

# **William III's commitment to Europe**

## **Ideals and Calvinism in the foreign policy of William III**

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### Introduction

William III of Orange's conspicuous commitment to European peace has caught the eye of many that have inquired into early modern international politics. It stands out in all of William III's political correspondences. A few months after Dutch and Austrian armies joined to defy French forces in November 1673, William III described his foreign policy to the Austrian commander Raimondo Montecucculi as 'le glorieux dessein (...) de rétablir et de conserver la liberté de l'Europe'.<sup>1</sup> Later, when the Duchy of Brunswick had joined allied forces in August 1674, William III wrote to the Duke of Brunswick that 'personne ne prend plus de part que moy à la gloire que V. A. s'est desjà acquise par les généreuses démarches qu'elle a faites pour le bien de l'Europe'.<sup>2</sup> During the Exclusion Crisis of 1679-1681, William III urged Charles II and the English parliament members to re-establish their unity. He wrote Sir William Temple, his English political trustee, that 'Dieu veuille que cecy produit une bonne intelligence entre le Roy et son Parlement, qui est (...) la seule chose qui peut sauver le reste de l'Europe à ne se point sousmettre à la France'.<sup>3</sup> William III's persistent concern for European peace and liberty is striking for it did not conform with the general political conduct many historians for a long time imputed to the international<sup>4</sup> political actors of his time.

William III reigned as Stadholder in five out of seven provinces of the Dutch Republic in the period 1672-1702. After the Glorious Revolution of 1688-1689, he also reigned as king of England in the period 1689-1702. The foundational principles of international relations had undergone significant changes in the period that preceded William III's reign. Most of these changes had materialized as a consequence of the decisive peace treaty of Westphalia, which was signed in 1648. Within this treaty, the concepts of sovereignty and territorial integrity were legally recognized as the governing principles of interstate relations. States were to relate to each other in a legally equal manner and every sovereign had the incontestable right to determine the official religion of his state. The authority to arrange treaties and alliances, to declare war and peace was to be confined to the sovereign and territorially integral state.<sup>5</sup> As a consequence, political and religious power was fundamentally fragmented among the many states that governed Europe within the period of William III's reign.

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<sup>1</sup>William III, 'Aan Raimond, Graaf Montecucculi', in: N. Japikse (ed.), *Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck, eersten graaf van Portland 2* (The Hague 1927-1937) 470-471.

<sup>2</sup>William III, 'Aan Georg Wilhelm van Brunswijk-Lunenburg, Hertog van Celle', in: N. Japikse (ed.), *Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck, eersten graaf van Portland 2* (The Hague 1927-1937) 468-469.

<sup>3</sup> William III, 'A la Haye, ce 9<sup>me</sup> de May 1679', in : P. Leupen (ed.), *Nederlandse Historische Bronnen 10* (The Hague 1992) 111.

<sup>4</sup>The term 'international' could be regarded as anachronistic in the early modern context. However, a suitable substitutionary term does not exist to my knowledge.

<sup>5</sup> H. Duchhardt, 'Peace treaties from Westphalia to the Revolutionary Era', in: R. Lesaffer (ed.), *Peace Treaties and International Law in European History: From the late Middle Ages to World War One* (Cambridge 2008) 47.

Revisions within the theoretical perceptions of interstate relations soon ensued. For a long time, the actuating forces driving interstate political conduct were thought to emanate from divine influence. Increasingly however, theorist argued that actuation of interstate interaction originated from among the states themselves. Upon Isaac Newton's definitive models of equilibrate interaction of objects (1687), political theorist had devised a similar mechanical understanding of international political conduct.<sup>6</sup> This conceptual revision soon gained widespread acceptance among theorists, politicians and diplomats. Its foundational theoretical discipline is now known as balance-of-power theory. Its theorists seek to understand the fundamental mechanics of international relations. They presume that weaker states can only resist the ascendancy of powerful states by converging with each other. The preservation of weaker states is thought to depend upon their unity and cooperation. This cooperation and unity is thought to originate from the self-interested nature of the sovereign state. Balance-of power theory therefore often predicates that unity and cooperation within international political relations only emerge as sovereign rulers aim for the preservation and aggrandizement of their state.

This pervasive notion of balance-of-power theory has ascended as the main historiographical conception of early modern interstate politics.<sup>7</sup> It is strongly politically realist in its connotations and as such emphasizes the supposedly anarchistic nature of interstate interaction. The realist maxim implies that conscience, morality, ideas and religion are of little importance in the cynical play for power of interstate politics. Realism has pervaded throughout early modern historiography.<sup>8</sup> Its application to the international balance-of-power policies of William III is, however, highly problematic. William III's devoted commitment to European peace and liberty, the ideas of common European interest so fundamental to his policies and his relentless dedication to the Christian cause all point to the idealistic and religious nature of his policies. William III was assuredly a pragmatist, but he also had a firm conception of his political goals. The pragmatic manner in which he conducted international balance-of-power policy was put into service of his firm political goals of a lasting European peace and definitive European liberties. William III's international balance-of-power policy was not motivated by strictly realist mentalities. Instead, as I will show in this article, they were based upon his ideals of European peace and liberty and his firm Calvinistic faith.

In this essay, I argue that the application of political realism to the international policies of William III is inadequate. I aim to explicate the idealistic and religious nature of William III's conspicuous concern for Europe. In doing so, I hope to show that morality, religion and the political ideal of Europe all played a role in the international relations of the early modern period. In this essay, I will focus my attention on the period of 1672-1686. It was in these years that William III devised and implemented his international policies for the first time. First, I will focus on the international political Western-European environment in the early 1670s; the years surrounding William III's accession to power as Dutch Stadholder. This international political environment to a great extent accounts for William III's conspicuous concern for European peace and liberty. It is characterized by the significant ascendancy of the French monarchy of Louis XIV (1638-1715) in political and military matters and the

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<sup>6</sup> T. Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory* (Manchester 1997) 111-112.

<sup>7</sup>D. Onnekink and G. Rommelse, 'Introduction', in: D. Onnekink and G. Rommelse, *Ideology and Foreign Policy in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham 2011) 3.

<sup>8</sup>D. Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How ideas shaped modern international relations* (Princeton 2001) 61-65.

relative neutrality and internal discord within the English state of Charles II (1630-1685). Second, I will turn to the most significant preceptors that acquainted William III with international politics, i.e. Johan De Witt (1625-1672) and Sir William Temple (1628-1699). In April 1666, at the age of 15, the States of Holland appointed William III as 'Child of State'. Johan De Witt, the Grand Pensionary of the Dutch Republic at the time, personally educated William III in political matters.<sup>9</sup> Sir William Temple was a distinguished English diplomat. William III was introduced to him in September 1668. A close friendship and confidential political correspondence soon developed between them.<sup>10</sup>

Third, I will center upon William III's balance-of-power policies during the Franco-Dutch War of 1672-1678. During this war, William III devised his policies in defense of European peace and liberty. The balance-of-power policies of William III are closely linked to the establishment and preservation of a strong defensive barrier in the Spanish Netherlands. Fourth, I will demonstrate the religious nature of William III's commitment to European peace and liberty. In the 1680s, as religious sentiments were on the rise throughout Europe, the anti-Protestant policies of Louis XIV led William III to emphasize the religious aspects of his commitment to European peace and liberty. William III's firm Calvinist faith is a source of his devoted commitment to peace and a significant factor in the religious character of his political conduct. The political correspondences of William III show his concern for Europe, his commitment to peace and liberty and the religious and idealistic nature of his political goals. These correspondences have been mainly archived in a significant archival source, namely *Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck*. It has been used throughout this article.

## **The international political environment of the 1670s**

William III acceded to the position of Stadholder in five out of seven provinces of the Dutch Republic on 4 July 1672. He was also named captain-general of its army and navy. These coronations were the result of a severe crisis within the governing circles of the United Provinces. Louis XIV of France and Charles II of England had declared war upon the Dutch Republic on April 4 1672. By June 30, French forces had already occupied the city of Utrecht. Three days later, French forces also invaded the city of Nijmegen. As panic spread across the Dutch public, Orangist mobs demanded the accession of William III as Stadholder and captain-general of the United Provinces. A coup d'état ensued on 4 July against the aristocratic leadership under the authority of Grand Pensionary Johan De Witt. As Johan de Witt was murdered in the streets of Dordrecht, William III acceded to power in The Hague.

The dramatic events that preceded and surrounded the accession of William III to power in the Dutch Republic mark the grave political situation of the United Provinces and the wider Western-European international environment in the summer of 1672. The political and military power of the Spanish monarchy had been greatly diminished by that time. For the Spanish Habsburg dynasty, the outcomes of the peace treaties of Westphalia and the

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<sup>9</sup>A. Lossky, 'Political Ideas of William III', in: H. Rowen and A. Lossky (ed.), *Political Ideas and Institutions in the Dutch Republic: papers represented a Clarke Library seminar* (Los Angeles 1985) 40.

<sup>10</sup>K. Haley, 'Introduction', in: P. Leupen (ed.), *Nederlandse Historische Bronnen* 10 (The Hague 1992) 98-101.

Pyrenees (1659) were thoroughly detrimental. The Spanish monarchy increasingly lost its leading position in the interstate politics on the European mainland. In economic matters, however, Spain remained a force to be reckoned with. Spain had an extensive trade network that spanned from the Americas to Asia. In Europe, Spain still possessed many strategically important territories, such as Naples, Sicily and Sardinia on the Italian peninsula and Franche-Comté and the Spanish Netherlands on the European mainland. As Spain grew increasingly weak when the sickly Charles II of Spain (1661-1700) came to rule the state in 1665, both Louis XIV and the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I (1640-1705) laid claim to the Spanish throne. The issue of the Spanish succession that ensued, dominated the international political relations until the end of the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1713).<sup>11</sup>

The peace treaties of Westphalia established the sovereignty and territorial integrity of German states of the Holy Roman Empire. Every sovereign within the Imperial territory was able to implement his own international policies. As a result, the political landscape within the Holy Roman Empire was severely fragmented. The sovereigns of the Imperial Estates and Electorates were predominantly concerned with the freedom that they had gained at the peace treaties of Westphalia. In cooperating with the United Provinces, Spain or Austria to prevent French ascendancy, they therefore proved unreliable.<sup>12</sup> It took the United Provinces considerable subsidies to make the duchies of Brunswick and Lorraine support the struggle against France. The bishoprics of Cologne and Münster joined French forces after England and France had declared war on the Dutch Republic in 1672. The elector of Brandenburg-Prussia Frederick William meanwhile rallied to the Dutch Republic. Already on 6 June 1673, however, Brandenburg-Prussia abandoned its war efforts.<sup>13</sup>

The Imperial state of Austria, in which the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I still ruled as a sovereign, was not as directly threatened by the French belligerence of 1672 as were the German states and the Dutch Republic. Leopold I, however, entered the war after French troops had invaded the Spanish Netherlands in late 1672. French dominance in the Low Countries of the Spanish monarchy would diminish the chances of Austria inheriting the Spanish crown from Charles II. Despite the firm anti-French course that Leopold I implemented after 1672, a pro-French mentality remained of influence in the Austrian courtly circles.<sup>14</sup> Austria's anti-French efforts were also diverted by the Turkish forces of the Osman Empire, which were stationed in Hungary along Austria's eastern borders. The strength of Austria's anti-French course was therefore dependent on the changing priorities and sentiments of Leopold I and his court.

The international political position of England had also proven to be an inestimable factor for Dutch political calculations. Prior to 1672, England and the United Provinces had already fought two wars, i.e. the first and second Navigation Wars of 1652-1654 and 1665-1667. In 1668, England, Sweden and the United Provinces established the Triple Alliance in response to the French aggressions of the Devolution War (1667-1668) in the Spanish Netherlands and Franche-Comté. In spite of the Triple Alliance, Charles II of England remained in benevolent contact with Louis XIV. On 1 June 1670, France and England secretly signed the Treaty of Dover, which stipulated English support of the French war against the United

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<sup>11</sup>N. Japikse, *Prins Willem III: De Stadhouder-Koning. Deel II* (Amsterdam 1933) 1.

<sup>12</sup>Japikse, *Prins Willem III*, 13.

<sup>13</sup>J. Lynn, *The Wars of Louis XIV: 1667–1714* (London 1999) 118.

<sup>14</sup>Japikse, *Prins Willem III*, 11.

Provinces. In return, France supported Charles II as he publicly supported the Roman Catholic faith in England.<sup>15</sup> Charles II knew that the English parliament would not consent with pro-Catholic policies. He therefore sought political and financial support of France. In 1672, Charles II issued the Declaration of Indulgence in which he lightened the penal laws against Roman Catholics.<sup>16</sup> Severe discord between Charles II and the English parliament ensued and because of his insecure political position in England, Charles II kept implementing a pro-French political course.

The weakness of Spain, the changing political positions of England and Austria and the unreliable nature of the international policies of the German Imperial states all characterize the international political environment of the 1670s. As a consequence, William III immediately led in the struggle against French political and military dominance in Europe as he opposed the French invasion of the Dutch Republic in 1672. To a considerable degree, William III's strong concern for Europe and his commitment to European peace and liberty stemmed from the grave condition of the European international relations of the early 1670s. If France were to acquire the Dutch or Spanish territories in the Low Countries, it would assuredly lead to French political, military and economic dominance. The French monarchy under the leadership of Louis XIV had already acquired great political and military power. To a considerable degree then, the idea of a common Europe so central to William III's policies arose in response to the threat of French dominancy in 1672.<sup>17</sup>

As France threatened to prevail as the dominant state in Europe, some politicians and diplomats pointed to the grave consequences of French ascendancy and increasingly did so in terms of European peace and liberty. One such diplomat was Franz Paul, Freiherr von Lisola (1613-1674). In his treatise on the ascendancy of the French monarchy, Lisola warned that Louis XIV was planning to declare a universal French monarchy in Europe. Lisola wrote the treatise, which was suggestively titled *Le Bouclier d'Estat et de Justice, contre le Dessein manifestement decouvert de la Monarchie Universelle*, in response to the aggressive French military policies of the Devolution War (1667-1668). Louis XIV's armies had overrun Spanish-Habsburg territories in the Spanish Netherlands and France-Comté. According to Lisola, Louis XIV had 'une dessein de la Domination Universelle' and 'une ambition qui marche à grands pas à la Monarchie Universelle'.<sup>18</sup> Lisola suggested that the other monarchs of Europe had to unify in order to resist French domination. He wrote that 'de tous les autres Princes, leur principal interest est de tenir la Balance (...) si elle avait esté pratiquée avec toute la vigueur & la prudence qui estoit nécessaire pour la rendre utile, l'Europe jouirait aujourd'huy d'une profonde tranquillité'.<sup>19</sup> What Lisola suggested to the opponents of France was clearly a balance-of-power policy that was incited by the French threat of ascendancy over the other European states.

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<sup>15</sup>R. Hutton, 'The Making of the Secret Treaty of Dover, 1668-1679', *The Historical Journal* 29 2 (Cambridge 1986) 297.

<sup>16</sup>G. Abernathy, 'Clarendon and the Declaration of Indulgence', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 11 1 (Cambridge 1960) 57.

<sup>17</sup>P. Burke, 'Did Europe exist before 1700?', *History of European Ideas* 1 1 (Cambridge 1980) 25-26.

<sup>18</sup>F. Lisola, *Bouclier d'estat et de justice contre le dessein manifestement decouvert de la monarchie universelle, sous le vain pretexte des pretentions de la Reyne de France* (1667) 4-5.

<sup>19</sup>Lisola, *Bouclier d'Estat*, 319-320.



## William III's political education

Sir William Temple was, together with Johan de Witt, the main preceptor of William III in international political matters. He was familiar with Lisola's treatise on Louis XIV's ambition for universal monarchy.<sup>20</sup> As an English diplomat at the time of the Devolution War, Temple brought across Charles II's offer to De Witt to establish the Triple Alliance with the Dutch Republic and Sweden in order to counterpoise French preponderance in the Spanish Netherlands. The Alliance was founded on 17 January 1668, but Charles II secretly sought financial support from Louis XIV. Temple, however, was convinced of the grave intentions of Louis XIV's policies. In September 1669, Temple conveyed to his patron, the English Secretary of State Henry Bennet of Arlington, the need 'to balance the affairs of Europe, to hinder the exorbitant growing power of France and to defend Flanders'.<sup>21</sup> Temple was convinced of the necessity of a firm alliance between England and the United Provinces so as to balance the international relations of Europe. He got across this conviction to William III who on 1 May 1671, about a year before his accession to power, wrote to Temple 'J'ay esté très marri de voir par la vostre qu'il y a si peu d'apparence d'entrer dans une plus estroite alliance avec l'Angleterre. J'espère que les sentiments changeront'.<sup>22</sup> The interrelation between balance-of-power policy and the pursuit of an Anglo-Dutch alliance developed to become one of the characteristic features of William III's policies.

The balance-of-power theories of Temple and his commitment to Anglo-Dutch cooperation left their mark on William III's international policies. This became increasingly clear after Temple's concern over the increasing power of France was validated by Louis XIV's declaration of war in the summer of 1672. While Charles II of England joined France in declaring war upon the United Provinces, Temple remained convinced of the necessity of Anglo-Dutch unity. This greatly benefitted the friendship that had developed between William III and Temple.<sup>23</sup> Charles II, however, persisted in his anti-Dutch course as England became embroiled in fighting the Dutch Republic at sea. The belligerence of Charles II and Temple's continuing commitment to Anglo-Dutch cooperation were incompatible to such an extent that some Englishmen argued that Temple was too sympathetic towards Dutch interests.<sup>24</sup> Charles II, however, continued to confide in Temple, as the latter became the English ambassador in the Dutch Republic in 1674.

Aside from Temple, Johan de Witt was also an influential political preceptor of William III. To counter the English influence of William III's uncle, King Charles II of England, William was designated as 'Child of State' in April 1666.<sup>25</sup> From then on, De Witt personally educated William III in the workings of Dutch politics and the foreign policies that he conducted. De Witt governed the United Provinces during the first Stadholderless Period of 1650-1672. He

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<sup>20</sup>W. Troost, "'To restore and preserve the liberty of Europe': William III's ideas on foreign policy", in: D. Onnekink and G. Rommelse, *Ideology and Foreign Policy in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham 2011) 286-287.

<sup>21</sup>Cited in K. Haley, *An English diplomat in the Low countries. Sir William Temple and John de Witt (1665-1672)* (Oxford 1986) p. 248.

<sup>22</sup>William III, 'A la Haye, le premier de may 1671', in: P. Leupen (ed.), *Nederlandse Historische Bronnen* 10 (The Hague 1992) 105.

<sup>23</sup>W. Troost, "'To restore and preserve the liberty of Europe'", 287.

<sup>24</sup>D. Roorda, *Ambassadeur in de Lage Landen: William Temple's observations upon the United Provinces* (Haarlem 1978) 22.

<sup>25</sup>W. Troost, *Stadhouder-Koning Willem III: Een politieke biografie* (Hilversum 2001) 58.

conducted a foreign policy aimed at maintaining the status quo in European international relations. The fundamental goals of De Witt's foreign policies were tranquillity, peace and commerce. This implied the establishment of defensive alliances founded upon collective European interests.<sup>26</sup> The European-wide political mentality of De Witt has certainly had an influence on William III. De Witt's conviction that European-wide peace would benefit all the states of Europe also characterizes William III in his political thinking. The firmly international political outlook of De Witt is distinguishable in William III's political frame of mind. De Witt was able to pass his perspicacious understanding of the European political environment on to William III.<sup>27</sup>

During his political career, De With established several alliances, i.e. the so-called The Hague Concert of 1659, the 1662 defensive alliance with France and the Triple Alliance of 1668. With these alliances however, De Witt was unable to reach his political goals of tranquillity and peace in the interest of commerce.<sup>28</sup> De Witt was predominantly concerned with preserving the status quo of European international affairs. The alliances that he established were all defensive in their nature, as war would only hurt the commercial interests of the Dutch Republic. As De Witt was chiefly concerned with the tranquillity in European international politics, he did not systematically implement balance-of-power politics. In this respect, the politics of William III and Johan de Witt are fundamentally different.

### **William III's balance-of-power policies during the Franco-Dutch War**

By the time William III acceded to the position of Stadholder in the Dutch Republic, war had broken out among the three most powerful Western-European states, i.e. France, England and the United Provinces. Before William III had come to power, Dutch engineers had deliberately flooded parts of the Hollandic Water Line west of Utrecht.<sup>29</sup> As a result, William III and the Dutch army managed to stop French advancements into Dutch territory. As captain-general of the Dutch army, William III proved to be a capable military leader. After a few months of fighting, the Dutch army managed to drive French forces out of Dutch territory. Spain, Austria and Brandenburg had allied with the Dutch in order to defend important strategic positions along the Meuse River in the Spanish Netherlands and the Rhine River further east.<sup>30</sup> The English efforts in the North Sea, against the Dutch fleet under command of Michiel De Ruyter (1607-1676), were unsuccessful and England soon ceased its military efforts.<sup>31</sup> After roughly a year of fighting, France was practically bereft of its allies. On 30 August 1673, the United Provinces, Spain, Austria and the duchy of Lorraine united in the

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<sup>26</sup>J. Boogman, 'Achtergronden, tendenties en tradities van het buitenlands beleid van Nederland (eind zestiende eeuw-1940)', in N. van Sas (ed.), *De kracht van Nederland. Internationale positie en buitenlands beleid* (Haarlem 1991) 19-20.

<sup>27</sup>A. Lossky, 'Political Ideas of William III', 41.

<sup>28</sup>J. Boogman, 'Achtergronden, tendenties en tradities van het buitenlands beleid van Nederland (eind zestiende eeuw-1940)', 20.

<sup>29</sup>J. Lynn, *The Wars of Louis XIV: 1667-1714* (London 1999) 117.

<sup>30</sup>W. Troost, *Stadhouder-Koning Willem III*, 123-125.

<sup>31</sup>J. Lynn, *The Wars of Louis XIV*, 113.

Quadruple Alliance.<sup>32</sup> On 16 February 1674, England signed peace with the United Provinces in the Treaty of Westminster.

The French military campaign in the Dutch Republic had failed. France was forced to abandon its positions in the United Provinces and had encountered forceful Imperial troops on the banks of the Rhine. The French armies along the Meuse in the Spanish Netherlands, however, remained firmly in position. The major cities in the vicinity of this river, e.g. Namur, Mons and Charleroi, emerged as the pivotal locations for the remainder of the Franco-Dutch War. In February 1674, France attacked and overran the Spanish territory of Franche-Comté. In the Spanish Netherlands, France implemented a more defensive strategy. On 11 May 1674, William III joined the Dutch army as it prepared a military expedition to the Spanish Netherlands. On 22 May, he arrived in Brussels.<sup>33</sup> French armies were defensively positioned in Charleroi, south of Brussels. These positions were strong and the Dutch army of William III did not make an attempt to attack them. In a letter sent to William III on 16 June 1674, Frederick van Reede, lieutenant colonel of the Dutch infantry, spoke of 'de bekommerlycke toestant van de Spaansche Nederlanden, die, in alle oorden door stercke, vaste Fransche steden doorsneden sijnde.'<sup>34</sup>

During the military expedition of 1674, William III developed his plan to create a barrier of cities along the banks of the Meuse. The strong positions of France prevented William III from implementing this plan. In his letter of 16 June, Van Reede referred to the importance of this barrier-plan and the current weakness of the Dutch and Allied positions: 'geen welgefondeerde gerustheyt kan werden gevat opeen so swacke barrière als zijn de Spaansche Nederlanden, tensy die by vervolg van den oorlogh ofte by 't aangaan van vrede in een andere stant als voorhenen werden gebraght'. Van Reede emphasized the danger of the strong French position in the Spanish Netherlands, by pointing out that 'die te gevaarlycker moeten geacht werden, omdat (...) den Coning van Vrankrijk, uyt hoofde van de Coninginne, by 't afsterven van Syne Catholycke Ma<sup>t</sup>, de gehele Spaansche successie pretendeert.'<sup>35</sup>

William III shared Van Reede's fear for French military dominance in the Spanish Netherlands. In his political correspondences, William III connected the military expedition in the Spanish Netherlands to the collective faith of Europe. As I have already pointed out, William III described his military and political policies to the Austrian commander Raimondo Montecucculi in August 1674 as 'le glorieux dessein (...) de rétablir et de conserver la liberté de l'Europe.'<sup>36</sup> The barrier-plan of William III involved the establishment of a broad coalition of anti-French states to defend and guarantee the barrier-cities along the Meuse. It was a balance-of-power strategy that required Frederick William, the Elector of Brandenburg who had abandoned his military expeditions against France on 6 June 1673, to enter the Quadruple Alliance established in August 1673. Frederick William was an uncle of William III and he received a letter from his nephew in the spring of 1674. In the letter, William III tried to persuade his uncle to re-enter the war. William wrote that 'dans un peu de temps nous

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<sup>32</sup>N. Japikse, *Prins Willem III: De Stadhouder-Koning. Deel I* (Amsterdam 1933) 306.

<sup>33</sup>Japikse, *Prins Willem III: De Stadhouder-Koning. Deel 2*, 19-21.

<sup>34</sup>F. van Reede, 'Van Frederik van Reede, Heer van de Lier, 16 Juni 1674', in: N. Japikse (ed.), *Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck, eersten graaf van Portland 2* (The Hague 1927-1937) 400.

<sup>35</sup>Van Reede, 'Van Frederik van Reede, Heer van de Lier, 16 Juni 1674', 400.

<sup>36</sup>William III, 'Aan Raimond, Graaf Montecucculi', in: N. Japikse (ed.), *Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck, eersten graaf van Portland 2* (The Hague 1927-1937) 470-471.

aurons l'obligation à V. A. E. d'avoir obligé la France de redonner la paix à l'Europe à des termes aussi justes que nécessaires pour le repos de toute la Chrestienté.<sup>37</sup> William III succeeded in his attempt as Brandenburg re-entered the war on France in late 1673.

The Dutch and allied military expeditions in the Spanish Netherlands of 1674 were only partially successful. On June 2, William met with the commanders of the Austrian and Spanish armies to discuss military matters. At the meeting, William III invoked arguments based on the common interests of all the Allied states. He argued that the faith of Europe was dependent on the anti-French policies of Leopold I of Austria.<sup>38</sup> The Austrian commander, however, remained doubtful and it took him until August to join the Dutch and Spanish armies in the Spanish Netherlands. The allied army then marched towards the French positions around Charleroi. They collided with the French army on 11 August 1674 at Seneffe, a small town just north of Charleroi. The ensuing battle, in which William III fought alongside the Dutch army, ended indecisively as both sides had to retreat. After the battle, the French army commander Louis II of Condé noted that William III had shown to be 'a great general except in exposing himself as a young man.'<sup>39</sup> In a letter sent to Sir William Temple shortly after the Battle of Seneffe, William III expressed that 'le service du public sera ce que j'auray le plus devant les yeux'.<sup>40</sup>

Already during the military campaign of 1674, William III had devised a balance-of-power policy that implied a strong strategic barrier in the Spanish Netherlands backed by a broad coalition of states that sought to prevent French military and political ascendancy in Europe. Throughout the campaign, William showed to be primarily concerned with the common goal of peace in Europe. Within his correspondences, he invoked common interest as he sought to convince the allied states of the necessity to fight French military dominance. The Dutch army had shown formidable strength during the military campaign of 1674. French positions in the Spanish Netherlands nonetheless proved to be too strong and the military coalition of the allied states remained divided.

After the military campaign had ended, William III devoted his attention towards the English monarchy. In line with the balance-of-power strategy he had devised, William III attempted to persuade Charles II to join the Dutch in fighting France. Charles II was not to be persuaded. He pressed William III to accept English mediation in an effort to achieve peace between France and the United Provinces. William III, devoted as he was to the common cause of the anti-French coalition, refused to negotiate a separate peace with France. In a letter to Arlington, the English Secretary of State, William wrote that a peace proposal of France 'puisse empescher que les allies n'ayent d'aussi bonnes conditions de paix qu'ils auroient eu autrement.'<sup>41</sup> During his conversations with Temple, English ambassador in The Hague at the time, William again stressed the importance of a strong defensive barrier in the

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<sup>37</sup> William III, 'Aan Friedrich Wilhelm, Keurvorst van Brandenburg (Maart/April 1674)', in: N. Japikse (ed.), *Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck, eersten graaf van Portland 2* (The Hague 1927-1937) 348.

<sup>38</sup> Japikse, *Prins Willem III: De Stadhouder-Koning. Deel 2*, 22.

<sup>39</sup> Cited in A. Lossky, 'Political Ideas of William III', 44.

<sup>40</sup> William III, 'Aan William Temple, 1 September 1674', in: N. Japikse (ed.), *Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck, eersten graaf van Portland 2 1* (The Hague 1927-1937) 477.

<sup>41</sup> William III, 'Aan Henri Bennet, Graaf van Arlington, 3 Februari 1675', in: N. Japikse (ed.), *Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck, eersten graaf van Portland 2 2* (The Hague 1927-1937) 2.

Spanish Netherlands.<sup>42</sup> This is a testimony of the perseverance of William III in reaching his goal of European-wide peace, for in the Dutch Republic, the States-General increasingly desired a peace settlement.

In June 1675, French armies overran the territory of Limburg, north of Liège. The French shortly invaded the territory of Brabant in July, but had to withdraw after the Dutch army threatened to cut off their supply lines. During the rest of the military campaign both sides kept their defensive positions. The States-General of the Dutch Republic increasingly showed a desire for peace, but William III kept refusing anything but a general peace involving all the states committed to the anti-French cause. In the end of 1675, William III wrote a letter to Thomas Butler, the English Earl of Ossory, in which he pointed out the desirability of a general peace, but also alluded to the continuation of his balance-of-power policy. He wrote that 'si toute la Christieneté est asses malheureus que la pais ne se fait cett hyver, j'espère qu'au moins l'anné qui vien, je seres assez heureux de vous voir avec nous en campagne.'<sup>43</sup> William III then, did not expect Louis XIV to propose a peace plan in which the necessary provisions were met to guarantee a durable European peace. He hoped that England would join the Dutch Republic in fighting France.

During the military campaign of 1676, France seized the offensive initiative and fortified its positions along the Meuse. Charles II did not rally to the Dutch cause and remained sympathetic towards the French monarchy. William III's hopes for a successful implementation of the barrier-plan therefore decreased in the course of 1676. France had occupied the strategically important city of Condé, west of Charleroi and William III's attempts to take the city of Maastricht in Limburg had failed. William was worried that if the allied forces did not improve the military situation in the Spanish Netherlands, the desirable peace terms could not be achieved. On 22 November 1676, William III wrote to the Austrian commander Othon Henri that 'nous sommes obligé de continuer la geurre, sans quoy assurément le Pais Bas est perdu [et] il faut aller demander la paix au Roy de France, le chapeau à la main.'<sup>44</sup> While William III thus continued to resist a separate peace with France, the States-General of the Dutch Republic increasingly opposed the policies of their Stadholder. This was especially the case for the city of Amsterdam, where the regents insisted that a separate peace would be in the Dutch Republic's best interests. In response to this, William III is reported to have said that 'if I were harmed, a separate peace with France would be signed within two days; but I will resist'.<sup>45</sup> Throughout 1676 then, William maintained his mentality of defending the common interest of the anti-French coalition. The way in which he resisted the increasing Dutch inclination to accept a separate peace with France shows that William III stubbornly kept his commitment to general European peace, in spite even of the disadvantages of war for the Dutch Republic. William's perseverance in resisting separate peace with France bears testimony to the idealistic nature of his policies. While the Dutch Republic had to bear the adverse effects of warfare, William III remained firmly concerned with the common interest of the European states.

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<sup>42</sup>Japikse, *Prins Willem III: De Stadhouder-Koning. Deel 2*, 34.

<sup>43</sup>William III, 'Aan Thomas Butler, Graaf van Ossory', in: N. Japikse (ed.), *Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck, eersten graaf van Portland 2 2* (The Hague 1927-1937) 71.

<sup>44</sup>William III, 'Aan Othon Henri, Graaf van Caretto, Markies van Grana', in: N. Japikse (ed.), *Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck, eersten graaf van Portland 2 2* (The Hague 1927-1937) 136.

<sup>45</sup>Cited in Japikse, *Prins Willem III: De Stadhouder-Koning. Deel 2*, 56.

After 1676, Charles II had become weary of French military advancements in the Spanish Netherlands. As the Dutch army prepared for another military campaign in the winter of 1677, Charles II reached out to William and promised to promote the general peace plan in France. William III was grateful, for Charles II had also hinted at the possibilities of an Anglo-Dutch alliance, which would greatly strengthen his balance-of-power policy.<sup>46</sup> By 1677, it had become clear to William III that the anti-French coalition could not force France to accept a peace proposal based on the peace treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle that had ended the Devolution War in 1668. Since then, France had gained much stronger defensive positions in Franche-Comté and the Spanish Netherlands. When William III proposed the peace terms based on the 1668 peace treaty, both France and Spain did not want to cooperate. William III's position grew delicate for the powerful city of Amsterdam kept insisting that a separate peace with France was the most desirable. To Temple, William III spoke about 'the difficulties to carry on the War, without endangering a Mutiny at Amsterdam'.<sup>47</sup>

The Dutch and allied armies, however, had to respond to the aggressive French stance in the Spanish Netherlands. France threatened to further fortify its defensive positions and was only partially withheld in doing so by the allied armies. In light of the strengthening of the French defensive positions, William III decided to travel to England in October 1677 to intensify the Anglo-Dutch cooperation and to marry Charles II's first daughter Mary Stuart (1631-1660). During the visit, William III and Charles II agreed on a peace proposal in which William prioritised the establishment of a strong defensive barrier in the Spanish Netherlands. Both Spain and France refused, but the interests of Charles II and William III started to converge. On 23 January 1678, England and the Dutch Republic established an offensive alliance against France to guarantee the peace terms they had agreed on. The alliance was a success for William III as it greatly strengthened his balance-of-power policy of a strong barrier in the Spanish Netherlands. The States-General, however, were less inclined to view the alliance as a success. Shortly after the alliance was established, France conquered the strategically important cities of Ghent and Ypres in the west of the Spanish Netherlands. Charles II, however, decided not to fulfil the duties established in the alliance treaty. Thomas Osborne informed William III on 17 May 1678 that Charles II found 'his affaires att home in so ill a posture that (...) he had not the least of hopes of doing anything by his arms for the preservation of Flanders, so that hee desires you will take your measures accordingly and that Your Highnesse would loose no time in shewing your willingnesse to comply with the people of your country for the peace'.<sup>48</sup>

William III was very disappointed by the refusal of Charles II to send troops to the Spanish Netherlands and his recommendation of a separate peace with France. After Charles's recommendation and the military advancements of France, the States-General emphasized the necessity of a separate peace accord. In the Dutch city of Nijmegen, deputies of all the belligerent states converged and discussed a peace treaty. On 14 June 1678, the Dutch deputy Hieronymus van Beveringh informed William III that 'Haere Ho. Mo. moeten

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<sup>46</sup>William III, 'Aan Karel II, Koning van Engeland, 27 Januari 1677', in: N. Japikse (ed.), *Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck, eersten graaf van Portland 2 2* (The Hague 1927-1937) 143.

<sup>47</sup>Cited in W. Temple, 'To Sir Joseph Williamson, Hague, 22 January 1677', in: Bart (ed.), *Works of Sir William Temple* (London 1731) 441.

<sup>48</sup>T. Osborne, 'Van Thomas Osborne, Graaf van Danby, 17 Mei 1678', in: N. Japikse (ed.), *Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck, eersten graaf van Portland 2 2* (The Hague 1927-1937) 247.

resolveeren het werck van den vrede met dese loopende meant te sluyten en (...) verstaen in recht te sijn, om den vrede te sluyten, selfs buyten den Keyser.<sup>49</sup> By the summer of 1678 then, the States-General proceeded in the negotiations concerning a separate peace with France. In response to the letter of 14 June, William III merely insisted that even in a separate peace with France, the establishment of a strong defensive barrier in the Spanish Netherlands remained of paramount importance.<sup>50</sup> Because William III abandoned his persistent commitment to a general peace, Charles II consulted with France to give in to William III's demands for a defensive barrier in the Spanish Netherlands. On 10 August 1678, France and the United Provinces concluded the peace treaty of Nijmegen and thereby ended the Franco-Dutch War. Louis XIV had accepted William III's claims to a defensive barrier in the Spanish Netherlands. The barrier that he granted the Dutch Republic was not as strong as William III had wanted. In light, however, of the French military dominance and Charles II's reluctance to declare war against France, it was more than William III could have hoped for.

After acceding to power in 1672, William III had proven to be a formidable political and military leader. Already in 1674, he had devised a balance-of-power policy that implied the establishment of a strong defensive barrier in the Spanish Netherlands backed by a broad coalition of anti-French states. Throughout the Franco-Dutch War, William III showed a firm commitment to the establishment of a European-wide peace and a propensity to emphasize the importance of a European-wide settlement. During the military campaign of 1676, the States-General and the regents of the city of Amsterdam increasingly pressed for a separate peace with France. William III resisted prioritizing the Dutch national interest. The refusal of William III to accept a separate peace is a testimony of the idealistic nature of William III's political goals; William III was not predominantly concerned with the Dutch national interest and continuously committed to his political ideal of a free and peaceful Europe. The successful implementation of the barrier-plan was hindered by the military strength of France during the Franco-Dutch War. The peace treaty of Nijmegen signified William III's concessions to this military strength. To the English Duke of Ossory, William III continued expressing his fear for French dominance in Europe. He wrote: 'Dieu vuillie qu'elles puissent bientost cesser, sans quoy la France sera en peu maistre de toutte l'Europe.'<sup>51</sup>

## William III's Calvinist faith and the international relations of the 1680s

In his political correspondences of the Franco-Dutch War, William III often expressed his firm Calvinist faith. Religious expressions, such as 'dieu veuille' and 'la grâce divine' continuously reappear in the many letters William III wrote during the war. Perhaps his most marked expression of Calvinism during the Franco-Dutch War followed after the Battle of Seneffe in August 1674. In a letter to Van Reede, William III stated that 'il a pleu à Dieu de me

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<sup>49</sup>H. van Beveringh, 'Van Hieronymus van Beveringh. 14 Juni 1678', in: N. Japikse (ed.), *Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck, eersten graaf van Portland 2 2* (The Hague 1927-1937) 248-251.

<sup>50</sup>William III, 'Aan Everard van Weede van Dijkvelt, 4 Juli 1678', in: N. Japikse (ed.), *Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck, eersten graaf van Portland 2 2* (The Hague 1927-1937) 254.

<sup>51</sup>William III, 'Aan Thomas Butler, Graaf van Ossory. Maart 1679', in: N. Japikse (ed.), *Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck, eersten graaf van Portland 2 2* (The Hague 1927-1937) 294.

conserver dans les dangers où je me suis trouvé (...) nous sommes tous obligés de nous en reposer sur la Sainte Providence de celui qui nous a desjà garentis de plus grands dangers et assistés miraculeusement dans de plus grandes espreuves.<sup>52</sup> The themes of divine providence and godly intervention are typical characteristics of William III's political correspondence. After the Franco-Dutch War, as religious passions were on the rise throughout Europe, William III's Calvinism increasingly influenced his policies.<sup>53</sup>

The conclusion of separate peace between the United Provinces and France had severely divided the anti-French coalition. With the Dutch Republic out of the war, both Spain and Austria were soon forced to reluctantly agree to the French peace terms. Meanwhile, the duchy of Brandenburg had entered into a coalition with France. In light of the advantageous circumstances, Louis XIV started his policy of *réunions* in September 1679, claiming the righteous expansion of French territory. William III was unable to prevent France from strengthening its defences. Meanwhile in England, anti-Catholic sentiments reached new heights after the fictitious Popish Plot had been revealed in August 1678. In response, Charles II and the English parliament became increasingly divided over the desired exclusion of the catholic James II from the English throne. William III had a vested interest in the matter, because the discord between king and parliament prevented the implementation of anti-French policies. On 21 March 1679, he wrote to Temple: 'Dieu veuille (...) que les différents entre le Roy et son Parlement se puissent accommoder, à quoi toute la Chrestienté a tant de part'.<sup>54</sup>

In January 1680, however, Charles II decided to dissolve the English parliament. In response, William III started to fear that the English king would approach Louis XIV for support. In March 1680, Charles II secretly did and promised Louis XIV not to implement anti-French policies. From then on, as he knew that Anglo-Dutch cooperation was prevented, Louis XIV intensified his *réunions* policies.<sup>55</sup> William III's fears of French domination increased as a consequence. As William III unsuccessfully tried to persuade Spain to resist French aggression, a Dutch diplomat in Spain stated in August 1681 that William III feared 'les maximes du Roy de France, de vouloir se rendre maistre de la Flandre et par ce moyen conquiesse la monarchie universelle'.<sup>56</sup> In March 1681, William III's initiatives against French aggression yielded results as Sweden, a long time ally of France, decided to enter into an association treaty with the Dutch Republic. The alliance was strengthened when Austria joined in February 1682. William III, however, could not prevent Louis XIV from further intensifying his *réunions* policy, because the States-General and specifically the city of Amsterdam refused to provide William with the necessary military apparatus.

In the summer of 1683, Turkish armies laid siege to Vienna, the Austrian capital city. William III was dismayed, not because of the Turkish threat, but because it prevented Austria from supporting him in his struggle against France.<sup>57</sup> On 4 June 1684, as the opposition to

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<sup>52</sup>William III, 'Aan Frederik van Reede, 10 September 1674', in: N. Japikse (ed.), *Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck, eersten graaf van Portland* 2 1 (The Hague 1927-1937) 491.

<sup>53</sup>A. Lossky, 'Political Ideas of William III, 45-47.

<sup>54</sup>William III, 'A la Haye, ce 21me de mars 1679', in : P. Leupen (ed.), *Nederlandse Historische Bronnen* 10 (The Hague 1992) 108.

<sup>55</sup>Japikse, *Prins Willem III: De Stadhouder-Koning. Deel 2*, 150-151.

<sup>56</sup>F. La Vergne, 'Reflections sur l'instruction que donne Monsieur le Prince d'Orange', in: N. Japikse (ed.), *Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck, eersten graaf van Portland* 2 1 (The Hague 1927-1937) 401.

<sup>57</sup>Japikse, *Prins Willem III: De Stadhouder-Koning. Deel 2*, 174.



Louis XIV was increasingly weakened, France managed to overrun the city of Luxembourg, one of the main targets of the *réunions* policies. In response, Spain and Austria signed a truce with France in the city of Regensburg on 15 August 1684 in which Louis XIV was allowed to keep Luxembourg. The truce signified a major concession to the French military strength. There was little, however, that William III, Spain or Austria could have done. The States-General and the city of Amsterdam prevented William from military resistance to France. As Austria committed to defending its eastern borders, the weak Spanish monarchy was left destitute of support.

William III increasingly conceived of his struggle against Louis XIV in religious terms. He perceived Louis XIV to be a religious enemy, endeavouring to establish a universal monarchy.<sup>58</sup> On 19 March 1684, William III had told Paul von Fuchs, a diplomat from Brandenburg, that 'it is so clear that Louis XIV is striving for a universal monarchy or at least wants to become a sovereign arbiter in Christendom.'<sup>59</sup> William III's religious frame-of-mind was further stimulated in 1685, when a series of unconnected events shook Christendom to its foundations. On 16 February 1685, Charles II died, leaving the throne to his Catholic brother James II. Anti-Catholicism in England reached new heights as James II sought to lift the penal laws for non-conforming Protestants and Catholics. In France, Louis XIV increasingly persecuted the Protestant Huguenots. In October 1685, he revoked the Edict of Nantes that had granted substantial rights to the Huguenots for almost a century. In Savoy, Louis XIV pressed Victor Amadeus II to persecute the Protestant Waldenesian population. The anti-Protestant policies of Louis XIV resulted in major streams of Protestant refugees to the Protestant countries surrounding France. Anti-Catholicism rose throughout Europe as a result.

In response to the anti-Protestant policies of Louis XIV, Frederick William, the Elector of Brandenburg, left the alliance with France. In January 1686, William III sent the Huguenot François Gaultier de Saint-Blanchard on a diplomatic mission to Brandenburg in order to establish a rapprochement with Frederick William. In the diplomatic instructions William III firmly showed that he conceived of his struggle against Louis XIV increasingly in religious terms. The instructions for Saint-Blanchard read:

'La Religion Protestante & Réformée est de toute part dans l'oppression (...) dans la France elle est sur le point de périr. (...) Le Papisme non seulement éteint l'Eglise Réformée dans les pays où il est dominant, mais aussi fait de si grand progresse dans les lieux où il ne domine pas encore.'<sup>60</sup>

The diplomatic mission of Saint-Blanchard was a success. In August 1686, Brandenburg and the United Provinces prolonged the alliance of 1678, which in fact had never been revoked. In July 1686, the Austrian emperor Leopold I established the League of Augsburg with Spain, Sweden, Brandenburg and other anti-French states. The Dutch Republic did not enter the league, because the States-General were reluctant to enter into any new alliances.

William III had expressed his Calvinist faith throughout his political correspondences of the Franco-Dutch War. During the 1680s, as religious sentiments were on the rise throughout

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<sup>58</sup>Lossky, 'Political ideas of William III', 48-49.

<sup>59</sup>Cited in Troost, "'To restore and preserve the liberty of Europe', 296.

<sup>60</sup>Cited in Japikse, *Prins Willem III: De Stadhouder-Koning. Deel 2*, 205.

Europe, William III's Calvinist faith reinforced his commitment to European peace and liberty. During the religious upheavals of the 1680s, William III increasingly emphasized the religious aspects of his struggle against Louis XIV. He started to perceive Louis XIV to be a personal enemy that posed a threat to the collective interest of Christendom. In the context of Louis XIV's anti-Protestant policies, he began imputing to Louis XIV not just the ambition to establish a universal monarchy, but also the ambition for universal religion. During the 1680s, William III's Calvinist faith reinforced his inclination to view international politics in a firmly European-wide context.

## **Conclusion**

While balance-of-power policies have often been linked to political realism, the application of political realism to the international policies of William III is highly problematic. William III's devoted commitment to European peace and liberty, the ideas of common European interest so fundamental to his policies and his relentless dedication in defending Europe against the universal ambitions of Louis XIV all point to the idealistic and religious nature of his policies. William III was not a realist politician predominantly occupied with self-preservation and aggrandizement of his state. Instead, William III was particularly driven by the ideals of European-wide peace and liberty and his firm Calvinist faith. To a considerable degree, William III's commitment to European-wide peace arose in response to the threat of French dominancy in 1672. During the Franco-Dutch War, William III devised a balance-of-power policy that implied a strong strategic barrier in the Spanish Netherlands backed by a broad coalition of states that sought to prevent French military and political ascendancy in Europe.

William III's distrust of French politics and his firmly international political outlook originated from his political education. The interrelation between balance-of-power policy and the pursuit of an Anglo-Dutch alliance, which had originated from Sir William Temple, developed in William III to become one of the characteristic features of his policies. William III's marked conviction that European-wide peace would benefit all the states of Europe originated from the political education of De Witt. During the Franco-Dutch War, William III opposed the States-General by continuing to struggle for a general peace that guaranteed the establishment of a defensive barrier in the Spanish Netherlands. William III's refusal to accept a separate peace with France was a testimony of the idealistic nature of his political goals. William III prioritized the common European interest for a general peace above the Dutch interest for a separate peace with France. During the 1680s, as religious passions were on the rise throughout Europe, William III's Calvinist faith increasingly influenced his policies. He began to perceive Louis XIV to be a religious enemy, endeavouring to establish a universal monarchy in Europe. He increasingly conceived of his struggle against Louis XIV in religious terms. In response to the anti-Protestant policies of Louis XIV, William began to impute to Louis XIV the ambition for the establishment of a universal religion.

In this article, I have argued that applications of political realism to the international balance-of-power policies of William III are inadequate. While balance-of-power policies have often been connoted with political realism, William III conducted balance-of-power in name of the common peace of Europe. This article focuses on the period of William III's reign before he became king of England. William III's accession to the English throne brought about new opportunities for policy implementation. At the same time, however, new struggles and limiting influences on the royal prerogatives presented themselves. A thorough research of William III's international policies as king of England could reinforce the conclusion of this

present article. What should be clear, however, is that while William III's time has often been identified as a period in which international politics consisted predominantly of a cynical play for power, the case of William III proves that morality, ideals and religion could and did play a role in the international politics of the early modern period.

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