

Welcome back to the war! Last time we brought our narrative through some fascinating inroads of diplomacy and negotiations, as a combination of factors led Charles II to do the unthinkable, and pledge his state alongside the Dutch to wrest a peace treaty from Louis. The King of France, faced with a peace which he felt was not befitting of a sovereign who had made such incredible progress, particularly in the last few years, made his own opening when he seized a series of important Spanish fortress cities, in Ghent and Ypres. The implications were obvious – Louis was taking these towns to use as bargaining chips later on, for the peace treaty which would be of more benefit to him, rather than the Dutch. Perhaps in spite of these aims, feverish diplomacy took place in London, where the different lobby groups sought to incept an Anglo-Dutch defensive and offensive alliance, though in the event this proved more difficult than the previous treaty of cooperation which had been signed in March 1678.

London and The Hague were certainly closer than they had ever been since Charles first came to the throne; with William of Orange's marriage to Princess Mary complete by the end of 1677 and with the pro-Dutch Earl of Danby spreading his monies around, it certainly seemed possible that such a relationship would only expand and grow to the point that it defined, not merely Anglo-Dutch relations, but those of the continent as well. Of course, with such a promising end goal for William of Orange's diplomacy, and with his solid intentions to drive a wedge between his mortal enemy Louis XIV and his uncle Charles likely to bear fruit, it remained to overcome the hurdles placed in his way by those in Britain who would do all in their power to prevent the union of the maritime powers. Let's see how it all went down, in this, our penultimate episode of the FDW, as I take you to spring 1678...

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*There has been much talk here of the Prince of Orange's wedding; among other things it is said that on the first night he went to bed with his wool breeches, and when the King of England asked him whether he did not want to take off this wool stuff, he replied that he and his wife would have to live together for a long enough time and that she would have to become used to his ways, and that since he was used to wearing his wool breeches he would not take them off now. And instead of supping with the King, the Queen and the bride, he had supper in town and made the King wait till after midnight in the room of the bride; who had been put to bed, and when the king asked him where he had been all this time, he said that he had played cards after supper. Thereupon he threw himself into a chair, called for his valet,*

*and had himself undressed right in the bridal chamber. With all of these manners I am not surprised that the bride was speechless; they almost remind me of the comedy of shrewish Kate and her husband.* Elizabeth-Charlotte, in a letter to Duchess Sophie of Hannover, 11<sup>th</sup> January 1678, writing on the union of William and Mary, with a reference in the last sentence to Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, known to Germans by performances by troops of travelling English comedians.<sup>1</sup>

As the war raged outside the British Isles, Charles II knew full well that a very different war was being waged in London. It was a political war, a dirty war; of smear campaigns, of rumour, of backbiting and of betrayal, of bribery, of dishonesty and of cunning. Parliament was certainly devoid of the later patriotic fervour which would characterise it in British political life; not only were the vast majority of MPs on the pay of someone, be they the Earl of Danby or the French ambassador, but the actual convictions of the individual MP seemed rooted in the age old belief that the King wanted to usurp their authority, and the idea that such usurpation was Charles' central goal. Indeed, Charles hadn't exactly done much to assure his peers of his sincerity; his religious bills and the convictions which went with them, while we may see in their tolerance one of the most admirable and forward thinking aspects of his reign, MPs saw as Charles' residual continental influences subjecting them to popery. Where the King bemoaned his financial state of affairs and begged his MPs with increasing impatience to hand over the necessary funds, these same MPs kept Charles on a short leash, terrified that he would find a way to escape their financial clutches and attain a level of economic independence from them.

When it came to the region of foreign policy, the actual mood and intentions of the MPs were about as impenetrable as Vauban's fence of iron. It was becoming obvious that such statesmen wanted to keep it that way; whether pro-Dutch or pro-French, neutral or thoroughly disinterested, MPs had to make the different lobby groups believe that they cared, or that their minds were in need of changing. Through such trickery they would be given sufficient economic grease to be made to think a certain way, and this could prove a lucrative business. It was not for nothing that Danby had contacted his bank with a personal loan of £60k, over £8 million in today's money.<sup>2</sup> Patriotic Britons, imbued with the sense that Parliament always had the best interests of the state at heart, should probably just avoid this era altogether, as the

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in Elberg Forster, *A Woman's Life* (Baltimore MD, 1997), p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> I found this website very useful for gaining the estimates of £ values in today's terms. This process cannot be exact by its very nature, but it is as close as we can get to imagining what the purchasing power of such fortunes would have looked like today. See: <https://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/relativevalue.php>

MPs that sat in the houses were little better than pawns of Charles, paid pawns of the French, paid pawns of Danby or somewhere in between. Integrity, it has to be said, was in short supply in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, and it wouldn't be for another two or three generations that the legacy of the civil war would be erased and replaced with a properly functioning parliamentary system. Until that time came, Charles would have to use the same tricks as his rivals, but he was all the more loathed for this.

As we've seen in the past, Charles' reliance on Parliament for monies, and the inherent unwillingness of Parliament to give him the monies he needed, led the King to do questionable things, and be open to accepting subsidies from the likes of Louis XIV. We could criticise the actions of Charles as unpatriotic, to accept money from a French King, but the reality was Charles needed money, and at times it seemed Parliament was so afraid of what Charles might do to them that it sought to neuter his influence through financially drip feeding him only when necessary. In fact it was within James' memoirs that the accusation first came through; the idea that Parliament actually feared Charles more than they feared Louis XIV's France – a crazy idea but one which is mostly borne out when we consider the literal struggle Charles had to endure with his MPs for the rest of his reign.

Although Charles had tried to rely on Danby, as Danby tried to rely on Parliament for the money his sovereign needed to float the navy and maintain the army etc., Parliament proved stubborn and suspicious at the best of times. Danby's mission remained the wresting of monies from MPs, and the usage of bribes to keep them on his side and in favour of war with France. While the atmosphere of Britain had been anti-French since late 1673, transforming this mood into a tangible policy was difficult so long as Parliament so distrusted Charles. Thus, Danby's mission was twofold – not only did he have to persuade his fellow MPs to advocate war with France, and wrest monies out of them for such an end, but he also had to persuade them to *trust their king*, and this would prove the biggest ask of all.

Thus we return to James' barb that Parliament here feared Charles more than they feared Louis XIV. It seems strange to us, and indeed it takes some understanding considering how feverish the anti-French and anti-Catholic sentiments seemed to be by this point in British history, but what we have to remember is that Charles, for all his talent and tact, had committed a few howlers that harked uncomfortably back to the civil war era, which of course made everyone jumpy and paranoid that their king aimed at their institution's downfall. Antonia Fraser noted perceptively in her biography of Charles II that England's

MPs hadn't simply forgotten about what their king had once done to them. Any suggestion that a king may have an army independent of them, or even that he may have an army at all, was increasingly being viewed with suspicion. This can be explained by the fear of popery, manifested in Charles' brother James, as much as it can be in the suspicion that Charles was not being frank with them about what he needed the monies for.

Britain's past was not so easily erased in these men's minds, some of whom had lived through the heady days of the 1640s, and certainly of the 50s. Ill-omens were said to be found in the King's requests for military aid – this explains why they refused to grant it to him unless he declared war on France *first*. They simply didn't trust their king to use the army for the purpose that he had asked for it. Charles' track record, to be fair, wasn't exactly inspiring; he had after all prorogued Parliament countless times since 1672 alone, when war was meant to be in play against the Dutch. If they ever found out just how deep his lies actually went – or the truth about the subsidies he had asked for from them in 1671, i.e. that they went against the Dutch rather than for them – then they would have been even less inclined to help him. As it stood here, Charles was in constant battle with his MPs, and thus required urgently a figure to smooth over these cracks, and acquire for him the level of influence and corresponding monies he would need from his peers. This was where Danby stood in. Without him, Charles foresaw his armed forces disintegrating as matters became more testy, and his prestige dropped amidst this helplessness. On top of all this, and as a further ill-omen, Scotland was beginning to cause trouble yet again.

Since Scotland had in many senses proved the touchstone of the civil war, MPs were highly wary to see it crop up again as an issue just at the point when they felt they could least trust their king. In July 1678 the Scottish Parliament would vote £1.8 million to put the latest band of Scottish rebels down – predictably, it was a protest against the English desire to cut Presbyterianism out of Scotland, and predictably again, it was only through violence that such rebels could be defeated. Yet, although Scotland had been reinforced by Lauderdale – that L in the cabal if you remember – in years past, he had begun to fall from grace at this point, and thus Charles' grip on the region was slipping amidst plain divisions in how the Scots saw their place in the religious maze of Christendom. Indeed, there was much resentment in the Scottish Parliament as the monies were voted through – many who sympathised with the rebels' desire to rid themselves of the unnatural association with Anglicanism, and return to Scotland's religious roots. This division in the north was

obviously the last thing Charles needed, and the brutal means of suppression there irked his sensibilities further.<sup>3</sup>

These incidents paint for us a picture of additional pressures, which all weighed heavily upon the British King, even as Parliament refused to fall into line and simply adhere to its responsibilities, thereby enabling him to run the country properly. To put it in perspective, although July of 1678 was the culmination of the Scottish crisis, its difficulties had been stressing Charles out for the last few years; in fact since the rebels began to pop up again in Scotland in 1669. In short, Charles was likely worn of much of his patience by spring 1678, and this explains, I feel, his later willingness to lob such naked threats and blackmail in Louis' direction. Where once the two cousins had seemed firm and determined allies, it now appeared as though the FDW had claimed another, and perhaps its final, victim – the friendship of Louis XIV and Charles II. Indeed, by the time the peace of Nijmegen was arrived at in mid-August 1678, England was tied to the DR in a defensive alliance, and British foreign policy seemed to have endured a paradigm shift.

Of course we're getting ahead of ourselves, but this just proves our unofficial motto – that to get to the heart of the story, one has to go back to the beginning. Events like the GR of 1688 make no sense if we don't place them in context, and the context in this case was that even before the Stuarts were evicted from Britain for the second time, they had long since chafed under the Parliamentary system which, they surely felt, overtly curtailed their powers at their kingdom's expense. Charles had expended so much energy trying to acquire what he felt were only the necessary funds from Parliament, that he may have had less patience for the likes of Louis XIV making affairs yet more complicated for him. Perhaps at the same time Charles felt emboldened to act against Louis on the understanding that this would increase his prestige, or respect, within Europe. One significant aspect of his foreign policy attests to this.

Since early 1678, Charles had been heaping pressure on the Spanish for them to lease a port to some British soldiers, who would be allowed to land and prove their king's sincerity when he claimed to be willing to do what was necessary. Charles believed that the sight of British soldiers on the continent would put steel into his MPs, rouse their patriotism and perhaps encourage them to shun Ambassador Barillon in favour of Danby's influence. Aware of these moves, Barillon pulled some strings of his own in Parliament, and began to play a far sneakier game. By tricking several MPs into agreeing to present unduly harsh peace terms to

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<sup>3</sup> See Antonia Fraser, *Charles II* (London, 2002), pp. 455-457.

France – including a ruling that France would be reduced to its 1659 state of affairs – Barillon was ensuring that the Anglo-Dutch side would be significantly delayed. Yet, Barillon was not above playing to domestic British fears on top of this, as the historian Clyde Grose noted:

In January 1678, Charles had ordered the recall of English regiments which had remained in French service. Barillon carefully fostered a suspicion among some parliamentary malcontents that this was only a means by which the king would have troops at his disposal in England. The old fear of a standing army showed its usual potency. Moreover, friends of William of Orange weakened in their allegiance as they saw him hand in hand with the hated Danby as well as with the distrusted king. The generally desired alliance with the Dutch lost much of its pleasant savour through having been brought about by a distrusted minister whose fall many desired. To the great satisfaction of Barillon hostility towards Danby began to loom larger than hostility towards France.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed it seemed as though the MPs feared and loathed *everything* more than their actual potential enemy. Barillon was thus highly effective in his disruption, and was clearly informed enough to play upon the sincere fears of many an MP. Charles still sought to outmanoeuvre him by placing soldiers on the continent though, a solution came to in desperation and frustration. Since early December of 1677 Charles had been in discussion with his Privy Council about this issue, and he now sought to put it into motion. In mid-January 1678 he requested an audience with the Spanish ambassador to London, and wrested from him an admission that he hadn't the powers to lease Ostend, the desired British base, to London for temporary use in the event of a war with France. When Charles pushed the issue, the ambassador offered some less desirable ports, so Charles dismissed him and aimed to use his contacts in the Netherlands, specifically with William of Orange, newly married into the Stuart family no less, to petition the Spaniards to comply.

What was Charles doing talking to William? Did he really feel *that* disadvantaged that he believed it necessary to turn the previous set of agreements on its head? Indeed, while we can judge that the position of France certainly changed since 1672, we also have to say the same about the Dutch, but for different reasons. Where it had once been the assailed Republic, all alone in Europe, it was now seen as the last point of resistance against the deprivations of France, and when MPs could put aside their differences long enough to see a coherent foreign policy, they saw the Dutch as critical for this very reason. These latent pro-Dutch sentiments were also embodied in the person of William of Orange, who had morphed from a

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<sup>4</sup> Clyde Grose, 'Alliance', p. 360.

disadvantaged and disinherited young boy into a man of arms, utterly committed to the defence of his homeland and the bettering of its Protestant interests, especially through marital means. Try as Louis might to win on the field, he could not defeat the potential that such a highly placed Anglo-Dutch heir would have on the strategic implications of European affairs to come. Perhaps understanding this, and seeing Louis in a less favourable light after the headaches he continued to cause him, Charles turned to the man he had once tried to turn into a vassal, and asked for his help.

The help proved vital, but what really did the trick were the French military triumphs at Ghent and Ypres over March 1678 – this jolted the Privy Council to action and compelled Charles to see Louis as a great threat to the looming peace. Not only that, but having spent the last few months hammering out an offensive pact which would force a peace on France, Louis was making this agreement more obsolete with every extra settlement he seized. Louis knew this well; he saw Ghent and Ypres merely as pawns to be sacrificed to the more important strategic interest. The French triumphs, impressive as they were, had the predictable effect of drawing the Spanish and Dutch closer to London, and thus Charles found that Madrid was more amenable to the plan to land British troops. This was eventually done on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1678, where merely 800 Englishmen departed for Ostend, on the understanding that more would be sent if necessary. It was more a diplomatic statement to France than a strategic manoeuvre; this would either up the ante or force Louis to back down; either way Charles believed it would signal to his MPs that he was serious about war, if they would support it, but that an advantageous peace would be preferable. If these aims all failed, as they did, Charles at least hoped that Louis would feel pressured into soliciting British aid for a different kind of deal, where for a cool 6 million livres Charles would offer to maintain Britain as the neutral observer determined to preserve the French interest. So yes, for some more money, Charles was apparently willing to forgo everything he had just done. Was Charles the most diplomatically flip-flopping monarch in British history? He'd certainly have to in the running.

In return, he told Louis, for 6 million livres over the next three years, Charles would pacify Europe on Louis' behalf, and he would ensure that Parliament couldn't meet to threaten that peace either. Unfortunately for Charles however, this offer was made Louis was flying high, having recently captured Ghent and en route to Ypres, so the Sun King was in no mood to compromise – he wanted to force the peace by himself, and he was more than a little peeved over the reported Anglo-Dutch efforts to force Paris to the bargaining table which had taken

place over January-March 1678. Yet, rather than admit defeat, Charles upped the ante. Taking advantage of the closeness Madrid and Vienna tended to now display towards London, he sent feelers out to Spain and Austria and suggested the emergence of a quadruple alliance aimed at curbing French influence. At this, Louis seemed to soften, and ordered sent to London the first payment of the 6 million livre deal.

What are we to make of this strange diplomacy? Did Charles really intend to create a 4 power bloc which would wage war against France? It is highly unlikely that he did, but Charles was desperate for funds as his finances sagged in the absence of Parliamentary support. Since Parliament seemed eternally divided between the camp willing to give money to Charles, powered by Danby, and the camp unwilling to, powered by Buckingham, Shaftesbury and the French ambassador, Charles likely saw his financial interests better served by familiar means, and these interests remained his end goal throughout this period. To keep his kingdom running, even if his peers refused to, Charles was willing to resort to the unscrupulous. Charles may not have wanted to create such a 4 power bloc, but by making Louis *think* he did, or by making Louis think that in his desperation Charles would let slip the dogs of war against him, Louis was willing by May 1678 to release the first payment to Charles. Charles for his part sought a solution to the war, which remained without a peace treaty and still contained the stubbornly triumphant Louis XIV lording his position over the Dutch and Spanish.

It would transpire that Louis had been given pause for thought by Charles', well, blackmail, of the 4 power bloc. It had left Paris more willing to listen to terms, but Louis remained frustratingly hard headed despite the obvious impetus for peace, and the fact that such a peace would make Charles' job that much easier. Louis signalled that the old Anglo-Dutch terms remained unacceptable, and that he now wanted a great deal more of his conquests than he had initially hinted at. At this, Charles seems to have lost the plot with his cousin. Unwilling to hold out hope for his peers, Charles understood that a war with France was the only course which would ensure Parliamentary support for any monies he might need. War with France would have been the most popular policy available to him, but Charles had refrained from using it because he didn't wish to engage in such a conflict where he could see no benefit. Although Danby would be empowered and the French ambassador's bloc discredited, it did not guarantee supply from Parliament even in the event of war with the French enemy. So fraught had tensions become, in other words, that Charles couldn't even be certain that Parliament would do what was necessary if the very realm itself was in jeopardy.



In short, I don't believe it likely that Charles was sincere in the following course he posed to the French ambassador, but as we saw before, the intention was not sincerity but to mask his true intentions. Charles wanted the war to end and believed that its ending would immensely unburden the demands on his finances and regime, as well as ease political divisions and enable the business of Parliament to resume in a more effective course. Since Louis XIV now appeared the last obstacle to this end, Charles now proposed to bite the hand that had fed and watered him all these years. Historian Clyde Grose, who wrote the two part article on the topic of the Anglo-Dutch alliance of 1678, summarised the situation thus:

The relations between king and parliament had long been such as to preclude harmony and efficient administration. Charles was ordinarily being paid by Louis XIV to rule without parliament because it was anti-French in spirit. Half of the members were bribed by Danby to do his bidding, though some of the others were ready at any time to accept French money to oust him. It was not a wholesome atmosphere, and what happened in the spring of 1678 surprised no one accustomed to breathing it.<sup>5</sup>

Ambassador Barillon's goal continued to be the maintenance of peace between England and France, and he believed that he could achieve this by undermining Danby and his allies, since Danby was the most anti-French and pro-Dutch MP and statesmen in Charles' employ, and seemed in the peak of his powers at the same time. Barillon thus had to team up with the English opposition, which mostly included Buckingham and Shaftesbury, if he wanted to discredit Danby or his policies. That Danby was at the peak of his powers couldn't hide the fact that he was also at the peak of his unpopularity, and although it seems crazy to talk about episode 30 already, it is within the opening months of that massive special that we'll be introduced somewhat suddenly to his fall.

One of the reasons why this era is so difficult to examine in detail is because so much happens simultaneously; you may notice that the HR Emperor is conspicuous by his absence, as are the Poles, who in fact are fighting the Turks at this point. That's also discounting the Swedes, who were fighting the Brandenburgers, who were in alliance with the Danes, who themselves were allied to the Dutch. It was a strange and complicated web that I feel would take far more episodes than I can muster to examine. What it does mean is that there's room to come back to the era in future Xtra episodes, but I think it's also a great example of what statesmen in this era were forced to deal with. Consider this; from January to March 1678, Charles approached Madrid, Vienna and The Hague with alliance agreements four times, and

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<sup>5</sup> Clyde Leclare Grose, 'The Anglo-Dutch Alliance of 1678', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 39, No. 155 (Jul., 1924), pp. 349-372; referenced in this case is p. 357.

each time the approach was agreed to, only to be later negated by some complication. If you can remember back to earlier episodes, where Conrad van Beuningen was running around, then you'll recognise his presence at this stage as the major negotiator of the Dutch end of the deal. Van Beuningen was unfortunately hampered by his lack of powers granted by the Dutch at home, and by this point the Dutch peace party was increasingly throwing its influence about, as the French victories at Ghent and Ypres granted further credit to their claims that the war simply would not end without a separate peace.

Thus in the background to the quadruple alliance which Charles seemed so eager to acquire, the Dutch were consistently trying to make their own way. To this William of Orange was resisting furiously, petitioning his agents in London to make use of their position and the latest marriage to affect a join effort against the French, preferably at sea. Yet Charles for his part couldn't get Parliament on side for anything – one of his major incentives for seeking an alliance of this nature was to be able to present it to Parliament as 'proof' of his intention to actually be worthy of their trust and thus their monies. That the agreement kept slipping from his grasp over March and April piled more frustrations on Charles's experience. Ambassador Barillon, smelling blood, continued to throw his own monies around and undermine Danby's influence, at the expense also of Charles. Louis openly approached the Dutch with a settlement designed to separate them from any potential alliance agreement, while the Habsburgs increasingly desired an end to the war for their own reasons. In response to his own domestic difficulties Charles blew between willing to accept Louis' monies and standing his ground, a position which saw Danby pose the ludicrous subsidy of 18 million livres, or £1.5 million, as the price for English neutrality.

Desperate to make some use out of the threat of his entering the war while the war still actually contained the other powers, Danby had been ordered to make this offer in the context of what were supposed to be negotiations with the ambassadors of Spain, the DR and Vienna to bring about a quadruple alliance. This should tell you all you need to know not merely about Charles' sincerity, but also his end goal. Remember, when we ask ourselves *why* he did that, it's a question that can only be answered when we consider how chronically short of funds Charles consistently was. If he was like Louis, with a bloated but reliable economic bureaucracy, as well as the absolutist will to command such resources into the funnels he desired, we would likely never ponder Charles actions as much, because they would be far more straightforward. An argument could be made I feel for Charles being a better monarch if he had been an absolutist one. His lack of money and resulting reliance on Parliament made

him painfully vulnerable when such monies were not forthcoming, but Charles was a king unfortunate enough to reign just between the transition from old British monarchy to new – a transition essentially characterised by Parliament’s increasing awareness of its own powers, and attempts to wield that power at the expense nominally of the King.

Later monarchs would go into their role as King or Queen fully anticipating and accepting the checks on their powers, but Charles went into his reign perhaps not fully aware just how much things had changed since his father once commanded resources into his pocket in the heady days before the civil war. Charles was of course unaware that we’d come to see his House as a transitional one; the handy cut off point between Tudor and House of Hannover, but I think examining his reign teaches us the oft forgotten fact of just how limited Charles II was in his role. There is a reason William of Orange refused the role, when the adoring Dutch citizenry seemed hell bent on promoting his House to previously unknown heights in their desperation – William understood and accepted in his early 20s the limitations and realities of what being a parliamentary reliant King meant; and he understood and accepted them far better than Charles did at any point in his life. It is likely for this reason that William found his transition to William III to be a relatively simple one.

Charles’ shortage of funds led him to squirm and slip in and out of different agreements in the desperate pursuit of money. He would never be freed from this burden, and the negative impact of it is found in the inconsistent foreign policy of Britain during much of Charles’ reign. This era also demonstrated another fact which must now be plainly obvious to us; there was no point in removing the King’s ability to grant himself monies, when he still possessed the prerogative to declare war. As we mentioned before, 1672 would be the last time that a King of Britain would declare his own war – in future Parliament would take that step, and Parliament would not have to fight so bitterly with itself for the funds...well, most of the time at least. I thought it only right to end Charles’ story properly; it’d be wrong, I feel, to bring our coverage of the FDW to an end without giving him a proper send off. As someone who we’ve come to see have an underrated impact on how matters proceeded from the late 1660s onwards, perhaps Charles’ ultimate lesson was that he realised that no matter his aim, his ambitions for revenge on the Dutch or his belief that an Anglo-French supremacy would be a good thing for his realm, these intentions could only be carried as far as his purse.

This purse, as Charles came to realise, perhaps never completely, always reluctantly, and certainly with a growing sense of horror, was dependent on several variables, from public

opinion, to the power of foreign bribes, to religious sectarianism and even to the legacy of the civil war. These factors all combined to tarnish Charles' image, and reduce his effectiveness in the eyes of his contemporaries. Perhaps Charles was unsuited for the position as king; on the other hand, consider those flashes of guile and cunning, those displays of tolerance and wit, and the personable nature of the King's court. All such factors lead me to consider what might have been had Charles only been released from the strings which led him to dance a certain way for money. Sometimes through such dancing a victory seemed at hand, but more generally it led to disaster, as Charles was outpaced by his rivals and outmatched by his allies. In this case, with Louis proposing peace terms exclusively to the Dutch on 15<sup>th</sup> April from an unmistakably strong position, it was clear that Charles' efforts either to bring about a unifying offensive alliance with the enemies of France or acquire the necessary peace on his own terms from Louis XIV had manifestly failed. Circumstances yet again had run ahead of the King of Britain, for it was now clear that the word of the day was peace. In the next episode, our final one of the series, we'll see how this peace brought the FDW to its end.