Journal of Strategy and Politics (2021), Volume 2, Number 4, pp. 1-57.

Elizabeth I and England's Forward Defense in the North

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Elizabeth Tudor, 25-year-old daughter of Henry VIII, found herself queen of England upon the death of her stepsister, Mary I, on November 17, 1558. The realm she inherited was beset by religious division and financial stress, and many of her subjects lacked confidence in their new monarch. Yet her reign laid the foundation upon which England became a great power. Shortly after assuming the crown, Elizabeth undertook measures toward religious settlement, and instituted policies to strengthen England's economy and make London a major financial center. She also began to build a strong maritime defense comprised of the royal navy and merchant ships. But her first external test came before any of this was fully in place. By the spring of 1559, French control of Scotland posed a potentially serious threat. This essay examines how the new English queen leveraged religious, political, and military circumstances at home and abroad in preparing a defense against the northern challenge.

Elizabeth's rule began at the conclusion of a lengthy period of conflict between the French and Spanish monarchies (Valois and Habsburg) for dominance in Europe. In June 1557, England had entered the war in support of Spain, whose king,

Philip II, was married to English queen Mary I. The following January, French forces captured the port of Calais, which the English had controlled for two centuries. By this time, the two main combatants were prepared to settle, and talks commenced between Philip and French king Henry II in October 1558. A little more than a month later, Mary's death ended the Anglo-Spanish marriage alliance. Thus, England, under Queen Elizabeth I, became an independent party in negotiations that produced the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, comprising an agreement between France and Spain, and separate accords between England and France, and England and Scotland, which were signed in April 1559.

This was no easy endeavor for the new English monarch. The negotiations had recessed following the death of Mary Tudor, and when they resumed in January 1559, the French were openly dismissive of Elizabeth's representatives. French king Henry II charged that she was illegitimate and a religious heretic who was unqualified to rule.[1] In his view, the rightful queen of England was 15-year-old Mary Stuart, daughter of French Duchess Mary of Lorraine (Marie de Guise) and the deceased Scottish king James V. Mary was directly descended from former English monarch Henry VII, and wedded to Dauphin Francis, heir to the French throne. The French king had created a coat of arms for Mary signifying her claim to the French, Scottish, *and* English crowns. He saw to it that meals were served to English representatives on dinnerware emblazoned with the same heraldry.

[1] J. B. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth, 1558-1603* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), 33, describes the French attitude toward Elizabeth as one of "ill-concealed hostility."

Elizabeth, undoubtedly infuriated, but outwardly unruffled, instructed her emissaries to be flexible on all matters but Calais. She knew it would be impossible to regain the port and its surrounding territory without recourse to war. But focusing on the issue allowed her to drag out the negotiations, show her concern at the loss of the last English enclave on the continent, and develop information on other issues. She was particularly interested in the attitude of Philip II. The Spanish king made clear that although he was sympathetic to Elizabeth's position, he would not sacrifice the gains he would make from the treaty to support her over Calais. Would he ultimately oppose her outright? Did his agreement to marry Henry II's daughter Elisabeth auger future cooperation between Spain and France?

Behind the scenes Elizabeth had more serious concerns. Reports from various sources indicated that while the French were negotiating peace they were preparing for war—against England. In December 1558 one of her advisers, commenting on the dangers that could arise when Elizabeth promulgated her widely expected Protestant religious settlement, had laid out a dire scenario. The pope, he averred,

> will be incensed; he will excommunicate the queen, interdict the realm, and give it a prey to all the princes that will enter upon it. . . . The French king will be encouraged more to the war, and make his people more ready to fight against us, not only as enemies but as heretics. Scotland will have some cause of boldness, and by that way the French king will soon covet an attempt to invade us. Ireland also will be very difficultly stayed in

> their obedience. . . . Many people of our own will be very much discontented.[2]

The message suggested that the French might seek to overthrow Elizabeth before she could consolidate her regime and install Mary Stuart as queen. France could assist an emboldened Scotland and use it as a launch pad from which to invade England. Moreover, the Irish could be incited to rebel; and, supported by the pope, France could call on English Catholics to rise against their heretic queen.

Worse, if France deployed a force to the Isle of Wight and captured Portsmouth, England would be hemmed in on three fronts: north, west, and south. France could command northwestern Europe and doom Spain's position in the Netherlands, especially if Spain were deterred from intervention by virtue of its peace treaty with France.

England's cause for alarm was reinforced by intelligence from Elizabeth's administrators and diplomats. From the Anglo-Scottish border zone, where periodic raids still occurred, Sir Henry Percy warned on January 1, 1559, that there could be a new incursion within months. Writing to the queen's comptroller Sir Thomas Parry, and her chief adviser, William Cecil, Percy reported that the Scots wanted a cease-fire; probably because they could not supply their forces over the winter. In the spring, however, "they look for a great force out of France, either to

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[2] "Alteration of Religion," December 1, 1558, in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, *1558-1559*, ed. Joseph Stevenson (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1863), no. 59, *British History Online*, https://www.british-history.ac.uk [Hereafter referred to as *CSPF: Elizabeth*.]

attempt [an attack on] Berwick or to invade England."[3] Little more than a week later, on January 9, Dr. Nicholas Wotton, one of Elizabeth's treaty negotiators, observed that France's grandiose ambition was to subdue both England and Ireland and become "monarchs of almost all of Europe." He feared "they mean no true peace." Further, Wotton conveyed, "it is said in [King Philip's] court that the French begin to make men in Germany to send into Scotland."[4]

Elizabeth had to assume the worst, especially given England's vulnerability. If Scotland was to be the French *point d'appui* for an invasion she would have to preempt it. She decided on a strategy of forward defense, engaging in Scotland rather than passively awaiting an invasion. She, like France's King Henry, would need a pretext to send troops and, ironically, both would act in response to the same political exigency—the emergence of Protestant opponents to the French Catholic queen regent, Mary of Guise. Elizabeth would intervene in support of them, while Henry bolstered the regent's defense against them.

Elizabeth instructed her emissaries to the peace process regarding the disposition of Scotland and negotiation of a separate treaty between Scotland and England.[5] Not only would

[3] "Percy to Sir [Thomas Parry] and Cecil," January 1, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol.1, no.190. For a comprehensive account of the ongoing border conflict, see Amy Blakeway, "The Anglo-Scottish War of 1558 and the Scottish Reformation," *History* 102, no. 350 (April 2017): 201-224.

[4] "Wotton to Cecil," January 9, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, no. 221.

[5] "Conferences at Cercamp," November 21, 1558, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, no. 19. For a longer transcript of Elizabeth's instructions to her

this commit both the French and the Scots to peace at least on paper, it would give her an opportunity to identify Protestant Scots whom she could support. Above all, she must have willing collaborators who would see her as a friend, not an enemy. Publicly, Elizabeth sought to remain faithful to the settlement terms and act against France only with plausible deniability. Forward defense in Scotland would begin as a covert operation. Indeed, the enterprise would be kept secret—even from her Privy Council and Parliament—until the moment when a decision was needed to authorize open military intervention.[6]

Sowing Seeds in Scotland

By the late 1550s, a Protestant movement had emerged in Scotland; and on December 3, 1557, several Scottish nobles signed a band (bond, or pact) in support of religious reform. This was the foundation of the rebel group later known as the "Lords of the Congregation."[7] But the movement was limited and

commissioners, dated November 23, 1558, see Dr. [Patrick] Forbes, *A Full View of the Public Transactions in the Reign of Q. Elizabeth*, vol. 1 (London: J. Bettenham, 1740), 1-4.

[6] As noted by Conyers Read in *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 148, "in all these early dealings with the Scottish rebels, Elizabeth kept the matter secret, even from her own councilors."

[7] Jane E. A. Dawson, "Lords of the Congregation," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (online), October 8, 2009, https://www.oxforddnb.com. Knox reproduces the document in his *History of the Reformation.* The signatories "do promesse . . . that we shall with all diligence continually apply our hole power, substance, and our verray lyves, to mainteane, sett fordward, and establish the most blessed word of God and his Congregatioun." See David Laing, ed., *Works of John Knox*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Wodrow Society, 1846), 273-274.

geographically separated, situated mainly in Perth, Dundee, and a few other towns, and kept in check partly by Mary Guise's "live and let live" strategy, which permitted local Protestant practices so long as they did not unify and become a threat to her rule. When a threat arose, Catholic authorities would act selectively and decisively, such as in the case of Protestant preacher Walter Milne, who was accused of heresy and burned at the stake in April 1558. By the time Elizabeth became Queen of England, the regent Mary Guise was in effective command of Scotland, with French advisers in top positions of her administration and French troops present in most major towns.

Fearing an invasion from France through Scotland, Elizabeth immediately took measures to bolster England's defenses. These included the closure of all ports, and fortification of key border towns such as Berwick in the north and select port areas like Portsmouth in the south. She also charged Thomas Gresham, her financial agent in Antwerp, with the task of acquiring as many munitions as possible. By the end of February 1559, she had been able to muster close to five thousand men under arms in Northumberland where Berwick, the traditional invasion corridor to England, was located .[8]

In Scotland, Elizabeth sought to create a political base for forward defense, which involved four separate but related policies. She had to identify and contact Protestant leaders; promote the emergence of a political authority with which she could enter into legitimate agreements; put forth a justification for Protestants to revolt; and establish a pretext for her intervention. The matter of justification involved developing a

[8] See "Musters in Northumberland," February 28, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, no. 365.

more robust and unified religious movement for reform in Scotland that would be broadly compatible with the religious settlement she was about to implement in England. Initially, she would pose the issue as Scottish Protestants against French Catholics, but her true objective was to drive the French out of Scotland.

Elizabeth's first step was to foster greater cohesion among Scottish Protestants by encouraging the return of the firebrand John Knox to Scotland. Knox was a staunch advocate of strict Protestantism with a long history of evangelizing in his native country. He had served a nineteen-month sentence as a French galley slave following his arrest in 1547 for fomenting rebellion against the Catholic Church, and for his role in the assassination of David Cardinal Beaton, Archbishop of St. Andrews. After his release in 1549, Knox spent five years in England promoting religious reform during the reign of Edward VI. Following Edward's death and succession by his Catholic half-sister, Mary Tudor, Knox decamped to the Continent; he was in Geneva imbibing Calvinism and preaching to English Protestant exiles when Elizabeth assumed the throne.

The new situation in England prompted many of the expatriates to return to their homeland. In November 1558, Knox received a renewed entreaty from Protestant leaders in Scotland to resume his preaching there. He might well have reestablished himself in England instead, had he been permitted to do so.[9] But Knox was told that Elizabeth, insulted by his infamous *First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*,

[9] Alec Ryrie, *Origins of the Scottish Reformation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 128, 156; and Peter Hume Brown, *Knox: A Biography*, vol. 1 (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1895), 103.

would not condone his presence. Knox could not even obtain authorization to pass through England on his way to Scotland, though he made several requests.

Clearly, however, Knox and Elizabeth had a coincidence of interest in promoting Protestantism and undermining French influence, evidenced by a decade of correspondence between Knox and William Cecil, Elizabeth's chief manager of foreign policy (as well as some other advisors), beginning in early 1559.[10] In Knox's letter to Cecil dated April 10 of that year, he stressed for the third time his desire to travel through England so that he could visit his former congregations there and also because there were matters he wanted to discuss that he did not wish to "commit to paper." [11] Having received no answer, Knox proceeded by sea to Scotland.[12]

Elizabeth had not been the object of Knox's scorn in his harangue against female rulers. Published in 1558 before Elizabeth became queen, the *First Blast* was aimed against the Catholic Scottish regent, Mary Guise; Mary Stuart, queen of Scots; and Mary Tudor. Nevertheless, his pamphlet was a convenient pretext for Elizabeth plausibly to refuse him entry into England and direct him immediately to Scotland where he would play the role that suited her objective: promoting cohesion

[10] Many of these letters are collected in David Laing, ed., *Works of John Knox*, vol. 6 (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1895). Their voluminous public record of communication probably was supplemented by enciphered messages that are no longer available.

[11] "Knox to Sir William Cecill, April 10, 1559," in Laing, *Works of Knox*, vol. 6, 15-20; and "Jhone Knox First Letter to Sir Williame Cecyll," in Laing, *Works of Knox*, vol. 2, 16-22.

[12] Laing, *Works of Knox*, vol. 2, 22.

among the Protestants. He arrived just in time to trigger the armed rebellion that would seal the Protestant reformation in Scotland.

A proclamation entitled the "Beggars' Summons" had stirred the pot several months before Knox's arrival. Posted at nearly every friary in Scotland on January 1, 1559, the Summons was both an ultimatum and a call to action, demanding that the Catholic clergy transfer their properties to the poor by Whitsun (Pentecost, which was May 14 of that year), or face eviction by force. [13] Who wrote the Summons, and caused its wide dissemination on January 1? No definitive answers to these questions have emerged from the historical record, but the logic of the political situation points to propagandists directed by Elizabeth.

Elizabeth's motive was obvious, but she also had means and opportunity. Mary Tudor's attempt to reintroduce the Catholic faith had driven many Protestants out of the country to avoid persecution, rather than renounce their faith or convert. Some fled to the Continent and others to Scotland where they formed what might today be called a fifth column, living mainly in what had been garrison towns the English had built along the border in the south and east of Scotland during the Anglo-Scottish war known as the "Rough Wooing" (December 1543-March 1551). Moreover, there was a daily stream of people across the border for legitimate travel and trade, as well as

[13] An earlier draft of the Summons may have appeared in October 1558. See Douglas Somerset, "John Knox and the Destruction of the Perth Friaries in May 1559," *Scottish Reformation Historical Journal*, 3 (2013): 9-10. Knox, who dates it January 1, 1559, includes the full text in his *History of the Reformation of Religion in Scotland*. See Laing, *Works of John Knox*, vol. 1, 320n1.

illegitimate smuggling and banditry, by what were called border reivers. It would have been relatively easy for Elizabeth's agents to tap into this stream and use like-minded English émigrés to smuggle documents across the border and arrange for the posting of the Summons on January 1 at the friaries.

The Summons had a double-barreled effect. On the one hand, it promoted greater coordination among Protestant Scottish lords led by James Stewart, the illegitimate half-brother of Mary, queen of Scots; and like-minded nobles, including the earls of Argyle, Glencairn, and Morton. But it was not enough to prod them into organizing themselves into a formal opposition to the regent. The Scottish lords were notoriously jealous of one another, refusing to accept a leader, which made organizing them difficult, and there were not yet enough of them committed to the Protestant cause to make a difference.

On the other hand, the Summons alarmed the regent Mary Guise and her masters in Paris. On February 9, 1559, Mary sent a proclamation to all the main towns warning against any "attempt to do any injury or violence to or disturb the service used in the churches . . . under the penalty of death."[14] She called a provincial council of the clergy in Edinburgh to address the problem. Although "admirable resolutions and decrees were passed," it was too little too late to quell the growing religious dissidence.[15]

In Paris, Charles de Guise, Cardinal of Lorraine, decided that his sister Mary's soft approach would not work. In early

[14] Robert Renwick and John Lindsay, *History of Glasgow*, vol. 1 (Glasgow: Maclehose, Jackson & Co., 1921), 403.
[15] Ibid.

March, he sent Sieur de Béthencourt to Edinburgh with instructions for her to take a hard line. Reportedly, Mary was reluctant to change her policy out of respect for the Protestant nobles and fear of provoking a confrontation. But under instructions, Mary issued a proclamation on March 23 warning that "failure to conform to Catholic rites on the approaching Easter Sunday would be treated as heresy." As it turned out, Mary was right. The proclamation had the effect of provoking widespread denunciation of "Catholic rites."[16] Mary's response was to summon four preachers who had violated her injunction—Paul Methven, John Christieson, William Harlaw, and John Willock—to appear before her for a hearing in Stirling on May 10.[17] Events were now gathering momentum.

Into this volatile mix came John Knox, who landed in Leith on May 2. He traveled and preached first in Edinburgh, then went north to Dundee, Crail, and St. Andrews. Along the way he gathered a crowd of over five thousand Protestant followers. Together, they marched the eighteen miles to Perth proclaiming their defiance of the Regent and refusal to comply with her summons, which called upon the people to assist in bringing the four miscreant preachers to Stirling. Her summons backfired, polarizing the people, most of whom refused to participate. When the preachers did not appear on the 10th, Mary declared them to be rebels.

Thoroughly aroused, the next day Knox preached at the church of St. John in Perth. His sermon galvanized the crowd, which stormed the town's churches, toppling idols and images.

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[16] Ryrie, *Origins of the Scottish Reformation*, 153.

[17]Somerset, "John Knox and the Destruction of the Perth Friaries," 14-15.

This sparked similar acts of defiance across much of Scotland. Sermons followed by riots occurred in Edinburgh, Stirling, Linlithgow, St. Andrews, and Scone. The Protestant protestors drove the priests out of the churches and "command[ed] that no masses be said in them." [18]

Mary struggled to impose a measure of control, negotiating with the Protestant nobles, and reaching an agreement regarding the status of Perth. The nobles agreed to turn over the city to Mary if she promised not to garrison it with French troops. Mary consented, but she deployed Scottish loyalist troops in the pay of the French. Considered perfidy, her act sparked outrage. The nobles gained supporters because of her deception, and they forced her to relinquish Perth on June 24. The rebellion was on, but there was still no one to lead it.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth had identified the man she wanted to lead the opposition to the regent. The problem was that at that time, he was in Mary's service as commander of Scottish forces. He was James Hamilton, Duke of Châtellerault and 2nd Earl of Arran. He had served as governor of Scotland and protector of young Queen Mary from her birth in 1542 until 1554, when Mary Guise assumed the regency. The Hamilton clan was one of the most prominent families in Scotland with a claim to the throne second only to that of Queen Mary Stuart. If James Hamilton could be persuaded to defect and assume the leadership of the opposition to the regent, Elizabeth could proceed with confidence to provide assistance.

[18] "Kirkcaldy to Percy," July 1, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, no. 907.

Hamilton had long played an important role in Scottish politics. Originally pro-English, he signed the Treaty of Greenwich in 1543 which betrothed the one-year-old Mary to the six-year-old Edward, son of Henry VIII. The marriage was rejected by the Scottish Parliament because Henry had broken with the Catholic Church. Henry then invaded Scotland, determined to reverse the decision. This was the origin of the eight-year war euphemistically called the "Rough Wooing." The Scots turned to the French for assistance, strengthening the "auld alliance" between the two countries.

The war turned Hamilton away from England. He professed himself a Catholic and joined the pro-French faction in 1548, signing the Treaty of Haddington, which authorized Mary's marriage to Henry II's Francis, the dauphin (heir to the throne). For his service, the French king awarded Hamilton a duchy and an estate outside Paris, at Châtellerault. After Mary Guise became Regent in 1554, and French influence in Scotland became overbearing, the duke seemed to have yet another change of heart.

The duke had contacted English agents before the end of 1558, and Sir Henry Percy met with him in January 1559 to explore the prospects of Anglo-Scottish cooperation. [19] Châtellerault said that he and "a great number of the nobility in Scotland" desired friendly relations with England. In his view,

in the event of a war the French could not maintain those fortresses [they held and], would in a short time be weary of keeping them, and would be glad to have a safe conduct to depart, and principally, if the Queen would assist the nobility of

[19] Peter Hume Brown, *John Knox: A Biography*, vol. 1 (London: A. and C. Black, 1895), 33.

Scotland, they would either render them up or be forced to leave every fort in their hands. [20]

He said the Scots chafed at French control, but they were powerless to overturn it; and he professed reluctance to act directly against Queen Mary. But he promised that if the French King should force the Scots to invade England, they would not perform to his satisfaction; Scots would provide intelligence about any serious plans to attack Berwick or England; if England invaded Scotland while the French were in control of it, Scots would endeavor to give the advantage to England; and if there were an armistice agreed between England and Scotland, the French king would be unable to break it.[21]

Hamilton appeared to be unabashedly Protestant and pro-English, yet his past loyalties had proven opportunistic. The key to securing his allegiance this time would be to free his son James, 3rd Earl of Arran, from France, where he was living on his father's estate, and bring him to Scotland to fight against the French.[22] This was an obvious step to prevent the French from holding his son hostage and thus being able to exert leverage on the duke.

Pondering this problem, Elizabeth and her advisers at length arrived at a solution. William Maitland, secretary to the

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[20] "Sir Henry Percy to [Sir Thomas Parry]," January 22, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, no. 262. The text of the letter is reproduced more fully in Robert Keith, *History of the Affairs of Church and State in Scotland*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Thomas and Walter Ruddimans, 1735), 364-368.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ryrie, *Origins of the Scottish Reformation*, 169, relates that the Scottish rebels "knew that securing Arran's escape was an absolute precondition if Châtellerault were to join them."

Scottish regent and emissary to the peace treaty negotiations, arrived in England at the end of March. Regent Mary had sent her newly designated secretary to show that her government was not an appendage to France but represented genuine Scottish national interests. But Maitland, "working both sides," had grander ideas for Scotland, which fit perfectly with those of Elizabeth.[23] Maitland assumed as many did that her ascension would transform England's relations with Scotland, certainly its Protestants. Indeed, Elizabeth was increasingly and already cultivating the idea that she was a beacon for Protestants throughout Europe.

Meeting with Sir Henry Percy, Maitland was gratified to hear his English counterpart propose an English-Scottish alliance sealed by Elizabeth's marriage to the Earl of Arran.[24] The highly "secret" marriage proposal would be the pretext, however flimsy, that would allow Elizabeth to arrange for the escape of young Arran to England. This would at one stroke satisfy the duke's condition, and yet remain technically faithful to the just-concluded treaty with France. Article seventeen of the treaty stipulated that "neither of the contracting parties shall harbour the rebels or traitors of the other, but shall give them up within twenty days after being required thereto." [25] As a proposed husband to the Queen of England, the Earl of Arran could hardly be considered a "rebel or a traitor," but she would have to get

[23] "William Maitland and English Alliance," *William Maitland of Lethington*, Clan Maitland (online), https://clanmaitland.uk.

[24] Ibid. The cited narrative conflates young Arran's title (3rd Earl) with that of his father, the Duke of Châtellerault, but the key point is its attribution of the marriage proposal to Percy.

[25] "Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis," April 2, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, no. 483.

him out of France secretly so she could plausibly deny any role in his escape or knowledge of his whereabouts.

The proposal was well received by Maitland who saw it as the answer to his prayers. How serious Elizabeth was about the marriage, and the alliance, we will see below. Maitland sped off to London to meet secretly with Elizabeth and Cecil, still ostensibly for the purpose of finalizing the peace treaty. Under the cover of the treaty negotiations, they reached an agreement for English support for Protestant rebels once the uprising began. Their talks would have had to include the formation of a legitimate authority, terms for an alliance, and perhaps Arran's escape plan. In any case, the treaty negotiations concluded, Maitland returned to Scotland a few days after Knox had arrived to begin his revolutionary work.

Knox quickly put forward a theoretical justification of rebellion based on the Scriptures. The scriptures declared that "a wicked ruler setting herself up against the godly might with divine sanction be deposed."[26] They commanded further that idolators should be put to death. Mary was not only a wicked ruler, but also an idolator. Therefore, she should be deposed and executed.

Knox thus set up a holy war with the patriotic Protestant forces against France and the wicked Catholics. Knox's extremism went well beyond what Elizabeth was prepared to contemplate, but for the moment his catalyzing presence was useful to the crown.

[26] Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth*, 35.

Outbreak of the Rebellion

Regent Mary's coarse deception at Perth was the act that pushed the nobles into rebellion and to take a crucial step toward formally organizing themselves. On May 31 Protestant clan leaders from east and west came together under a second "band," and importantly, the merged congregation expanded to include Lord James Stewart.[27] Sir James Croft, governor of Berwick and one of Elizabeth's agents on the Anglo-Scottish border, wrote to Parry on June 14 that "the [Scottish] nobility (with few exceptions) are all joined," and likely to seek assistance from the English queen.[28] As noted earlier, the combined Protestants mustered a large enough force to reoccupy Perth on June 24; and on June 30, they took control of Edinburgh. Sir William Kirkcaldy of Grange sent a list of "the erlles lords with principall barons and gentilmen of the congregation" to Sir Henry Percy in a letter dated July 1, 1559, indicating the establishment of a political authority for the revolution that Elizabeth could support.[29] He declared their twin aims to be nothing less than to

[27] Laing, *Works of John Knox*, vol 1, 344-345; Ryrie, *Origins of the Scottish Reformation*, 156, 162.

[28] "Croft to Sir Thomas Parry," June 14, 1559, *Calendar of the State Papers Relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots*, ed. Joseph Bain, vol. 1, *1547-1563* (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1898), no. 465. [Hereafter cited as *CSP: Scotland*.]

[29] Jonathan P. Woods, "Rebellion and Reformation in Scotland: The Lords of the Congregation and the End of the Auld Alliance, 1547-1561" (PhD diss., Fordham University, 2017), 64. The letter, "Kirkcaldy to Percy," July 1, 1559, and the appended list of names, are in *CSP: Scotland*, vol. 1, no. 489, and *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, nos. 907 and 908. Woods believes that the term "Lords of the Congregation" was

see "a general reformation [of the church] throughout the whole realm . . . and the Frenchmen to be sent away." Knox, on behalf of the Lords, also wrote to Percy on July 1, asking whether Elizabeth would support them "if they be pursued by an army of Frenchmen."[30] Oddly, however, despite expectations, there had been no French buildup in Scotland through the spring.

Elizabeth was banking on the duke, James Hamilton, to lead the rebellion, but this was not a certainty. In any event, keeping the Scottish nobles together would be daunting. Kirkcaldy presented an impressive list of nobles associated with the Congregation, and there were "many" more, he averred, who "will subscribe with them to keep out the Frenchmen." [31] Yet not all the lords he mentioned had formally joined with the rebels. Indeed, many were straddling to see which way the wind would blow.

Although Kirkcaldy's letter claimed that the duke would participate on the side of the Congregation, he had not yet publicly committed to it. He was still commander of Scottish forces under Mary and as recently as June 13 had been involved in a confrontation with rebel forces led by Lord James Stewart and several nobles along the River Eden at Cupar Muir. In that event he had joined with the French resident ambassador in Scotland, Henri Cleutin, known as Monsieur d'Oysel, who commanded the regent's French forces. The confrontation ended in a truce signed by the duke without fighting. Was he playing

originated by Kirkcaldy, who used it in a subsequent letter to James Croft.

[30] "Knox to Percy," July 1, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, no. 909.

[31] "Kirkcaldy to Percy," July 1, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol 1, no. 908.

both sides and was Kirkcaldy subtly informing Percy that the duke was prepared to switch?

The next day, July 2, the Lords sent a dissembling message to the regent denying any rebellious, anti-French intent and focusing solely on the religious reform, declaring that "their mind and purpose was and is to promote and set forth the glory of God, maintain the true preachers of His Word, and abolish idolatry and false abuses which may not stand with His Word. . . . As regards their Sovereign's authority, in all civil and politic matters, they are as obedient as any other [of] her subjects in the realm." [32] The Lords thus sought to distinguish between their loyalty to the regent Mary and their religious preference.

Mary was not deceived. She knew that there was a political objective being pursued under the cover of religious reform, but there were weightier matters on her mind at that moment. Two weeks earlier, French king Henry II, engaging in a jousting match while celebrating the marriage of his daughter Elisabeth to King Phillip II of Spain, was severely injured by a splintered lance fragment that pierced his eye. Although early reports by his physicians indicated that he would recover, he expired suddenly from an infection in the wound on July 10, creating a crisis and a scramble for power in Paris. Within days, the duke of Guise (and his brother, the cardinal of Lorraine), emerged as the power behind the throne of the new king, fifteen-year-old Francis II, increasing the potential for conflict with England. While Henry was alive, a French invasion through Scotland had been an assumed but undeclared possibility. The Guise brothers, however, had a decidedly different mindset, and

[32] "The Lords of the Congregation to the Queen Dowager of Scotland," July 2, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, no. 925.

were predisposed to support their sister Mary, regent of Scotland, and the claim of their niece, Queen Mary Stuart, to the English throne.[33]

After the truce at Cupar Muir in mid-June, the rebels under the leadership of Lord James Stewart and Archibald Campbell, the Earl of Argyle, moved to take control of Perth and surrounding areas in Fife, the peninsula bounded by the rivers Tay and Forth. They occupied Edinburgh on June 30, while Regent Mary and her forces fled first to Dunbar, later recovering to the port of Leith with its formidable castle, there to await reinforcements from France. Meanwhile she instructed the duke to negotiate another truce, and the two sides agreed to halt fighting until the parliament assembled to decide the religious question. Mary and the French, much better armed, trained and organized in the military arts than the rebels, believed that they could vanquish them easily when reinforcements arrived. It was a play for time.

The Protestant rebels mistakenly assumed that Mary's withdrawal from Edinburgh had meant victory and their numbers began to dwindle. The rebel forces were the nobles' men who could be mobilized quickly and serve for short periods of time, but were not well armed, trained, and supplied. The rebels simply possessed no system of supply for wages, food, and weapons. When the money ran out, food supplies were exhausted, and weapons gone, so were they. Moreover, some served for periods

[33] Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth*, 33-34, notes, so long as Henry II lived, "the Stuart claim to the English Crown would be no more than a tacit threat. . . . What was to hinder [the Guises], now that they had the resources of both France and Scotland at their feet, from seeking to establish a Guise ascendency over England as well?"

when they were free from farm work but left when it became time for the harvest. Furthermore, although they obeyed their lords' summons to serve, they seemed to have little allegiance to the Protestant "cause." [34]

In fact, by the end of July the Protestant forces were collapsing. On August 8, Elizabeth, realizing the danger, sent Sir Ralph Sadler, Cecil's old friend and trusted aide with extensive knowledge of Scottish affairs, to Berwick to join her representative, James Croft. Still operating on condition of plausible deniability, Sadler was to connect with the Lords of the Congregation, secretly distribute £3,000 to the rebels, promote dissension between the two sides, and explore the prospects of finding an alternative to Châtellerault, should he refuse to break with the regent.[35]

Sadler was instructed to contact the duke and impart to him the necessity of shifting to support of the Protestant cause and opposing any government in Scotland except by Scots. The duke should be under no illusion about the French. Under the pretense of subduing religion, they would also subdue the realm and "extirpate his house." Finally, he should retaliate against the French for their arrest of his sons by arresting and holding hostage Monsieur d'Oysel and some other Frenchmen. Finally, he was to explore the "pretentions of Lord James Stewart to the Scottish throne and if he have any and if Châtellerault prove unresponsive to give Lord James free rein."[36] Elizabeth, it seems, was hedging her bet. Having doubts about the prospects of the

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[34] Ryrie, *Origins of the Scottish Reformation*, 162.

[35] Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil,* 153.

[36] *The State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler*, ed. Arthur Clifford, vol. 2, (Edinburgh: Cadell and Davies, 1809), 268-70.

duke's change of allegiance, she had decided to consider the possibility of assigning the leading role of the revolution to the Lord James.

As Sadler was making his way to the Scottish border, Cecil was busy effecting the escape of the Earl of Arran from France and passage to England. Only a handful of men were privy to the secret mission, which was under the charge of England's recently arrived Ambassador to France, Nicholas Throckmorton. The mission was nearly compromised before it got under way. The French had evidently got wind of Elizabeth's plan to join with the Hamiltons and sought to thwart it by apprehending Arran. They were in any case growing suspicious of the earl because he had recently converted to Protestantism and was practicing his faith at the Châtellerault estate.

In early June, alerted by Throckmorton, Arran fled from his father's estate outside Paris. He headed to Switzerland for a rendezvous with English agents, hiding in the woods near Poitou for two weeks to evade capture by French search parties, who were ordered to seize him at all costs, dead or alive. Arran reached Geneva safely on July 8. The French, frustrated and enraged at their inability even to locate let alone arrest the earl, instead arrested his younger brother, David, and a kinsman named Nicol Campbell, and confiscated the Duke's Châtellerault estate in France.[37] The French "greatly suspected" Throckmorton of aiding in Arran's escape and gave him the cold shoulder.[38] In

[37] "Throckmorton to the Queen," July 19, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, no. 1024. See also John Durkan, "James, Third Earl of Arran: The Hidden Years," *Scottish Historical Review* 65, No. 180 (October 1988): 163.

[38] "Throckmorton to Cecil," June 21, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, no. 870.

any case, reduced to a weak reed, the French let it be known that they would only free their hostages and restore the estate if the Hamiltons did not join the opposition.

With the secret mission to get Arran out of France underway, Cecil took the opportunity to communicate to the duke and to urge him to seize the day, leave the regent's service and assume the leadership of the Lords of the Congregation. He urged him to "neglect not such opportunity of doing good to your country, as the like was never offered this 100 years, nor percase shall not many other 100 happen, if this time be omitted." [39] The letter signified that Elizabeth and Cecil were still betting on the duke to provide the leadership and the legitimacy needed to build a force that could overthrow the regent.

In the meantime, Cecil assigned the management of the second part of the delicate escape mission to his brother-in-law, Henry Killigrew, and Richard Tremayne, a Dutch speaking agent. Killigrew was a trusted operative experienced in clandestine matters.[40] Used to danger, he had lived in exile in France and Germany during Mary Tudor's reign and was recalled to England after Elizabeth's accession to enter her diplomatic service. He and Tremayne met Arran in Geneva, and disguising themselves, they took a circuitous route to avoid the channel ports where the French would be looking for them. They proceeded to Emden, a German port on the northern Netherlands border sometimes used by English cloth merchants. Killigrew and Arran sailed to

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[39] "The Copie of Mr. Secretary Cecill's Lettre to the Duke of Chastelherault, in Scotland," August 24, 1559, *State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler,* ed. Arthur Clifford, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Caddell and Davies, 1809), 404-5.

[40] Amos Miller, *Henry Killigrew: Elizabethan Soldier and Diplomat* (Amsterdam: University of Leicester Press, 1965), 12, 21.

London from Emden, hidden aboard an English ship, arriving on August 28.[41] The earl stayed at one of Cecil's houses in Cannon Row incognito for the next three days.

For the next two days, the 29th and 30th, Arran met secretly with the Queen and Cecil. There is no record of their discussions, except for Elizabeth's offhand remark to the Spanish Ambassador, Álvaro de la Quadra, who evidently had heard a rumor about the Arran marriage story. He said that he had "heard that the Queen . . . had spoken of taking 'a husband who would give the King of France some trouble and do him more harm than he expected.'" Elizabeth dismissed the story by noting that Arran was "mentally unstable."[42]

(The Earl had what could be construed as a politically convenient nervous breakdown in 1562, but his actions until that time and afterward betray little evidence of serious mental instability. He had displayed great courage in leading his kinsmen in battle against the French. After the tumultuous events of the Scottish Reformation/Revolution, he would retire to a quiet life until his death in 1609.[43] Thus, Elizabeth's remark about the earl's mental state could be taken as her way of indicating that there was no truth to the marriage rumor. On the other hand, her remark revealed that she had met with Arran. The notion of a marriage between them would persist like a hardy perennial,

[41] "A Memorial of Things Committed to Killigrew's Charge," July 17, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, no. 998.

[42] R. B. Wernham, *Before the Armada: The Emergence of the English Nation, 1485-1588* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1966), 249.

[43] See the very thoughtful MA thesis by Harvey Joe Inman, "James Hamilton, Third Earl of Arran: A Study of Scottish Relations with England and France (1559-62)" (Eastern Illinois University, 1971).

flowering again after the death of Mary of Guise in June 1560, until the queen officially quashed it in December of that year.)

There can be little doubt about the topics of discussion between Elizabeth, Cecil, and Arran in August 1559. First, Elizabeth would have been at pains to explain that the purpose behind the marriage proposal was to justify helping him escape from France without violating or circumventing the treaty, and that she had no desire to wed. Theirs would be *fiançailles de convenance* only. Both needed the earl's return to Scotland to satisfy his father's condition for joining the Lords of the Congregation, which would increase the organization's political legitimacy. On that basis Elizabeth could provide assistance against Regent Mary and the French. Both also needed Arran to return to lead his men in battle.

In addition, they would have discussed the arrangements for British financial support and if and under what conditions Elizabeth would send troops. It was still necessary to maintain the utmost secrecy so she could deny any knowledge of Arran's whereabouts, because the French (and the Spanish) were inquiring at court and reminding her of her obligations under article 17 of the treaty. The French were scouring Europe in search of the young earl.

Thus, on August 31, again in disguise and accompanied on this leg of his journey by Thomas Randolph, who would become the English liaison to the Scots (and later ambassador), they crossed over at Berwick into Scotland, arriving on September 10. He arrived just in time, because the Duke of Guise had sent a contingent of French troops to reinforce the regent and more were on the way. Elizabeth's men in charge of Berwick, Sir Ralph Sadler and Sir James Croft, reported the appearance at

the end of August of "four or five ensigns," or 1,200 to 1,500 men, effectively doubling the regent's French forces to about 3,000.[44]

Preparing to Intervene

On the day of the earl's departure for Scotland, Elizabeth decided that it was time to bring the Privy Council in on her heretofore covert operation. Over the previous nine months she had seeded the rebellion and brought it to a fruition. She had sent John Knox to continue his earlier preaching in favor of religious reformation. She had sent money to sustain rebels in the field. She had established contact with the heir to the throne, James Hamilton, the Duke of Châtellerault, to gain his agreement to defect and lead the rebellion. She had arranged for the flight of his son, the Earl of Arran, from France to join his father in Scotland. She had promoted the emergence of a political authority in the Lords of the Congregation, which she could support. The ingredients were in place to take the next step of confronting the regent, but it might require greater direct involvement. Thus, it was necessary to bring in the Privy Council to authorize a unified, national commitment.

Elizabeth and Cecil had already worked out their plan for a government to replace Mary's regency, but the question was: Should England intervene openly in Scotland to accomplish it? Earlier in August, she and Cecil had discussed their long-term alternative objectives of England and Scotland coexisting in "perpetual peace," or being "made into one monarchy." Either

[44] "Sadler and Croft to Cecil," August 29, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, no. 1270. Infantry bands or 'ensigns' typically comprised 230 to 300 men, according to George Gush, "Renaissance Armies: the French," *myArmory.com*, http://myarmory.com/feature_armies_french.html.

way, the first step was to establish an independent government of "a mere Scotsman," for while the Scots were under the "command of the French," there was "no hope" for peace.[45]

Their position was that until Mary Stuart bore an heir and "during her absence out of the realm," the Hamiltons should manage the affairs of Scotland, their house being "the next heirs to the crown." Scotland should be "free from all idolatry, like England is" and be governed by Scotsmen. No Scotsmen should receive any money or land from the French and no Frenchman should receive any of the same from the Scottish government. There should be "a council in Scotland, appointed in the queen's absence to govern the whole realm and not to be directed by the French." If the French and Mary "be found unwilling," then "the next heir of the crown," James Hamilton, should rule.[46]

Cecil prepared a lengthy paper for "Discussion of the Weighty Matter of Scotland." The central question was: should England "help" to expel the French or not? In his view the ultimate French aim was to defeat the Scottish rebels preparatory to invading England. He wrote, "As long as the nobility of Scotland shall be of greater power than the French, so long will the French forbear the open invasion of England, but as soon as Scotland shall yield, forthwith will they employ their own strength and the power of Scotland against England." It was therefore right and just that Scotland defend itself and that

[45] William Cecil, "Memorial of Certain Points for the Restoring of the Realm of Scotland to the Ancient Weale," August 5, 1559, *Sadler State Papers*, vol. 1, 375-77.
[46] Ibid.

"England both may and ought to aid Scotland to keep out the French."[47]

Cecil laid out the case for and against intervention. On the negative side was the argument that it was against God's law to subvert a fellow prince. Covert support would not be sufficient and overt support may provoke war with France. If war came, England was too weak, militarily, financially, and France too strong in both areas. England would have to go it alone, while the French would have the Catholic world behind her. On the affirmative side, Cecil countered that it was agreeable to both God and nature that every state should defend itself and that included England. The French, he maintained, mean to conquer "and be masters of England."

The crucial question was "how long it is likely for the Scots to keep the upper hand?" The balance of power favors the French and the Scottish rebels "can't endure long in the field. . . . [W]ithout some relief it will be no long time ere the Scots shall be forced to leave off, whose end of necessity must be the beginning of England; and so the sooner the one endeth, the sooner the other shall begin." England must defend itself, but where should the battle be fought? Is it "more profitable for England to continue the Scots in their strength and defence, than to leave them, and be at the charges of our own defence?" A forward defense in Scotland would ultimately cost less and spare the English people.

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[47] "A Short Discussion of the Weighty Matter of Scotland," August 31, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, no. 1300; *Sadler State Papers*, vol. 1, 377-83.

To defend in England, Cecil warned, "our people must be spent, our country spoiled and wasted; and as to expence of treasure, ten times more to be spent that way than the other." Furthermore, England would have to defend "all three borders." Scotland, Ireland, and the channel coast would need to be "planted with garrisons" and if the French transported an army to Scotland, England would likewise have to muster an army. But England was devoid of generals and the army would not be as well trained and led as the French. Finally, under cover of the peace treaty the French were inserting troops into Scotland, while England, under that same treaty, could do nothing.[48]

Cecil's memorandum began a roiling months-long debate over the question of whether England should intervene in Scotland to support the Lords of the Congregation in their quest for Protestant reformation and the expulsion of the French. The Privy Council, recall, was roughly split between Mary Tudor holdovers and Elizabeth's appointees, and some of the latter did not support her position initially. The outcome of the debate, and Elizabeth's decision, depended upon the battlefield balance of power, the ability of the French to supply reinforcements and England's ability to deny them to the regent. Lastly, there was the question of what King Philip II would do.

In mid-August 1559, Throckmorton wrote to Cecil that he was "informed that the French have a secret practice in hand for a sudden surprise [attack] of Berwick."[49] Agents abroad sent intelligence of ship and troop movements at France's main ports that seemed to confirm Throckmorton's information. But there

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[48] Ibid.

[49] "Throckmorton to Cecil," August 15, 1559, number 1190, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, no. 1190.

was a more alarming message from Elizabeth's ambassador in Brussels, Sir Thomas Challoner, describing an assemblage of about ninety ships in Antwerp.[50] These were there, it was reported, to shepherd King Philip II from Brussels to Seville. His departure was to be in the latter part of August. Was his departure from Brussels in any way connected to France's plans for Scotland? Were Philip and the Guises in collusion? Until Philip's intentions were clear, Elizabeth could make no move to support the Scottish rebels, and so she vacillated. As it happened, Philip departed the Netherlands on August 25 and sailed directly south for Seville under the watchful eyes of Elizabeth's agents. There would be no collusion between Philip II and the Duke of Guise, at least for the moment.

At the outset of the Privy Council deliberations the battlefield advantage in Scotland seemed to belong to the Duke of Guise. Regent Mary had moved to the port/fortress at Leith and was ensconced there with over three thousand French troops armed with cannon and arquebuses (the latest infantry weapon), and several hundred Scottish loyalist troops. More troops were on the way; in early September three hundred arrived, with two hundred more scheduled to sail in late September, according to agents' reports, and several thousand more later in the year. In addition, Throckmorton advised the queen that the French were preparing to take Portsmouth and Wight "minding to trouble her that way by the French only, and

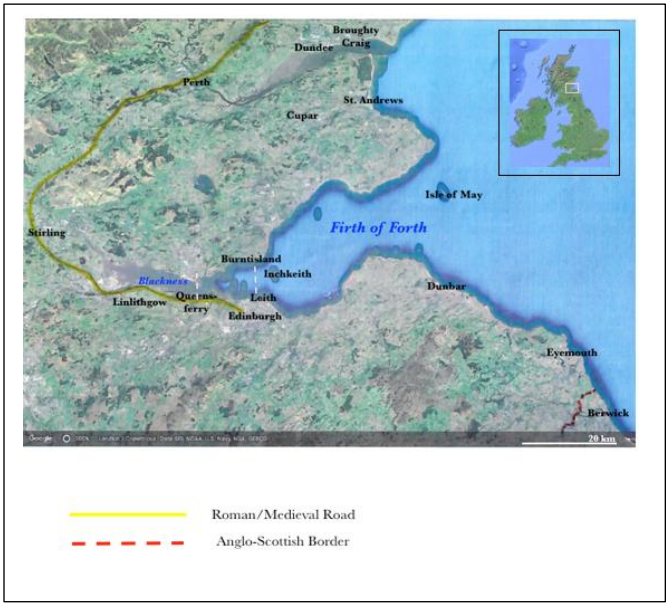
[50] "Challoner to Cecil," August 27, 1559, ibid., no. 1258. There were twenty Spanish, thirty Dutch, and "forty sail of others of less sort."

at the same time with their force of Almains [Germans] to be busy northward."[51]

On the other hand, the Scottish leadership question was about to be resolved to the advantage of Elizabeth. The Earl of Arran gathered the Scottish nobles around him in Stirling in mid-September and his father, the Duke of Châtellerault, defected from the regent's employ and joined with the Lords of the Congregation three days later. The allegiance of the Hamiltons, with their claim to the throne, provided a legal basis for the rebels' challenge and drew more nobles off the sidelines and into the rebel camp. They began a Great Muster, assembling close to 16,000 men. Their plan was to deploy the bulk of this force to Edinburgh by the middle of October. They kept about a thousand men in Stirling to control that vital nexus and sent a force to seize Broughty Craig to control the access to the River Tay and thus to Dundee and Perth.

A look at the map is important to understand military strategy and the movement of forces. The pertinent area of the conflict lay on both sides of the estuary ("firth") of the Forth river. The area can be envisaged as an open-ended triangle with the point at Stirling and the two ends of the base at Perth in the north and Edinburgh/Leith in the south. Although there were two ferries spanning Blackness Bay, at Queensferry west of Edinburgh and Burntisland across from Leith, the main road went from Perth southwest to Stirling and then east to Edinburgh. The bulk of the military action would take place in this triangle.

[51] "Throckmorton to the Queen," September 23, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, no. 1360.



The main force of about ten thousand men, half on horseback, and under the leadership of the Hamiltons but including many prominent clan nobles, arrived outside of Edinburgh on October 18, 1559. Two days later they entered the capital unopposed and convened a meeting of the nobility. In a formal "Act of Suspension" on October 21 and a letter to the regent on October 23, they denounced and deposed her and established a ruling council under the duke.[52] The council would remain loyal to Queen Mary but would govern Scotland as long as she remained in France. Recall, this was exactly the formula that Elizabeth and Cecil had devised in early August.

The Earl of Arran, and Archibald Campbell, the 5th Earl of Argyle, who had mustered most of the force, urged an attack on

[52] Laing, *Works of John Knox*, vol. 1, 444-451.

the regent at Leith, only two and a half miles away, but they were overruled. The council determined that the French were too strong, and they could not storm the fort with the weapons they had on hand. Lacking cannon and scaling ladders necessary for an assault, they decided to wait until they could negotiate reinforcements from England. In the meantime, they would blockade Leith.

The decision to delay action led to an unexpected degradation of their forces, as their men began to leave the encampment and return home. Within a week their forces had dwindled to under two thousand, an eighty percent reduction in manpower. Part of the reason was because their terms of service to their lords had ended, and it was time for the harvest; and part was because the money to pay them had run out. It seemed clear, as Woods notes, that most of the men had little personal stake in political opposition to the French, or ideological support for Protestantism. Earning money was their major concern.[53]

Seeking to provide some financial support for the Protestant forces, Elizabeth sent John Cockburn of Ormiston with six thousand laundered French crowns. But Regent Mary's men had been tipped off. James Hepburn, the fourth Earl of Bothwell, who she had placed in charge of the border, ambushed Cockburn as he was crossing at Haddington, making off with the funds. The duke sent his son with seven hundred men and two cannon to Bothwell's castle at Crichton to regain the purse but missed him "by a quarter of an hour." When overtaken and confronted, Bothwell refused to surrender the money, so Arran ordered the

[53] Woods, *Rebellion and Reformation in Scotland*, 43.

castle to be "set on fire," his goods seized, and Bothwell to "be taken as an enemy," but he fled, evading capture.[54]

There were two consequences that arose from Bothwell's theft. First, Bothwell made known that the funds came from Elizabeth, exposing her involvement. Second was the impact of the loss of funds on the men. Elizabeth protested that sympathetic Englishmen were sending the aid and they did not represent official policy, but the argument was not convincing. At the same time, she hastened to assure the duke privately that more funds would be forthcoming and asked his advice as to the most secure method of transportation.

When Regent Mary saw that Arran's departure had weakened the rebel army, she ordered her French forces to attack Edinburgh. Despite a fierce fight, the battle of All Hallows, the French were unable to take the castle and retreated to their stronghold at Leith. During the next several days, the French conducted forays out of Leith to attack supply wagons meant for the rebels in Edinburgh, but these raids were not sufficient to sustain the French troops. It seemed that without resupply of men, munitions, and victuals from France, they could not hold out for long.

Perceiving an opportunity, in early November Arran and Lord James convinced the council to authorize an attack on the fortress at Leith. Elizabeth agreed to finance the attack and "take steps to intercept French reinforcements by sea." Cecil, instructing Sadler and Croft to convey the decision to the Scots,

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[54] "Randolph to Sadler and Croftes," November 3, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, *1559-1560*, ed. J. Stevenson (London: HM Stationary Office, 1865), no. 175, and "Balnaves to [Sadler]," November 4, 1559, no. 183.

said that England would provide money and powder for weapons and urged them to "make speed to recover Leith before new succors come."[55] Cecil's advice was ill informed, as the English were not able to make good on their promises in time. The Protestants' attack on November 6 occurred before Sadler and Croft could get money and powder to them. The result was predictable.

The French were a well-disciplined three thousand-strong force heavily armed with arquebuses and cannon, which the Scots could not match. The French may have been famished but they still had ammunition for their guns and dealt the rebels a serious defeat, killing thirty and taking forty prisoners.[56] The defeat on November 6 left rebel leaders terribly shaken. Believing they could not defend the capital if the French attacked, they decided to evacuate Edinburgh, which they did in the middle of the night, "leaving behind them the greater part of their artillery, ladders, and other preparations for the siege of Leith."[57]

But the French were unable to take full advantage of the rebel retreat. Edinburgh castle remained in the hands of the neutral John Erskine, the 1st Earl of Mar, but not the town.[58] On the morning of November 7, the regent "removed to Edinburgh,

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[55] "Mr. Secretary Cecil to Sir Ralph Sadler and Sir James Croft," November 3, 1559, *Sadler State Papers*, vol. 2, 71-73.

[56] "Sadler and Croftes to Cecil," November 8, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 211.

[57] Ibid., n3, "D'Oysel to Noailles," November 12, 1559.

[58] "Sadler and Croftes to Cecil," November 8, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 211. "Lord Erskyn, though he seem neuter and keep the castle indifferent . . . has declared himself for the Protestants . . . when the Lords were out of the town, and has since been in council with them sundry times."

where she hath all things at her will…[although] the most part of the inhabitants fled out of the town with bag and baggage before her coming thither."[59] In fact, the regent moved to Holyrood House just outside the town and claimed symbolic control over the capital, but the castle itself remained in Erskine's hands.

Regrouping and retreating to Linlithgow, some twenty miles west of Edinburgh, the Lords of the Congregation decided to divide their forces. The duke and the council moved to Glasgow while Arran and Lord James took five hundred men to St. Andrews in Fife. The council sought to obtain additional aid from Elizabeth, sending William Maitland, who had also defected from Mary a few weeks earlier, secretly to London to negotiate an alliance and provision of arms.

In the meantime, the duke's son, Arran, and Lord James tried to prevent the French from gaining control of the north shore of the Forth. Regent Mary's strategy was to take control of both banks of Blackness Bay and seize St. Andrews to facilitate resupply from France. Having driven the rebels back to Stirling and secured control of the south bank at Leith, the next step was to gain control of the north bank. Skirmishing ensued in Fife over the next month with the French prevailing. By the end of November, Mary's French forces had driven the rebels to the outer fringes of the crucial triangle, while consolidating control of both banks of the Forth and the port site at St. Andrews. The exception was Edinburgh castle, which remained neutral under John Erskine. The two sides were at an uneasy standoff. Everything now hinged on whether the Duke of Guise could

[59] "Intelligence out of Scotland," November 10, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 234.

supply his sister Mary's forces, or Queen Elizabeth could prevent it.

The French "Get the Jump" on the English

The sting of rebel defeat at Leith on November 6 seemed to strengthen the doubters in the Privy Council, as arguments swirled around four options. First, the English could do nothing, allow the French to resupply their forces and enable Regent Mary to defeat the Scots. This course might avoid war with France in the short run but open the way to invasion of England. Second, they could continue to provide aid secretly to sustain the Scots, which would delay defeat but offer little hope of victory. As long as the French could resupply their forces, the Scots alone could not defeat them. Third, they could continue to provide aid secretly, fortify the border (implying potential offensive action), and interdict the French at sea to prevent resupplying their men at Leith. This would shift the advantage to the Scots and would verge on open intervention. Finally, Elizabeth could decide to attack by land and by sea and, with Scottish rebel support, drive the French out. This would tip the balance in favor of the Scots but risk all-out war with France.

From the beginning of the enterprise Cecil's position was that the Protestant rebellion gave England an unparalleled opportunity to expel the French from Scotland. But action had to be taken immediately before the window of opportunity closed. He saw before him two options: either an Anglo-Scottish "amity," or a united island under one monarchy. Henry FitzAlan, 12th Earl of Arundel, was resolutely against any involvement. (This may have been kindled by the rejection of his proposal of marriage to Elizabeth.) Six others opposed to varying degrees, including the

Comptroller of the Household, Sir Thomas Parry; the Lord High Treasurer, Marquess William Paulet; the Principal Secretary, Sir William Petrie; diplomats Sir John Mason and Dr. Nicholas Wotton; and the Lord Keeper of the Seal, Sir Nicholas Bacon. Concern that overt English involvement in Scotland would precipitate war with France seemed to undergird their opposition.

There appeared to be a twelve-to-seven majority in favor of Cecil's preference for open intervention, but the arguments against were formidable and growing. Events, especially evidence of France's ability to support and build up its forces in Scotland, began to have their impact.

The belief that France planned to invade England through Scotland had underlain everything that Elizabeth had done in support of the Scottish rebels through the year. But until now, in early November, there had been little evidence of French actions to support that belief. The deployment of some twelve hundred troops in September arguably was to support their beleaguered garrison at Leith and did not necessarily indicate preparations for an invasion of England. There was also the assumption that winter would provide several months of respite before the French could arrive in strength in the spring.

But that comfortable idea began to suffer with a report from German agents on November 7 stating that the French planned to deploy ten thousand troops to Scotland aboard forty vessels within weeks.[60] English agents in France, Henry Killigrew and Robert Jones, surveilling French ports, confirmed that report

[60] "Troops for Scotland," November 7, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 203.

four days later observing the arrival of numerous ships at Calais and Newhaven (Le Havre) that were scheduled to depart on November 30.[61] The upshot of these reports was clear; the French were not waiting until spring.

With the assumption of a respite dashed, Elizabeth had to move fast. Supported by the Privy Council, she decided to provide additional clandestine support in the form of money, ammunition and cannon (with English markings melted off to maintain plausible deniability).[62] Cecil informed Sadler and Croft of this decision and further informed them that the Queen was "in consultation [with the Privy Council]" over the question of "whether aid shall be given openly or secretly to Scotland, and if openly, whether she will enter into the war [with France]. In a second message to them the same day Cecil thought that the council would "advise the queen to begin in time, rather than too late" and "two days consultation here will utter what is to be done." In the meantime, he exhorted them to encourage the Scots. "For God's sake, comfort them to stand fast."[63]

Agents Killigrew and Jones confirmed that the French naval force was still scheduled to depart on the thirtieth and provided additional intelligence regarding the operation. The plan upon landing in Scotland was to fortify six places between Leith and Berwick, which indicated either preparations of a launchpad for an invasion of England, or for a defense against an English invasion of Scotland. They reported further that the

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[61] "Killigrew and Jones to Cecil," November 11, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 227.

[62] "Cecil to Sadler and Croftes," November 12, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 243.

[63] "Cecil to Sadler and Croftes," November 12, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 244.

French would send ten galleasses, each with six hundred men, for a total of six thousand men.[64] The galleass was a large hybrid ship propelled by two to three hundred rowers and had three masts with sails, which gave it considerable mobility in calm waters. It mounted fifty or more guns that gave it formidable firepower. But the ship was not as fast, maneuverable, or seaworthy as an English galleon and was unstable in harsh weather. The French had decided to gamble using the galleasses to cross the Channel and the North Sea in rough winter weather.

The Privy Council, in a message to Sadler and Croft on November 15, deemed it necessary to deploy four thousand men to Berwick "considering the stirs in Scotland," but were concerned about the town's ability to feed and house that many. Consequently, they were going to send two thousand now and the rest later. The Lord High Treasurer, William Paulet, along with council members Thomas Sackville and Ambrose Cave, were assigned the task of "providing the victuals for Berwick and the navy." The message was signed by eleven members of the Privy Council, including Cecil.[65]

But sending reinforcements to Berwick was only a small part of what Elizabeth was doing, according to a report by the French ambassador Gilles de Noailles. In a message to King Francis II intercepted by English intelligence, Noailles surmised that the deployment of two thousand troops to Berwick was the leading edge of a larger intervention force to support the rebels. England was "making preparations for war," he said. Ambassador

[64] "Killegrew and Jones to the Queen," November 14, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 256.

[65] "The Privy Council to Sadler and Croftes," November 15, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 271.

Throckmorton had arrived "most unexpectedly on the 7th, which is regarded as a prognostic of war." Elizabeth had sent Admiral Winter to inspect the navy at Gillingham. Noailles, misjudging this intelligence, thought Winter's task was to "hasten ships for the defense of the coasts." [66]

He reported that the queen was building four new galleys at Portsmouth. Moreover, she had given orders for a levy of troops for the defense of Kent; the inspection of ports from Hull to Berwick; and the strengthening of defenses of Wight, Portsmouth, Hampton, and other places. She had sent a German engineer to inspect England's fortifications in the north; and "to reconnoiter Leith," presumably to determine what would be necessary to assault it.[67]

A week later, on November 23, Sadler and Croft responded to the decision to send troops to Berwick. Winter was coming, they said, and lodging troops in Berwick would be a burden on the local economy. They advised that unless there was intelligence regarding French preparations to sail, a troop deployment should be deferred until Spring.[68] Two reports from one of Elizabeth's agents, Francis Edwards, who was watching French port operations, removed all doubt about French intentions. The French would be departing two weeks behind schedule, in mid-December, from Calais and Newhaven, but they were coming in force. Five thousand men would be aboard a dozen ships—all in the 120-170-ton class accompanied by two

[66] "Report by Noailles to Francis II," in "Cecil to Sadler and Croftes," November 12, 1599, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 243, n1.

[67] Ibid.

[68] "Sadler and Croftes to the Council," November 23, 1599, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 316.

rowing barges loaded with bread and wine. By Christmas they expected to have ten thousand men in Scotland! The French, Edwards reported, perceived themselves to be in a race with Elizabeth to see who could get the jump on the other.[69] And the French were winning.

Elizabeth's only hope for a quick response lay in reaching an agreement with the Scottish rebels to authorize and assist in an English intervention. Calling in Maitland, who had just arrived secretly, the Privy Council grilled him about the rebels' ability to put forces into the field and whether they could provide support for English forces who crossed the border. Council members wanted to know how much support the rebels had, who supported the French, and how many were neutral. Maitland offered a list of sixteen Lords of the Congregation who supported them, said that only five supported the French, and about a dozen were neutral but would be "with us," once the fighting began.[70]

"How many can you put into the field," Maitland was asked. He thought they could muster three thousand within three weeks and provide "as many as they brought before," some sixteen thousand. If England should intervene, how many could they bring to the border? Maitland thought that they could bring "a great part of their horsemen through Lothian," because they controlled the countryside, and the French had no horsemen and thus little mobility.

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[69] "Francis Edwards to Cecil," November 26 and 30, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 353.

[70] "Questions by the English Privy Council on the Invasion of Scotland, with answers," December 10, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 392.

Would there be adequate provisions for a force moving from Berwick to Edinburgh? Yes, he said, there are "great stores of victuals there and the Lords are masters of the fields." Asked about rebel ships, Maitland answered that he had no accurate count, but "all of the havens between Aberdeen and Stirling will be friends." Could cattle be provided to haul cannon, and wood to make scaling ladders? The answers were "yes" and "yes."

How many of the border towns would be with the rebels? Maitland said, "a great part of Teviotdale is so already" and the rest will "do the like" once England comes in. What about Edinburgh, he was asked. Would John Erskine help? Maitland thought that he assuredly would be "friendly," but did not know if he would provide cannon. Erskine was proving to be a determined neutral, willing to accept gifts from both sides. Finally, the councilors asked: Did the Regent have any ships and how many men were in Leith castle? Maitland said that Mary had only two small pinnaces under sixty tons, but both were lost in a recent storm and as for men in Leith, there were no more than three thousand.[71]

Based on Maitland's conversation with the Privy Council, Cecil and Maitland drew up a draft mutual defense treaty. The dual purpose of the treaty was to legitimize English military intervention in Scotland against the French and to pose a weak deterrent against the contingency of an attack on England. The treaty was negotiated during the month of December and Maitland took the draft with him back to Scotland, but it would not be signed until February 27, 1560—just prior to English forces entering Scotland.

[71] Ibid.

The ten articles of the treaty included the following key provisions: Queen Elizabeth promised to protect Scotland, as represented by the Duke of Châtellerault and his co-signatories, from conquest or oppression; for that purpose, she would send an army with all speed to join with Scots in expelling the French; Scotland would never agree to any tie with France other than the one that existed due to the marriage of Mary Stuart to King Francis II; Scottish forces would help to repel any French invasion of England; the Earl of Argyle would use his force to put down rebellion against English rule in the north parts of Ireland; and to guarantee their fidelity to the terms of the treaty, the Scots would immediately send half a dozen men as pledges, or hostages, to be kept in England for one year beyond the duration of the marriage of Mary and Francis.[72]

As the Privy Council engaged in discussions with Maitland for the treaty, Sadler and Croft sent a message dated December 9 with intelligence that three hundred Frenchmen had landed at Eyemouth, and another five hundred were coming to fortify it. In a follow-up letter dated December 10, they indicated that the story had proven false, but they relayed new information that "six ensigns more of the Frenchmen are upon the seas coming towards Scotland."[73] Six ensigns would comprise as many as eighteen hundred men and amount to a significant reinforcement of the French presence. Another message came from Sandy Whitelaw at St. Andrews, liaison to the Scottish rebels in Fife. He reported that seven supply ships had already

[72] "Articles agreed upon at Berwick," February 27, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 781.

[73] "Sadleir and Croft to Cecil," December 9 and 10, *CSP: Scotland*, vol. 1, nos. 593 and 594, pp. 273-274; "Sadler and Croftes to Cecil," December 10, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 393.

arrived with "powder, bullets and munitions," as well as victuals, and possibly two ensigns of men.[74]

More unwelcome news came shortly thereafter. Francis Edwards, reporting from Rouen, conveyed that since he had last written on November 30 about the sailing of sixteen ships from Newhaven, "much munition has been laden at Abbeville and upon the river of Somme, viz, of gunpowder and shot twenty lasts, morrispikes, shovels, spades, mattocks, [thousands of] baskets to carry earth in…and of other sorts to fortify with, also wheat and wines, all to be sent to Calais, to furnish the ships that go for Scotland and for the wars there." [75]

Traveling to Newhaven, Edwards reported that "all merchant ships there begin to rig, likewise at Dieppe, and all the coast alongst." The French say that are merely heading for Newfoundland "a fishing," as they do at this time every year, but "some think that when the ships are all ready the French King will take all such his merchant ships as may best serve for his affairs for Scotland."

Edwards went hurriedly to Calais "with as much speed as his horse could make," covering the 150-mile journey in a week and arriving on December 13. "Much provision," he said, was headed from various cities to Calais and Boulogne and thence to Scotland. Five or six ships departed Brittany, others from Rochelle and Bordeaux. Observed on the docks at Calais were "thirty great brazen pieces of ordnance," which will be placed aboard the "twenty or twenty-two sail to convey the Marquis

[74] "Whitelaw to Sadler and Croftes," December 10, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 395.

[75] "Francis Edwards to Cecil," December 12 and 19, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 408.

d'Elbeuf into Scotland." These ships "have not yet departed, but the Marquis and his wife are upon their way riding towards Calais." It is said that at least three thousand men go with him, "though some say more. . . . The talk of war increases here, and much afeared they are," Edwards observed, and "their merchants come daily out of England, and our merchants go a fast home; by the last of this month there will be few Englishmen here or elsewhere in France."[76]

The notion promulgated by the French through their various spokesmen, and clung to by several in the Privy Council, that France was merely supplying the beleaguered garrison in Leith and would not be moving forcefully into Scotland until the following spring, had been blown to smithereens.

Elizabeth's "Luck" and the Decision to Intervene

Elizabeth reacted quickly and personally to the flurry of incoming intelligence. In a message of December 13, she ordered Sadler and Croft to observe carefully what the French were doing in Eyemouth. Based on their report about the arrival of hundreds of French troops (apparently a false alarm), she asserted that "300 French come to Aymouth and 500 more, is so directly against the treaty [of Cateau-Cambrésis] and the safety of Berwick, that it cannot be borne." If the French did come and attempt to fortify the town, which was only six miles from Berwick-upon-Tweed, Sadler and Croft should be prepared to

[76] Ibid.

expel them.[77] As Berwick was the invasion/intervention gate, it had to be secured at all costs.

Cecil also sent a message to Sadler and Croft acknowledging that the threat from France seemed to be accelerating faster than English preparations. Ruefully, he explained that "they had meant before that Norfolk should be at Newcastle before the end of this month, and Lord Grey at Berwick. The ships (twelve men of war, eight or ten food supply vessels, and eight others with munitions) "were appointed to depart on 20th inst." But he understood that forty ships already had sailed from France, "so the English are like to come too late." He wished that "some had been of more speedy foresight." [78]

Cecil was reflecting the shifting of opinion in the Privy Council, whose members had come to terms with the unpleasant fact that the French had indeed beaten them to the punch, making English intervention futile at that juncture. Nicholas Bacon, the Lord Keeper of the Seal, and Cecil's brother-in-law, offered the queen a face-saving rationale for accepting this outcome. "The question is," he said, whether the Queen should intervene in Scotland against the French "openly and presently," characterizing Cecil's position. In Bacon's opinion, "assistance should not be openly and presently granted them, nor yet utterly denied them." England should defer war with the French until the

[77] "The Queen to Sadler and Croftes," December 13, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 409.

[78] "Cecil to Sadler and Croftes," December 13, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 412.

following year while conserving the friendship of the Scots, he advised.[79]

His reasons were that England was weak and the French overwhelmingly strong. England lacked "money, men, and friends," while France was "four times" as large as England, had "four times" its population, and was "four times" as rich. Furthermore, he said, "the greater part of all the realm is unwilling to make a war of invasion." He also thought the cause of the war doubtful and bore "the appearance of injustice." To invade would mean that England would "the first breaker" of the peace treaty, which also is injustice. "If it be said that this is a war of necessity," because France

> under the pretence of repressing a rebellion in Scotland seeks the conquest of England, that it is easier to hinder their landing than their marching when landed, and that we can expel those already landed if the thing be presently executed; to these objections he answers, that an abstinence of war for a time were the safest way. It is not true that everything that is meant to be done ought presently to be done, as though time had nothing to do in doing. We must see that when we begin we are well able to perform it.

His conclusion was that England could not presently "sustain and endure" a war with France. The better course would

[79] "A speech delivered by the Lord Keeper Bacon about ten days before Christmas A. D. 1559 at the Council Board Concerning Aid Required by the Scots for the Removing of the French out of Scotland," attached as a footnote to "Cecil to Sadler and Croftes," December 16, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 440.

be to "aid the Scots secretly by all the ways and means [possible] this summer," which would sustain their friendship and enable them to weaken the French and strengthen England. "As for any war that France will begin to make upon us before summer come a year . . . it is very probable that . . . we shall by reason of our strength by that time increased and theirs decreased, be more able to drive the French out of Scotland, and from thenceforth to keep them, with the help of the Scots, out of the whole island, than now we be . . . . Also, in that time no man knows what may happen to the French Queen, being a very sick woman, or whether the house of Guise (the chief upholders of this quarrel) shall continue their favour and governance above the King."[80]

Bacon's speech was most likely delivered on December 13, and it is apparent that the queen had decided to accept his advice. Her decision would have dismayed Cecil who had for months championed the course of "openly and presently" intervening. It is left to our imagination to conjure up the argument that ensued, but evidently it was of such vehemence as to prompt Cecil to offer his resignation to the queen.[81] Stating that he could not ethically execute a policy that he opposed, he decided to step aside. On the evening of the 13th, he sent her the following message:

> With a sorrowful heart and watery eyes, he, her poor servant, beseeches the Queen to pardon his lowly suit, that as the proceeding in the matter for removing the

[80] Bacon probably meant here the Scottish regent Mary, who was ill, not the French queen, who was not.

[81] Cecil's resignation threat was neither the first nor the last of his many differences of opinion, even healthy confrontations, with the Queen. See Susan Doran, *Elizabeth I and Her Circle*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 231-40.

> French out of Scotland does not please Her Majesty, and as he cannot give any contrary advice, he may, with her favour, be spared intermeddling therein And he is forced to do this, for he will never be a minister in any Her Majesty's service, whereunto her own mind shall not be agreeable, being sworn to be a minister of her determinations, and of none others. It must needs be unprofitable service, to serve her in anything of which he does not approve, being loath that she should be deceived. But in any other service, whether in her kitchen or garden, he is ready from the bottom of his heart to serve her to his life's end. Wishes her to make some proof of this, and affirms that since her reign he has had no one day's joy but in her weal and honour.[82]

The argument that swirled around the queen, Cecil, Bacon, and the Privy Council had reached its conclusion, and had gone against the secretary. But it was all washed away in an instant by news from Sir Thomas Challoner, England's

[82] "Cecil to the Queen," n3 in "Cecil to Sadler and Croftes," December 13, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 412. Author's note re: Bacon's speech and Cecil's resignation letter: neither document is dated, although the title of Bacon's speech states that he delivered it "about ten days before Christmas," suggesting December 15 as the date delivered. The editor of the *Calendar of State Papers*, Joseph Stevenson, attached both documents as footnotes to other documents that *are* dated to suggest their date sequence. Bacon's speech is attached to a message from Cecil to Sadler and Croft of December 16 regarding the queen's instructions, which effectively repudiated the argument made by Bacon; and Cecil's resignation letter is attached to his message of December 13 to the same two men, apologizing for acting too late over support for Scotland. Thus, in the *Calendar*, Cecil's resignation letter comes *before* Bacon's speech and seems unrelated to it. The author believes the opposite to be the case.

ambassador to the Netherlands. In his message of December 15, he reported news of a French disaster at sea. He said that the "late great tempestuous weather (in which none durst venture the seas)" had caused the shipwreck of four ships and "at least 1,000 Frenchmen" who have perished off the coast of Emden with "their bodies cast on land in Zeeland [the Netherlands] in great numbers." (They would shortly learn that the numbers were double the initial report, with eight ships wrecked and several thousand men lost.) When this news reached Paris, he reported, the government council gathered immediately and "sat that afternoon longer in council til dark night beyond their wont."[83]

Elizabeth and her advisers immediately understood the significance of Challoner's report. It meant that the French would not be able to steal a march on the English after all and it would take some weeks if not months before they could marshal and send more men, ships, and supplies. If she could move fast, she might still beat them to the punch, prevent them from reinforcing their men in Scotland, isolate the Leith garrison, and win. Thus, the very next day, December 16, Elizabeth, and Cecil (who no doubt happily withdrew his resignation letter) sent messages to Sadler and Croft detailing the reversal of the queen's decision and their plans for prosecution of the conflict.

The queen ordered as a matter of urgency that Sadler and Croft enlist four thousand men to be stationed in and around Berwick. She would authorize further levies and was sending provisions, weapons, and armor so that the "town and frontier shall be replenished and well reinforced with men." She had

[83] "Challoner to Cecil," December 15, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 427.

consulted "with the Laird of Lethington [Maitland] to understand what the Scots can of themselves do" and how England might help them. She had "appointed to send Lord Grey thither to act as Warden there" with two thousand horsemen and "appoints also the Duke of Norfolk as Lieutenant-General of all north of the Trent," which meant that the northern third of England would be mobilized and under effective martial law to provide for the troops.

The queen added that "she sends also fourteen ships of war, well-armed, under the charge of Mr. Winter . . . which shall depart on Saturday at the furthest." His mission would be "to enter into the Firth, to impeach the entry of any more succours out of France; and also, if occasion offers, to make any notorious defeat upon the French as of himself, without any demonstration of public hostility." She was instructing Sadler and Croft to advise Winter on how he might "commodiously take some notorious advantage of the French." [84] Elizabeth had decided to risk undeclared war with France.

On the same day, Cecil sent three messages: one to Sadler and Croft and two to Winter, to expound on the meaning of the queen's orders. To Sadler and Croft he said that "the French preparations being very great, [they] must be impeached at the beginning." Therefore, "the first mean is to obtain possession of the Firth to stay further succour, and then (if the Scots will play their part) to enter by land with 4,000 footmen and 2,000 horsemen and recover Leith." Lord Grey was coming with an additional two thousand horsemen and five or six "good brass pieces for battery." The Duke of Norfolk was "almost ready" to

[84] "The Queen to Sadler and Croft," December 16, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 435.

depart. Winter would leave the next day with fourteen "strong vessels such as will make small account of all the French navy in Scotland." Cecil noted that first reports of the French disaster at sea had been undercounted. He had now been "told that eight French ensigns are perished on the coast of Holland; God send it to prove true!"[85]

Cecil sent two messages to Winter, the second embellishing on the first. The first message contained twelve points; the second condensed the same points into seven but placed more emphasis on the tactical trickery Winter should employ.[86] He was instructed to "make speed" to take supplies to Tynemouth, Holy Island, and Berwick. He was to enter the Firth and without warning "offend the French [navy] to the utmost, either by shot, fire, or otherwise." He was to insure that "no French ship . . . shall come out of the Firth, neither that any shall come in." He must prevent the French from unloading supplies "at Leith, Inchkeith, Dunbar, Blackness, or any other place." He should "surprise and defeat the French navy . . . wheresoever he shall find them, either in the [North] sea or in the Firth." He should communicate with Sadler and Croft and follow their advice until the Duke of Norfolk arrived. And he was to provide such aid to the Scottish rebels "as he shall see may further their defense."

The queen, he was informed, had thought it "convenient" for the time being "to forbear any open declaration of war." Therefore, Winter was to act "in his own name." Upon

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[85] "Cecil to Sadler and Croft," December 16, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 440.

[86] "Instructions for Winter," December 16, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, nos. 441 and 443.

entering the Firth, he could explain that "he is thither driven by wind, or that he comes for victualling upon the coast of Fife . . . to colour his lying there until he shall have further occasion to manifest hostility." He should make excuses to remain in the Firth for 13-14 days and create any pretext for challenging the French. For example, he "may challenge the French for carrying the arms of England to the dishonour of his sovereign and country, which he cannot abide, and so, as of his own hand, do that enterprise he shall see most hurtful to the French."[87]

Elizabeth had made the command decision to engage in an undeclared war in Scotland. It was now necessary to ask the Privy Council to reconsider their position before she would authorize action. There followed, according to a report by French Ambassador Noailles, "eight days" of debate within the Privy Council.[88]

On December 24, the Privy Council sent their "advice" to her request to "consider" her grounds for action. In a lengthy memorandum of forty-five points, the council expressed a nearly unanimous opinion to support her decisions. All those who had previously been opposed, except one, now supported her,

[87] Ibid.

[88] "Noailles to the Queen Dowager," December 21, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 467, n1. Like most ambassadorial intelligence reports it was partly right and partly wrong. He got the essence of the privy council debate but was off by a couple of days on either end. He indicated that the debate raged between December 11 and 20, but according to the chronology above, the council began to debate Elizabeth's command decisions on the 16th and finished on the 24th. It is highly likely that Elizabeth's officials were feeding the French Ambassador information that served her purposes.

including Nicholas Bacon. The voting balance had changed from twelve to seven in favor to eighteen to one, the lone holdout remaining Henry FitzAlan, Earl of Arundel.[89]

The Privy Council's report took up and refuted every point of Bacon's thesis, while fully endorsing the measures Elizabeth had initiated. Events, the council noted, had already refuted Bacon's view that the French would not be able to make war on England before "summer come a year," even if no aid were given to the Scots. In the council's view "if the French are suffered until the spring they are likely both to vanquish the Scots and so to increase in numbers as that they shall invade this realm." To Bacon's argument that the French were too strong and England too weak, having neither "money, men, or friends," the council urged the following: As for "money," the Queen should borrow 200,000 pounds in Antwerp and sell crown lands to obtain 100,000 pounds more; as for "men," she must "put the whole realm in a defensible array" and as for "friends," she must not "stand post alone," but acquire friends by reaching out to King Philip II, the German Princes, the King of Denmark, and the Duke of Finland to ensure that they do not align with the French.

Bacon had argued that the conflict in Scotland was not a "war of necessity," and to intervene would be "unjust" and make England the "first breaker" of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis. But the council countered with the view that "the French have already begun a war with [Elizabeth] by claiming her crown," displaying her coat of arms as theirs, and "publishing these their interests in all open places in the world." "What they can do more until their army be safely in Scotland, the [council] sees not. And

[89] "The Privy Council to the Queen on the French Designs Upon Scotland," December 24, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 483.

when it is there, the French will not diminish their ambition or return their powers by sea into France." Finally, in opposition to Bacon's claim that "the absence of war for a time was the safest way," the council concluded to the contrary that "it is best to avenge these great wrongs now in time while a small power and treasure may do it."[90] The die was cast.

[90] Ibid.