

History Unit 2 Elizabeth
Lesson 20 of 30

How did Elizabeth's direct action provoke all out war with Spain?



The Treaty of Nonsuch 1585

Background

In 1584, **King Philip II** made an alliance with the **French Catholic League** who were determined that another Protestant would not become heir to the throne, after the death of the **Duke of Alencon**. This alliance was sealed in the Treaty of Joinville. This treaty meant that France and Spain were now united in their aim to rid the Netherlands, and Europe, of Protestantism. **Elizabeth I** now could not delay in taking action against Spain.

Impact

In 1585 **Elizabeth I** signed the Treaty of Nonsuch with the Dutch. This marked a change in Elizabeth's policy, as before she had tried to avoid triggering an all out war with Spain by intervening only indirectly in the Netherlands. However, in the Treaty of Nonsuch she agreed to send an army of around 7000 soldiers to help the Dutch in their fight against the Spanish in the Netherlands. Elizabeth decided that the campaign would be lead by one of her favourites **Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester**. To help the Dutch further, **Elizabeth I** also sent **Francis Drake** to the New World where he was instructed to disrupt Spanish trade and supplies of resources that were often used to support the Spanish armed forces in the Netherlands. **King Philip II** was furious and interpreted this actions as an act of war. He told the Pope of his intention to invade England at the end of 1585.



Leicester's campaign

Background

After Elizabeth I signed the Treaty of Nonsuch in 1585 with the Dutch, she chose one of her favourites, **Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester** to lead a campaign of 6,000 soldiers to the Netherlands to aid in their fight against the Spanish.

Leicester's campaign

Dudley's expedition started badly in January 1586. **Elizabeth I** didn't provide **Dudley** with sufficient money or soldiers to maintain the campaign in the Netherlands. She was reluctant to fully equip her forces to crush Spain as she still wanted to negotiate with them. Matters were made worse when later, the Dutch then offered **Elizabeth I sovereignty** over the Netherlands. **Dudley** accepted the title of 'Governor General' without Elizabeth's permission. This infuriated Elizabeth as well as **King Philip II** who believed this was evidence that England was trying to usurp Spanish rule there.

Throughout 1586, **Dudley's** forces were not able to fully stop the **Duke of Parma** from moving through the Netherlands and retaking control. However, in 1587 **Dudley** was able to stop the **Duke of Parma** taking control of the deep water port of Ostend, and other deep water points. If the Spanish were to invade England from the Netherlands, access to such ports would be crucial to launch their large ships. Despite this success **Dudley** was ordered to return from the Netherlands by the end of 1587. The campaign was viewed as a failure.



The singeing of the King's beard 1587

Background

Although there was no formal declaration of war between them, by the mid 1580s both Spain and England considered themselves to be at active war against each other. It was also clear at this time that **King Philip II** was planning a major naval invasion of England. To try and weaken Spain and disrupt their plans, in April 1587 **Elizabeth I** gave permission to **Francis Drake** to attack the Spanish fleet which was stationed in Cadiz harbour in Spain.

Impact

The attack destroyed 30 Spanish ships, a huge loss to the Spanish navy. The attack also delayed **King Philip II** of Spain's plans for launching a naval invasion of England for a year. This gave England time to prepare its own fleet and build defences throughout England for an attack. The attack became known as the 'singeing of the King of Spain's beard'. After the attack on Cadiz, **Drake** then attacked Spanish colonies, ports and ships in Portugal and the Azores and stole their treasure. In July 1588, **King Philip II of Spain** formally launched his naval invasion of England which was named 'The Spanish Armada'.



Comprehension questions

1. What was the impact of the Treaty of Nonsuch on Anglo-Spanish relations?
2. What were the consequences of the Earl of Leicester's mission to the Netherlands in 1587?
3. Why did Elizabeth I order what became known as the 'singeing of the King of Spain's beard' in 1587?
4. What were the consequences of the 'singeing of the King of Spain's beard' in 1587?
5. **Challenge question:** Explain why England's actions in the Netherlands between 1585 and 1587 angered King Philip II of Spain.

Challenge question sentence starters

One reason why England's actions in the Netherlands between 1585 and 1587 angered King Philip II of Spain was...

This angered King Philip II of Spain because...



Extension Question

6. Explain how Elizabeth’s actions in the Netherlands between 1585 and 1587 provoked all out war with Spain.

Sentence starters:	Key words
<p><i>One reason why Elizabeth’s actions in the Netherlands between 1585 and 1587 provoked all out war with Spain was..</i></p> <p><i>This provoked war because...</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Treaty of Nonsuch- Dudley’s campaign- Robert Dudley-Francis Drake- Singeing of the King’s beard
<p><i>Another reason why Elizabeth’s actions in the Netherlands between 1585 and 1587 provoked all out war with Spain was..</i></p> <p><i>This provoked war because...</i></p>	



Glossary

French Catholic League - A group of powerful French catholics who wished to end Protestantism in Europe.

Duke of Alencon - The heir to the French throne and suitor of Elizabeth I. He was sympathetic towards Protestants.

Sovereignty - To have supreme power or authority.

Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester - One of Elizabeth's favourites and rumoured love interest. He was sent to the Netherlands with 6,000 men in 1586.

Duke of Parma - A Spanish noble and military commander who was sent to the Netherlands by King Philip II of Spain in 1579 to establish control over the Netherlands.

The Azores - A group of Islands off the coast of Portugal.

