

Welcome back to the war history friends, for the final time. In the last few episodes we've been brought up to speed with Charles II's struggles; how his never-ending quest for funds and grants led him to engage in contradictory and controversial policies. He lied to Parliament, he duped his subjects and he sought subsidies off Britain's continental rivals, all in the name of being able to pay for the country's armed forces, and perhaps wield a bit of financial independence himself. In the last episode we pretty much concluded Charles' war experience, which began arguably at the moment he returned amidst such splendour and pomp, not to mention high hopes, in 1660. Yet, as we also discovered last time, though London seemed to participate in the moves towards a quadruple alliance, Britain was merely one cog in a machine that all wanted or required different things from Louis XIV's France. Thus the efforts to uniformly affect a peace were made difficult by the national interests of each of the major actors; the Dutch, for example, had been offered separate terms by Louis since 15th April, while the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs looked to deal with Paris from a different position, and Charles as we know was more interested in using his realm's position as a bargaining chip to wrest more funds from Louis, than he was in actually declaring war.

If you're ready then, this is the episode in which we conclude these disparate threads. We bring the narratives together and reveal that, although it had taken all this time to arrive at such a destination, Europe was no closer to peace than it had been in 1672. While the treaties were of course hammered out, troubling clouds remained on the horizon, yet what no power could deny was the fact that behind these clouds, and around which their interests seemed to revolve, was the Sun King. If the FDW meant anything for the continent then, it meant that, amidst the failed hopes, fleeting triumphs and horrific losses, Louis XIV had definitively arrived. Let's see how it all went down, as I take to you to mid-1678, in this, the final episode of the FDW...

It seems to me that one can hardly view all his works and efforts without some sense of gratitude, nor without being stirred by the love for the public will which inspired them. Louis XIV did more good for his country than 20 of his predecessors together. Voltaire, writing in 1751.¹

¹ Cited in *History in Quotations – Reflecting 5,000 Years of World History* (ed) M.J. Cohen and John Major (London, 2004), p. 467.

William of Orange was plainly in a bind. Although his career and prospects for bettering his position amongst his wider extended family had improved since 1672, the initial Dutch zeal for resistance to France seemed to dip once Louis' armies had evacuated their lands. The greatly hampered merchant cities of Holland, which still contained the bulk of the once formidable regent party, did not relish the prospect of further worsening their incomes for the sake of some Spanish towns, which the French seemed to seize at will from 1676 onwards. It was the French seizure of Ghent and then Ypres in March 1678 that seemed to have represented the last straw. From this point the regents within Amsterdam, Rotterdam and elsewhere invested their resources into the furthering of the peace party, and insisted that France could not be defeated in the current conditions of warfare. The Dutch, it had to be said, were suffering from the kind of military exhaustion that could only result from years of consistently draining warfare, at the head of a coalition which was neither as united or effective as it appeared on paper. Utterly opposed to the concept of giving ground was William of Orange, who insisted that the fall of Ghent and Ypres in March 1678 was just the beginning, and that France had to be resisted at all costs; but then, William of Orange was plainly in a bind. Try as he might, he had lost the war for the hearts and minds of the peace party, as this party had gained considerable ground in the last year.

The renowned historian of Dutch history, K D Haley, wrote an article entitled 'the Anglo-Dutch Rapprochement of 1677', and within it outlined the ups and downs of the Dutch fortunes in war:

The successes of William's first two years in power had been clouded by later disappointments. Charles had been obliged to make a separate peace, and a coalition against Louis had come into being, but the combined forces, far from regaining anything, were unable to prevent French armies over-running the Spanish province of Franche-Comte, and capturing several important fortresses in Flanders. In August 1676, William's failure to recapture Maastricht was a bad blow. The coalition did not work well together, and the Dutch had many justified complaints against the poor co-operation of their allies, and especially against the dilatoriness and incompetence of Spain. The French were able to put into the field better-equipped armies earlier in the year under undivided control, and further allied losses in Flanders seemed probable. The successes of Denmark and the Great Elector against Louis' Swedish ally could not offset the danger in this crucial area. Moreover, in Amsterdam and other cities, there were signs of the growth of a peace party, dissatisfied with war taxation, discontented with the efforts of their allies and suspicious of William's personal ambitions.²

² K. H. D. Haley, 'The Anglo-Dutch Rapprochement of 1677', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 73, No. 289 (Oct., 1958), pp. 614-648; referenced in this case is p. 615.

Indeed the underrated aspect of the FDW, but a fact which quickly became apparent to us as we detailed the conflict, was that France was in a far better position to field armies large enough to make effective changes to the status quo. The coalition of the Habsburgs, the Dutch and sometimes Brandenburg on the other hand, were less capable of pooling their resources and acting as a unit. Petty jealousies, geographic concerns and the logistical complications inherent in moving large bodies of men to the same spot cannot be understated, and thus Louis was, in spite of the arming of the continent against him, far better positioned to take the initiative. It also has to be said that the initial eagerness for warfare seemed to evaporate from the Dutch psyche once the French evacuated their lands and London simultaneously evacuated the conflict. Perhaps feeling less pressurised, the merchant classes of the Republic may have felt content to allow the other more militarily capable states to take the lead now. Yet, as we have gathered, Spain was in no position to make this commitment, while the HR Emperor was consistently distracted both by his own princes' political agendas and by his own concerns about the Ottomans. These two factors contributed to effectively negate the impact of the Habsburgs, and when Sweden invaded Brandenburg in 1675, although the GE was soon on hand, his subsequent campaigns against Stockholm sufficiently distracted Berlin so that Brandenburg became a non-entity in the war against France, which of course had been Louis' aim all along.

In a sense, the FDW was an example of how to not wage a coalition war, and we must remember that even while it is often seen as a foolish miscalculation and a disastrous waste of resources on the part of Louis, it was, to a large extent, a victorious war for him and for France. Louis would effectively lead the way from 1676 onwards, and would consolidate French holdings in its border with the SN, while preventing the Imperials from ever sufficiently threatening France along the Rhine. With Raimondo Montecuccoli's retirement after 1675, the enthusiasm seemed to evaporate out of the Imperial war effort, and while the Emperor did contribute troops to the field along the Rhine, and settlements such as Philipsburg were seized from the French influence, no grand campaign was ever launched against the French, as the French continued to support against the SN. With each new season seemed to bring new French successes; however minor these were, they served to chip gradually away at the Spanish presence in Flanders, and surely it was only a matter of time, at this pace, before Louis overtook the Spanish in this region altogether?

John A Lynn noted that in terms of French army size, 'The Dutch War high hit 279,610, as indicated by a key document from January 1678. This included 219,250 infantry and 60,360

cavalry, while 116,370 of the total served in garrisons.³ This was an insanely high number of soldiers, and the allies simply couldn't keep up with it, nor could they match the French propensity for well-organised campaigns, courtesy of Louvois, or the engineering marvels of Vauban, or even the military command of Marshal Turenne. We must accept the actual supremacy of France during the FDW – that is what granted Louis the moniker of Sun King after all. Even while I have noted that Louis faced into a war which he did not want, and that this must represent a failure in his foreign policy, we have to admit that it is because of the strength of France that Louis was able to endure this miscalculation, almost despite himself, and come out of the Peace of Nijmegen in August 1678 technically on the winning side. Indeed if we are to measure the war purely in terms of what France achieved within it, it's difficult to arrive at any other conclusion than that which states that France, and by extension Louis, was the victor.

In many ways this is hard to swallow, not least, for me, because I expected Louis to get his comeuppance after behaving so arrogantly and wastefully in 1672. These pigeons would come home to roost for Louis XIV, but not yet. At the same time though, considering French supremacy and the general weakness of the allies in a unified sense, it has to be said that French peace terms were quite reasonable. The historian Clyde Grose noted that 'In general the French terms had a certain fairness, were tactfully phrased, and unquestionably timely.'⁴ Timeliness was of course key, since during March 1678 Conrad van Beuningen was involved in discussions in London to create the quadruple alliance, a weapon which Charles hoped to use to obtain concessions both from Louis and from Parliament. That it proved illusory had much to do with the plain unwillingness of the Dutch States General at home to grant van Beuningen proper powers to negotiate, and it soon became apparent that the Dutch were stalling for time. As Charles urged van Beuningen to think of war, van Beuningen reported home to a Dutch government which was itself determined to bring about an end to that war. We should bear in mind that the Dutch were mostly untouched by the FDW by this point, and while their lands had suffered and their incomes had certainly been damaged also, they were not under the military threat endured by Spain.

William of Orange had also vastly improved the Dutch ability to defend itself, but defence and attack were not similar aims, and after having relied on the Habsburgs for the last few

³ John A Lynn, 'Recalculating French Army Growth during the *Grand Siecle*, 1610-1715', *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Autumn, 1994), pp. 881-906; referenced in this case is p. 893.

⁴ Clyde Leclare Grose, 'The Anglo-Dutch Alliance of 1678 (Continued)', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 39, No. 156 (Oct., 1924), pp. 526-551; referenced in this case is p. 527.

unimpressive years, The Hague was not willing to do so any longer. It was clear from the negotiations that Madrid and Vienna again expected the Dutch to carry much of the offensive burdens of the alliance, something which they had already done since 1672. This was immensely unpopular with the States General, increasingly dominated by the regent peace party, and empowered by the general war weariness which had permeated the republic. With the massive French gains in Ghent and Ypres, the Dutch perception of the Spanish ability to resist sunk to an all-time low, and the Dutch came to see the necessity of another campaign in Flanders to bail the Spanish out as one of high cost and low reward. Although commitments had been made in late 1673 to never make a separate peace with France, the Dutch were running out of reasons to maintain the war, while Louis was showing no signs of slowing down. Since it was well known that Paris also desired peace, or was at least open to negotiations, and had been partaking in them in Nijmegen along with everyone else since spring 1677, the peace party in the DR gained further credit. Through a combination of Dutch fears of French power, the dread of having to endure another thankless campaign in Flanders, the frustration at its allies' ineffectiveness, and the military and economic exhaustion of the country, Louis' aforementioned peace offers, made exclusively and tactfully to the Dutch on 15th April 1678, must be seen as the Sun King's finest hour. Not only did Louis here abandon much of his earlier arrogance, but he demonstrated his tact and awareness of the situation, which he would rarely be known for.

The timeliness of the peace offers were complimented by the fact that, in return for peace, the Dutch would have to give virtually nothing in return, and would in fact gain a favourable trade deal with Paris, which the economically depressed merchants eagerly upheld. The terms of the French peace offers are examined by Clyde Grose, who noted:

France was willing to surrender to Spain Ghent, Oudenarde, Courtrai, Ath, and Charleroi, but must retain Conde, Valenciennes, and – most important of all – Ypres. This was not to be regarded merely as a basis for negotiations but as a final concession, with 10 May as the time limit for its acceptance.⁵

While the Dutch debated these terms in the States General, William returned to The Hague accompanied by John Churchill, who aimed to put steel into the Dutch for further campaigns. Churchill, of course, was under orders from London to keep the Dutch in the war mostly for the sake of Charles' interests. If the Dutch left the war, as we learned last time, the quadruple alliance which Charles wished to beat Louis with would have far less of an impact in Paris.

⁵ Clyde Grose, 'Alliance (Continued)', p. 526.

As it transpired, this effort at inspiration proved ineffective – by this point William was coming to terms with the fact that his homeland was desperate for peace, and he could at least reconcile himself with the fact that Britain was closer to the DR than it ever had been in the past. Despite the weighted nature of the French offers, and the fact that they expired on 10th May, it took much heated debate to reach an agreement in the SG, and much diplomatic work plainly needed to be done, as neither Madrid nor Vienna had yet been consulted. In a secret session of 3 May then, the Dutch voted to ask France for an extension of time; and Louis XIV, assured soon that they were sincere and actually desired the time for necessary negotiations with their allies and not for war preparations, extended the time limit to 15 May, later to the 20th, and finally to the 27th. Louis, it seemed, appreciated that he had reeled the Dutch in at last.⁶

Amidst these tense negotiations, the Dutch were inconvenienced by the presence of the Swedish ambassador in The Hague, who argued for Dutch support for Sweden's interests in the peace negotiations. It was quickly learned that Sweden had also sent a plenipotentiary to London with the same aim, and before long the French were notified of Stockholm's move as well. Occurring in early April 1678, Sweden's decision to send two of its most able diplomats to the British and Dutch were the result mostly of Swedish fears that it was soon to lose the opportunity to recoup its losses in the war, and that France was about to abandon her. Indeed, Sweden had not fared well since entering the war in late 1674. Brandenburg had rolled up the Swedish possessions and kicked the Swedes totally out of their German enclaves in Bremen and Pomerania, affecting a great victory for Berlin and imbuing the GE with much prestige. When French representatives at Nijmegen proved slow in listening to Swedish concerns, the decision was made in late March for Sweden to take matters into its own hands, and negotiate independently of France. By doing so, Sweden seemed to threaten identification with the Dutch and British, and a resurrection of the vaunted TA of old, but with far more serious implications. Sweden was virtually the only ally France could count upon in Europe by this point, and thus much was made of these Swedish acts to Louis, who demanded that Sweden be reimbursed at once.

Clyde Grose explains that this French desire to aid the Swedes effectively stonewalled negotiations further, writing:

⁶ See Clyde Grose, 'Alliance (Continued)', p. 528.

Louis's inclusion of Sweden in the terms was thus a diplomatic move to encourage her allegiance. All realized the great injustice which the fulfilment of the clause would work to the Great Elector; and on 21 April the allied representatives at The Hague met, disapproved of the French terms, and endeavoured strenuously to persuade the Dutch not to accept.⁷

The Swedish element proved the greatest obstacle to a general peace, as Louis insisted upon returning virtually all of the lands that Sweden had lost to Stockholm. The unfairness of this stipulation was not lost on the Dutch, but it transpired that the Dutch wanted peace more than they wanted justice for the GE, who after all had largely abandoned them militarily after 1675 anyway. The Dutch sent a diplomat to London to plead their case – that the country was exhausted and in the majority desirous of peace. At this, Louis instructed the Dutch that his armies were ready to move again on 10th May, once the peace offer expired. In response to this, the States General voted to accept the peace offers if their allies would also follow suit. Louis thus extended the deadline to 13th May to allow time for discussion, adding tactfully that he would extend it to 18th May and would refrain from further campaigns in Flanders if the Dutch would thus make peace. He would remain with his army at Ghent until the 27th May 1678, as his final offer, effectively setting a stopwatch for the Dutch and their allies. This set other events in motion, as the Dutch now moved to bring about an end to the war they were sick and tired of fighting.

Despite his country's desire for peace, it seemed as though William of Orange blew between accepting the terms and desiring a better deal, so on 14th May he promptly hurried from his country house to the Hague to oppose sending a mission to Louis; and although he was supported by the nobles and several important towns, the peace party, led by deputies from Amsterdam, was in the majority. William's opposition also weakened when he received several letters from England, urging him to make peace, but the representatives of the allies gave unwilling consent to the mission after receiving assurance that only a six-week truce and not peace would be discussed.⁸ On top of the aforementioned complications then, it seemed that, rather than an instantaneous peace, Louis was angling first for a truce whereupon the gains could be consolidated, and the supremacy of France could be impressed upon the allies. Perhaps he planned on further military exercises after the expiration of the truce, but Louis bargained that the Dutch wouldn't test the waters for the sake of this fear, and he was correct. Although the Dutch rep initially pleaded indisposition and refused to meet with Louis, the

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 528.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 530.

States General urged him ‘notwithstanding his indisposition’,⁹ to travel to the French camp at Wetteren in East Flanders, where Louis awaited the Dutch plenipotentiaries.



The Wetteren town hall, near to the site where Louis XIV met with the Dutch representatives and arrived at terms for a 6 week truce.

After 5 hours of intensive negotiations, the Dutch plenny agreed to the truce, and some reports even claim that the Dutch committed to abandon their allies if they would not follow suit.¹⁰ News of this agreement wrested concessions out of Madrid, who signalled they would also agree to the truce and the general peace agreements as well, while Brandenburg, Denmark and the Duchy of Lorraine maintained its own policy of resilience, though to no avail.¹¹ To jog our memories from the last episode, we should bear in mind that as soon as it became clear that the Dutch would accept the French terms, Charles II had made peace with Louis XIV. Except for some agitation, the chief promoters of war were Danby and Charles’ brother James, the Duke of York. We have already examined the long-sustained policy of Danby, while York had a family interest in the house of some military ambitions, and at times a desire to moderate anti-Catholic zeal of parliament by supporting the cause on the Continent. As for Charles, he has been characteristically difficult to pin down one way or another, but there is no to believe that he at any time desired to go to war, except perhaps to mollify rebellious subjects, to build his army for domestic emergencies, or to invite large French as the price of his neutrality.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 530.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 530.

¹¹ Louis XIV’s consistent struggle in Lorraine is examined masterfully by Philip McCluskey, ‘From Regime Change to Réunion: Louis XIV’s Quest for Legitimacy in Lorraine, 1670—97’, *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 126, No. 523 (DECEMBER 2011), pp. 1386-1407.

It should also be added that, despite the apparently threatening joint ambitions of the building quadruple alliance towards France, several unfortunate events had since drained the patience of those who desired war. The quarrel over Britain sending troops to Ostend had led to hard feelings between England and Spain. Similarly the Dutch rejected London's offer for a defensive alliance and the English plan of naval cooperation. In British domestic terms, the support of parliament was questionable; while after March 1678 it was apparent that the war was going strongly in favour of Louis.¹² The general trend throughout April and May then had it that Charles realised his neutrality was less favourable or of concern to France, so Charles tried to appear more bellicose and threaten war as a last resort; a significant part of this policy was to encourage the genuine warmongers in London, such as Danby and James. Thus we come to the final shift in Charles' policy, whereupon he realised in mid-May that the Dutch were eager for peace, and so sought to cash in on his own neutrality before it was too late. Within three days of learning of the new developments in the DR, Charles had sent an agent to France with a peace-and-subsidy project, drafted by the king and the French Ambassador Barillon. Therein Charles agreed to the French terms, offered to use his influence upon the allies in favour of peace, and promised to desert them and maintain neutrality if they did not make peace within two months. As compensation he was to receive 6,000,000 livres annually for three years, the first year to begin 1 January 1678, and the first semi-annual instalment to be paid within one month of the signing of the treaty.¹³

When Charles tried to make one last go of it in Parliament, the result was intense embarrassment, as Clyde Grose noted:

After hearing the king's speech the commons at once demanded a sight of the offensive alliance with the states and criticized it mercilessly. They next went off on religious tangents and made redress of grievances a prerequisite to further grants of money. They attacked Danby and Lauderdale accused the king of planning a coup d'etat on ministerial advice. They objected to the maintenance of an army without a war, but would vote no money for disbandment. It is not surprising even two days before the English agent returned home from France, York advised Orange make peace.¹⁴

Charles thus rushed to make something out of Britain's commitment to peace before the Dutch removed themselves from the war. What followed was his hurried acceptance of the peace terms as Louis' had offered them previously to the Dutch, which meant that Louis' conquests received their further blessing from Europe's courts, adding further pressure on

¹² Clyde Grose, 'Alliance (Continued)', p. 531.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 532.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 533.

Madrid, Vienna and Berlin at Nijmegen. Danby made sure, before he totally approved of the treaty, to acquire an alteration of its preamble, so that it would make it appear as though the Dutch had forced London to make peace against its will, an alteration which demonstrated Danby's belief in the need for Charles to save face. What followed was a hilarious incident that demonstrated just how in fear of their position British statesmen were in this era. Though the treaty had thus been approved, it required the signature of a significant minister, such as Danby or Lauderdale, for it to pass into law. Yet neither man was willing to sign it in case it was later used against him. When Charles had the bright idea to bring the treaty to William Temple and get him to sign it, they found Temple in bed indisposed, obviously having predicted that he would be used to take the fall. Admitting his difficulties to the French ambassador, Barillon informed Charles that his own signature would suffice, and Charles went ahead and finally put historians out of their misery, signing the treaty into British law on 27th May 1678, effectively removing Britain from the equation going forward.

Just as everything seemed to be going according to plan, with the Dutch and British apparently eager for a total peace, Louis overstepped the mark. Having conveniently ignored the issue of Swedish compensation up to this point, the issue was resurrected in Nijmegen in negotiations between the Dutch and French. Here the French stipulated that they would hold some border towns of Flanders in trust until Sweden was compensated, and in addition, French soldiers would be garrisoned in the Duchy of Cleves, on the border with Brandenburg, until Sweden received its dues. This was a step too far. In the private letter of the Dutch plenipotentiary at Nijmegen to Holland's GP, much was made of:

The new unreasonableness of the French to the precipitate proceedings of the States, and the over great forwardness they had shewed to the peace, and also to assurances which he had understood the French had received from some merchants in Amsterdam that though their demands were so high and extravagant, yet the town would comply with them.¹⁵

The idea that Spain would surrender a series of towns until Sweden received Pomerania and Bremen was an impossible request for Spain to accept, and Madrid began cosyng up to Berlin, which in turn drew the previously disparate elements of the threatened quadruple alliance back together. In The Hague, William's war party seemed thrust back into favour. What had Louis done? Had he truly misjudged the situation to such an extent? Back in London, Charles seemed to be back at square one yet again. Although Danby and Charles desired a peaceful settlement, both were obdurate on the point of immediate surrender of the

¹⁵ Cited in Grose, p. 536; footnote #5.

additional towns to Spain; and York as usual 'lost his head' in enthusiasm for war. Parliament, on the other hand, seemed a hopeless tool with which to prevent war, for all MPs were by now anticipating a long and early prorogation, and as a result many members had already left London, while there was general lack of interest amongst those that remained behind.¹⁶

Had it not been for these new demands, the six week truce period would certainly have compelled Madrid, London, The Hague and even Berlin to agree to a general peace, yet now all felt pushed into a corner. Temple was now informed that he could assure the Dutch of England's utmost support in whatever transpired, and after much negotiations with the already war weary Dutch, much to the surprise even of William of Orange, the Dutch fell in line behind London and signed an alliance with them on 25th July 1678. Paris had two weeks to drop its Swedish requests and Spanish border town demands, or there would be war. This ultimatum was handed to a furious Louis, while William congratulated Temple on his hard work, and went himself to lead the Dutch army near Mons, where the French were also gathering. By the 28th July, Clyde Grose noted that:

There is every reason to believe that France, after seeing the effect of this Swedish demand, and the impending war against an alliance strengthened by England's might, was doing her utmost to retire gracefully and without humiliation.¹⁷

For his part, Danby now took the surprising step of cooperating with his old nemesis, the French ambassador Barillon, and the two men now pressured the Swedish ambassador in London to release France from her bonds. By doing so France could save face, and the war which was implied by the expiration of the Anglo-Dutch ultimatum would no longer be necessary. By now Danby seemed to have accepted that Parliament would never have cooperated to support Charles in the event of war, and thus his already confusing behaviour becomes even moreso, as he plainly sides with Barillon from this point onwards, propelled forward with the additional hope that if he acted quickly enough, Louis would, again, grant Charles the subsidies once agreed upon.

Then a further complication was added, as on 29th July, one of Barillon's agents in Nijmegen posed as an agent of Sweden, and informed William Temple that Sweden would accept the latest round of agreements aimed at limiting her compensation, in return for British

¹⁶ Grose, p. 538.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 545.

guarantees of Spanish and Dutch neutrality. In other words, Barillon was trying to use all the cunning and guile he possessed at his disposal to deconstruct the Anglo-Dutch alliance. This threw a spanner in the works, but Louis himself also worked to undermine it, offering the Dutch another tantalising chance to discuss separate terms. This temptation was resisted, but it had the effect of encouraging the Dutch in Nijmegen, and they informed the French plenny there on 3rd August that only a week remained before the ultimatum expired and an Anglo-Dutch force, as per the terms of that recently signed alliance, would be forced to march.

This barely veiled threat against the French to get on with things seemed to do the trick. On 5th August William journeyed to the army near Mons under the impression that the ultimatum was soon to expire, and that further manoeuvres would soon prove necessary to force a peace on the French. With William gone, the French plenies in Nijmegen may have expected the Dutch tone to calm a little, but it did not. The Dutch remained stubborn on the issue of Swedish compensation, but the French plenny Estrades had one last card up his sleeve. In his communications with Louis, Estrades pleaded his position in the face of Anglo-Dutch intransigence. Louis had relented on the issue of total Swedish compensation, but argued that a conference should be set up to discuss the matter before peace was agreed at. When the Dutch failed to respond to this, Louis then totally relented, accepting only a vague commitment within the peace treaty he posed to Estrades to grant Sweden a fair deal. On the morning of 9th August, when the Dutch met with Estrades and his peers, the Frenchman pretended as though Louis still wished to see Sweden compensated. It was only when the Dutch stormed about, claiming that an Anglo-Dutch force was rearing to go in 24 hours, that Estrades, having believed them, gave in himself, and presented Louis' offer.

Feeling as though they gained something which Louis was in fact already willing to give, the Dutch slowly came around to the idea of this 11th hour peace deal, despite the embarrassment it would inflict upon London, after Charles had essentially abandoned Louis' subsidies for its sake. The French and Dutch thus seemed to lock themselves away in private at Nijmegen, and at 12PM on 10th August, the French and Dutch plenipotentiaries signed the Treaty of Nijmegen amongst themselves. Clyde Grose noted that:

News of the treaty reached Hague and London to the surprise of most people who expected a general peace, to the disgust of some who opposed any sort of peace, and to the downright satisfaction of the Dutch alone, most of whom yearned for any reasonable terms.¹⁸

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 549.

The signing of this treaty proved to be the definite statement that the differing camps required to actually affect a proper peace. After months of dancing around with measures and countermeasures, amidst scenes at Nijmegen which were reminiscent of Westphalia for their intricacies and complexities, the French and Dutch had voted to officially end their war, which had begun in such different circumstances 6 years and 4 months before. William Temple was chastised for failing to prevent a humiliation of British diplomacy, or for proving unable to protect Charles' sought after opportunities for a French subsidy. Furthermore the Spanish declared their sworn intentions never to accept the Treaty at all. William of Orange, as we know, fought the Battle of St Denis over 14th-15th August, reportedly unaware that the treaty had been signed. All of these acts certainly demonstrated that not all were happy with the official Dutch act, and that some powers or actors had other plans, but in time all would come around.

The Dutch mediated the peace between the French and Spanish, so that by 19th September, Madrid and Paris were at peace once more. Similarly, on 26th January 1679, Sweden was brought to make peace with the HRE and Dutch, while the following October, the Dutch and Swedes, a comparatively quiet front in the conflict, were also brought to an official peace. So it was that the gloriously and intensely magnificent warmongering displays of Louis XIV had come to such a complicated and anti-climactic end in the halls of Nijmegen. Louis' miscalculation at the last moment ensured that Europe was not willing to totally roll over, and in this we can certainly argue that the King of France overstepped. Yet, while he did not acquire all that he desired for his Swedish ally, and neither could he retain all the towns he had conquered in Flanders, it was clear that Louis XIV had arrived. There could be no doubt among the courts of Europe, having examined the final desperate negotiations and the extent to which all diplomacy seemed to revolve around the inclinations of the King of France, that Louis' realm was the most supreme it had been at any time in its history. The war had thus brought about many eventualities; it demonstrated the resilience of the Dutch in the face of a hopeless struggle; it bore witness to Brandenburg's shattering of the Swedish military juggernaut, and it even presaged the kind of Anglo-Dutch cooperation that Louis so deeply feared. Yet, ultimately, the Franco-Dutch War brought about something else. From 10th August 1678, Louis XIV was no longer merely the King of France – he was now, unquestionably, the Sun King, for Europe now revolved around him as surely as that conflict had done, for 6 long years.

Alright history friends, on that note we have finally, after such a winding and hopefully you'll agree fascinating tale, brought the FDW to its end. How do we feel about it? To me it is one of the most incredible wars I have ever covered, and it is indicative of exactly what Louis XIV was capable of. Having learned what he did here, it was also clear that the newly crowned Sun King was not finished yet. Before long the King of France would be back, upsetting the peace of Europe and daring its powers to answer the challenge. When that happens, you can be sure that WDF will be there, as for our next act we shall examine the Long War, where every aspect of European warfare became intertwined, and the 17th century, so horrendous, so costly and so significant in its impact on the continent, ever so reluctantly bowed out in favour of the 18th. I hope you'll join me then, as WDF returns in September 2017 to detail that conflict, literally from this point onwards, up to 1699. A huge thanks to all of you lovely history friends and patrons for joining me for this long and winding tale, and I really hope you're ready for the even more incredible ones to come. Until then, thanks for listening history friends, my name is Zack and I'll be seeing some of you very soon, but most of you after just a little break. Take care!