

Henry vii college



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Henry VII has been considered to have taken a far more defensive position as King than his predecessors. This was caused by the nature in which he had come to power, usurpation. This meant Henry had to be aware of possible invasion from foreign powers allying with pretenders to the throne. Polydore Vergil wrote Henry was "more inclined to peace than war," power struggles going on in Europe and his own vulnerable position in dynastic and financial terms, made no intervention the most sensible approach, dynastic stability had to dominate dealings with foreign powers.

When assessing the extent to which Henry's foreign policy was an exercise in consolidating the Tudor dynasty, it is important to identify his aims, and to the extent to which they were achieved. In doing so, it is useful to use the pattern established by Professor Chrimes, dividing Henry's foreign policy into three clear phases. The way in which Henry had come to power meant his first aim had to be stabilising his position on the throne. Dynastic consolidation had to dominate his goals in phase one.

This included his foreign policy, as his vulnerable position meant he would not be able to have any chance at fighting any wars or come into any conflict with foreign powers. Also, he had to remain on good terms with powerful countries as this was a very dangerous time for pretenders to the throne, who would look for support from such countries. Diplomacy was Henry's best tool in foreign policy and consequently dynastic consolidation. The first opportunity arose for such diplomacy when Henry negotiated a one-year truce with France, which was later extended to January 1489. An opportunity for this truce became apparent as France had helped to finance the

expedition that directly led to Bosworth, which provided a chance to maintain good relations with the country regarded as England's traditional enemy.

This was the first step for Henry in his diplomatic foreign policy, remaining peaceful with a very strong power. Another major truce was to be signed shortly after the first with France, a three-year truce with Scotland. Scotland had been a country of worry for Henry and previous kings of England, as there was a fear from a northern attack. With land borders invasion was much easier than at sea, which caused great concern. This was why Henry wanted peace with his northern neighbour; he got this in July 1486 when he persuaded James III to a three-year truce. With the assassination of James III in 1488 15 year-old James IV became King of Scotland, which meant for now no real threat existed for the northern border.

So the diplomacy of a treaty and the luck of a death meant that Henry kept his throne secure from the threat of a northern invasion, foreign policy protecting his position as King. In spite of the truce with France, Henry negotiated a commercial treaty with Brittany, another country that had helped him in his time of exile. Also. In January 1487 Henry renewed Edward IV's treaty with Maximilian, King of the Romans and heir to the Holy Roman Empire, for one year.

For now with these treaties Henry had secured his position in Europe, and could be fairly confident his principal foreign rivals would not offer assistance to other claimants to the throne, also he was being accepted as the king of England by other foreign leaders, and they also seemed to expect he would remain so, for now his position was secure. However, a warning came to

Henry in the form of a claim to the throne, Simnel. Lambert Simnel received support from Ireland and Burgundy. The Irish were always prepared to support alternative claimants to the throne as they opposed to an English King.

However the support from Burgundy was unusual. Throughout the Hundred Years War against France, Burgundy had been England's main ally, and it was the main outlet for English cloth. However, Margaret the Dowager Duchess of Burgundy, sister of Edward IV, had supported Yorkists in the recent civil war and so was only willing to provide 2, 000 mercenaries to Simnel's cause. Fortunately for Henry was lacking in any other support and so beat the rebels at the Battle of Stoke in 1487. This incident did act as a warning to Henry as he now knew the extent to which he would have to monitor the activities of countries with potential claimants.

Henry's foreign policy was now highlighted in the importance of dynastic stability. Shortly after the Simnel rising came a predicament with France, which meant foreign policy for Henry was at a challenging time. Charles VIII the French king was a minor, and the regent was his sister Anne of Beaujeu. She planned for Charles to marry Anne, the daughter of ageing daughter and heir to Duke Francis of Brittany. Anne of Beaujeu wanted this, as Brittany was the last kingdom of France that had independence, it was the final stage of in her country's expansionist policy.

While the Duke was still alive he was doing his best to avoid this match. So in 1486 he arranged for his daughter to marry Maximilian. He then intrigued with Anne of Beaujeu's enemies within France, which provoked her to send

an army to Brittany in 1488. Maximilian then sent an army of 1, 500 men to help defend his future father-in law, and Ferdinand of Aragon begrudgingly sent another 1, 000 men. The Duke then asked Henry for help, which put Henry in a difficult position.

Henry had been given hospitality by the Duke while in exile, but also it would have been foolish to willingly let France take over the southern shore of the Channel, creating an increased threat to England's security. However, he could not danger England's truce with France. Henry cleverly sent ' several hundred volunteers' under the name of his wife's uncle, Lord Scales, while attempting to negotiate between them. However the Bretons refused to listen and so with no possible mediation Henry renewed the treaty with France and disowned Lord Scales. Bretons defeated at Battle of St.

Aubin du Cormier. So the Duke signed the Treaty of Sable, stating that his daughter could not marry without the French king's approval, when the Duke died the French king claimed custody of Anne, and the take over of Brittany by France seemed imminent. Henry was now in a very awkward position. If France gained control of Brittany it would make bases for an invasion of England, or France could attack merchant ships disrupting English trade. However, war would be would be a war of important finances and encourage France to aid claimants to the throne. So his foreign policy here in terms of dynastic consolidation was very important, as if a pretender had support from France this would cause major problems.

So to deter France from war Henry tried to find as many allies as possible. He renewed the treaty with Maximilian and formed a new allegiance with the

growing major power, Spain, when the Treaty of Medina del Campo was formed in 1489. A treaty was also signed with Brittany at Redon in 1489, the Bretons promised to pay the cost of 6, 000 men Henry chose to send to Brittany. Henry sent the 6, 000 men to Brittany, however Henry found himself let down by his allies.

Maximilian was unreliable because of commitments to the Hasburg Empire, and the Spanish sent a force of 2, 000 in 1490 but they had priorities against the Moors of Granada. In 1491 the Bretons accepted defeat and Charles and Anne were married. Without his allies Henry realised he could not take on France but would look very weak if they withdrew without any force. He decided to create an aggressive move so that the French would buy him off so Henry would withdraw, so making money and saving England's pride. The Treaty of Etaples was created in 1492, so France paid England off, so they could concentrate on problems in Italy. France also promised not to aid any pretenders to the throne, especially Warbeck.

This dispute over Brittany was a major part in Henry's first phase of foreign policy; developing diplomacy. Henry had to defend England's interests; as if they had appeared weak other countries would have taken advantage of this vulnerability, and invaded or supported a threat to the throne. This was a key part of Henry remaining on good terms with France but not appearing weak. The main aim of this time for Henry was consolidating his throne. He successfully managed to use his foreign policy to not offend any major foreign powers that could back threats to the throne. Henry was now set up to continue this good position.

Henry was successful in the first phase of his reign at consolidating his power, the first step towards dynastic stability. He then tried to continue this using marriage in the second phase of his foreign policy. This was because marriage created allies; it also showed that countries had faith in the stability and strength of England in Europe. With France now in control of Brittany European leaders were worried with the about the growing strength of France in Europe. So, in 1495 the Pope, Ferdinand, Maximilian, Venice and Milan formed the League of Venice, with the aim of driving Charles out of Italy. England managed to stay out of this conflict as it was outside the usual countries interest.

Henry managing to remain diplomatic and neutral offending nobody, so they had no reason to aid a threat against him. However, by 1496 Ferdinand realised it would be dangerous not to include England in case Henry were to decide to ally with France, the chance had increased after France had Brittany as they were a bigger threat to England. Also, Charles was offering help to Henry with practical assistance against Warbeck. However, in 1496 Ferdinand and Henry secured the agreement of marriage for Catherine and Arthur, and secured England's place in the revamped League of Venice now called the Holy League. However, Henry joined on the agreement that he would not go to war against France, but will not fight with them either. Ferdinand agrees as having England's neutrality is better than having England as an enemy if allied with France.

This was a good way of keeping everyone happy. No power had been offended, and so none would support a rebel pretender to the throne. Henry had succeeded again in remaining neutral, but also becoming more

important as major powers was now considering him a threat if against them. In 1497 Warbeck was captured and peace made with Scotland. Warbeck was significant to Henry as he involved other rulers in England's dynastic problems.

This complicated Henry's foreign policy; especially over the treaty with Spain as the Catholic kings did not want their daughter to marry into an insecure crown. The Truce of Ayton 1497 was a treaty between England and Scotland that came into full effect when Warbeck was executed. The treaty was sealed with the marriage of Henry's eldest daughter Margaret, to James. However, Scotland did still have an old pact with France, which meant the peace relied on good relations with France.

This was a big step in dynastic consolidation, as Warbeck had been defeated but also a treaty with Scotland, a traditional problem, was created too. Marriage was proving to be an asset to Henry, creating allies, that would not back treats to the throne or invade England. The next was the marriage of Prince Arthur to Catherine of Aragon in 1501. This alliance was of greater reward than had first been expected. As Henry could play a part in the growing Spanish Empire and its strength, but also the marriage of Catherine's sister, Joanna, to Philip of burgundy tied the countries together, and also meant other possible allies. The two marriages were great successes of Henry's foreign policy.

Henry had began remaining neutral, and over time had built up allies and made new treaties, becoming a secure crown. Throughout the second phase Henry had remained cautious and continued consolidating his crown, while



further becoming a stronger and well respected king and country. For example, the marriage alliance with Spain enhanced the prestige of the Tudor dynasty, and promoted the stability and strength of England in Europe. The last phase of Henry's foreign policy was made difficult by unfortunate deaths that caused problems for him. The prospect of his greatest ally might be reduced from king of Spain to just of Aragon.

This being caused by his either main ally, Burgundy meant hard decisions and choices for Henry. The first problem arose for Henry when his son Arthur died. This could have created great dynastic problems, as this ally would be lost. However, this was soon to be rectified when plans were put into motion for Catherine to marry Henry's other son, later to be Henry VIII.

However as Catherine was seemed to be related to Henry, Arthur's brother, a dispensation would be needed from the Pope, but by the time it had arrived the diplomatic situation had moved on. Another problem was created when Henry's wife Queen Elizabeth died after giving birth to a daughter. This created dynastic worries, as now two out of three of his sons were dead, and with the death of his wife the opportunity for any more heirs was difficult. Henry then looked for another possible wife, a young widow, Queen Joanna of Naples; niece of Ferdinand of Aragon was first choice.

Ferdinand encouraged this, as he wanted to strengthen links with England as relations with France were becoming worse. However the death of Joanna's mother, Isabella Castile meant that as Isabella was the heir to the kingdom the unity of Spain could only remain secure if her father were to act as regent on her behalf. However, her husband Philip of Burgundy took up this

job. So it looked as if Henry's main ally maybe reduced from King of Spain to just King of Aragon.

His two allies against France were now rivals. Henry could not lose support from neither Burgundy nor Spain. It was vital to have this support as France had the Brittany and so it would be easy to invade England if they had no allies. In 1505 Henry attempted to create better relations with Philip of Burgundy, in case of a possible break with France.

However friendship with Philip at this time made relations more difficult, especially after lending Philip money to take over Castile. Henry also considered a marriage with Margaret of Savoy the daughter of Maximilian and sister of Philip, however this would have jeopardised the marriage of Prince Henry and Catherine of Aragon. Henry further annoyed Ferdinand by keeping the princess's dowry, after Ferdinand asked for a marriage settlement or to return the bride and dowry to Spain. In 1506 Henry took an opportunity to create a treaty with Philip, this stated Suffolk would be returned to the English and Henry would marry Philip's sister. Ferdinand was now isolated and looked for an ally in France, Louis XII was glad to see relations between Netherlands and Spain were shattered.

In 1505 Ferdinand married Germaine de Foix, Louis' niece. Although this was bad for Henry he had no choice but to ally with Philip because of the growing influence he was having, the loss of Ferdinand was important. The situation then changed again when Philip of Burgundy died, his wife Joanna supposedly went mad with grief, giving Ferdinand an excuse to take over Castile. Margaret Savoy was now regent for six-year-old Archduke Charles in

the Netherlands, but Maximilian her father was really in charge. Henry had to alter his diplomacy according to these changes.

Worried France would try and obtain lands in Netherlands, because of its weakness Henry attempted to restore links to Ferdinand and strengthen them with Maximilian. Henry now sought Joanna of Castile as a wife, desperate for the alliance of England Castile and Burgundy to remain. However, now Ferdinand was in control of Castile and allied with France he refused the marriage of Joanna and to send Catherine's dowry. This proved a very difficult time for Henry and was the first signs of failing diplomacy. He had made a wrong move in offending Ferdinand. He had lost his main triangular alliance that had been his support against France.

He was now in a vulnerable position on the throne. Henry then realised his old three ways alliance was no longer possible and so looked for another, this came in the form of England, Netherlands and France. In 1507 Maximilian agreed to the marriage of the young Archduke Charles and Henry's youngest daughter, Mary. Perhaps this would have been a comfortable position for Henry to remain in, however Henry continues to annoy Ferdinand. He offers Louis XII's niece the opportunity to marry Prince Henry, it seems his plan of allying against Ferdinand was working.

The League of Cambrai really designed as an anti-Spanish alliance. However Louis decided he could not risk the understanding with Ferdinand over Italy. So when the league was signed it was an alliance against Venice, between the Pope, Louis XII, Archduke Charles and Ferdinand. So in the end it was

Henry that was isolated by this and not Spain. It seemed that dynastic consolidation was not as much as a priority for Henry in the third phase.

However, perhaps if he had remained as diplomatic as previously he would have had more success in this phase. But the unlucky deaths in this phase played a major part in problems Henry faced. If Henry Isabella of Castile had not died, Henry would not have had to try and keep both Philip and Ferdinand happy. On the other hand if Henry had been as diplomatic as when faced with the problem of Brittany's independence, he may have kept neutral and less involved.

Henry VII's foreign policy in terms of dynastic consolidation can definitely be described as his main aim in the first phase, and can be disputed if it was the same in the second phase. It was vital that dynastic stability dominated dealings with other major foreign powers, caused by the nature by which he came to power, usurpation. Perhaps to which the degree of which dynastic stability was the main aim in his foreign policy became weaker as the years and strength of England went on. This was caused by the financial and dynastic strength growing, which meant that Henry could afford to be brave. But when being brave, also consolidating the crown. For example, when France were attempting to take over Burgundy it was important that Henry showed resistance otherwise other countries would view him as an easy target.

In conclusion, dynastic stability had to dominate Henry's foreign policy because of the powerful countries in Europe at this time, such as Spain and

France, however the extent to which they dominated foreign policy decreased as time progressed.