The late summer of 1695 witnessed one of the more unusual events of the Nine Years' War. After more than two months of bloody siege, the great fortress and citadel at Namur had finally fallen to Stadholder-King William III's confederate army, and as was customary after a stout defense, the garrison's commander, Louis-François, marquis d'Boufflers, concluded an honorable "capitulation." According to its terms, he and his remaining 5,120 troops – more than 10,000 had been killed or wounded during the siege – were allowed to march out of the fortress through the breach at the Terra Nova accompanied by six cannon and two mortars.

1 Louis-François, marquis d'Boufflers, was one of the most experienced and respected of Louis XIV's generals. A veteran of the War of Devolution and the Dutch War, Boufflers was an excellent tactician but an average strategist. For his defense of Namur in 1695, Louis XIV would create him duke d'Boufflers. For details, see Linda Frey and Marsha Frey, eds., The Treaties of the War of the Spanish Succession: An Historical and Critical Dictionary (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 54-6.

While the capitulation might have followed the pattern of similar surrender documents, this would be no usual surrender. As Boufflers and his troops marched out of the breach and through the tidy gauntlet of allied troops formed up for this occasion, William's chief diplomat, Everard van Weede van Dijkveld, rode up to the Marshal and requested an audience with him away from the procession; he had something urgent to discuss. Annoyed, Boufflers replied, "I keep no secrets from the officers that accompany me; say what you have to say." While Dijkveld spoke with Boufflers, several of William's guard dragoons quietly interposed themselves between the marshal and his troops. Dijkveld asked if Boufflers would honor the capitulations concluded by the garrisons of Deynse and Dixmuide. When he refused, Dijkveld ordered the surprised Boufflers arrested. Almost before he could react, Boufflers was hustled away in the custody of William's surrounding dragoons. Escorted to Maastricht by William's favorite, Hans Willem Bentinck, first earl of Portland, Boufflers would remain under Portland's care until the garrisons were released.

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3 Everard van Weede van Dijkveld was special envoy from the States General to the government of the Spanish Netherlands for much of the Nine Years' War and was William III's most trusted diplomat. For details, see O. Schutte, *Repertorium der Nederlandse Vertegenwoordigers Residerende in het Buitenland, 1584-1810* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), 21-3; and J. H. Hora Siccama, *Aantekeningen en Verbeteringen op het in 1906 door het Historisch Genootschap uitgegeven Register op de Jounalen van Constantijn Huygens den Zoon* (Amsterdam: Johannes Müller, 1915), 752-4.

4 This passage is drawn from Knoop, 3:341.

5 Dixmuide and Deynse (Deinze) fell to Villeroi's army on 28 July and 29 July 1695 respectively. In both instances, the allied garrisons were not granted "honors of war" – which would have allowed them to exit the fortresses safely and march to allied lines – but instead were detained as prisoners of war, the consequence of an inadequate defense. What constituted an "adequate" defense is open to interpretation, but it usually required holding out until the enemy had created a practicable breach in the curtain wall, which did not occur in either case. Nevertheless, William III viewed the garrisons' surrender and imprisonment with anger. For details, see Childs, 284-8.

6 For details of Boufflers' arrest, see in particular Knoop, 3:340-2; N. Japikse, *Prins Willem III: de Stadhouder-Koning* (Amsterdam: J. M.
Although technically a prisoner, Boufflers was very well treated, and eventually he and Portland developed a friendship. Months later, the terms of William's demands met, Boufflers was released as promised. When he arrived in Paris, he received a hero's welcome, and his king showered him with gifts, including a dukedom. Such were often the ways of war and peace in the age of Louis XIV.  

In his classic work *On War*, the oft-quoted nineteenth-century military theorist Carl von Clausewitz states, "war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means." At few times in history was the relationship between diplomacy, war, and policy as closely linked as during Louis XIV's wars. The Nine Years' War – or War of the League of Augsburg as it is often called – erupted when Louis used military means in pursuit of his policy goals: the security of the eastern frontier of France through the seizure of the key fortress of Philippsburg and much of the surrounding territory. As Geoffrey Symcox writes in his essay on the origins of the Nine Years' War, however, "self-delusion is the occupational disease of absolute monarchs," and Louis XIV succumbed to this
dangerous disease in the decade leading up the Nine Years' War.\textsuperscript{10}

During the years between the conclusion of the Nijmegen peace and the French invasion of the Palatinate in September 1688, Louis XIV pursued an aggressive foreign policy aimed at extending the French frontier at the expense of his neighbors. His willingness to use force combined with adroit diplomacy to expand his territories ultimately undermined the security of France by uniting his enemies against him. By the time the Nine Years' War broke out, few of his neighbors trusted his diplomatic efforts, particularly given his reunions policy in the years following the Peace of Nijmegen. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that when the French monarch appeared to offer a diplomatic solution to the conflict between himself and the "Grand Alliance" in early 1693 only to follow this offer with more aggressive diplomacy and vigorous military operations, his enemies were less than receptive. William III, the leader of the allied coalition, was particularly wary and grew even more so during the course of the conflict. Indeed, Louis' insistence on using force to support his diplomatic initiatives only served to build greater mistrust of his motives within the allied camp, ultimately obscuring genuine diplomatic efforts aimed at ending the war in the years that followed.

This essay explores the tangled relationship between policy, diplomacy, and war, focusing on Louis XIV and William III's diplomatic efforts prior to the opening of official peace negotiations in Rijswijk in 1697. In 1693, many years before the peace was finally concluded, both monarchs expressed their desires to end the war. Given their apparently sincere wish to end the conflict in 1693, why did it take William and Louis another four years to reach a settlement? How were they finally able to reach an accord? In large part, Louis' so-called "Peace Offensive" of 1693 coupled with his refusal to accept the legitimacy of William III's succession to the English throne extended the war unnecessarily and created mistrust among his players.

\textsuperscript{10} Symcox, 179.
enemies, particularly William himself. At the same time, Louis' use of (often duplicitous) negotiations while simultaneously engaged in vigorous military operations pushed William and the allies to redouble their own military efforts. This complex and often muddled diplomatic situation, coupled with both sides' hope that their armies might eventually force the other side to the peace table through a victory on the battlefield, extended the conflict far longer than either monarch had intended. Only William's reliance on less traditional diplomacy ultimately eliminated the mistrust that hampered the negotiations and finally paved the way for the Treaty of Rijswijk.

War as an instrument of policy in the later seventeenth century

The Nine Years' War's opening moves in many ways highlight warfare's inability to be a decisive instrument of policy in the later seventeenth century. When Louis XIV invaded the Palatinate in 1688, he intended a lightning war that would gain him the territories he sought. Instead, he found a coalition arrayed against him, the product of his expansionist policies. Although his revocation of the Edict of Nantes turned many states against him, Louis' reunions policy in the years between the Peace of Nijmegen and the outbreak of war ultimately set the stage for his diplomatic isolation.\(^{11}\) French military strength was challenged for the first time by a coalition with the potential to field an army as strong as Louis', and given the character of seventeenth-century warfare, troop numbers more than any other factor had the potential to tip the scales of war to one side or another.\(^{12}\) At the same time, the combination of larger, slow-

\(^{11}\) Sonnino, 124-5; Symcox, 179-81, 203-5; and especially Peter H. Wilson, *German Armies: War and German Politics, 1648-1806* (London: University College London Press, 1998), 87-9.

\(^{12}\) During the course of the later seventeenth century, France gradually lost its technological edge on the battlefields of Europe. Consequently, numbers more than any other factor ultimately decided campaigns and battles during the period of the Dutch War and Nine Years' War. For details, see especially Symcox, 187-8; and Childs, 75-84.
moving field armies reliant on magazines for their food and fodder and theaters of operations dotted with Vaubanian fortresses ensured that battles would be few, while decision in battle, the only military factor which might have implications at the negotiating table, was extremely difficult to attain. The diplomatic consequences of a defeat were serious and dissuaded commanders from seeking a full-scale encounter. Consequently, positional warfare and maneuver rather than decisive battle dominated the war's campaigns, leading some scholars to conclude that warfare suffered from a "crisis of strategy."^{13}

Despite its military potential, the allied coalition operated at a significant numerical disadvantage during the early stages of the Nine Years' War, the product of coalition politics.\footnote{14} Consequently, Louis' generals could hazard a battle with less fear of the risks involved than their allied counterparts. The results are easy to see. Apart from the allied victory at Walcourt in 1689, the allies suffered defeat after defeat in the Low Countries: Fleurus in 1690, Leuze in 1691, Steenkerk in 1692, and Neerwinden in 1693. Although these defeats did not translate into the kind of breakthrough that would directly threaten the

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\footnote{13} Géza Perjes, "Army provisioning, logistics and strategy in the second half of the 17th century," in Acta Historica: Journal of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences 16 (1970): 1-52. Most historians of early modern warfare subscribe to Perjes' view that the logistical constraints of the day severely limited the ability of armies to achieve a decision on the battlefield: David Chandler, The Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough (London: B. T. Batsford, 1976), 11-23; John A. Lynn, The Wars of Louis XIV, 1667-1714 (New York: Longman, 1999), 79-82; and Childs, 31-64.\footnote{14} Although most historians agree that Louis XIV possessed the largest army, it was not always the largest army in the Low Countries. The difficulties in getting all of the various contingents into the Low Countries theater in a timely manner was a consistent problem for William III and his generals which often affected the army's overall strength. During his principal campaigns before 1694, William was often significantly outnumbered by the duke of Luxembourg and was usually late in leaving winter quarters, which meant that Luxembourg possessed the strategic advantage. For details, see Childs; and Lynn, 193-265.
Dutch Republic, as the French invasion had done in 1672, they did allow Louis' chief captain in the theater, the duke of Luxembourg, to crack the barrier of fortresses in the Spanish Netherlands by weakening the allied field armies in the theater. Mons fell in 1691, followed by Namur in 1692 and Huy and Charleroi in 1693, opening both Liège and even Maastricht to French attack, while much of Flanders and Brabant lay exposed to contribution raids.

Most damaging were the French raids into the Spanish Netherlands, which not only drained the coffers in Brussels, but made it increasingly difficult for the Spanish to pay their troops in the theater as well. Only in 1692, with the war in Ireland concluded did William begin to redress the imbalance of forces in the theater. The politics of coalition warfare ensured that, in spite of the coalition members' best intentions, many contingents were slow in arriving, which allowed the better organized and orderly French to beat the allies into the field. Even Parliament posed a problem. Preferring a smaller army supported by a blue-water, peripheral strategy to a continental focus on the "cockpit of Europe," the reigning Tories refused William's pleas to deploy

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16 For the impact of French contribution raids on the Spanish Netherlands during the Nine Years' War, see Reginald de Schryver, Jan van Brouckoven, Graaf van Bergeyck, 1644-1725: een halve eeuw staatkunde in de Spaanse Nederlanden en in Europa (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1965), 96-8.

17 According to de Schryver, the Spanish Netherlands' government's budget shortfall – the consequence of French contribution raids and trade embargoes – largely explains the shrinkage of Spanish troop strength in its lowland provinces. De Schryver, 83-8.
more troops to the Low Countries. Consequently, while the allies might have had the potential to match French military might in the Low Countries, early French success coupled with the politics of coalition warfare made it an almost unrealizable goal before 1694. Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that in late 1692 William expressed his weariness with the war, confiding to Anthonie Heinsius his desire to conclude a peace as soon as possible.

**Early negotiations and the "peace offensive"**

Although Louis XIV had met some success on the battlefield, his forces were still unable to win the kind of victory that might bring the allies to the negotiating table and secure the favorable peace he sought. Much like William III, Louis XIV had begun to tire of the war. While generally unknown to the allies, as early as the fall of 1692 the French economy was feeling strain of almost five years of war. Determined to end the conflict before his resources were further exhausted, Louis decided to make an all-out effort to end the war favorably by 1694. His strategy was two-fold: first, his armies would launch strong attacks in Germany, Italy, and the Spanish Netherlands aimed at inflicting a decisive defeat on one or more of the allied armies. Accompanying these military offensives would be political ones designed to unhinge the alliance. First and foremost, Louis hoped to pry Emperor Leopold, with his Turkish commitments, away from William III and the rest of the Grand

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Alliance. If he was successful, he believed a general peace might be concluded on his terms.\(^{20}\)

As part of this effort, Louis initiated negotiations with both William's and the Dutch Republic's representatives.\(^{21}\) He began this diplomatic onslaught in the winter of 1692-1693 by sending the count d'Avaux, former envoy to the Dutch Republic, to Sweden with the mission of convincing the king of Sweden to broker the peace settlement.\(^{22}\) At the same time, d'Avaux contacted the Dutch extraordinary minister to Sweden, Walraven van Heeckeren,\(^{23}\) through his Swedish contact, count Oxenstierna.\(^{24}\)

Initially, d'Avaux's overtures were met with interest,\(^{25}\) but soon William, Dijkveld, and van Heekeren began to express


\(^{21}\) The Dutch officials aware of these negotiations were Heekeren, Bentinck, Dijkveld, Heinsius, and William III. Only later were representatives from Amsterdam brought into this inner circle. For details on the conduct of peace negotiations during the Nine Years' War, see Guido de Bruin, Geheimhouding en Verraad: De geheimhouding van staatszaken ten tijde van de Republiek (1600-1750) (The Hague: SDU Uitgeverij, 1991), 348–9.

\(^{22}\) For a discussion of how d'Avaux was to travel through allied territory, the nature of his passport, and his reasons for traveling to Sweden, see van Weede van Dijkveld to A. Heinsius, Brussels, 14 Dec. 1692, and J. Robinson to Lord Nottingham, Stockholm, 22 Mar. 1693, in Van der Heim, 3:4-7; and Thomson, 28.

\(^{23}\) A nobleman from Zutphen, Walraven Van Heeckeren spent much of his diplomatic career in northern Germany and the Baltic, mostly serving as an extraordinary envoy. Prior to being sent to Sweden, Heeckeren was extraordinary envoy to Brunswick-Lünenburg and Celle. For details, see Schutte, 231-2.

\(^{24}\) Count Gabriel Thomson Oxenstierna was Swedish extraordinary envoy and plenipotentiary to the Dutch Republic in 1688-89. For details, see Hora Siccama, 520.

\(^{25}\) Van Heekeren to Heinsius, Stockholm, 22 July 1693, in Van der Heim, 3:17-9; and Jean Bérenger, "Die Politik Frankreichs bei den Rijswijker
doubts about d'Avaux's real intentions. Particularly troubling was the focus on William's legitimacy as a point of negotiation, a topic William himself considered closed because it was an English domestic concern. Louis' insistence on defending James II, however, convinced William that the Sun King's overtures could not possibly be sincere. This issue would prove to be one of the greatest stumbling blocks to peace.

A series of talks in the Low Countries followed the negotiations in Sweden. In the summer of 1693 while the armies campaigned, Louis sent a French merchant named Daguerre with instructions to determine which of William's interests were most important to him. Daguerre first contacted the Dutch resident in Brussels, Johan Hulst, to discuss "the disposition, which several of the French Ministers had for a [general] peace" and to determine William's true position, particularly with regards to James II. Hulst put Daguerre in contact with Dijkvelt, William III's chief negotiator. A shrewd diplomat, Dijkvelt immediately understood the real purpose behind Daguerre's mission and surmised that it was a ruse; Daguerre had no real power to negotiate a peace. True to his assessment, Daguerre produced a letter from Colbert d'Crissy, the French foreign minister, which professed the seriousness of Louis XIV's desires for peace but offered no conditions, no starting point for negotiations.


26 Oxenstierna told van Heckeren that William III's demand that he be recognized as legitimate sovereign of England "was a great obstacle" and that the two parties should at least "come to negotiate several conditions regarding King James II," in particular a pension of sorts since "King James must have something on which to live." For details, see Van Heckeren to Heinsius, Stockholm, Sept. 1693, in Van der Heim, 3:23-4.

27 Thomson, 30-1.

28 Van Weede van Dijkvelt to Heinsius, with the army at Leuven, 20 June 1693, in Van der Heim, 3:12.

29 Van Weede van Dijkvelt to Heinsius, Leuven, 16 July 1693, in Van der Heim, 3:16-7; Thomson, 31; and W. T. Morgan, "Economic Aspects of the
Although the Dutch would maintain their diplomatic efforts with the French during the summer months and well into the fall of 1693, after discovering the true motive behind the French actions, they no longer took the talks seriously. This understanding of Louis' motives, in turn, led William to view any French peace overtures with growing skepticism.30

Despite victories at Neerwinden and Marsaglia, Louis' military and diplomatic onslaught proved a failure. While Neerwinden allowed for the conquest of Charleroi, a key frontier fortress, it was not decisive enough to force William to the negotiating table. In fact, contrary to Louis' intentions, the defeat spurred the Dutch Republic and England to redouble their efforts to redress the military balance in the theater. In response to the defeat, William III dramatically increased the size of the allied contingent in the Low Countries in 1694. On 18 September, while French troops besieged Charleroi, the States General of the Dutch Republic read a petition from the Council of State (Raad van State) in response to William III's pleas for more troops, requesting a further 900,000 Dutch florins for the replacement of losses sustained during the 1693 campaign and the recruitment of additional forces to make up the shortfall. The wording of this petition illustrates the Council's recognition of the military problem facing the allies in the Spanish Netherlands:

the great advantage that superiority of troops gives the enemy, has this last year appeared so clear, or (to put it in a better way) is so painfully felt, that no one can doubt that the first and foremost responsibility of the good regents, with regards to the general security and defense [of the land], must go towards the army if not to increase [it], then at least, as much as is possible, to keep it at full strength.31

31 Thomson, 31-2; and Morgan, 227.
Meanwhile in England, William grew tired of the Tories' failure to provide adequate forces for the Low Countries and turned to the Whigs who were more willing to support his continental strategy. The result was not immediate; indeed, it would be another year before the parliamentary acts would be translated into soldiers in the theater. Nevertheless, the increase in English forces in the theater would enable William to meet the French army in the Low Countries on something close to even terms in 1694 and even surpass it in 1695.

With the realization that France might have to fight another campaign with even fewer resources, Louis XIV embarked upon yet another round of negotiations with William's representatives. Hoping to take advantage of his military successes in the Low Countries, Louis sent Abbé Morel to negotiate with Dijkvelt.

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32 These increases are reflected in The National Archives of Great Britain [formerly the Public Record Office, hereafter TNA], SP 8/15, ff. 158 ("A List of the Land Forces which his Matie. thinks necessary, to be maintained in England, Scotland, and beyond Seas, for the Service of the yeare 1694"); TNA, SP 8/15, ff. 230 ("A List of the Land Forces his Majty. has now in pay & which he thinks necessary to be continued and maintained in England & beyond Seas for ye Service of the year 1695"); and "A list of the General Officers and of the Colonels and Commanding Officers of his Majesty's Land Forces, with the numbers" in Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of the House of Lords, 1695-97, n.s., 2 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1903), 131-5.

33 By 1694, the allied armies in the Low Countries numbered over 150,000 men on paper. In all likelihood, however, the actual strength was closer to 125,000 given the inaccuracy of muster-rolls and the military accounting practices of the day. Dutch paper strength figures are contained in the following documents: NA SG (1.01.05), 8113 (Staten van Oorlog, [hereafter SvO] 1694), 8114 (Extraordinaris SvO, 1694), 8115 (Extraordinaris SvO, 1694 "Nieuwe geworven militie"); Ten Raa, Het Staatsche Leger, 7:339-40. The British strengths are derived from the allied order of battle presented in Edward d'Auvergne, The History of the Campagne in the Spanish Netherlands, Anno Dom. 1694 with The Journal of the Siege of Hay (London, 1694); and NA, Rijksarchief Zuid Holland 3.20.63, Familie van Wassenaer, #4 "Willem van Wassenaer-Duvenviorde," 2-10 ("Trouppes daer over den Coninck van Groot Bretaigne, Monsteringe, ende Reveue heeft gedaen, ende daer uyt d'Armée inde Spænsche Nederlanden, onder desselffs commande is gecomposeert 1694").
Unlike earlier discussions, however, Louis authorized Morel to enter into genuine talks with the intention of concluding a general peace settlement. These negotiations, too, ended in failure, and again the main sticking point was the English succession issue. Given the fact that William had established that the topic was "out of bounds," he felt that its mere mention demonstrated the insincerity of the French discussions. He wrote to Heinsius in November 1693,

I trust that no further mention shall be made in regards to the pretender Prince of Wales, because that business was set outside of a possible conclusion, [there] being no expedient of the world to find in it[.] It must be said, . . . in case further instances are done, that one probably can be certain, that Fr. [had] no real intention of negotiating and [it was done] only was for [their] amusement.

But for Louis, the succession issue was of vital importance. To accept William's legitimacy would undermine the very concept of divine right monarchy and thus Louis' own legitimacy. While Morel and Louis might have been sincere in their desire for peace, the suggestion that William was not the legitimate ruler of England tainted the negotiations nevertheless. Worse, the suggestion of his illegitimacy led William to perceive that Morel's overtures were again a mere diplomatic ruse, when in fact Louis had begun to seek a real end to the war.

The growing mistrust between William and Louis was only exacerbated by the events of 1694. For the first time since the war's beginning, the confederate army outnumbered French forces in the Low Countries. At the same time, crop failures and a dearth of money ensured that Luxembourg's army was relegated to the defensive. The result was William's first successful campaign of the war. Although there were no decisive

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34 Heinsius to van Weede van Dijkvelt, 12 Nov. 1693, in Van der Heim, 3:33; and Thomson, 31-2.
36 Thomson, 32.
field engagements, the allies did succeed in capturing the fortress of Huy and relieving French pressure on Liège and Maastricht.37

French economic and demographic crises coupled with the relative success of the allied campaign in 1694 led some in the allied camp to hope that perhaps Louis might be more open to compromise. Indeed, in the fall of 1694, it appeared that there might be a break in the allies' diplomatic fortunes to match their military ones. As part of ongoing negotiations between French and allied parties, Francisco Mollo, an Amsterdam merchant then in Paris,38 informed Dijkveld after an audience with Louis XIV, the dauphin, and Croissy, of Louis' desire to arrange a secret meeting between himself and Dutch representatives. According to Mollo, Louis desired to see if one could "come to a preliminary agreement for a good and sufficient barrier and equivalent for Luxembourg," on which the Republic had always depended, after which, Mollo believed, a general peace would surely follow.39 Not long after Mollo's letter to Dijkveld, a meeting was arranged in Maastricht between Dijkveld and two French plenipotentiaries: Messieurs de Callières, seigneur de la Roche-Chelly, de Gigny, and de Harlay-Bonneuil, conseiller d'Etat.40

From late October through the end of November, Dijkveld, Callières, and Harlay-Bonneuil tried to lay the foundation for a peace settlement. Initial discussions appeared promising, focusing on the composition of what would later constitute the "Dutch Barrier," a belt of fortified towns in the Spanish Netherlands designed to insure the security of the Dutch

37 The best overview of this campaign is Childs, 249-62; see also Lynn, 241-7.
40 A. Legrelle, La Diplomatie française et la Succession d'Espagne, vol. 1, Le Premier Traité de Partage (1659-1697) (Paris: F. Pichon, 1888), 392-3; and A. Legrelle, Notes et Documents sur la Paix de Ryswick (Lille: Desclée de Brouwer et Cie., 1894), 44-5.
Republic from future French attack.\textsuperscript{41} Although the first talks focused on which cities would comprise this barrier, gradually they drifted toward the question of Louis XIV's recognition of William III as king of England. On 14 November 1694, Dijkveld wrote to Heinsius that "the king their master should negotiate with the King of Great Britain, just as [he would] with all other princes, [and] if the peace was concluded, His Majesty should be recognized without condition." Again, the main sticking point continued to be Louis XIV's recognition of William III. Dijkveld refused to negotiate further until he received assurances from the French envoys that William III would be recognized; they assured him that Louis would recognize William but that it was important first to reach some agreement regarding the other terms of the settlement.\textsuperscript{42} Louis XIV's reluctance to recognize William up front, however, was not the reason for the eventual breakdown of the negotiations in Maastricht. Rather, the real troubles in the negotiations occurred in disagreements over the fate of Luxembourg, Strasbourg, and the rest of the barrier.

Much of the problem derived from the actual possession of the cities during the negotiations coupled with the indecision of the previous campaigns. Dijkveld proposed that the cities in question be considered under no one's control for purposes of negotiation. Not surprisingly, French plenipotentiaries refused since their forces were in possession of all of the places in question. When discussions began regarding the future of Strasbourg and Luxembourg, it quickly became clear to Dijkveld that the French were just as intractable in 1694 as they had been the year before. In spite of the setbacks they had suffered in the

\textsuperscript{41} Alice Claire Carter, Neutrality or Commitment: The Evolution of Dutch Foreign Policy, 1667-1795 (London: Edward Arnold, 1975), 18-26; and Olaf van Nimwegen, De Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden als grote mogendheid: Buitenlandse politiek en oorlogvoering in de eerste helft van de achttiende eeuw en in het bijzonder tijdens de Oostenrijksche Successieoorlog (1740-1748) (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 2002), 13-5.

\textsuperscript{42} Dijkveld to Heinsius, Maastricht, 14 Nov. 1694, in Van der Heim, 3:116-21; A. Legrelle, La Diplomatie française, 1:392-3; and A. Legrelle, Notes et documents, 46-8.
field during the previous summer, Louis' diplomatic position remained firm.\textsuperscript{43} Soon, the talks degenerated into little more than squabbles over who possessed the military advantage in the Spanish Netherlands. Dijkveld claimed that military affairs on the allied side were "in a more favorable state"; they had taken Huy and so insured the security of Liège. Dijkveld maintained that the allies would have even stronger forces in the field in the coming campaign year. Not surprisingly, the French plenipotentiaries argued the contrary; they in fact enjoyed the advantage in the Low Countries and to say otherwise was "injurious" to the reputation of the French king.\textsuperscript{44} The talks would continue for some weeks although it was clear to parties on both sides after the first few discussions that neither side was prepared for serious negotiations. Clearly, the distance between Louis and William's positions was simply too great to be bridged in 1694. The stadholder-king's desire for peace was indeed sincere, but he was not prepared to settle on French terms. As he confided in Heinsius, "[p]eople can believe what they want, but it is certain that there are few that have as good a reason as I to wish for a good peace if the same were a tolerable one[.] I would much prefer peace to the continuation of the war."\textsuperscript{45} With the success of the 1694 campaign, however, William III enjoyed the firm support of both the States General and the English Parliament and thus could afford to hold out for better terms.\textsuperscript{46}

In many ways, the 1695 campaign and its impact on the negotiations demonstrate the confluence of military action and diplomatic stalemate. William's 1695 campaign was his masterpiece, if he ever had one. For the first time in the war, the confederate army in the Low Countries operated at a distinct advantage. The duke of Luxembourg, the ablest of Louis' field commanders, had died in January 1695 leaving the less talented

\textsuperscript{43} Van Weede van Dijkvelt to Heinsius, Maastricht, 14 Nov. 1694 in Van der Heim, 3:118.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{45} William III to Heinsius, Kensington, 7/17 Dec. 1694, in ibid., 3:125.
\textsuperscript{46} William III to Heinsius, Kensington, 13/23 Nov. 1694, in ibid., 2:122; and Thomson, 32-4.
Villeroi in charge of French troops in the theater. Furthermore, Parliament's augmentation of the English army added no less than 20,000 additional troops to William's confederate army.\textsuperscript{47} The result was that the allies enjoyed a significant superiority in numbers, which in part explains the successful investiture and capture of Namur. Nevertheless, all did not go according to plan. The allied garrisons at Deynse and Dixmuide surrendered and were detained as prisoners of war, much to William's chagrin, and Villeroi bombarded Brussels as much to try to lure William away from Namur as to retaliate for the allied bombardment of French coastal towns. These events somewhat diminished William's capture of Namur in September 1695. Nevertheless, the 1695 campaign was his greatest military triumph.\textsuperscript{48}

Unfortunately, the successful campaign led Louis to dig in his heels still more at the negotiating table. Just as in 1693 when Louis XIV tried to use military success to leverage diplomacy, William III's 1695 campaign did not bring the Sun King to heel. Instead, Louis became even more intractable, particularly with regard to the barrier provisions. Thus military success threatened stalemate rather than fostering a diplomatic breakthrough.\textsuperscript{49} For much of the negotiations with Louis XIV to this point, William had been unable to ascertain the French monarch's real position. William had hoped to conclude a settlement in 1694, but again compromise proved illusive. One way to determine where Louis really stood on the issues was to ask him without asking him – in other words, to open another, more direct channel between William and Louis. The capture of Namur and its garrison commander, Marshal Boufflers, provided an opportunity to

\textsuperscript{47} 1695 saw the British army at its strongest, mustering 100,000 officers and men on paper. Of this figure, close to 60,000 were employed in the Spanish Netherlands. For details, see TNA, SP 8/15, fol. 230 ("A List of the Land Forces his Majty. has now in pay & which he thinks necessary to be continued and maintained in England & beyond Seas for ye Service of the year 1695"); and "A list of the General Officers and of the Colonels and Commanding Officers of his Majesty's Land Forces, with the numbers."

\textsuperscript{48} See, especially, Knoop, 3:303-49; Childs, 264-99; and Lynn, 247-51.

\textsuperscript{49} Morgan, 230.
gauge Louis' position on the barrier and a general peace, not to mention to communicate his own feelings in a less public way. Although we do not know what transpired between the earl of Portland and Boufflers, it is plausible – even likely – that upon his release, Boufflers served as an impartial messenger for William, able to express William's position on key issues like the barrier and the Spanish succession without alarming his Austrian allies.

Regardless of Boufflers' discussions with Portland in 1695-1696 and the messages he may or may not have borne to Louis XIV, the war ground to a halt in 1696 as England's finances threatened collapse and peace negotiations neared culmination. The exit of Savoy from the war at the very time the warring parties neared peace badly undermined the allies' position at the negotiating table. With more troops than ever available for the field just as the confederate army's troop strength waned, the result of the recoinage crisis, William would be forced to fight one last campaign. And yet, when the negotiations in Rijswijk appeared once more to reach a stalemate – again over the fate of James II – it was Portland and Boufflers who were summoned to break the deadlock.50

In July 1697, Portland the former jailer and Boufflers the former prisoner met in Brucom, near Brussels, to hammer out the details. As William's voice, Portland delivered the message of his sincerity regarding the peace and even distanced himself from the Spanish and imperialists who threatened to undermine the talks. Likewise, Boufflers, as the voice of Louis XIV, expressed his master's desire for peace. With the barriers of mistrust broken, the two were finally able to reach agreement. The meetings between Boufflers and Portland jump-started the negotiations and ultimately helped break the deadlock between the allies and Louis. As personal representatives of their respective masters, Portland and Boufflers were able to express their true positions, positions previously obscured by both sides' use of diplomacy as a tool of war. With the issues on the table,

50 Thomson, 34-42; and Morgan, 247-8.
the talks between Portland and Boufflers allowed each to identify the real sticking points in the negotiations as well as the subjects closed to discussion. In his essay on the Peace of Rijswijk, W. T. Morgan notes, "too much attention has been paid to the formal negotiations at [Rijswijk]. They meant little." According to Morgan, it was the discussions between William and Louis' diplomats – culminating in the negotiations between Boufflers and Portland – that ultimately mattered. \(^{31}\) Boufflers and Portland broke the deadlock. \(^{52}\)

What do the preliminaries to Rijswijk tell us about the relationship between diplomacy and war in the age of Louis XIV? First, the shared belief that one party's success on the battlefield would somehow lead the other to the negotiating table was misplaced. Louis' peace offensive failed to achieve the decisive results he had hoped for largely because the nature of the armies and warfare precluded an event on the battlefield decisive enough to end a war. Although Neerwinden had been a devastating blow to the coalition, it was not sufficient to break the allies' will. Likewise, Namur may have represented a personal victory for William, but in many ways it hurt the allied cause; not only was the operation extremely expensive, but it injured the pride of the Sun King, which in turn prolonged the peace process.

The use of negotiations as a policy tool in conjunction with military operations undermined diplomacy's effectiveness when both sides truly sought peace. Louis' continued use of deceptive and aggressive negotiations led to the loss of trust between William and himself and ultimately extended the conflict. The only way this trust was regained was through the use of more unorthodox channels. Although we do not know to what extent Portland conveyed to Boufflers William's diplomatic position regarding a settlement during his brief captivity in Maastricht, it

\(^{31}\) Morgan, 243, 244-9.

\(^{52}\) For details of these discussions, see especially David Onnekink, *The Anglo-Dutch Favourite: the Career of Hans Willem Bentinck, 1st Earl of Portland (1649-1709)* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 200-2; and Thomson, 42-5.
is certain that the trust developed between Portland and Boufflers during that period laid the foundations for the discussions that ultimately broke the stalemate at Rijswijk.