The Methods the Queen Has Used to Unsettle Neighboring Countries

This is what happened in England. But Queen Elizabeth and her council recognized that as matters were unfolding well for them (according to their lights), their deeds must needs offend the pope and the other Catholic monarchs and princes. And that, being separated from the faith and communion of the Catholic Church, they could have neither peace in their own house nor the security regarding their neighbors they hoped for. And so they decided that to secure the realm and protect the government, they would disturb the peace of neighboring lands, especially those of France, Flanders, and Scotland. By kindling fires there, they would so unsettle them that their princes would be unable to concern themselves with foreign affairs, having so much to do at home. Under this plan, breaking every ancient league and new alliance with the greatest princes and monarchs of Christendom, while merely making a show of observing them, they made pacts and leagues with the rebels against almost every monarch, at once traitors to their homelands and plagues upon Christendom. In Scotland, against Queen Mary; in France, against the three brothers, the Most Christian Kings; in Flanders, against the Catholic King Don Philip. And they so agitated these kingdoms and provinces, dispatching troops and occupying territory, seizing cities and stealing the merchants’ wealth, infesting the ocean sea with fleets and inducing their subjects to rebellion, and committing countless other affronts and outrages, that they have ruined the whole realm of Scotland and entangled its king in his present miseries and calamities. They have infected the kingdom of France, endangering the lives of Kings Francis II, Charles IX, and Henry III. They have ravaged and desolated the provinces of Flanders, sustaining the unjust and bloody war waged for so many years against the true and rightful lord, with their money, arms, soldiers, munitions, victuals, schemes, and advice. Nor have they been satisfied

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2 In addition to Elizabeth’s long history of financial support for the Protestant powerbrokers in Scotland, she had encouraged the Ruthven Raid of 1582, which saw the young James kidnapped by Calvinist lords. McCoog, Our Way of Proceeding?, 188.
3 1562, for example, saw an English force land in France to assist the Huguenot rebels against Charles IX, with disastrous results, including the loss of Dieppe and Le Havre. Haigh, Elizabeth I, 133–34.
with this, but they have also attempted to raise the states against the governor, Lord Don John of Austria, and to drive the Spanish garrison back into Italy. Not thinking themselves safe even with this, they sent from England a high-born gentleman, young and hot-headed, by the name of Egremont Radcliffe, to assassinate Lord Don John through treachery. But it pleased our Lord that this wickedness was discovered and the knight imprisoned: having confessed the truth, he was beheaded at Namur, and with him his brother-in-law (his confederate and companion in treachery). 5

They have offered and pledged themselves to all heretics, agitators, and disturbers of the commonwealth as comrades, defenders, and soldiers, for the purpose of further kindling and stoking the hellish flames of heresy against the Catholic Church. And this evil desire to spread the venom of perverted doctrine through the world and to embroil Catholic rulers with civil wars and the disobedience of their vassals has waxed so great that to this end they have dispatched ambassadors to Turkey and Muscovy, inciting those princes

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4 Though Elizabeth was wary of involvement with the Dutch rebellion against Spain, the Treaty of Nonsuch (1585) eventually committed her to 6,400 infantry, one thousand cavalry, and an annual subsidy of 126,000 pounds—that is, to open war on Habsburg forces in the Low Countries. Haigh, Elizabeth 1, 28, 135. Cf. MacCaffrey, Elizabeth 1, Chapter 17.

5 Egremont Radcliffe (d.1578) was the son of Henry Radcliffe, second earl of Sussex (c.1507–57). A participant in the ill-fated Rising of the North, he spent most the 1570s in exile or in captivity. Upon his release in 1578, he journeyed to the Spanish Netherlands to serve Don John of Austria (1547–78). Even before John’s mysterious death on October 1, 1578 (attributed by historians to the plague), an imperial adviser cautioned the governor general “that he is a rash and daring young man, ready for anything, and his sudden liberation and decision to serve us may well engender suspicion.” After John died, Radcliffe, along with a confederate by the name of Gray—who does not seem, pace Ribadeneyra and Sander, to have been related to him—was arrested on suspicion of having poisoned the governor general. The two were beheaded in Namur in December 1578. Julian Lock, “Radcliffe, Egremont (d. 1578),” in ODNB, 45:731–33. McCoog, Our Way of Proceeding?, 114. CSPSE, 2:497.

6 Beginning in the 1570s, Elizabeth began to work toward better relationships with the Ottoman Empire, including proposals for a military alliance against Catholic Europe. See Lisa Jardine, “Gloriana Rules the Waves: Or, the Advantages of Being Excommunicated (and a Woman),” Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, sixth series, 14 (2004): 209–22.


Russia was a Christian state (albeit not properly so in Ribadeneyra’s eyes); equating Muscovy with the Ottomans is more of a political statement—in the sixteenth century, the tsars’ polity became a symbol of despotism and tyranny. Scott, Oxford Handbook, 397.