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978-0-521-12447-8 - Muscovy and Sweden in the Thirty Years' War, 1630–1635

Edited by B.F. Porshnev and Paul Dukes and Brian Pearce

Excerpt

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## 1    Muscovy and the entry of Sweden into the Thirty Years' War

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### The diplomatic preparation

The years 1628–1629 were a turning-point in the Thirty Years' War. Its first phase had ended with almost complete victory for the Emperor and the Catholic reaction in Germany. All Europe was now faced with the danger that the Habsburgs' design of universal domination would be realised. The Polish–Lithuanian state was also closely associated with the Habsburg–Catholic bloc. The other states were alarmed by this developing aggression and in the 1630s we see them already united in a broad anti-Habsburg coalition which was to alter the course of the Thirty Years' War. Vague outlines of this future coalition were to be observed already in the 'Danish period' of the war (1625–1629), but two of its principal participants, France and Sweden, still at that time remained in the background.

It was precisely these two states, however, that were threatened with immediate dangers – France with strangulation in a ring of Habsburg possessions<sup>1</sup> which, under Richelieu, it had twice tried to break in Italy, in 1624 and in 1628 (the wars for the Valtelline and Mantuan succession), and Sweden with loss of its domination of the Baltic and establishment on the Swedish throne of the Catholic Sigismund III, by the hands of his kinsmen and allies the Habsburgs.

Richelieu emerged as the organiser of the European coalition against the Habsburgs. He had expressed the idea in 1624–1625 that the only way to bring down the Empire would be to make it fight a war on two fronts, to grip it between two armies, and, through the Dutch, he had tried to put that idea into effect, moving Denmark into Germany from the north-west and Sweden from the north-east. But at that time this plan miscarried owing to refusal by Gustavus Adolphus to begin a war with the Empire before he had concluded his war with the Polish–Lithuanian state for the

<sup>1</sup> Most scholars now reject the traditional thesis of German historians according to which Richelieu pursued an aggressive policy in the Thirty Years' War (cf. Beller, E., 'Recent Studies on the Thirty Years' War', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 3, No. 1, March 1931).

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Baltic littoral (Livonia and Prussia). This long-standing conflict, which had died down in 1622–1624, flared up again in 1625.<sup>2</sup> Despite all persuasion, Gustavus Adolphus remained adamant in his refusal. This had the consequence of temporarily discouraging Richelieu, and contributed to his inclining even to seek a *rapprochement* with the Habsburgs. But he was soon obliged to realise that such a course would be fatal for France.

The key role in the development of the Thirty Years' War at the beginning of the 1630s fell to Sweden. Not so much because of its strength as because of its strategic position, Sweden had the power to decide the fate of Europe. England and Denmark had withdrawn from the game at the end of the 1620s. France possessed an excellent ally against Spain, namely the Dutch, but had no ally against the Empire, despite intense diplomatic efforts. The Ottoman Empire was too much taken up with Persian affairs, and French diplomacy failed to bring it in against the Empire, right down to the end of the Thirty Years' War.

Sweden was a different matter, because it had its own dream of striking at the Empire, due to the growing concern with which it followed the Habsburg–Catholic preparations for ‘the rape of Europe’. Gustavus Adolphus, who had already ‘taken away the sea’, as he put it, from Muscovy (by the peace of Stolbovo in 1617) and was moving towards a similar result in his bitter war with the Rzeczpospolita, was now not merely hankering after the Pomeranian shore of the Baltic, which belonged to the Empire, but was also anxious about the Habsburgs, since they were preparing to deprive him of all his gains and even of his crown. In Gustavus Adolphus's own words, the Emperor was ‘aiming at the very heart of the Swedish state’.<sup>3</sup>

However, to take the offensive against the Empire before he had concluded his war with the Rzeczpospolita would have been, in Gustavus Adolphus's opinion, a stupid move to make, as he told the English, Dutch and Brandenburger diplomats in 1626. The Swedish King was convinced that he would be able quickly to achieve a definitive defeat of the Poles.

In the Habsburg camp, though, they also perceived that possibility. Wallenstein was mortally afraid of Swedish intervention in the war in Germany. As early as the Brussels congress of the Habsburg coalition, in 1626, the decision was taken to give covert military help to Poland, so as to keep Sweden's forces tied up. From 1627 a substantial part of Wallenstein's army was stationed in Pomerania so that from there it could come to the aid of the Poles. Swedish vessels were set on fire in the

<sup>2</sup> The basic source for the history of this war is the work by I. Hoppe, the *Burggraf* of Elbing: *Geschichte des ersten schwedisch-polnischen Krieges in Preussen*, edited by M. Toeppen, Leipzig, 1887.

<sup>3</sup> Forsten, G., *Baltiiskii vopros v XVI–XVII stoletiiakh*, Vol. II, St. Petersburg, 1894, p.304.

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Pomeranian ports. In 1629 a force of ten thousand men under Arnim's command operated in Prussia alongside Sigismund III's army, against the Swedes. Gustavus Adolphus's plan to end the war with Poland quickly was thus frustrated. But the Swedish King had already in 1628 been partly drawn into war with the Emperor when, in alliance with the Danes, he gave what help he could to the besieged Pomeranian port of Stralsund, against Wallenstein's army.

This event inspired Richelieu with fresh hope and reinvigorated his diplomatic efforts. To be sure, it proved impossible in the end to keep Denmark, which had been irretrievably beaten, within the anti-Habsburg coalition. Nevertheless, he strove by every means to keep up Denmark's spirits while at the same time applying himself to his main task – bringing Sweden into the war against the Empire.

That was still a task of exceptional difficulty. In the first place, Sweden lacked sufficient resources for paying and maintaining its armed forces: the state's coffers were empty. Richelieu could help with that problem by granting Sweden large subsidies from France's treasury. In the second place, it was necessary, at whatever cost, to reconcile Sweden and Poland: the situation in Europe brooked no further delay. But how was this result to be attained? Dutch and Brandenburger intermediaries had tried to bring it about in 1627 and 1628, and failed. Consequently, Richelieu was required to turn his diplomatic efforts to disentangling the very complicated contradictions in the far east of Europe. Unless he plunged into East-European politics he would be unable to solve the problem, of importance to all Europe, of organising an anti-Habsburg coalition.

Richelieu himself explained this in his memoirs. Gustavus Adolphus was 'a new rising sun' in North-Eastern Europe. The King of France had taken note of this young prince with a view to trying to make use of him in order to divert, in due course of time, the Emperor's main forces and to prevent the Emperor from unjustly waging war in Italy and France, and to make him give up, through the terror and damage he would suffer, his design aimed at oppressing public freedom . . . Several princes of the Empire, wrongly despoiled of their states by the Imperial forces . . . look toward the King of Sweden in their wretchedness, as navigators look toward the North. But he was busy with war against Poland, and, although he lacked neither courage nor ambition, he needed to be freed from that enemy before making for himself another, such as the House of Austria was.<sup>4</sup>

Richelieu succeeded in accomplishing this task. In September 1629, through French mediation, a six-year truce was agreed between Sweden and the Polish-Lithuanian state. Gustavus Adolphus was free to move against the Habsburgs.

<sup>4</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires* (Collection Michaud et Poujoulat, Vol. XXII, Paris, 1854), pp. 67–69.

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Many historians consider this truce to be Richelieu's most brilliant diplomatic achievement. 'What an incomparable piece', Lamprecht exclaims, 'was this Swedish King on the chessboard of France's anti-Habsburg policy! If only his hands were freed so that his full strength was made available, he would be able, from an unsuspected corner, to cause the Emperor to find himself in check. Consequently, it was a masterly move of French diplomacy when, through its mediation, a six-year truce favourable to Sweden, was agreed on by Poland and Sweden in September 1629.'<sup>5</sup> Many such enthusiastic evaluations by historians concerning Richelieu's skill in connection with the truce of Altmark could be quoted.<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, West-European historians have stayed with this view. Yet the question arises here: what did this masterly move consist in, with what means did Richelieu succeed in solving the key task of European politics, namely, ending the Polish–Swedish war? One cannot confine oneself, as they do, to talk about Richelieu's 'cunning' or about some 'extensive connections' which he possessed in Poland. Let us try to throw light on this question.

The dispatches of Baron Charnacé, whom Richelieu sent into Eastern Europe at the beginning of 1629 on a mission of mediation, show that he encountered considerable difficulties. When, in 1627, the Dutch had sought to incline Sigismund III of Poland towards peace with Sweden, he was unwilling to hear of it on the grounds, as one dispatch tells us, that he had received 'great promises from the Pope, the Emperor and the King of Spain that they would render powerful aid to the Polish King'.<sup>7</sup> And in fact the Emperor did send Sigismund III an auxiliary corps for the war with Sweden, while the Spaniards supplied warships, and so on. True, Richelieu knew in 1627, from his informants in Poland, that the magnates and the Sejm were pressing for a quick peace with Sweden precisely because of this military aid from abroad, as they feared that Sigismund might, relying on such support, proclaim himself an hereditary and absolute monarch.<sup>8</sup> The Empire's open preparations to fight for domination of the Baltic also disposed part of Poland's merchant class and *szlachta* against the pro-Habsburg policy of Sigismund III and for reconciliation with Sweden. Charnacé, of course, had to base himself first and foremost on these oppositional sentiments, as we learn from one of the dispatches

<sup>5</sup> Lamprecht, K., *Istoriia germananskogo naroda*, Vol. III, Part 5, St. Petersburg, 1896, p. 516. [*Deutsche Geschichte*, Vol. V, Part 2, 1895, p. 726.]

<sup>6</sup> The main work on this is Cichoński, M., 'Medjacia Francji w rozejmie Altmarkskim', in *Polska Akademja umiejetnosci. Wydral hist-filozof. Rozprawy*, Vol. 67, No. 1, Cracow, 1928.

<sup>7</sup> *Akty i pis'ma k istorii baltiiskogo voprosa v XVI i XVII stoletiakh*, ed. G. Forsten, fasc. II, St. Petersburg, 1893, p. 91.      <sup>8</sup> Ibid.

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of his mission.<sup>9</sup> But the King's party nevertheless enjoyed undisputed predominance in Poland, and the French diplomat's intervention was incapable of altering this relation of forces. After having won a victory over Gustavus Adolphus in Prussia in June 1626, with the aid of the Imperial auxiliary troops, Sigismund III remained, as before, uninterested in peace.

As for Gustavus Adolphus, he too did not feel that he was weak, and in July he turned the tables on the Poles, in a small way, before Marienburg. The chief argument of the Swedish government against peace with Poland was set out with complete frankness by Chancellor Oxenstierna in his reply to Charnacé's proposals for mediation: Sweden saw no certainty that the Poles would not use the truce for making war preparations, and then stab the Swedes in the back as soon as they began war with the Empire.<sup>10</sup>

These were the almost insuperable difficulties that Charnacé encountered in Eastern Europe. However, Richelieu possessed the key to the accomplishment of his task.

In order to understand how it was that Charnacé, in spite of everything, compelled Sigismund III to go over from uncompromising belligerency to compliant peaceableness it is enough to read the brief instructions that were given to him on 25 January 1629, when he set forth on his mission. The most important item in them was the point which indicated how Charnacé had to go about inclining the Polish King towards peace. The diplomat was to tell Sigismund III that, in offering to mediate for conclusion of peace, 'His Majesty [the King of France] is guided chiefly by the interests of the King of Poland, for if the Swedish King allies with the Muscovite [*unist avec luy le moscovitte*] which is his intention, so His Majesty has learnt, such an alliance can bring notable harm to the Polish King.'<sup>11</sup> This was Richelieu's idea: to frighten Poland with the prospect of a Swedish–Russian military alliance, a war with two enemies at the same time, even while the war with Sweden alone was proving hard to keep up. As we read in Richelieu's memoirs, Charnacé convinced the Poles that Louis XIII knew on good authority that the Tsar of Muscovy had decided 'to break the truce that winter and march a powerful army into Poland', so that Poland would have 'two strong enemies to cope with at the same time'.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Relation de ce qu'a faict le S. Charnacé en Brandenbourg et en la trève entre les rois de Pologne et de Suède. Octobre 1629*, in *Akty i pis'ma*, fasc. II, No. 40, pp. 101–103.

<sup>10</sup> *Akty i pis'ma*, fasc. II, No. 56, p. 135; Forsten, *Baltiiskii vopros*, Vol. II, p. 279.

<sup>11</sup> 'Instruction et dépêche baillée à Mons. de Charnassé allant en Allemagne. Du 25 Janvier 1629'; Forsten, *Baltiiskii vopros*, Vol. II, p. 278.

<sup>12</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, p. 70.

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The information about the Moscow government's decision was no invention of Richelieu's but did accord, as we shall see, with the truth. Richelieu merely made vigorous use of information supplied to him by his brilliant international informants. But he was not content with that: he resolved to give active backing to the Muscovite's decision to go to war with Poland. After Baron Charnacé was sent to talk to Sigismund III in Prussia, Baron des Hayes de Courmesnin was sent to Moscow, to Tsar Mikhail Fedorovich, accompanied by an equally noble retinue.

Thus, Richelieu's 'masterly move' consisted of two parts, united by a single aim: (1) to tell the Polish government of Moscow's decision to break the truce of Deulino and (2) to send a special embassy to Moscow.

Let us analyse the reasons that could have compelled Richelieu to make such a seemingly unexpected move. We can point to three motives:

1. As far back as 1625 Richelieu contemplated sending an embassy to Moscow. This was recorded by the Dutchman Isaak Massa, who was intending at that time to accompany this mission, which, however, did not take place.<sup>13</sup> Formally, it was to have been a response to the Russian embassy of Kondyrev and Neverov which had come to France in 1615. Why was Richelieu thinking of Moscow in 1625, particularly? Doubtless because it was then, as we have mentioned, that he had a real hope of bringing Sweden into the war with the Empire. The logic of things demanded that the situation in Eastern Europe should in no way hinder Sweden from engaging in West-European affairs. In 1625, however, Richelieu's plans regarding Sweden were not fulfilled. It was natural that in 1629, when these plans were revived, there was reactivated along with them the idea of an embassy to Moscow.

2. In 1628 a group of French merchants who wished to form a company for trade with Muscovy presented Richelieu with a memorandum in which they set forth the principal problems affecting Franco-Russian trade. Among other things they proposed was that a response should at last be made to Kondyrev's embassy of 1615 – that an embassy to Moscow be organised. It is important to stress that one point in this memorandum cannot have failed to prompt Richelieu into thinking that a *rapprochement* between France and Muscovy might serve as a lever for political pressure on Poland. This point ran as follows: 'Besides the advantages that France can draw from these relations with Muscovy through trade, the King will become even more important among the Northern rulers and especially in the eyes of the Polish King, who, having no enemy more powerful than Muscovy, will henceforth hold back from promoting the interests of the House of Austria, since His Majesty [the King of France] can also harm

<sup>13</sup> *Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov (TsGADA)*, Dela gollandskie, 1625, stb. 2.

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him and render services to the Grand Duke of Moscow.<sup>14</sup> This memorandum was doubtless among the preconditions for the embassy of Des Hayes de Courmesnin to Moscow in 1629, although it was not the immediate reason for the embassy.

3. There can be no doubt that the immediate reason for the embassies of Charnacé and Des Hayes was some news received in Paris of a very important political decision which had been taken in Moscow, namely, not to wait for the expiry of the truce with the Polish–Lithuanian state but to start a war with it at once, thereby helping the Swedes. This news doubtless did not come to Paris from Sweden, since the decision in question was first conveyed, confidentially, by the boyars to the Swedish ambassadors Monier and Bönhardt in March 1629,<sup>15</sup> and Richelieu already knew of it two months earlier, in January 1629, when he drew up his instructions for Charnacé, saying ‘. . . as His Majesty has learnt’.

We have succeeded in discovering another source of Richelieu’s information – Turkey. The first person in Moscow who was told of the decision to break the truce with Poland was the Turkish ambassador, the Greek Foma Cantacuzene, who at once passed the news back to Turkey (1628). And in Constantinople, at the court of Sultan Murad IV, there were no secrets safe from those who were able to pay for them. First among the latter was France’s permanent ambassador in Turkey, Césy. Extracts from his dispatches to Paris in 1620–1627, taken from the archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs,<sup>16</sup> show that this French agent was very well informed concerning Moscow’s policy, and, consequently, that the government in Paris knew about it. Unfortunately, Césy’s dispatch of 1628, which is of most interest to us, has not been published and is apparently missing from the archives, so that we can only speculate about its content.

After carrying out a number of diplomatic assignments on his way to Germany, Charnacé arrived at Sigismund III’s camp before Marienburg in the middle of July 1629. At that same time news was received there, from Denmark, of the mission of Des Hayes de Courmesnin, who had embarked at Dieppe on 6 June and arrived in Denmark on 29 June. His stay in that country was marked with great celebrations.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, both components of Richelieu’s ‘masterly move’ influenced Sigismund III’s policy simultaneously.

<sup>14</sup> *Recueil des instructions données aux ambassadeurs et ministres de France, Russie*, published by Rambaud, Vol. VIII, 1890, p. 23. Cf., also, Bezobrazov, P.V. *O snosheniiakh Rossii s Frantsiei*, Moscow, 1892, pp. 5–6.

<sup>15</sup> *TsGADA, Dela shvedskie*, 1629, stb. 2, ll. 275, 319, 353–354.

<sup>16</sup> *Akty istoricheskie, otnosiashchiesia k Rossii, izvlechennye iz inostrannykh arkhivov i bibliotek A.I. Turgenevym*, Vol. II, St. Petersburg, 1842.

<sup>17</sup> *Les voyages de M. Des Hayes de Courmesnin en Danemark, enrichis d’annotations par le sieur P.M.L.*, Paris, 1664.

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Charnacé was at first received by the Poles in an unfriendly way. On the pretext of a dispute about titles and credentials he was not admitted to the King's presence. He was showered with reproaches because his sovereign, the King of France, while presenting himself as a friend of Poland, had at the same time sent Des Hayes to Moscow to stir up the Muscovite Tsar against Poland. Charnacé parried these reproaches with the prepared reply that the mission of Des Hayes to Moscow pursued solely commercial aims.<sup>18</sup> Special care was taken in Paris to lend verisimilitude to this story. Des Hayes de Courmesnin had in fact been given very extensive commissions regarding trade, as well as his political instructions. Furthermore, in the eyes of the public, his visit to Moscow was merely the French government's response to the above mentioned memorandum about difficulties being experienced in trade with Muscovy which had been presented to Richelieu by a group of French merchants in the previous year.<sup>19</sup> All of this deprived the Poles of any formal justification for reproaching the ambassador. But, of course, there was nothing to stop them speculating about the political content of Des Hayes's mission.

This mission and the information brought by Charnacé greatly disturbed the Polish government. But it did not yield at once. While Charnacé was being held up by endless altercations, a diplomatic trial-balloon was quickly flown towards Moscow. We know about this from a letter of Mikhail Fedorovich to Gustavus Adolphus. In July 1629 there suddenly appeared at the Russian frontier near Viazma two Polish envoys whose task was to restore diplomatic relations between Poland and Russia, which had been broken off in 1622. These envoys said that they were to be followed by a 'great embassy' from the Polish King. This was undoubtedly an attempt by Sigismund III either to ward off a blow or, at least, to find out for certain what the situation was. The second aim was definitely attained, for not only was the 'great embassy' not accepted, but the Muscovites refused even to talk with the envoys. They were refused audience in Moscow and ordered to quit the territory of Muscovy forthwith.<sup>20</sup>

At the same time Charnacé, having lost patience, left at the end of July for the Swedish camp, almost despairing of success. On 1 August, however, apparently just as the Polish envoys returned from Viazma, he was suddenly recalled, by an urgently worded letter, to the Polish camp, where he was graciously received by Sigismund III. All the diplomatic obstacles collapsed at once. Peace negotiations began on 6 August.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, p. 71.      <sup>19</sup> *Les voyages de M. Des Hayes*, pp. 1–2.

<sup>20</sup> *TsGADA*, *Dela shvedskie*, 1630, stb. 2, l. 246.

<sup>21</sup> Hoppe, *Geschichte*, pp. 434–459; Richelieu, *Mémoires*, pp. 72–75.

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In fact, nothing was left to Sigismund III but to trust Charnacé and agree to a truce with Sweden. Moreover, he now showed impatience for even greater speed and tractability in the negotiations. He agreed to leave Sweden, for the duration of the truce, in possession of almost all the Baltic coast that belonged to the Rzeczpospolita. The negotiations lasted through August, with military operations suspended, and in September 1629 they were crowned with the signing of the truce of Altmark.<sup>22</sup> It should be mentioned that the English intermediary Thomas Roe, who arrived at the end of August, tried to blacken his rival, Charnacé, in the eyes of the Poles by means of something that was actually to his credit, namely revelations concerning the Des Hayes mission to Moscow.

Gustavus Adolphus's agreement to the truce was obtained partly with the aid of that mission. Des Hayes's embassy strengthened the Swedish King's hope that the Russo-Polish antagonism would become active and so Sweden would be able, without fear, to embark on the great struggle with the Empire. It was with this prospect in mind that Gustavus Adolphus entered into the truce of Altmark. But he had already received, by then, without the help of France, Muscovy's promise to begin a war with Poland.

It was highly characteristic of the Richelieu school of diplomacy that while Charnacé was having to disavow Des Hayes, describing him as no more than a commercial agent, Des Hayes, in Moscow was having to disavow Charnacé and his mission in Poland. Since, in Richelieu's view, cessation of the war between Sweden and Poland did not suit the interests of Muscovite policy, Des Hayes assured the boyars that French diplomacy was not involved in any attempts at conciliation between the warring powers, neither those said to be prompted by Thomas Roe, the English ambassador in Poland, nor those which were ascribed to the Dutch. On the contrary, France was helping the Swedish war-effort.<sup>23</sup> It may be that it was in order to make the mutual disavowal by his two envoys seem more natural that Richelieu had assigned these roles to men who were irreconcilable enemies one of the other. Charnacé and Des Hayes continued their bitter political conflict in the years immediately following their missions in Eastern Europe, until Charnacé won the day. Des Hayes, having been found guilty of connections with the anti-Richelieu court party of Gaston of Orléans, ended on the scaffold in 1632.<sup>24</sup> This biographical episode deserves mention because it may account for the extraordinary reserve shown by the French memoirists and historians of

<sup>22</sup> For the text of the treaty see Hoppe, *Geschichte*, pp. 666–676.

<sup>23</sup> *TsGADA, Dela frantsuzskie*, 1629, kn. 2, ll. 115, 181, 227–229.

<sup>24</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres, instructions diplomatiques et papiers d'état*, published by M. Avenel, Vol. VIII, Paris, 1877, p. 82; Richelieu, *Mémoires*, p. 414.

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the seventeenth century, including Richelieu himself, when discussing Des Hayes's mission to Moscow in 1629. And that, in turn, has caused later historians to neglect this very important fact in the diplomatic history of the Thirty Years' War – all the more because the French public records contain neither the instructions drawn up for Des Hayes nor any reports on his mission.<sup>25</sup>

It is significant that Louis XIII's letter to Mikhail Fedorovich, with which Des Hayes set out, was signed at Susa (in Northern Italy) on 22 April 1629,<sup>26</sup> that is, a few days after the signature there of the treaty between Savoy and France<sup>27</sup> and two days before the signing, also at Susa, of the Anglo-French peace treaty.<sup>28</sup> This was a moment of feverish and truly titanic activity on Richelieu's part. The negotiations between Denmark and the victorious Empire were nearing conclusion. Richelieu had failed to delay them any further. In May the peace of Lübeck was signed. Not a moment must be lost, for the dark cloud of Habsburg-Catholic aggression hung over Europe. At home Richelieu hastened to put an end to the struggle with the Huguenots (the *Edit de grâce* was issued in June 1629). In September 1629 came the truce of Altmark. And in June 1630 Gustavus Adolphus, freed from his conflict with the Polish-Lithuanian state, landed on one of the islands on the Empire's Baltic coast. The 'Swedish period' of the Thirty Years' War had begun.

One should not, however, exaggerate the part played by Richelieu in all of this. He himself remarks that France was unable to influence Muscovite policy.<sup>29</sup> Moscow's position in relation to the division of Europe into two coalitions, Habsburg and anti-Habsburg, was determined not by Richelieu's intrigues but by the entire preceding history of Muscovy's intercourse with Europe.

An historian of the Thirty Years' War who confines his attention to Western Europe might perceive the role played by Moscow in the history of the truce of Altmark as an involuntary one, as the mere coincidence in time of two series of events, a fortunate accident that Richelieu exploited. It would even seem more likely than not that when the Muscovite government decided to terminate the truce with Poland it failed to contemplate the consequences that its decision would entail for Europe.

On the other hand, though, common sense is against such a notion. It is beyond doubt that even the most short-sighted foreign policy of any state must take account of the strength not only of its neighbours but also that

<sup>25</sup> *Recueil des instructions*, p. 24.      <sup>26</sup> *TsGADA, Dela frantsuzskie*, 1629, II. 11–12.

<sup>27</sup> During the War of the Mantuan Succession, in which the Duke of Savoy at first took the side of France's opponents (Editor) [i.e. the editor of the Russian original – Trans].

<sup>28</sup> Ending the war of 1627–1629 between these states (Editor) [see n. 27].

<sup>29</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, p. 70.