Spanish And English Rivalry

Spain and England would be considered to be major powers at the time, they would focus on the notion of expansion and exploration into the Americas that would significantly benefit them in resources for their economy and also power. Another reason for expansion was to expand religion throughout the world and to grow their beliefs between indigenous habitants of the new world. As the Spanish were to be considered Catholics, they would spread Catholicism throughout the Americas, as for the English who would be recognized as protestant, would hold sides with other powers. Even though Religion was a major part in conflict and rivalry between these powers we can argue that there are many more reasons that led to the Anglo Spanish war in 1585-1604 such as commercial rivalry and English actions with the Dutch that would later on ensue to the start of the war.

English and Spanish powers would both fight for and claim to rule territory in the west Indies. In 1498, The Spanish would gain information that the English are assembling a voyage to discover islands and continents. Don Pedro would state that the land that the English are trying to find are already in possession of Spain. For example, it states, “I told him that, in my opinion, the land was already in the possession of Your Majesties; but though I gave him my reasons, he did not like them” (Pedro 1). Spain would use the Americas to gain silver which was a very useful resource in expanding their economy and trade. Sir Benjamin Rudyerd would state, “For it is very well known that Spain itself is but weak in men and barren of natural commodities [resources]” (Rudyerd 4). This shows that Spain was in need of resources and used exploration and expansion so they can get whatever they needed to build their government and economy. The English would have pirates that would steal and take control of Spanish ships that werenreturning resources back to Spain, it is stated, “They go so far as to boast that they are lords of the sea and of the land, and as a matter of fact daily we see them seize ships both of the Indies trade and also some that come here from Spain itself” (Aldrate/Costilla 2). The activities from the English pirates would seriously affect Spanish royal revenues. Spain would then consider that the only way to prevent the English and French from going into areas was to sink them and to not spare them which would then escalate more tension between the two powers. “no foreign ship should be spared in either the Spanish or Portuguese Indies, but . . . everyone should be sent to the bottom . . .. This will be the only way to prevent the English and French from going to those parts to plunder” (Mendoza 2). This shows that this is a response for the pirate raids that were conducted by the English and that the Spanish are taking action. Later during the year 1586, the English would take control on Santo Domingo and would destroy, burn and take whatever they needed in a revolt of Spain. It is stated “The English remained here thirty-six days, during which they treated this city as an enemy of their religion, of their queen, and of themselves. They carried away everything they wanted and could transport; everything else they burned and destroyed” (Dean of the cathedral 3). This shows that religion between the two is very much disagreed upon both sides and that they have different beliefs.

After the result of the Spanish Armada would fail, stated by Richard Hakluyt, “Thus the magnificent, huge, and mighty fleet of the Spaniards (which themselves termed in all places invincible) such as sailed not upon the Ocean sea many hundred years before, in the year 1588 vanished into smoke, to the great confusion and discouragement of the authors thereof”

(Hakluyt 3-4). England would still try and take control of the west indies and would have a design for taking over Spanish territory. “The design in general is to gain an interest in that part of the West Indies in the possession of the Spaniard” (Cromwell 5). As years would pass on, England and Spain would have a peace treaty in the year 1670 “GODOLPHIN TREATY, celebrated between the Crowns of Spain and Great Britain, to reestablish Friendship and good Relations in America. Madrid, July 18, 1670” (Treaty of Madrid 6). This shows that any land that the English had claimed would be given and no conflict would escalate between the two. Religion seen by most was also considered to become the reasons for tension and war between the two powers. At the time England would be considered to be a protestant country which did not please Phillip II who as considered to be a devout catholic. As Elizabeth was seen as the protestant cause was the center to her survival, she would then be joining and supporting the sides of the Dutch. Elizabeth would sign the Treaty of Nonsuch with the Dutch which would be, “pledging support to the Dutch rebels against Spain and, of course, Philip II’s consequent sending of the Spanish Armada (1588)” (Bhaduri 151). This was a response due to catholic Spain persecuting the Dutch who were protestant. And as war would break out in 1585 between Spain and England, the English would join the side of the Dutch Protestant United Provinces who would declare independence from Phillip II and Spain.

As though the English decided to support the Dutch due to being a protestant power and going against the Catholic Spanish, which could be considerably a good reason for the start of the war due to religious tension. However, religion did play a significant role in conflict and rivalry, it would not be considered the main cause for the Anglo Spanish war as there were many more actions such as commercial rivalry and English actions which were the results for the hnger of power of the Americas and islands.

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