The Second Northern War [1655-1660] and the Crisis of Government in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

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This thesis examines the crisis of government experienced by the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania in the aftermath of the Cossack Revolt, which began in 1648, and the invasions of Muscovy [1654] and Sweden [1655]. The Commonwealth's collapse in the face of these invasions demonstrated serious weaknesses in its decentralised political system. The essential concern of this thesis is to explain why all attempts to introduce political reform should have failed after 1655, despite a widespread conviction that reform was necessary.

The thesis concentrates on royal policy under John Casimir [1648-1668]. The decision of the royal Court to pursue the election of a successor to John Casimir *vivente rege* has frequently been blamed for the failure of reform, since concentration on the election, it is argued, meant that the Court missed a good opportunity to reform the Polish Diet by introducing majority voting and abolishing the principle of the *liberum veto*, by which the vote of one deputy was sufficient to break the proceedings of the Diet. In the 1660's, royal efforts to secure the election convinced many that the veto was a necessary barrier to royal absolutism.

This thesis examines the reasons for the adoption of the election campaign, and challenges the view that this decision was taken primarily for private or dynastic reasons. It concentrates on the period 1655-1660, and examines the decision to pursue the election against the background of the conduct of foreign policy.
during the war. In this context, the decision was sensible and seemed to have a good chance of success. Support for the election remained strong on the Senate Council until at least 1661, while both the King and leading politicians began to have serious doubts about the wisdom of introducing majority rule.
There is no satisfactory solution to the problem of personal and place names in a thesis on Eastern European history. I have tried to balance the conflicting claims of consistency and comprehensibility for readers unacquainted with East European languages. Where a satisfactory English equivalent exists, I have used it for the Christian names of ruling princes and members of royal families. I have used transliterations from Ukrainian for the names of Cossack leaders: Khmel'nycyi, not Chmielnicki. With regard to place names, wherever possible I have used the modern English equivalent, or the form most familiar to English-speaking readers: on occasion this means preferring a Russian to a Byelorussian or Ukrainian form: thus Mogilev, not Mahiliou; Chernigov, not Chernihiv. With regard to cities and provinces whose cultural and ethnic composition has changed radically since 1655, I have preferred as far as possible the form used by the dominant linguistic group in the area or town in the seventeenth century. Thus for places in Prussia and Silesia, German has been preferred: Danzig, not Gdańsk, Thorn, not Toruń, Breslau, not Wrocław. The one exception is the Bishopric of Warmia [Ermland], since by the seventeenth century this was held by Poles rather than Germans. Similarly, I have preferred Polish rather than Lithuanian or Byelorussian forms for most places in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, although I have used Ukrainian forms for most places in the Ukraine. Transliterations from the Cyrillic alphabet have been carried out according to a modified version of the Library of Congress system. All dates are given in New Style. All translations from Polish, Latin, French, German and Italian are by the author.
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In the summer of 1655, the second-largest state in Europe collapsed. The Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania had struggled for seven years to contain a massive Cossack revolt led by Bohdan Khmel'nyt's'kyi, which had broken out in the Ukraine in the summer of 1648. After six years of inconclusive fighting, Khmel'nyt's'kyi, unable to force the Commonwealth to accept his demands, had looked to Alexis, Tsar of Muscovy, to break the deadlock. By the Treaty of Pereiaslav [18th January 1654], the Cossacks put themselves under the protection of the Tsar; shortly afterwards, Muscovite armies swept into the Commonwealth. The result was wholly unexpected: already weakened by the struggle against Khmel'nyt's'kyi, the Commonwealth armies were pushed back relentlessly. By the summer of 1655, Alexis had occupied most of Lithuania, while joint Cossack and Muscovite forces in the Ukraine had driven the Poles back to Lwów. On 9th August 1655, the Tsar's triumphal entrance to Wilno, capital of Lithuania, crowned a remarkable campaign which upset the whole balance of power in eastern and northern Europe.

The coup de grâce was administered by Sweden. The Muscovite drive into Lithuania was a direct threat to Sweden's Baltic Empire, which, with its long, exposed frontier, was difficult to defend, even for a state whose armies had so recently played such a dominant rôle in the Thirty Years' War. Sweden's new status as a great power was based on slender resources; shortly after the return of peace in 1648, conscious of the growing cost of maintaining garrisons on the far side of the Baltic, the Swedish government began to consider
fighting a new war to counter the growing domestic pressures it faced as it adjusted to the problems of defending its empire in peacetime. Queen Christina's unexpected abdication in 1654 brought to the throne her ambitious and more belligerent cousin Charles X Gustav, commander-in-chief of the Swedish forces in the last years of the Thirty Years' War. The Commonwealth's apparently imminent collapse gave Charles Gustav the opportunity to forget his domestic problems by countering what appeared to be a real threat to Swedish security. In July 1655, he invaded to preempt Muscovy and ensure that Sweden would enjoy its share of the spoils.

The result exceeded Charles Gustav's greatest expectations. He hoped to seize Royal Prussia and to prevent Muscovy reaching the Baltic; instead, within three months he controlled the whole of Poland. The Polish King, John Casimir [1648-1668], was blamed by many for failing to defeat Khmel'nyts'kyi and for needlessly provoking the Swedish attack by refusing to resign his claim to the Swedish throne, thereby missing an opportunity to ally with Charles Gustav against Muscovy. As two Swedish armies, under Wittemberg and Charles Gustav, entered Poland in July, and one under Magnus de la Gardie entered Lithuania from Livonia, John Casimir was abandoned by large numbers of nobles, who saw Charles Gustav as their potential saviour against Muscovy. At Ujście on 25th July, the noble levy of Great Poland, led by Krzysztof Opaliński, Voivode of Poznań, surrendered to Wittemberg. The voivodeships of Poznań and Kalisz were placed under the protection of Charles Gustav, who was to be accorded the loyalty and obedience due to the king of Poland.[1] A month later, a similar treaty was signed at Kiejdany by Janusz Radziwiłł, Voivode of
Wilno and Lithuanian Grand Hetman.[2] Other voivodeships swiftly followed suit, as John Casimir went into exile at Oberlogau [Głogówek] in Silesia, where he arrived on 17th October, nine days before most of the Polish army surrendered to Wittemberg near Cracow.[3] The Commonwealth had succumbed with scarcely a fight.

Charles Gustav, however, found Poland easier to conquer than to control. The Commonwealth was not Germany, and he found it difficult to create a lasting basis of support. The necessity for Sweden to make the war pay for itself rapidly alienated the nobility, as the army levied contributions from noble and royal estates alike, demonstrating the insincerity of Charles Gustav's promises to respect noble privileges. There was not a large enough number of Protestants in the Commonwealth to provide a solid nucleus of support, and Sweden was unable to exploit religious divisions in the way it had in the Empire during the Thirty Years' War; indeed, outrages perpetrated by the Swedes against the Catholic Church did much to turn opinion against the invader. Encouraged by the spread of resistance, John Casimir returned to Poland in early 1656; by the spring, Opaliński and Radziwiłł were dead and the overwhelming majority of Poles had abandoned Charles Gustav.

To defeat the Swedes required more than the return of the will to fight. The Swedish army was superior in training, discipline and equipment. Although the Poles waged a daring and effective guerrilla war, it proved impossible to inflict a major defeat on the Swedish professionals in open battle. Polish deficiencies in artillery and siege-craft made the reduction of occupied cities a long and slow
process. From the outset, the Poles were forced to seek foreign aid; it was only after they won the support of Austria, Denmark and Brandenburg that Sweden was eventually forced to make peace at Oliva in 1660. Meanwhile, the willingness of an important part of the Cossack leadership to reach an accommodation with the Commonwealth after Khmel'nyts'kyi's death in 1657, due to concern at Muscovite aims in the Ukraine brought an improvement of the situation on the eastern front. The Treaty of Hadiach [1659] envisaged the creation of a Grand Duchy of Ruthenia as part of the Commonwealth, in which Cossack rights would be respected and the Cossack Hetman would sit in the Senate as Voivode of Kiev.[4] Hadiach and Oliva opened the way to the great campaign of 1660-1, in which the Muscovites were swept out of much of Lithuania. It seemed that disaster had been averted and that the crisis was over.

It was only just beginning. The collapse of 1655 had opened the eyes of many to the defects of the Commonwealth's political and military systems, convincing a broad spectrum of opinion that political reform was necessary to prevent a recurrence of the catastrophes experienced between 1648 and 1655. The key problem was the breakdown in the relationship between the King and the Sejm [Diet]. After 1648, John Casimir was blamed for mishandling the war against the Cossacks, and sessions of the Sejm became increasingly stormy. In 1652, an obscure Lithuanian deputy called Władysław Siciński appealed to the principle of unanimity, which theoretically governed Sejm proceedings, to block an extension of the Sejm beyond its allotted six-week span. The recognition of Siciński's right of liberum veto, and the consequent failure of the Sejm, created a
baleful precedent. Sejms had failed to reach a conclusion before 1652, but henceforward the opposition of one deputy was sufficient not merely to block individual items of legislation, but to break the whole Sejm. Since the government was almost wholly dependent on the Sejm for its income, the acceptance of the principle of the veto seriously threatened the Commonwealth's ability to defend itself: the disorganisation of the Commonwealth's response to the Muscovite invasion had much to do with the breaking of the first Sejm of 1654.

The collapse of 1655 convinced many that reform was necessary. Yet despite the favourable climate which emerged in its aftermath, royal attempts to introduce reform encountered growing opposition, especially after 1660, when apparent military success against Sweden and Muscovy dispelled the doubts raised by the disasters of the early 1650's. When John Casimir continued to press for reform, views of the liberum veto changed, and it came to be regarded as a necessary barrier against the Court's alleged desire for absolutum dominium. In 1660, Andrzej Maksymilian Fredro, who, as Marshal of the Chamber of Deputies at the fateful Sejm of 1652 had not wished to recognise Siciński's veto, published a defence of the principle as essential for the preservation of liberty. The victory of this point of view among the szlachta [nobility] sounded the death-knell for the Sejm's chances of developing into an effective parliamentary body. During the 1660's, recourse to the veto became regular: it had only been used twice between 1652 and 1662; between 1664 and 1668, it was used on five occasions. Opposition culminated in civil war in 1665-6, when Crown Grand Marshal Jerzy Sebastian Lubomirski led a rokosz [legal rebellion]. Defeat at the Battle of Mątwy [1666] effectively
ended Court reform plans. Facing growing political anarchy and forced to make a disadvantageous settlement with Muscovy at Andrusovo in 1667, by which Kiev and all of the Ukraine to the east of the Dniepr river was lost, a weary John Casimir abdicated in 1668.[7] Thereafter, the veto became a regular part of Polish political life. Thirty-one out of eighty Sejms failed to reach a conclusion between 1652 and 1763, with the nadir being reached in the reign of Augustus III, when every Sejm was broken between 1736 and 1764.

Despite one last moment of glory in Sobieski's triumph at Vienna in 1683, the Commonwealth's days as a great power were over. Lacking a standing army of any size, it was vulnerable to the ambitions of its neighbours. Between 1648 and 1718, it barely enjoyed ten years of peace: as soon as the war with Muscovy ended, a cycle of wars against Turkey began which was to last to the end of the century, to be followed by the Great Northern War [1700-21], during which the Commonwealth again became a battleground for the armies of Europe. Incapable of defending itself, the Commonwealth was increasingly open to foreign interference. The liberum veto proved useful for foreign ambassadors, who could use influence or bribery to persuade deputies to break the Sejm. The Commonwealth's neighbours, none of whom wished to see it recover its vitality, signed a series of treaties which agreed to preserve its anarchic political system by blocking reform: such treaties were signed by Sweden and Brandenburg [1667, 1686, 1696], Austria and Muscovy [1676], and Austria and Brandenburg [1686].[8] Finally, at the "Silent Sejm" of 1717, with the building surrounded by Russian troops, deputies accepted a
decree by which the standing army was limited to 24,000 men, pitifully inadequate by contemporary standards. While eighteenth-century Prussia supported 3-4 soldiers per 100 inhabitants on a flimsy economic base, Poland-Lithuania supported 1 for every 5-600.[9] From 1717, the Commonwealth was effectively a Russian protectorate. When it showed signs of revival in the reign of Stanisław Augustus Poniatowski [1764-95], it was partitioned out of existence.

Most European states experienced civil war and foreign intervention in the early modern period, most struggled to cope with economic, social and military change, most experienced violent political upheaval in one form or another, without succumbing permanently to forces of anarchic decentralisation. Indeed, comparable crises frequently stimulated the growth of central government around a monarchy which could act as a national rallying-point against internal anarchy and foreign invaders. The French Crown emerged from the Wars of Religion and the Frondes with its authority and position strengthened, the 'Time of Troubles' in Muscovy ended with the establishment of the Romanov dynasty upon the throne, while failure in war opened the door to the introduction of royal absolutism by coup d'état in Denmark in 1660, and with the consent of the Riksdag in Sweden in 1680. If, as Gierowski points out, absolutism did not always ensure the maintenance of great power status, or even military success, nevertheless, it could protect states from the kind of foreign interference experienced by the Commonwealth.[10] If other states, such as Spain, Denmark and Sweden experienced relative decline as bigger and more powerful neighbours
proved more able to meet the challenges posed by the military revolution, no other state experienced the paralysis of central government on such a scale, no other state saw the institutionalisation of a constitutional principle as damaging as the liberum veto, and no other major European state was partitioned out of existence in the early modern period.

The reasons for this failure were primarily social and political rather than economic. It is certainly true that the mid-seventeenth century was a period of economic recession for the Commonwealth after the expansion of the previous century, when it benefitted from the great western European demand for Baltic grain. As grain prices dropped, landowners increased the burdens on their serfs in an effort to maintain their profits. The towns, never strong outside Royal Prussia, entered a period of decline, while the series of devastating wars after 1648 meant that attempts at economic recovery constantly foundered.[11] Yet if this economic crisis was the essential background to the Commonwealth's political crisis, there was nothing unique about it which might explain the lapse into political anarchy. If the Commonwealth suffered extensive devastation in the 1650's, other states faced the scourge of war in the seventeenth century, yet experienced economic recovery once peace was restored.[12] Grain production for the western market and the "second serfdom" were characteristic of all states to the east of the Elbe, all of which suffered from the downturn in the European economy after 1620. Both Brandenburg and Russia were backward, primitive and poorly-urbanised; both had political systems dominated by the nobility; both suffered from crippling wars in the early
modern period. Yet both recovered to develop successful systems of government in which large standing armies and relatively efficient administrations were maintained with the cooperation and participation of the nobility. Both emerged as great powers by the early eighteenth century despite, or perhaps because of, their primitive, serf-dominated economies. Noble power over the peasantry was strengthened in return for noble cooperation and participation in the new standing armies and developing administrative structures. There appear to be no convincing economic or social reasons why the Commonwealth should not have evolved in a similar direction.

It was in its political structure that the Commonwealth differed most radically from its neighbours. Poland and Lithuania had been joined in a personal union since 1386, motivated initially by common hostility to the Teutonic Knights. While Lithuania's political and administrative system remained separate under its hereditary Grand Dukes of the Jagiellonian dynasty, the political traditions of Poland were closer to those of Bohemia and Hungary, dynastically linked to Poland at various stages between 1370 and 1526. Like Bohemia and Hungary, Poland was an elective monarchy after the extinction of the native Piast dynasty in 1370, and the Polish nobility demanded substantial political and social privileges as the price of royal elections: at Košice [1374], Czerwińsk [1421], Jedlno [1430], Nieszawa [1454] and Piotrków [1496]. These privileges restricted royal power and defined the rights and liberties of the szlachta, which by the early sixteenth century enjoyed a monopoly of political power, landholding and government office. The safeguarding of these privileges was, from the fifteenth century, in the hands of
local or provincial sejmiks [dietines]. The climax of noble constitutionalism came at the end of the century, with the emergence of a central Sejm emerged, whose powers were established by the statute of Nihil Novi [1505], which decreed that no new law could be introduced without the consent of the szlachta as expressed by the delegates of the local sejmiks assembled in the Sejm.

The emergence of a central parliamentary body with wide powers, participation in which was limited to the nobility, was a vital development which marked the Commonwealth off from its neighbours. The differences were compounded by the constitutional changes resulting from the extinction of the Jagiellonian dynasty in the mid-sixteenth century. At Lublin in 1569, afraid that the loose dynastic union between Poland and Lithuania, largely unbroken since 1386, would not survive his death, the childless Sigismund Augustus signed away his hereditary rights in Lithuania in return for a parliamentary union, in which the Lithuanian nobility was to enjoy the full rights of its Polish counterparts. The Union of Lublin established one central parliamentary body for the new Commonwealth, although Lithuania kept its own administration and its own army. Where the Habsburgs or Hohenzollerns could move separately against the different Estates in different parts of their dominions, from 1569 the Polish monarchy faced one Diet, which was capable of more concerted opposition to royal demands.

Further changes followed the death of Sigismund Augustus in 1572, when it was decided that the crown would be fully elective, and that every nobleman would have the right of direct participation in
royal elections. This right was henceforward regarded by the szlachta as the basis of its liberties. The first elected monarch, Henry Valois, later Henry III of France, had to swear to a coronation charter, known thereafter as the Henrician Articles, agreeing to uphold these liberties. This charter became the basis of the Pacta Conventa, which formed the coronation oath of all subsequent monarchs, and which represented a growing body of constitutional law establishing the limits of royal power and defining the extent of the famous "Golden Freedom" which was the birthright of every Polish and Lithuanian nobleman. At each election, the constitutional pact was renewed, often with new restrictions on royal power.

In theory the king was responsible for the direction of government policy; in practice his actions were severely limited by the Pacta Conventa and by further restrictions imposed by the Sejm. From the outset, the main problem was financial. Although the Crown owned about 20% of the Commonwealth's land, since much of it was leased out to nobles in the form of starostwa, the king did not derive direct financial benefit: the recipient of a starostwo held the land for life, keeping most of the proceeds for himself, although one quarter was supposed to go towards the maintenance of the small standing army in the Ukraine. The king was dependent on the Sejm for all his tax revenue, including extraordinary grants in wartime, and various indirect taxes which were only voted for specified periods by individual Sejms. Although a Sejm had to be called every two years after 1572, and although an extraordinary Sejm could be called at any time, the limited time available for government business was a grave handicap: ordinary Sejms could only last six weeks, while
extraordinary Sejms were restricted to two. Since much of the agenda consisted of remonstrances or private and local matters, it was often impossible to devote much time to government business and the voting of taxes. Any extension to the session beyond two or six weeks had to be agreed unanimously at the end of each day. Although Sejms did frequently run beyond their allotted span, deputies were usually reluctant to sanction too many extensions: the first liberum veto in 1652 resulted from Siciński's objection to an extension, while in 1650, John Casimir had sat in a continuous session of thirty-four hours to ensure that the Sejm was not broken.[13] The result was that Sejms frequently ended without achieving anything, even before 1652. Since the legislation of a particular Sejm was regarded as an indivisible whole, if a Sejm broke up without agreement, even enactments already accepted could not become law.

The government had to carry on regardless. Despite such problems, the monarchy was by no means a cipher after 1572. The king had extensive patronage powers, including the sole right to appoint to the most prestigious central and provincial offices which alone gave status within a nobility whose attachment to the principle of equality blocked the introduction of a titled aristocracy. He also controlled the distribution of the lucrative starostwa, which were an essential source of income for ambitious nobles. Partitive heritance was the norm under Polish law, and only a mere handful of families succeeded in winning Sejm approval for entailing their estates at the end of the sixteenth century. Under such circumstances, a family's fortune could decline rapidly. The nobility in Poland proper was exceptionally numerous, constituting
some 6-8% of the population, and pressure on land was intense: even a nobleman of good birth might inherit only a relatively small estate. Access to royal land was essential if he were to maintain his social position. Bogusław Leszczyński, Crown Treasurer and later Vice-Chancellor under John Casimir, inherited a mere 6 towns and 70 villages; control of 6 starostwa and the ekonomia of Samborz added 14 towns and 259 villages to this total.[14] Few could afford to distance themselves too far from the Court: their own position might permit opposition to the Court, but their sons' careers had to be secured.

The key to effective government was the king's relationship with his Senate Council, with which he shared executive responsibility between Sejms. The Senate possessed a dual function under the Polish system. It had grown out of the old Royal Council and, apart from constituting the upper house of the Sejm, formed a permanent advisory body at the king's side; without its consent, no royal decree could be issued. The Council was seen both as an organ of the central government and as a check upon it. Since the king had wide powers to send and receive ambassadors, to declare war and make treaties and to raise troops in time of danger, the rôle of senators as "custodes regis et legis" was seen as vital. Nevertheless, in practice the king could exercise far more control over the Council than he ever could over the Sejm. Firstly, he had sole right of appointment to the Senate. Secondly, while all 150 senators had the right to attend Council meetings, in practice few ever did, despite the appointment of senators-resident by the Sejm, who were assigned specific six-month periods when they were supposed to be in constant
attendance at Court. The majority of senators consistently avoided their residential duties, and the nucleus of Council meetings tended to be formed by government ministers and royal courtiers. Thus royal supporters usually outnumbered the opposition, giving the king substantial freedom of manoeuvre.[15]

While the Henrician Articles required the king to seek the Council's unanimous consent for his actions, in practice he did not even have to follow the majority opinion, although it was usually prudent for him to do so. For a decree to be legal, it had to bear the king's signature and the seal of one of the four Chanceries; if the king could obtain the support of his chancellors, senators could do little to prevent the promulgation of a decree, or the despatch of an ambassador.[16] While such actions technically had to be approved by the next Sejm, the length of time between Sejms meant that the government usually held the initiative and frequently could present the Sejm with a *fait accompli*. The Henrician Articles spoke of the Council's duty of *respondowanie* before the Sejm; senators, however, tended to interpret this principle as meaning that they had a duty to inform the Sejm of their decisions, not as any expression of their responsibility to it.[17] While they were quick to tell the king if they felt an action was impossible without Sejm consent, senators bitterly opposed any suggestion that their own powers were subject to Sejm control, and frequently sanctioned royal attempts to evade the restrictions placed upon the executive. Such advantages brought an increasing reliance on the Senate Council by the monarchy after 1569.
For nearly a century after the Union of Lublin, the system appeared to operate passably well. Although Henry of Anjou was deposed after fleeing to France in 1574, his Transylvanian successor, Stefan Batory [1576-86], proved one of Poland's most successful rulers. The reputation of the first Vasa king of Poland, Sigismund III [1587-1632], king of Sweden from 1592 until his deposition in 1600, has improved significantly in recent years. Although Sigismund III's strong counter-reformation sympathies and his plans for political reform sparked off the Sandomierz rokosz [rebellion] in 1606, the second half of his reign was fairly successful: he defeated the rebels, and although he had to abandon his reform plans, he built up a strong regalist party and, after 1609, proved himself an able parliamentarian, demonstrating that a working relationship between monarch and Sejm might well be possible: backed by a sizeable group of royalist senators, the king was often able to manage the Sejm quite effectively.[18]

All monarchs after 1569, however, regarded the situation as unsatisfactory; all tried to reverse the trend towards greater decentralisation and sought to evade the restrictions placed upon them. The essential problem was that government could only be carried on at all if the king regularly flouted the law, yet such behaviour increased szlachta suspicion of royal intentions and led to the progressive reduction of the monarchy's financial independence. If the establishment of the Treasury Tribunal in 1591 and the use of commissions appointed by the Sejm to oversee payment of the army improved the Commonwealth's financial organisation, the overall tendency was one of decentralisation, in which the Sejm, as much as
the government, lost influence, and a growing proportion of taxation was raised and administered by local sejmiks rather than the state Treasury. The royal and state treasuries were separated in 1590, and although the Treasurers of Poland and Lithuanina were appointed by the king, they were accountable to the Sejm rather than to him.[19]

The monarchy's financially precarious position was felt especially keenly by the Vasa dynasty after Sigismund III's deposition as King of Sweden in 1600. The consequent lack of an independent political and financial base outside the Commonwealth meant that the Vasas became even more dependent on the Sejm than their predecessors. The szlachta's liking for this state of affairs was shown by its willingness to elect Sigismund's sons, Władysław IV and John Casimir, in 1632 and 1648 respectively. The monarchy's poverty had important consequences. The Court was continually short of money, and suffered in comparison with those of its fellow monarchs, or even with the magnificent households maintained by great magnates. Moreover, the status of royal children was highly insecure. The marriage prospects of the eldest son were poor until his election was secured; those of his younger brothers were hopeless. All Władysław's brothers joined the Church, merely to enjoy a career and an income. John Casimir drifted aimlessly until the death of Władysław IV's only legitimate son in 1647, when he became heir presumptive. He fought briefly on the Habsburg side during the Thirty Years' War, before accepting a post as Admiral in the Spanish fleet, only to be arrested and imprisoned by the French en route. On his release he joined the Jesuit Order before becoming a cardinal, a position which he renounced as soon as he heard of his
nephew's death. John Albert [1612-1634], who also became a cardinal, was successively Bishop of Warmia and Bishop of Cracow, the richest See in the Commonwealth, while Sigismund III succeeded in having his fourth son, Charles Ferdinand [1613-1655] elected to the lucrative bishopric of Breslau. From the dynastic point of view it was highly unsatisfactory that so many sons were forced to enter the Church.

The Vasas therefore stubbornly maintained their dynastic claim to Sweden after 1600 and were always attracted by schemes for the acquisition of a hereditary principality, either within the Commonwealth, such as Courland, or abroad, since the possession of such a sovereign territory might offer the financial and political independence they were increasingly denied in the Commonwealth. Such attempts, however, tended to drive a wedge between the dynasty and the szlachta, which offered little support for attempts to win back Sweden after 1600, which merely provoked further efforts to reduce royal independence in the conduct of foreign policy. The monarchy's adventurous policy during Muscovy's Time of Troubles, which saw Władysław's election as Tsar in 1610 was met with indifference. Ominously, a feeling was emerging that the interests of the monarchy were different from those of the Commonwealth, and that the best way of safeguarding liberty was to ensure that the king conducted a peaceful foreign policy. If the Commonwealth were attacked, the szlachta would defend it; it would not, however, back aggressive foreign adventures. Thus Władysław IV's attempts to intervene in the Thirty Years' War were blocked, as were his grandiose schemes in the 1640's for a Turkish war.[20]
The szlachta remained confident of the Commonwealth's ability to defend itself despite the decentralised political and financial system. Before 1648, such confidence seemed justified. Between 1558 and 1634, the Commonwealth enjoyed unprecedented success against Muscovy, pushing its border eastwards, seizing Smolensk and Chernigov, and occupying Moscow itself between 1610 and 1612.[21] In 1619-20, a great Turkish assault was halted at Khotyn. Although Sweden seized most of Livonia in the 1620's, the great Gustav Adolf was fought to a standstill in Prussia, on one occasion almost losing his life. Confident in the merits of their political system, the szlachta complacently observed the tragedy unfolding in the Empire between 1618 and 1648, feeling that such a conflict was impossible in the Commonwealth.

The 1640's were a decade of apparent calm, but beneath the surface currents were stirring which would threaten the Commonwealth's very survival. For the benefits of the Golden Freedom were only enjoyed by the szlachta. Important sectors of society were excluded from participation in political life, elements whose social, economic and political status was under threat as the noble Commonwealth flourished. Even within the nobility, united by its common birthright, serious tensions existed. The seventeenth-century Commonwealth was a multi-national and religiously plural state, in which the increasing political dominance of Counter-Reformation Catholicism provoked resentment among the substantial religious and national minorities. Although full religious toleration had been established for Protestants by the 1573 Warsaw Confederation, a great Counter-Reformation offensive, spearheaded by the Jesuits, was
launched under Sigismund III. From a late-sixteenth century peak, in which over half the Chamber of Deputies [the lower House of the Sejm] had been Protestant, the number of Protestants declined rapidly, as the Court, especially under Sigismund III and John Casimir, discriminated heavily in favour of Catholics in the distribution of patronage.[22]

It was not just Protestants who were affected by the Counter-Reformation. Although much of the Lithuanian nobility had converted to Catholicism after 1386, many nobles and the vast majority of the peasantry remained Orthodox. Despite strong encouragement from Poland for the Catholic Church in Lithuania and the Ukraine, Orthodoxy continued to flourish, while Kiev reestablished itself as one of the leading centres of Orthodox learning and culture. The Union of Lublin, however, which transferred the Ukraine to Polish control, opened it up to the forces of the Counter-Reformation. Orthodox nobles were also affected by the growing monopoly on royal patronage enjoyed by Catholics, and a number of leading Orthodox families, such as the Wiśniowieckis, turned Catholic.

In 1596, the establishment of the Uniate Church at the Union of Brest was one of the great triumphs of the Counter-Reformation: the Commonwealth's Orthodox hierarchy agreed to accept the authority of the Pope in return for being allowed to follow the Orthodox rite. The great hopes inspired by the Union were soon disappointed, however. Catholic prelates in Lithuania and the Ukraine jealously guarded their jurisdictions against their Uniate counterparts, who were not admitted to the Senate, while the state lacked the means to enforce
the ban on Orthodoxy. Much of the Orthodox hierarchy became Uniates, but the bulk of the parish clergy and the vast majority of the people did not. A clandestine hierarchy was soon established and Orthodoxy continued to flourish. Few great nobles became Uniates, preferring either to turn Catholic or remain Orthodox. Although Władysław IV restored legal recognition to the Orthodox Church in 1632, the damage had been done. The Uniate Church remained to complicate Catholic-Orthodox relations, while the gap between the Orthodox mass of the population in the Ukraine and an increasingly Catholic high nobility had widened.[23]

In the Ukraine, the Orthodox cause was championed by the Cossacks. In origin military adventurers and freebooters who lived largely by mounting raids against their Tatar neighbours, the Cossacks by the seventeenth century constituted a self-defined élite within the Ukraine, but one which was increasingly isolated and discriminated against within the Commonwealth. Afraid that the king might use the Cossack army to force through constitutional reform, the Sejm tried to limit its size by maintaining an official register. All those excluded from the register lost the right to bear arms and fight as Cossacks, and did not enjoy the privileges of the Cossack élite. The Sejm's desire to reduce the number of registered Cossacks as far as was consistent with the defence of the south-eastern border provoked serious Cossack discontent and periodic risings. The reduction of the register to a mere 6,000 following the crushing of the 1638 rising created simmering resentment in the Ukraine, which finally boiled over in 1648.[24]
The unprecedented scale of the 1648 rising was due to widespread support for the Cossacks from the Ukrainian peasantry which, like peasants throughout the Commonwealth, was excluded from all share in political power, and was deprived of many legal rights. The tying of the peasantry to the land, the increase of labour dues, and the steady reduction of the right of legal redress against landlords had provoked risings in Poland and Lithuania, which were all easily contained. In the Ukraine, where the Cossacks could provide military and political leadership, the situation was much more dangerous. The 1640's had seen the climax of a great drive in the Ukraine by Poles and polonised Ukrainian magnates to extend control over the vast, potentially lucrative steppe: the colonisation of the Ukraine, begun after 1569, now reached a peak, as huge estates were created, and peasants, many of whom had originally fled to the Ukraine in order to escape the harsh conditions in Poland, found themselves tied once more to the land and subject to labour service. In 1630, the Wiśniowiecki family estates in the Ukraine were composed of 616 separate holdings. By 1640, this figure had risen to 7,603; in 1645, the Wiśniowieckis controlled 38,000 holdings, with some 230,000 "subjects".[25]

Religious grievances, Cossack discontent and peasant anger formed an explosive mixture, whose detonation in 1648 rocked the Commonwealth to its foundations. The essential concern of this thesis is to examine why, despite the revelation of grave political and military shortcomings after 1648, the Commonwealth should have failed to reform itself, preferring to remain vulnerable to foreign attack rather than to strengthen central government. This problem
will be explored by concentrating on royal policy after 1655. Historians have traditionally argued that the Court should bear a large share of the responsibility for squandering a unique opportunity to overhaul the political system. It is suggested that the Court's neglect of schemes to abolish the **liberum veto** after 1655 in favour of a campaign for an election of a successor to John Casimir **vivente rege** was largely responsible for the triumph of the veto in the 1660's. It was the Court's campaign in the 1660's to secure the election of a French candidate, the Duc d'Enghien, which provoked fears of absolutism and the resistance which culminated in Lubomirski's **rokosz**. The French election seemed to serve the interests of the royal family rather than the Commonwealth, and was seen as an inappropriate scheme dreamed up by John Casimir's French wife, Louise Marie of Gonzaga. By irresponsibly linking Sejm reform to the election campaign, it is argued, the Court ensured its defeat: the attempt to interfere with the right of free election, seen by the szlachta as the basis of its liberty, was bound to provoke opposition, while deputies feared that if majority voting were introduced, the king's extensive powers of patronage would not only ensure victory for the election, but would also allow the king to dominate the Sejm permanently, which might lead to the introduction of hereditary monarchy and **absolutum dominium**. Thus the Court not merely failed to destroy the veto, it ensured its survival in a more devastating form by making it seem the only effective defence against royal ambition.

There is a strong historiographical tradition which argues that the Court's election plans were bound to fail. The romantic
nationalist historians of the early nineteenth century, led by the
great Joachim Lelewel, emphasised the unique historical destiny of a
Poland which embodied a national idea in which the most important
elements were democracy and republicanism. Lelewel looked back to
the alleged communal traditions of the primitive Slavs as the source
of this idea and argued that attempts to construct strong royal
government in Poland were bound to fail: Poland could not be saved by
absolute monarchy on Western lines, since monarchy conflicted with
its political traditions, its "national idea" and its public
interest.[26] Attempts to introduce absolutism distorted the
political system and retarded its natural development towards
democratic republicanism. Lelewel accepted Fredro's view of the
liberum veto as a constitutional device necessary to defend Polish
democracy against the monarchy's absolutist pretensions. The
romantic school glorified the Commonwealth's political system,
claiming that Poland was not responsible for its own downfall, but
was destroyed by foreign powers hostile to democracy.[27]

After the failure of the great anti-Russian insurrections of
1830 and 1863 the romantic view of Poland's past was discredited. As
the study of history became a more rigorous, university-based
discipline, a desire for a more scientific approach emerged. The so-
called Cracow School, based in Austrian Galicia, where the rule of
foreigners appeared less oppressive than in the Prussian or Russian
partitions, rejected the notion that foreign powers were primarily
responsible for Poland's fate. Historians such as Szujski, Kalinka,
Smolka and Bobrzyński argued that the Commonwealth was itself to
blame for the political decay which left it at the mercy of its
neighbours. They stressed the rational development of European states from a primitive liberty through the feudal period towards the modern Rechtstaat. Poland, it was argued, failed to make this last transition due to the szlachta's blind attachment to its liberties.[28] The Cracow School considered the failure to develop strong royal government to be the fundamental reason for the Partitions, rejecting naive romantic visions of the szlachta democracy and the view that Poland was destined to follow a different path of historical development. Bobrzyński wrote in relatively favourable terms of the election plan as being a good way to strengthen royal authority, claiming it failed due to the opposition of selfish magnates led by Lubomirski, who wished to exploit the situation to his own advantage.[29]

This view of royal policy has not met with much approval from later historians. A more favourable view of the constitution was taken by historians working in Warsaw, such as Laguna, Pawiński, Korzon, Rembowski and Smoleński. The "Warsaw School", supported by a younger generation of Cracow scholars, including Bujak, Zakrzewski and Sobieski, attacked the Cracow School as collaborationist [Bobrzyński was appointed by the Austrians as Governor of Galicia] and rejected its pessimistic view of the old Commonwealth. Rembowski pointed out that Polish institutions had counterparts in the West and rejected the idea that Poland was responsible for its own decline. Korzon echoed Lelewel's opinion that the Commonwealth was partitioned out of existence at the very moment when it was reforming itself, and had raised itself to "democratic levels of rule".[30] The Warsaw School did not, however, represent a complete return to the
ideas of the romantics, recognising that the Commonwealth had displayed grave weaknesses which could not all be blamed on the Jesuits and foreign powers. Plebański emphasised Poland's indiscipline and anarchy, arguing that its only hope of rescue lay in the reform plans of the monarchy. Nevertheless, if Plebański condemned Lubomirski's rebellion, he regarded John Casimir as a weak, feeble king, and although he was ready to credit Louise Marie with considerable political skill, he considered that her French election plan a fatal distraction from the necessary task of reform.

Recent assessments of John Casimir's reign do not generally challenge this judgement. Although military historians have stressed that John Casimir had some talent as a soldier, the general assessment of his political abilities remains unfavourable. Nevertheless, if most recent historians have accepted that Court policy after 1655 was at best misguided and at worst recklessly irresponsible, few would place the whole blame for the failure of the Commonwealth's political system upon the Court alone. Lelewel romanticised the szlachta and its attachment to its liberties, but subsequent historians have taken up some of the criticisms of the Cracow School and pointed out that unfettered liberty all too easily led to licence, and that the personal ambition of powerful magnates such as Lubomirski and Radziwiłł played a vital rôle in the Commonwealth's decline. Historians from Lelewel to Konopczyński had pointed to the growing influence of a small magnate élite after 1569, which worked for its own interests behind the façade of szlachta democracy. This idea was developed after 1945, when political
considerations forced historians to emphasise the class nature of the Commonwealth's political system. The trend towards decentralisation was linked to the development of a magnate oligarchy.[34] Although the principle of equality remained a cherished dogma among the szlachta, real power rested with a small group of families whose influence depended upon their economic dominance:

"the Commonwealth by the mid-seventeenth century represented a specific type of the szlachta monarchy, its essential form of government being a magnate oligarchy, in fact a dictatorship of the magnate élite realised through the aid of the so-called szlachta democracy."[35]

The undermining of the "progressive" szlachta democracy by a "reactionary" magnate oligarchy brought decentralisation and political decay.

This theory provided a model of the Commonwealth's political development which might explain its divergence from the general European pattern. Czapliński argued that although Denmark and Sweden also developed magnate oligarchies in the seventeenth century, they were overthrown by an alliance between the monarchy and other social classes such as the burghers and peasants, classes which were less powerful in the Commonwealth. Only in Poland, according to Czapliński, was the magnate oligarchy ultimately triumphant.[36] This, it is suggested, was partly due to the monarchy's failure to exploit undoubted anti-magnate resentments which existed among the ordinary szlachta, and to reestablish the brief anti-magnate alliance between Crown and szlachta during the 1560's: the movement for the Execution of the Laws. After 1572, the monarchy preferred to rely on magnates. Consequently, szlachta suspicion of royal
intentions grew, while the magnates' position was strengthened by their growing monopoly on royal patronage.

It proved easier to form the concept of a magnate oligarchy, however, than to determine the criteria for membership of this élite, and to establish why its interests should be served by political decentralisation:

"Polish historiography...knows...the term "magnate", which it uses and abuses without constraint...The term...is employed...in a way which is inexact, confused and undialectical."[37]

The magnates did not constitute a legally separate group in the Commonwealth: the ideal of noble equality was rigidly maintained by the szlachta, which strongly opposed any attempt to introduce titles, orders of knighthood, or anything which might create barriers between individual nobles. As Kersten admits, the term was not used in seventeenth-century sources. Nevertheless, he argues that if artificial barriers between the szlachta and the magnates did not exist, contemporaries were well aware of who was a magnate and who was not.[38]

Strenuous efforts have been made to establish the criteria by which such judgements were made. While the ownership of substantial property was fundamental, it is difficult to establish a dividing-line between magnate and rich nobleman.[39] Attempts to define magnate status on the basis of the number of villages owned were condemned by Dworzaczek, who pointed out that the relative value of villages varied widely: while a nobleman from Great Poland could be regarded as a magnate in the sixteenth century if he owned 10 villages, his counterpart in Little Poland would have to own 20 to
enjoy a comparable income. It is also impossible to decide magnate status solely on the basis of senatorial rank, since some powerful magnates might be denied a seat in the Senate due to royal disfavour. The king was also likely to favour lesser nobles seeking to establish their position in society, who did not yet own property substantial enough to guarantee membership of the élite. While wealth and office were important, other factors played their part: birth, connections, conspicuous consumption, education, reputation among the local szlachta and the leadership of a locally-based clientage network based round a magnate court.

To establish how and when magnate domination became entrenched has proved even more difficult. The importance of the Union of Lublin for this process is widely recognised. While magnates had existed in sixteenth-century Poland, they did not constitute a stable élite. The Union of Lublin, however, created great opportunities for richer Polish szlachta families. The transference of the Ukraine from Lithuania to Poland opened up its lucrative starostwa to Poles. The richest starostwa tended to be reserved for indigenous Ruthenian families such as the Ostrogskis, Zasławskis and Wiśniowieckis. Nevertheless, the existing trend towards the development of large magnate fortunes was strengthened, and new magnate families such as the Zamoyskis, Potockis and Lubomirskis emerged.

This development was accompanied by a relative decline in the economic position of the middle szlachta, the class which had been so influential in the mid-sixteenth century. The concentration of land in the hands of the magnates, who enjoyed an increasing monopoly on
grants of starostwa, fundamentally altered the balance of power between the magnates and the middle szlachta, which experienced a fall in the average size of its estates. The growth in demand for grain from western Europe increased the profitability of large-scale agricultural enterprises, so that the larger landed proprietors did better than the middle szlachta; they were also better able to absorb the effects of the downturn in the grain market after 1620 and to survive the devastation caused by war.[44] As the number of landless and impoverished noblemen increased, the importance of magnate courts as centres of employment and patronage for a district, a county or even an entire voivodeship, grew correspondingly.[45] The establishment of a common Sejm opened up Polish politics to the influence of the wealthy and powerful magnate families of Lithuania and the Ukraine. The appearance of factions based on extensive clientage networks enabled magnates to exercise greater control over provincial sejmiks, which chose deputies for the central Sejm, issued them with instructions, and were increasingly responsible for the implementation of Sejm decrees. Such power could be used to frustrate royal plans.

There is no consensus as to exactly when the decisive shift from szlachta democracy to magnate oligarchy took place. Lelewel had considered that the period of szlachta democracy lasted from the reign of Casimir the Great [1333-1370] until the accession of Sigismund III in 1587, when the tradition of communal rule began to crumble under the twin assaults of the magnates and of foreign rulers, although he was later to push the date forward until the Sandomierz rokosz.[46] While inter-war scholars such as Balzer and
Kutrzeba did not distinguish between the szlachta democracy and the magnate oligarchy, Lelewel's periodisation proved popular after 1945, when it was accepted by a series of scholars. Yet recent research has led historians to question whether it is appropriate to date the triumph of the magnate oligarchy from 1606, or to see the magnates as a dominant, closed élite even as late as 1648.

It has also proved difficult to discern any coherent pattern of political dominance. Recent reappraisals of the reigns of Sigismund III and Władysław IV have stressed the existence of a strong body of magnate support for Crown attempts to strengthen central authority, and have emphasised the effective way in which both monarchs ruled by playing off one magnate faction against another and depending on a regalist party made up of men trying to establish themselves among the élite, who needed access to royal patronage to build up their fortunes. The view that this policy was successful after 1606 contrasts with traditional accounts which saw Vasa dependence on the magnates as a fundamental mistake and a vital reason for the triumph of the magnates. Olszewski argued that Sigismund and Władysław:

"precisely because they depended on cooperation with the magnates, did not allow the helm of state to slip from their grasp."[49]

He suggested that the Sandomierz rokosz proved that an opposition group, even with significant szlachta support, could not win a full victory over a monarch with a strong base of support in the Senate, and suggested that it was only after Lubomirski's rokosz [1665-6] and the abdication of John Casimir in 1668 that the vital transition occurred. Czapliński argued that:

"Royal authority did not succumb easily. Even if we recognise the reign of Michael Korybut Wiśniowiecki [1669-74] as a period..."
of unreserved magnate domination, nevertheless John III Sobieski [1674-1696] in the first years of his reign still commanded sufficient resources to decide affairs of state for himself and to avoid being swamped by the tidal wave of magnate power. Only in the second half of his reign did he capitulate completely, retreating to a cocoon of domestic tranquility and reverting...to the rôle of a Polish magnate.][50]

Kersten agreed that the magnate oligarchy had not yet triumphed by the end of the Vasa period in 1668.[51]

Yet pushing forward the date of the commencement of the magnate oligarchy brings problems of its own. Kersten suggested that the term "magnate oligarchy" was used by Polish historians in two different ways:

"[firstly as] a small group of the largest landowners, and therefore...one of the strata of the feudal class,...but also and most frequently as a period in the history of the Polish state and of Polish law, between 1606 [or 1572] and 1764, in which the decisive rôle was played by the magnates."[52]

He argued that both these definitions were over-simplified, preferring to use that suggested by Czaplinski:

"a situation in which the helm of state, that is the direction of external and internal policy, lay in the hands of a magnate oligarchy independent of, or even in opposition to, the king."[53]

Kersten added to the definition the rider that this power was used to further magnate class interests.[54]

There are serious problems with such a definition, especially if the date of this seizure of the "helm of state" is pushed further into the seventeenth century, precisely the period at which control of central government meant little, as decentralist forces grew in strength. If the end of the magnate oligarchy is usually taken to be 1764 and the election of Stanisław August Poniatowski, which opened the "Period of National Reform", then the magnate oligarchy covers
precisely the time of unchecked anarchy:

"The view has been universally accepted, based on the direct links between economics and politics, that the class interest of the magnate stratum...demanded political decentralisation. Constitutional historians argue that the magnate oligarchy must eo ipso by signifying the progressive decentralisation of the state apparatus, the limitation of the power of the king and the disruption of the central institutions of the feudal state, in consequence have led to complete anarchy."[55]

Yet if the period of the magnate oligarchy is taken to start with the seizure of control at the centre by a class wishing to use that power to further its own interests, why should decentralisation be necessary?

This problem is not confronted by Czapliński, whose definition of the oligarchy rests firmly on the idea of central control. Kersten, however, criticised the view that power in the Commonwealth devolved essentially towards local regions dominated by magnates, who had simultaneously seized control of central government institutions:

"At one and the same time we have exceptionally strong decentralist tendencies and successful attempts to seize control of central authority, with the achievement of a decided position of dominance over the king. In consequence, we do not know whether the magnates sought to decentralise and to influence the Sejm and the Senate in a decentralist direction, or whether these same magnates seized control of the central institutions of the state, achieved dominance over the king, and in this way asserted its authority over the whole Commonwealth."[56]

Kersten suggested that in fact the class interests of the magnates demanded a strong state:

"I would venture to suggest that the magnates, no less than the szlachta, were interested in the existence and strength of the Commonwealth...After 1648 the magnates as a whole, as a social stratum, saw the necessity for the existence of strong state authority...In reality...the protection of magnate interests demanded strong and effective government; this was even more in the interests of the magnates than of the szlachta. Expansion eastwards, and later the defence of territories conquered
there, could not be sustained solely by the forces of even the most powerful Ukrainian magnates...If we agree with the very old theory that the "Golden Freedom" of the szlachta grew, among other reasons, due to the absence of external threats, it is worth suggesting that attempts to limit it were linked with growing threats from abroad.\[57\]

Kersten, however, still begs the fundamental question. He fails to explain why, despite the growth of external threats, especially to magnate interests in the east, the magnates failed to strengthen the state: faced by the loss of Livonia to Sweden, \textit{de facto} in 1629, \textit{de jure} in 1660, by the loss of Kiev and the left-bank Ukraine to Muscovy in 1667, and by the loss of Podolia to the Turk in the 1670's, the Commonwealth manifestly failed to reform in the direction of strong government whether controlled by the magnates or by anyone else. Despite the existence of a strong body of regalist magnates in the early and mid-seventeenth century, and despite widespread support for reform from the Senate Council after 1655, when John Casimir attempted reform, the result was civil war.

Kersten cannot resolve this problem, although he is aware of it:

"It must be said, however, that the attitude of the magnate groups actually controlling the helm of state...with regard to the question of authority, was not uniform. This is a complex problem; at its root lie the...conflicts of interest within the magnate class itself; it finds its expression in attitudes towards the royal prerogative and, to a lesser extent, towards the Sejm."\[58\]

He did not specify what these "conflicts of interest" might concern, and failed to explain why magnates might oppose royal plans to reform the system. He suggested that the szlachta remained stronger than is frequently allowed, and that it was primarily responsible for decentralist trends. Such a view, however, implicitly calls into question his whole conception of the magnate oligarchy and he is
forced to reach the rather lame conclusion that one cannot yet talk of a full magnate oligarchy before 1668, without suggesting when, if ever, it came into existence.[59]

Kersten's problems stem from too rigid an attachment to a vision of the magnates as a coherent, class-conscious entity. Far from cooperating in the defence of common interests, the magnates were split by deep rivalries between contending factions. Recent studies, especially on the history of the Sejm, suggest that this period was characterised not by the calm control of a small, closed oligarchy, but by bitter faction-struggles within the magnate élite. It is suggested that the paralysis of the Commonwealth's political system resulted not from any necessary or deliberate decentralist urge, but from the political battles between the various magnate factions: paralysis resulted from the fact that no one faction was able to dominate sufficiently to seize control and entrench itself in power. If no faction was capable of outright victory, all were able to block the ambitions of their rivals.[60] Olszewski suggests that once the magnates were freed from constraints imposed by the political power of the szlachta, they came into conflict over the spoils:

"In consequence, the Commonwealth from the mid-seventeenth century was not a state controlled by a whole stratum, but by individual groups or coteries."[61]

Wyczański argues that by the mid-seventeenth century:

"The [szlachta] preserved only electoral decisions and decisions on local matters, which were made during local [dietines]. But political decisions of a more general nature rested with the king and the magnates. It was characteristic that none of the parties involved, either the king or any of the magnate factions, was able to capture full power and pass from intentions to their implementation...the political system was based on mutual obstruction practised by the king, the magnates and the ranks of the [szlachta]. Only in times of danger was a temporary suspension of obstruction possible."[62]
One of the most important sources of divisions within the magnate elite was the conflict of interests between nobles from different parts of the Commonwealth in what was a massive, multinational and religiously divided confederation. The stress laid by historians in the 1950's and 1960's upon szlachta and magnate class unity meant that regional and national differences were ignored or downplayed. It was argued that after 1569 the Lithuanian and Ruthenian szlachta was opened up to strong polonising forces, which brought an increasing use of the Polish language and a growing number of conversions to Catholicism.[63] Although few agreed with Šreniowski's ridiculously exaggerated claim that by the seventeenth century the Lithuanian nobility was "completely polonised", the development of the distinctive Sarmatian ideology, which claimed that the szlachta of both Poland and Lithuania was of different ethnic origin from the common people, was used as evidence for the development of a common class consciousness and the disappearance of national differences within the ruling class.[64] Yet Sarmatism was an idealised myth, and the concept of polonisation lacks precision: too much stress was laid on the growing use of the Polish language, which was too often assumed to indicate the adoption of Polish national identity. Language is an imperfect guide to national loyalty in the early modern period, and in practice provincial and regional identification remained strong. Sysyn's study of the Ukrainian nobility leads him to doubt the general applicability of the formulation "gente Ruthenus, natione Polonus," which has often been used as proof of the strength of polonising forces.[65] Chymczewska-Hennel suggests that historians have over-emphasised the importance of the second part of this formulation while
underestimating the importance of the first.[66]

The strength of regional feeling was strongly evident after 1648. The external and internal challenges to the Commonwealth provoked a crisis of the Union which was just as important as the crisis of central authority. Lithuania bore the brunt of the Muscovite attack after 1654, but Polish concern with the Ukraine and unwillingness to offer Lithuania military support created dangerous tensions. Lithuanian nobles might speak Polish in 1655, but the sentiments they expressed were frequently highly critical of Polish attitudes and policy. Such feelings did not disappear with Radziwiłł's death; on several occasions between 1655 and 1658, there was a grave danger that the Union might collapse. In practice, szlachta and magnate class-unity proved extremely flimsy.[67]

Rivalry between magnates was not confined to clashes between Poles and Lithuanians, however. There was often intense competition between magnates from the same part of the Commonwealth. This was especially true of Lithuania, where magnate fortunes were so much greater on the whole than in Poland, and a handful of families dominated the political landscape. Studies of the failure of the Court's election campaign in the 1660's have stressed the importance of such divisions. Although the Court could count on the support of the Pac family, this automatically provoked the opposition of the Sapiehas and the Radziwiłłs; the same was true of Polish politics to a lesser extent.[68] This suggests that the Court failed not because it faced a united magnate oligarchy which sought to seize control of the "helm of state", but because it failed to construct a strong
enough coalition of supporters to overcome its opponents. The
support of figures like Pac indicates that the Court could count on
some of the greatest magnates in the Commonwealth, and did not just
rely on lesser families struggling to establish their position among
the élite.

If this is true, then the Court's failure was by no means
inevitable, as so many have suggested, assuming that the Court's main
priority ought to have been reform of the Sejm, not the election
campaign.[69] Yet studies of the failure of the campaign in the
1660's suggest that there was substantial support for the Court: if
defeat had been assured, Fredro would not have been sufficiently
worried to develop his view of the veto, and there would have been no
need for a civil war to block the election.[70] This thesis will
argue that the Court adopted the election campaign not merely for
private or dynastic reasons, although these certainly played their
part, but because it saw an election *vivente rege* not only as vital
for the reform of the Commonwealth's political system, but also as
more likely to strengthen the state than reform of the Sejm. It will
suggest that an additional reason for the adoption of the election
campaign was that support for it seemed to be stronger than support
for Sejm reform. Historians have too readily accepted the motives
ascribed to the Court by its opponents in the 1650's and 1660's,
while John Casimir's eventual defeat and abdication, together with
the subsequent fate of the Commonwealth, ensured that he has had few
defenders since 1668.
The greatest weakness of studies of political reform in the 1650's and 1660's is the failure to examine the problem in the context of the war. Political reform could not be considered in isolation after 1655 while the Commonwealth was struggling for its very survival. For the Commonwealth's inability to save itself by its own efforts was the fundamental reality which produced the election campaign. There has, however, been no detailed examination of the government's conduct of the war since Kubala's general narrative written over fifty years ago, which is not always reliable. The four-volume collective work published in 1957 to mark the 300th anniversary of the war contains many useful articles on individual problems, but is marred by its rigid Stalinist approach; many of its contributing authors subsequently produced much more subtle and perceptive work on the period. With regard to foreign policy, there have been a number of important studies of individual problems, such as relations with Brandenburg or Muscovy, but no work which evaluates government policy as a whole. Military aspects of the war have received a great deal of attention, especially since 1945, but there is no narrative account of the "Thirteen Years' War" [1654-1667], with most authors treating the Second Northern War [1655-1660] and the war with Muscovy [1654-1667] as two separate conflicts; of the two, the war with Sweden has received by far the greatest degree of attention. The best biographical study of the period, by Kersten, also deals with a military figure: Stefan Czarniecki, who, along with Lubomirski and the King himself, was largely responsible for Poland's success in frustrating the Swedish armies.
This thesis therefore examines the government's conduct of the war, stressing the relationship between the election campaign, political reform and the fluctuating military and diplomatic situation. It is based primarily on printed sources and on sources available in Polish archives. The disruption of the 1650's, when many documents were destroyed or removed by the Swedes, and when many records were interrupted, means that this period is less well served than others, especially with regard to Court politics. Most of the contemporary diaries and memoirs, many of which have been published, are concerned largely with military aspects of the war, or reflect the views of ordinary nobles, not the senators or government ministers who played such a vital rôle in the formation of policy. There is nothing to match the diary of A.S. Radziwiłł, Lithuanian Grand Chancellor from 1623-1656, which is such an informative source for the reign of Władysław IV and the early years of John Casimir, but which says little after the outbreak of war in 1655. Although the diary of the Queen's secretary, Pierre des Noyers, gives much useful information, des Noyers was not at the centre of politics in quite the same way.[75]

The relative paucity of sources for the study of Court politics has led historians to rely extensively on the reports of foreign ambassadors, especially the detailed accounts of de Lumbres and Lisola, the envoys of France and Austria respectively.[76] Yet over-reliance upon these sources has, on occasion, reinforced tendencies to regard the Court as merely a pawn in the great battle of Habsburg and Bourbon, and its policy as subservient to foreign interests, a charge first made by opponents of the election campaign. This thesis
argues that this was far from being the case, and draws extensively on the detailed despatches of the Papal Nuncio, Pietro Vidoni, who spent far more time at the Polish Court than either de Lumbres or Lisola. Vidoni's despatches have not been used extensively by historians working either on the history of the war, or on the failure of reform, yet they cast important light on both problems and enable a more critical approach to be adopted towards the reports of de Lumbres and Lisola, demonstrating that the political situation was much more fluid and complex than has frequently been allowed, and was far from the simple battle between a pro-French and a pro-Austrian party which is so often assumed. [77]
The immediate cause of the 1655 crisis was the Commonwealth's military incapacity. In 1648, the Polish army had been destroyed by Khmel'nyts'kyi at the battles of Zhovti Vody, Korsun' and Pyliavtsi. Since Poland was crucially dependent on troops raised in the Ukraine, these defeats seriously undermined its defensive capacity. There was no substantial standing army: political considerations had prompted the progressive reduction of the number of troops under direct government control. By 1648, these consisted of the Royal Guard, limited to 1,200 in 1647, the wojsko kwarciane, a permanent force of 4,200 regulars [from 1643], which garrisoned the Ukraine, the piechota wybraniecka, infantry chosen by lot from peasants on royal estates in time of need, and the registered Cossacks, reduced to 6,000 in 1638, and unavailable after 1648.[1] The Commonwealth depended in times of need on locally-raised or private forces: the noble levy, consisting primarily of cavalry, units raised and trained by local sejmiks, units raised from the great entailed estates established at the end of the sixteenth century, and the private armies of magnates.[2] Great nobles could field far more men than the king: Jarema Wiśniowiecki maintained a permanent force of 1,500-3,000; he could quickly raise 3,000 more, with a further 6,000 in an emergency.[3] Of the 19,130 troops present at the battle of Okhmativ in 1644, there were 3,500 regulars, 4,000 registered Cossacks and 11,580 private troops.[4] Since most private troops were raised in the Ukraine, the Cossack revolt effectively deprived Poland of the bulk of its army.
The need to rebuild the army cruelly exposed the shortcomings of the Commonwealth's political system. While the short sessions of the Sejm had not been an insurmountable obstacle to the conduct of executive government in peacetime, during a war, the limitations of sessions restricted to six or two weeks were readily apparent. For the Sejm controlled the finance which was essential if the government were to raise regular troops and not depend upon the noble levy. Even when the Sejm was in a cooperative mood, it was no more capable than the royal government of ensuring that its wishes were obeyed. In the absence of any centralised bureaucracy, the government was dependent on provincial sejmiks, which met after the end of a Sejm to hear the reports of returning deputies, to put Sejm decisions into effect.[5]

It was the imperfect control of both government and Sejm over these sejmiks which was the true source of executive weakness. Through deliberate obstruction, incompetence or laziness, sejmiks frequently failed to execute Sejm decisions. The 32,700 men raised in 1652 may have been the largest army fielded by Poland up to that point, but the Sejm had called for 50,000.[6] Even when taxes were agreed by the Sejm, sejmiks regularly failed to collect the allotted sums. Consequently, the army often remained unpaid:

"the Commonwealth will be disappointed by the refusal to pay taxes, although sufficient were voted, which means that the troops previously raised have not been paid, while new forces will not be recruited in the numbers called for."[7]

The situation was exacerbated by the war. In 1655, Tyzenhaus, the Swordbearer of Lithuania, wrote to one of the Lithuanian sejmiks:

"Do not agree to the taxes asked for...Of our taxes, only half goes to pay the army. The rest slips away into the hands of tax-collectors, tax-farmers and Jews."[8]

Since the king was dependent on the Sejm for finance and had few resources of his own, royal credit was too poor to cover the gap. All
that could be done was to recall the Sejm, which often merely
criticised royal policy and did nothing to solve a problem about
which deputies were either indifferent or ill-informed.[9]

In this situation, John Casimir's government was unable to
satisfy either the hardliners, who urged that the revolt must be
crushed, or the moderates, who desired a negotiated settlement.
While the Commonwealth was capable of defeating the Cossacks in
battle, most notably at Berestechko in 1651, it lacked the ability to
win the war. The result was a series of campaigns ending in
unsatisfactory compromises which soon broke down: at Zboriv [1649]
and Bila Tserkva [1651]. Attempts by John Casimir to assert his
authority merely exacerbated the situation and confirmed the
suspicious in their prejudices. He first sought to strengthen his
control of the armed forces. At the Coronation Sejm in 1649,
government supporters unsuccessfully attempted to end the automatic
life tenure of office for the Grand Hetmans of Poland and
Lithuania.[10] Following the deaths of Mikołaj Potocki in 1651 and
Janusz Kiszka in 1653, John Casimir refused to appoint successors,
citing precedents under Sigismund III. It was a bold attempt to
assert royal control, understandable given the wide military,
diplomatic and even fiscal powers of the Hetmans.[11] Despite the
fact that John Casimir, as commander-in-chief, was under no
obligation to appoint a Hetman, his refusal aroused fierce
opposition.

John Casimir was reluctant to appoint a successor to Kiszka
because the Lithuanian Field Hetman, who would normally have been
promoted, was the Commonwealth's leading Calvinist, Janusz Radziwiłł, one of Lithuania's greatest magnates and John Casimir's bitterest opponent, who was widely suspected of engineering the first liberum veto of 1652.[12] By retaining command of the armies himself, however, John Casimir attracted the blame for the military failures in the years following his victory at Berestechko and provoked suspicion about his motives. Sejms and sejmiks refused to vote taxes until the King agreed to appoint new Hetmans. Condemnation reached such a pitch at the Sejm of March 1654 that John Casimir sanctioned its breaking by the royal supporter Paweł Białołęcki, before capitulating at the second Sejm of 1654, when Radziwiłł and Stanisław Potocki were appointed Grand Hetmans of Lithuania and Poland respectively.[13] The recourse to such controversial tactics further stimulated suspicion of John Casimir among the szlachta and alienated powerful magnates. Increasing political chaos in Warsaw brought stalemate in the war, only broken by the Muscovite invasion after the Treaty of Pereiaslav.

The Commonwealth was in no condition to resist a Muscovite assault. Although Alexis had entered the war in support of the Cossacks, he saw it as an opportunity to realise Ivan IV's dream of seizing a foothold on the Baltic coast. Lithuania therefore bore the brunt of the Muscovite onslaught.[14] If the situation in the Ukraine, where Potocki faced the Cossack forces and Buturlin's Muscovite army of 40,000 with 22-23,000 was bad enough, in Lithuania it was catastrophic. After manning garrisons spread out in the Grand Duchy's vast expanses, Janusz Radziwiłł faced two Muscovite armies with 8,000 men.[15] He was pushed back relentlessly as the Muscovites
took the vital cities of Smolensk, Polotsk, Vitebsk and Mogilev.

The defence of Lithuania was hampered by the political conflict between Radziwiłł and the King. Although John Casimir had appointed Radziwiłł Grand Hetman in June 1654, he had done what he could to limit his power, transferring part of the Grand Hetman's competence to the General of Artillery, and appointing Gosiewski, Radziwiłł's bitter rival, to succeed him as Field Hetman. Not only was the Field Hetman's autonomy increased, but as Lithuanian Treasurer, Gosiewski could ensure his own units were paid first.[16] John Casimir was following the time-honoured royal tactic of playing the Lithuanian factions off against one another, but the arrangement seriously hindered the Lithuanian war-effort:

"the Fatherland suffers more from poor relations between the Grand and Field Hetmans than from shortage of resources or the strength of the enemy..."[17]

Lithuania's plight, however, was ultimately due to the overwhelming superiority of the Muscovite forces, not the dispute between the Hetmans. The June Sejm of 1654 voted 18,000 men for the Lithuanian army, but in July Radziwiłł had a nominal 11,261, in fact about 4,000.[18] When John Casimir met Lithuanian senators at Grodno in October 1654 in a vain attempt to settle Lithuania's military and political problems, Radziwiłł attacked him for failing to settle with Khmel'nyts'kyi when he had the chance, while John Casimir blamed Radziwiłł for inadequate defensive preparations.[19]

Radziwiłł's views were echoed by other war-weary senators. As the Muscovite advance resumed in early 1655, the conviction spread that the Commonwealth could not save itself by its own efforts, and
that foreign aid was essential. The most obvious potential ally was Sweden, which had much to lose if Muscovy won through to the Baltic. Many senators hoped for an alliance with the power which had forged such a reputation for itself during the Thirty Years' War. Yet Swedish-Polish relations were poor. Although Sweden had been forced to grant concessions in 1635 in renewing the Truce of Altmark [1629], no peace treaty had been signed. The truce was due to last until 1661, but Charles Gustav's attitude suggested it might not. The greatest obstacle to a settlement was John Casimir's claim to the Swedish throne. John Casimir had approached Sweden as early as 1649, when a Muscovite invasion was already feared, but he broke off negotiations in 1651 after Berestechko.[20] When talks resumed in 1652, they soon foundered over John Casimir's refusal to compromise over his hereditary rights.[21] On Christina's abdication in 1654, John Casimir sent his secretary Canasilles to Stockholm with a strong protest at Charles Gustav's accession.[22]

Nevertheless, John Casimir was just as aware as his senators that Swedish aid might save the Commonwealth. On the outbreak of war in 1654, he began privately to seek a Swedish alliance through French mediation. In August 1654, he urged Piquet, the French resident in Stockholm, to do all he could to achieve peace with Sweden and an alliance against the Tsar.[23] Mazarin had instructed d'Avaugour in January to seek a Polish-Swedish alliance against Muscovy, and Canasilles, despite the protest at Charles Gustav's accession, also tried to explore the possibility of a settlement through a deal over John Casimir's claim, as he had in the summer of 1652, in the hope that the French might persuade Sweden to be more reasonable.[24]
Canasilles was rebuffed, as was Jan Andrzej Morsztyn, who spent three fruitless months in Stockholm in early 1655. Charles Gustav insisted that the preconditions for talks were John Casimir's resignation of his claim to Sweden and recognition by the Commonwealth de iure of Swedish rule in Livonia. In March, the Swedish Senate sent a letter which, far from offering an alliance, threatened war if these demands were not met immediately.[25]

Part of the aim of this letter was to increase divisions between John Casimir and those of his senators who wished an alliance with Sweden against Muscovy. It was not an ultimatum, but an offer of an alliance over John Casimir's head.[26] In this, the letter was partly successful. Many senators were outraged by the King's apparent willingness to put his personal interests before those of the state:

"for I am satisfied with His Majesty with regard to personal matters, but I am not satisfied with his ruining us by his plans and...his lack of faith in any of his senators...so that every piece of advice is suspect and he does nothing for the Senate, except in the last resort.[27]

How justified and how widespread was this attitude? Historians have usually argued that John Casimir's refusal to abandon his claims was motivated primarily by selfish considerations, and as such was bound to attract universal condemnation. This view needs to be challenged. John Casimir was quite willing to surrender his rights, but was determined to secure in return an improvement in the monarchy's position within the Commonwealth. However attractive the prospect of a Swedish alliance might be, he could not consider it in isolation. Even if Swedish aid enabled the Commonwealth to expel the Muscovites, the structural problems which had rendered the Commonwealth incapable of defeating its enemies would remain. John Casimir had
shown his conviction from the moment of his election that the authority of the royal government must be increased, and felt that he must exploit this opportunity to improve the material position of the monarchy. He therefore suggested to Sweden that should an anti-Muscovite alliance be formed, he should receive any lands taken from Muscovy as hereditary prince.[28] When Sweden rejected this idea, John Casimir tried to win compensation from the Commonwealth.

His price was high. Like Władysław IV, John Casimir had sworn an oath at his coronation to surrender his rights should it be necessary in the interests of the Commonwealth. This oath included the words: "if suitable recompense is made to Our House."[29] When this issue was discussed in March 1655, some argued that the phrase had been inserted subsequently, and that the Commonwealth was not bound to honour it.[30] Nonetheless, an offer was made which the King rejected at the Council meeting of 2nd March.[31] He revealed his price the following day. The details are unknown, but they shocked Jan Leszczyński:

"my hair stood on end...if we submitted these terms to the King of Sweden he would renounce the Swedish throne to become King of Poland."[32]

Historians have taken Leszczyński's reaction to indicate that John Casimir was demanding absolute power, although none defines what this might mean.[33] It is clear that the proposal essentially concerned the succession:

"I declare that I cannot consent to such servitude. Uncertainty over the election has ensured the moderate rule of our kings, who, not having an hereditary kingdom, endeavour to win the affection of their subjects by the moderation of their rule in order to win support for the future election of their sons;...whatever abuses they perpetrate can be dealt with at the election..."[34]
Leszczyński's reaction suggests that John Casimir's proposal was at least for the acceptance of his brother, Charles Ferdinand, as successor *vivente rege*, and at most for the establishment of hereditary rights for the Vasa dynasty. The proposals were rejected, however, and it was decided merely to send plenipotentiary powers to Morsztyn to treat with Sweden. The Swedish refusal to accept Morsztyn's *lettres de créance* due to quibbles over the wording merely increased suspicion that John Casimir had deliberately sabotaged the mission for his own ends. In March 1655, Radziwiłł stated that if the King proved intransigent, the Commonwealth was entitled to negotiate on its own:

"That...Morsztyn has been received as a private visitor is quite right, for it is well known that His Majesty neither may nor ought to deal with such matters without the consent of all the estates of the realm. It is necessary that not only the Archbishop, but also the Polish and Lithuanian Chancellors, and the...Hetmans should sign in the name of others...For if the King may negotiate himself with regard to his private interests, nobody other than the Commonwealth may treat over Livonia."[35]

It is true that many regarded the King's obstinacy as the principal barrier to a settlement. His claim for compensation from the Commonwealth was ignored at the 1655 Sejm, where deputies urged him to comply with the terms of his Coronation oath.[36] Plenipotentiary powers were granted to Jan Leszczyński and Aleksander Naruszewicz to undertake a new mission to Sweden, which sought to avoid the mistakes which had caused Morsztyn's embassy to fail. Nevertheless, the Sejm could not force John Casimir to abandon his claim; on the day the instructions were drawn up for Leszczyński and Naruszewicz, the King absented himself from the Sejm, demonstrating that he had not yet agreed to resign his rights.[37]
The extent to which John Casimir's intransigence had a direct bearing on the collapse of 1655 is, however, open to question. This has long been a controversial issue, especially since 1945, for an important school of thought has seen the events of 1655 as being of vital significance in the development of the magnate oligarchy, suggesting that they represented a collective act of betrayal by the magnate élite, which had long plotted to overthrow John Casimir, who had proved incapable of securing magnate interests in the east, and therefore ought to be deposed in favour of a monarch who was.[38] To achieve this goal, some have suggested that the magnate opposition actively connived in the Swedish invasion. The assertion of the right to depose an unsatisfactory monarch seemed to symbolise the seizure of control of the "helm of state" by the magnate oligarchy.

Three important questions must be answered if such a view is to be accepted: the extent to which John Casimir had alienated the magnate élite, the extent to which a coherent magnate opposition existed, and the extent to which that opposition was involved in precipitating the Swedish invasion. There is certainly evidence to suggest that some had considered John Casimir's deposition from the very start of his reign. Radziwiłł had opposed John Casimir's election, and may have been the author of a 1648 letter from Lithuania to Sweden hinting at the possibility of breaking the Union with Poland.[39] In 1650, Emperor Ferdinand III warned John Casimir of approaches to Sigismund, brother of George II Rákóczy of Transylvania, while there are strong indications that Lubomirski was the author of a letter written in May 1651 to George Rákóczy in connection with a plot to overthrow the King.[40] In 1654, Radziwiłł
sent Rákóczi a detailed set of proposals, in which he did not conceal his contempt for the government:

"Whence closely followed the hatred of all estates of the realm, the tedium caused by the present government and the public despair at serving the Commonwealth under such a preposterous regime."[41]

He asserted that discontent with John Casimir was so great that some were prepared to consider deposing him and electing a new monarch:

"ita, ut maxime metuendum sit, ne multi inveniantur ex proceribus, etiam ecclesiasticus, qui ab istiusmodi gubernatore, qui rem publicam curat tanquam rem alienam, ad alium, qui eam, tanquam suam, curare velit ac possit, imperium transferre conentu. Quamquam enim gente nostra caeteroquin [ut sunt res humanae] sui vitii laborante, fidelioarem erga imperantes nullam reperias: tamen et necessitas frangit omnem legem, et in pactis utrinque conventis, quo modo servata fides obstringit, ita violat dissolvit mutuam fidem."[42]

From early 1655, Radziwill was in contact with Sweden through the Duke of Courland, writing of the need:

"[to show] favour to the King of Sweden and his House: who is to know what the Fates might bring? The election of our lord is in our hands."[43]

The case of Hieronim Radziejowski seems to supply further evidence of the responsibility of the Polish ruling class for the Swedish invasion. Radziejowski, a protégé of the Queen, was unexpectedly advanced to the position of Crown Vice-Chancellor in 1650, only to fall out with the Court, which successfully impeached him in 1652. To escape punishment, he fled to Stockholm, where he waged a ceaseless campaign to persuade the Swedes that the Poles wished to be rid of John Casimir because of his absolutist leanings, and that they would welcome Swedish intervention.[44]

It is difficult, however, to demonstrate that such activities were typical, or that there was any widespread acceptance of Radziwill's view that John Casimir had forfeited his right to loyalty
before the King appeared to abandon his subjects by fleeing to Silesia in October 1655. Nevertheless, many historians have argued that Radziwiłł, Opaliński and Radziejowski were part of a widespread, coherent opposition to John Casimir:

"The united opposition of the great families of Lithuania, Great and Little Poland, was based on the "family alliance" between the Opaliński, Leszczyński, Lubomirski and Radziwiłł clans. It was led by the subsequent traitors Krzysztof Opaliński and Janusz Radziwiłł, who worked closely together, openly stirring up the szlachta against the King and plotting to replace him with another."[45]

Kersten admits there are problems in giving a full characterisation of the political basis of the opposition, but nevertheless argues that a coherent opposition existed:

"The opposition functioned actively in the years before the Swedish invasion. The Radziejowski affair concerned more than just Radziejowski, being but one element in a great political game conducted by a group of frondeur magnates against the Court and magnates who supported the King."[46]

According to Nowak:

"[Radziejowski] represented certain influential factions in the Polish magnate élite which suspected John Casimir of planning to introduce absolutum dominium, and who wished a future king to base his rule on the magnates, and to pursue their interests."[47]

The case rests on reputed contacts between Radziejowski and opposition magnates:

"Aristocratic and bourgeois historiography in general has underestimated the links which existed within the magnate camp, seeing the whole background of the treason before the war in terms of Radziejowski. That this is not a true picture is proved by the broad network of contacts which the magnate opposition maintained with Radziejowski."[48]

Firm evidence of the existence of an organised opposition, however, is hard to come by. The view that it was based on the "family alliance" of the Opalińskis, Leszczyńskis, Lubomirskis and Radziwiłłs, is based on a report by Adersbach, the Brandenburg envoy
at the March Sejm in 1654. There is nothing in Adersbach's letter, however, to indicate that this alliance went further than opposition to the King's stand on the specific issue of control of the army; even if he stresses the unity of this group, he gives no hint of the nature of their programme, or of actual plots against John Casimir.[49] Attempts to link Radziejowski with a concerted opposition party remain unconvincing. Radziejowski's appointment had been deeply resented by leading magnates, who regarded him as a social parvenu. Lubomirski, a leading opponent of John Casimir, had insulted the new Vice-Chancellor when handing over the seals of office at the Sejm, by openly claiming that Radziejowski had bought his position. While Radziejowski bombarded senators with letters after 1652, these overwhelmingly contained complaints about the injustice he had suffered, and requests to support his rehabilitation.

There is little evidence of any response, though some were sympathetic. Nowak, followed by Czapliński and Kersten, cites one letter from Krzysztof Opaliński to his brother Łukasz, written in August 1653, where he "did not conceal his contacts with Radziejowski."[50] One letter is insufficient evidence for the "broad network of contacts," which Nowak alleges existed; furthermore as Sajkowski has demonstrated, Opaliński was referring to Radziwiłł, not Radziejowski.[51] Radziejowski's contacts with the Cossacks and Sweden, which were revealed at the second Sejm of 1652 through the production of intercepted letters, brought widespread condemnation of his actions as treasonable, and his sentence was confirmed.[52] Kersten argues that Radziwiłł at least was a "silent
ally" of Radziejowski, but admits that despite Radziwiłł's hostile attitude to John Casimir, he did not openly intervene on Radziejowski's behalf.[53] When Radziejowski wrote to the szlachta of Great Poland on behalf of Wittemberg in early July 1655, when the Swedish army was already on the march, the reply, condemned as treasonable by Czapliński, did not respond to the political offers and made no mention of any previous political contacts.[54]

It was one thing to express opposition to individual royal policies, quite another to consider deposition. Sajkowski, who does not doubt the existence of a coherent opposition, is puzzled by Adersbach's inclusion of the Leszczyńskis in the "family pact", since he considers them to have been supporters of the Court.[55] In fact, while Jan Leszczyński was in close and frequent contact with Opaliński, Radziwiłł and Lubomirski, the Leszczyńskis, while deeply critical of many of John Casimir's actions, were not prepared to go to the same lengths as Radziwiłł, and reacted with horror to rumours of plots. When Radziwiłł complained to Andrzej Leszczyński in September 1654 about the King's behaviour, he was rebuked for his behaviour:

"I have recently heard enough alarming and pitiful accounts of the wretched state of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but the worst of all must be that contained in yesterday's letters, which appal me, for I hear not only of your implacable hatred for your colleagues, but also of your terrible disagreement with...His Majesty."

In reply to Radziwiłł's contention that Lithuania's desperate plight was due to the breaking of the Sejm, Leszczyński acidly pointed out that the 1652 Sejm had been broken by Sicinski, a Lithuanian deputy, and that the issue which caused the breaking of the 1654 Sejm was the hetmanship of Lithuania, not the attempt to
exclude the Prussian deputy Bąkowski, the ostensible reason for Białeobłocki's veto:

"I do not blame...Bąkowski so much, since I believe he bears less responsibility, for the Sejm had been divided for six weeks over the issue of the Lithuanian hetmanship, and it would certainly have broken up over the matter in any case. I pass over in silence the fact that His Majesty awarded the Field Hetman's baton without consulting Your Grace; in truth it is not the first occasion on which this has occurred, and it would be the last only if someone were to impose a law upon His Majesty. Past Hetmans have experienced such slights without taking them so amiss."[57]

Trzebicki was alarmed at rumours that Lithuanians intended to go over to the Swedes.[58] Radziwiłł had to deny that he sought to break the union, or that he had done anything improper:

"It is permitted to hold sessions and councils at Sejms on matters of private interest; there is nothing to prevent it: ultimately every voivodeship is free to provide for its security itself. Lithuania, however, is apparently not permitted to do so, out of suspicion that I counselled that it should seek its freedom. I am astounded that anyone could think of dismembering [the Commonwealth]; to speak or think of such a thing is forbidden by the ties of our sacred union."[59]

To view the political situation in 1655 in terms of a coherent opposition party confronting an increasingly isolated King is fundamentally distorting. There was some unity in the opposition to royal demands on individual issues, such as relations with Sweden and the nature of compensation owed by the Commonwealth. There was no agreement, however over the best way to break the deadlock. If the King could not force the Commonwealth to compensate him, neither could the Commonwealth force him to resign his claim. John Casimir's obstinancy may have driven some to consider deposing him, but there is no convincing evidence to indicate that this course of action was supported by more than a tiny minority. Furthermore, he was by no means isolated, even over the compensation issue. In Lithuania,
rivalry between the great magnate families meant that he could count on the support of many who feared the prospect of Radziwiłł domination, such as Gosiewski, and the Sapieha and Pac families.[60] The hostility between Radziwiłł and the Sapiehas had already been evident at the Coronation Sejm in 1648.[61] In 1654, it was not just John Casimir who opposed the appointment of Radziwiłł as Grand Hetman. Radziwiłł was afraid he might fail:

"since he knows that his bitterest and sworn arch-enemy Sapieha, the Lithuanian Vice-Chancellor, is also chasing and competing for this position."[62]

The King would have liked to grant the baton to Kazimierz Leon Sapieha, his nephew Paweł Sapieha, or Gosiewski, none of whom wished to serve under Radziwiłł.[63]

The King also found support for his stance with regard to Sweden. Not everyone shared the views of Jan Leszczyński, whose detailed correspondence has sometimes been the basis for misleading generalisations about the feelings of the whole magnate class.[64] While Leszczyński criticised John Casimir for playing down the Swedish threat, there were many who shared the King's view that Sweden would not attack.[65] After the Swedish invasion, K.L.Sapieha argued that nothing could have been done to prevent it:

"After seven years and more of constant misfortunes for our Fatherland, and after the destruction wrought everywhere, a new and almost unbearable scourge has recently arisen, as the Swedes, working in agreement with Muscovy, have brought war to our Commonwealth,...after spurning talks for a permanent settlement."[66]

Even Leszczyński had his doubts:

"as before, I am now pondering the extent to which the Swedes are dealing with us in good faith, and to what extent they wish a peaceful settlement without humiliating conditions...I am still of the opinion that they do not wish to enter any war, though various views may be heard with regard to this
Leszczyński thought John Casimir's attitude was unreasonable, but others felt that Sweden was in the wrong. The Catholic Church objected to the loss of Livonia, while there was concern that Sweden might demand the Prussian ports, or at least the right to levy tolls on them. With regard to compensation, Crown Treasurer Bogusław Leszczyński disagreed with his cousin over the 1648 oath and over the Commonwealth's responsibility towards the King, while John Casimir's proposed deal was put before the Council by Trzebicki, which suggests that he supported the plan.

If Radziwiłł was plotting to depose John Casimir, he was aware that he did not enjoy widespread support. Although his Calvinism was an important reason for his opposition, he knew that if the King were to be deposed in a Commonwealth where the overwhelming majority of the Senate was Catholic, he could not rely on Protestant support alone, as he stressed to Rákóczy in 1654:

"It does not behove us, who worship God under the sacred name of the pure Gospel, and for whom it is seemly to turn away not only from this act, but also from the sight of all evil, to raise the standard of just rebellion for others, unless death or flight impels us, [which indeed to those concerned with the state of our fatherland seems such a close and likely prospect] and frees us from our sacred vow,...or if some violent necessity drives us to take this step."

Recently, a debate has taken place between Wisner and Wasilewski over the significance of this letter. Wisner has argued that Radziwiłł could not have believed in the existence of a plot to depose John Casimir at this stage, claiming that he merely sought to keep Rákóczy quiet and stressing that he could not count on Protestant support. Wasilewski counters this suggestion by arguing that Radziwiłł's Calvinism was the primary motivating force
behind his betrayal of the Commonwealth in 1655, and that Radziwill was deeply involved in plots to depose John Casimir long before 1655, suggesting that Radziwill's attitude and promises of support were important in encouraging the Swedish attack.[72]

Neither view is entirely convincing. Wasilewski overstates his case in claiming that the letter to Rakóczy was a clarion call to rebellion and Wisner is right to suggest that Radziwill cannot have believed in 1654 that a plot to depose the King could succeed. He is wrong, however, to imply that this meant that Radziwill did not consider deposing John Casimir before 1655. If he did not believe in the existence of such a plot, as Wisner argues, why did he write to Rakóczy about it? Radziwill was hinting that the situation was deteriorating to such an extent that John Casimir might face deposition, but that circumstances were not yet favourable. Although Protestants might wish his deposition more than anyone else, they could not play the leading rôle, since this would run the risk of rallying Catholic support behind the King. Radziwill was telling Rakóczy to bide his time.

It was only when the Swedes invaded that John Casimir's position was undermined to the extent that he faced a realistic prospect of deposition. Before July 1655, despite widespread discontent, opposition was too fragmented for any such move to succeed. As Wisner remarks:

"The so-called union certainly did not go further than the kind of solidarity characteristic of the szlachta and magnates of that period. For not only did it contain representatives of different regions and faiths, which insured a divergence of interests...but it would have departed significantly from practices usual in the Commonwealth. Moreover,...there is no
sign in later years of the existence of any strong links, or of any unity in action. The different attitudes adopted by supposed members of the union towards the Swedish attack is significant."[73]

The Austrian observer Fragstein stressed the divisions among opponents of John Casimir:

"it is easy to see that the poor state of this kingdom will not readily improve. Its main cause is the great mistrust which not only divides the King...from the Commonwealth, but which also divides the Commonwealth itself into different factions."[74]

All parties hoped that a settlement with Sweden was possible, and thought that it ought to be pursued. Many refused to believe that the Swedish preparations were far enough advanced to permit an invasion in 1655. Schlakow, the Danzig resident at the Polish Court, reported that:

"much has been written saying that the preparations for war in Pomerania are not as well advanced as some here would have us believe,...the Court is therefore once more in better spirits."[75]

It was hoped that pressure from d'Avaugour in Stockholm might smooth the path for Morsztyn.[76] A new agreement had been reached with the Tatars, and John Casimir had launched a new initiative to win over the Cossacks, offering them the full privileges of the Polish szlachta.[77] Finally, although the mission of Don Diego da Villalobos to ask Ferdinand III for permission to raise troops in the Empire had received an official rebuff, Villalobos reported that the Emperor might permit unofficial recruitment.[78]

Yet there was widespread recognition that war might come, and a readiness to face the enemy if necessary. As soon as the letter from the Swedish Senate arrived, the government began to prepare for war. On 3rd April the summons was issue for an extraordinary Sejm, called
for 19th May in Warsaw, with preliminary sejmiks meeting on 28th April. Crown Grand Chancellor Stefan Koryciński was aware of the problems of fighting a war on two fronts, and suggested that an army of at least 30,000 needed to be raised. He admitted, however, that such a figure could only be achieved on paper. He calculated that 20,000 would be required to defend the Ukraine, before even thinking of the Swedish or Byelorussian fronts. To face the Swedes, professional infantry would be best; to raise mercenary troops quickly would be difficult, however, while the noble levy was useless:

"We do not have such [mercenary] troops, and who knows when we can raise them. What can the levy do against Swedish firepower without infantry or dragoon regiments? The levy does not always wish to give battle, and even if it did, I do not know what can be done without infantry."[81]

Far from fearing further disorder, he was confident that the perilous state of the Commonwealth would ensure a cooperative mood:

"But a Sejm is the best remedy for all our ills, if only Our Lord God grants us enough time, at which we can decide on the best policy, whether to wage war or to seek peace. I appreciate the dangers, and I do not wish to overlook any viable means of saving the Commonwealth."[82]

Historians have argued that by the time the Sejm assembled, the szlachta was affected by profound feelings of apathy and defeatism. Kersten suggests that John Casimir was almost completely isolated and that the few supporters he had did not dare to speak up. Wisner argues that the szlachta felt a deep mistrust for the King, and had no understanding of the nature of the Swedish threat:

"At a point when the country was fighting two wars and was threatened by a third...the debates were conducted intially in an incredible fashion. It seems that the King and the estates completely failed to realise the danger of the situation."[85]
As proof, he points to the low attendance at the Sejm:

"The attendance in both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate was low. Despite the curtailment of the length of the Sejm [from six weeks to two], by 27th May, only 2 bishops, 3 voivodes and 7 castellans were present in the Senate."[86]

Yet this was an extraordinary Sejm, with sejmiks taking place only 21 days before it opened, instead of a month or so for an ordinary Sejm. It was common for senators not to turn up at the start of a Sejm, when much routine business was conducted, and Wisner overlooks the presence of 5 ministers.[87] In fact, the attendance of 19 senators so early in a Sejm was unusual: while 19 senators were present at the start of the 1632 Sejm, this figure was the highest for the reigns of Sigismund III and Władysław IV. At the start of the first Sejm of 1629, only 5 senators were present, while there were only 6 at the second Sejm of 1637, and at those of 1638 and 1639. Between 24 and 27 senators in all attended the 1655 Sejm; while this was some way short of the 55 present in 1627 and 1631, it was more than the 21 who attended the second Sejm of 1637, and not much below the average attendance for the peacetime Sejms of Władysław IV's reign, which was 30.[88] Considering the disruption of the war and the short notice given, it was by no means a disastrously low attendance and should not be seen as evidence of indifference or opposition.

The deputies showed no lack of urgency. Fragstein reported that they were already arriving by 25th April, with more appearing by 15th May, four days before the Sejm opened. When it did, Umiastowski was immediately elected Marshal of the Chamber of Deputies without the usual problems, while deputies urged that the session be completed within a fortnight, with defence as the main priority.[89] The
government proposals, read by Koryciński on 22nd May, were concerned solely with defence, with no mention of diplomatic initiatives: measures were proposed to liquidate arrears in the payment of the army, to fortify towns and fortresses near hostile borders and to raise new troops.[90] At the primate's suggestion, debate was conducted in secret; despite objections to this procedural innovation, it was accepted.[91]

The prospect of war was taken seriously. If the deputies strongly supported further peace talks with Sweden, and called for negotiations with Muscovy and the Cossacks, they were ready to fight if necessary. The royal instructions had castigated sejmiks for their slowness in implementing the decisions of the last Sejm and had called for the lanowa infantry. The szlachta were warned that the King might have to call out the levy:

"In such a situation the means are lacking to mount any swift military action. Although His Majesty has ordered supplementary troops to be raised in neighbouring states, wishing to make up the army complement to the figure allowed...[by the last Sejm], these troops will arrive too late due to lack of money, which flows but slowly into the Treasury, and in any case they will not be sufficient to match the force of the enemy. Therefore His Majesty must consider the last resort, the noble levy, which is the swiftest means of salvation."[92]

In private, however, John Casimir urged senators to ensure that sejmiks agreed to the lanowa infantry and did not rely solely on the levy:

"the only means of saving the Commonwealth in its last paroxysm is if the estates of the realm immediately agree at the forthcoming sejmiks to the lanowa infantry rather than the noble levy, with one infantryman from every ten ian. They must then implement this decision immediately."[93]

Since Ferdinand III had rejected requests to permit recruitment in Germany, to John Casimir's intense anger, it was essential that this
infantry be raised.[94]

The response of sejmiks was encouraging:

"in a moment of such peril and misfortune for our Commonwealth...not wishing to confront our enemy with the noble levy, which is our last line of defence, we unanimously consent to His Majesty's proposal concerning the lanowa infantry."[95]

While the Chełmno sejmik rejected the call for the lanowa infantry, calling the noble levy for 30th June, as did the general Prussian sejmik, this was not through any lack of urgency.[96] Although the lanowa infantry was refused, the Prussians agreed to taxes to raise paid units, being well acquainted with the nature of the Swedish army.[97] Similarly, while the general sejmik of Great Poland called out the noble levy and an infantry levy of 1 man from every 50 households and 15 lan, slightly smaller than the King had asked for, it also sanctioned the raising of 3,000 troops from abroad.[98] Similarly, the provincial sejmik of Great Poland voted funds for the recruitment of 3,000 mercenaries.[99] There is no sign that the szlachta felt the state was unequal to its task. Defence against Sweden was entrusted to Great Poland, while Little Poland was to aid the Lithuanians and parry any thrust from the Ukraine. An oath was taken to defend the Fatherland and the mood was confident:

"Zeal for the Fatherland was that day most fervently displayed by all, and when Herr Dembinsky cried in a loud voice that whosoever wished to complicate proceedings should leave the chamber immediately, he was hailed by everyone with a loud 'Amen!'"[100]

On the whole, the government could be reasonably satisfied with the Polish response to the crisis. John Casimir was disappointed that the compensation issue had not been settled, but although delegates from Great Poland were suspicious of his desire to raise paid troops
in Germany, fearing that he might use them to make his rule absolute, he had avoided the sort of criticism he had faced at previous Sejms.[101] If no new taxes were voted for Poland, except for a levy of 20,000 złoties on the Jews, this must be seen in the context of the great efforts made over the previous four years. Between June 1654 and July 1655, the szlachta paid 80% of the 10,000,000 złoties voted in taxation. It was the greatest financial effort since 1648; indeed, of the 30,500,000 złoties paid between 1648 and 1655, 9,300,000 had been collected in the last year:

"One should not therefore be surprised that after such a great financial effort, which had in principle ensured pay for the army until the end of 1655, the szlachta did not vote for further taxes for the war with Sweden, agreeing only to the noble levy and to the raising of lanowa infantry..."[102]

Since the royal proposals did not call for new taxes, but for the lanowa infantry, it is hardly surprising that the Sejm failed to vote them of its own accord. Much had already been done to alleviate the arrears of pay, which dated in some cases from 1648.[103]

The main problems at the Sejm came not from Poland, but from Lithuania, where the military and political situation was desperate. The Muscovite war placed the most serious strain on Polish-Lithuanian relations since 1569. If the magnate oligarchy's supposed priority was the protection of the Commonwealth's interests in the East, between 1648 and 1655, Poland had done little to help Lithuania. Already in 1648 Radziwiłł, who wanted a vigorous war to be waged against Khmel'nyts'kyi, fearing that the unrest would spread to Lithuania, attacked the attitude of the Poles, who were not directly threatened.[104] Lithuanians could not forget that the Union of Lublin had taken the Ukraine from Lithuania and given it to
Poland. Lithuanians had accepted the Union despite this loss of territory because they needed the military support that the more numerous Poles could provide. If such support had largely been forthcoming in the first half of the seventeenth century, after 1648 it increasingly appeared as if Lithuania had been abandoned to its fate, as Radziwiłł pointed out:

"Not forgetting that it was through the Union of Lublin that Volhynia and the Ukraine were transferred to Poland. The Grand Duchy never had to bear the whole burden of war against Muscovy on its own shoulders, but Poland helped with all its forces, something which it no longer undertakes with its former enthusiasm."

The growing tendency for different regions of the Commonwealth to look after their own defence intensified Lithuanian resentment at being left alone to face the Muscovites. Radziwiłł attacked the low numbers of troops allowed Lithuania by recent Sejms and the lack of money voted to pay them, so that even those sent to aid Lithuania laid waste the countryside.

Radziwiłł feared that at the Sejm the Poles would ask for subsidies already voted to be recalled, when substantial reinforcements were required. He was determined on confrontation, trying to impeach the royal supporter Obuchowicz over the surrender of Smolensk. The affair wasted two valuable days, and although Obuchowicz was prevented from taking his seat in the Senate, support from the Sapiehas helped the King to block the impeachment. While Radziwiłł attracted some Polish support in this matter, many blamed him for the loss of Smolensk. When he addressed the Sejm on the state of the Muscovite war, reporting the capture of 60 Muscovites, including three princes or voivodes and of 60 standards, he was poorly received:
"he had to wait over half an hour before anything was said in reply; finally, after a long silence and after divers speeches and arguments presented on behalf of His Majesty by the Lithuanian Vice Chancellor [K.L.Sapieha], he was thanked in cold and ungracious terms."[111]

Lithuanian opinion was bitterly divided. While Radziwiłł was convinced that the main priority should be to resist the Tsar, and that an alliance with Sweden was therefore essential, Gosiewski, Sapieha and other Lithuanian magnates wanted to settle with Muscovy. Gosiewski had already sent Medeksza to Radziwiłł in September 1654 to try and win the soldiers under his command for the King.[112] The depth of the political chasm between the two Hetmans was revealed at the Sejm. In mid June, Fragstien reported a stormy session of Lithuanian deputies in the Bernardine Church, during which Radziwiłł and Gosiewski had a major confrontation. Radziwiłł, who called for large sums of money for the Lithuanian army, was violently attacked by Gosiewski and others for unspecified excesses connected with the conduct of the campaign against Muscovy, and the session ended in complete chaos.[113]

The Court did what it could to isolate Radziwiłł. One barrier to his achieving widespread support was his Calvinist faith, which represented an easy target. Wisner has criticised John Casimir for exploiting this:

"In a situation when unity...was so important, when deputies brought with them in their Instructions the recommendation that "Dissidents in the Christian Religion should be appeased in accordance with the Constitution of the most recent Sejm," the Jesuit Karwat, during the opening Church Service, preached "violently against dissidents and heretics." If this was not inspired by the King, nevertheless the responsibility falls on his shoulders."[114]

It is certainly unlikely that Karwat would have preached such a
sermon without royal approval. Yet there was good reason for the attack. Most sejmiks had urged their deputies to ensure that no private matters be considered, but only those relevant to the defence of the realm; when Protestants protested at Karwat's sermon, they seemed to be wasting valuable time on an unpopular private issue: the resultant criticism rebounded on Radziwiłł when he arrived in Warsaw.[115] Hoverbeck was alarmed at the extent of anti-Protestant feeling interpreting what he saw as Jesuit-inspired attacks on Radziwiłł as part of an attempt to use his Protestantism to force him onto the sidelines; ultimately, Hoverbeck feared, it was hoped to drive the Protestants from the kingdom.[116] The Court's anti-Protestant campaign was not due to any lack of concern for Lithuania, as Wisner suggests. John Casimir was merely exploiting an easy target in Radziwiłł's Calvinism to divide the opposition and isolate him even further.

Concentration on the personal clash between John Casimir and Radziwiłł obscures the extent to which general relations between Poland and Lithuania were deteriorating. Although Radziwiłł blamed the King for the Grand Duchy's plight, the government did make efforts to help Lithuania which were blocked by Polish deputies. As Tyzenhaus remarked, the devastated Grand Duchy was in no state to raise the taxes proposed in the royal instructions:

"If we are...to save the Fatherland, we must take up arms ourselves...perhaps the Tsar would graciously consent to wait until we gather such prodigious sums in taxation, and until we have recruited an army."[117]

He believed that Lithuania on its own could not sustain a major war against Muscovy, and felt that it was unable to pay any more taxes.[118] The government was aware of the problem, and proposed
that the mutinous Lithuanian army be paid out of the Polish Treasury, since Lithuania had been laid waste by Muscovy.[119] The proposal, however, was rejected by Polish deputies, who followed the Lublin sejmik in demanding that the Lithuanian army be paid by Lithuania and not by Poland.[120] While the Sejm voted no new taxes for Poland, Lithuania was saddled with 22 rates of the hearth tax, to be paid in 2 instalments, the first 12 by 1st August, the remaining 10 by 1st September. The czopowe, a tax on alcoholic drinks, was voted for two years and customs duties were increased.[121] Since Lithuania was in a much worse financial situation than Poland, Radziwiłł was perhaps justified in feeling deserted; it was by the Polish szlachta rather than John Casimir.

The 1655 Sejm was therefore characterised neither by united opposition to John Casimir nor by defeatist sentiments, at least on the part of Poles. If there had been time to implement its decisions, the catastrophe might have been averted. There was no time. The speed of the Swedish attack caught everyone by surprise. Great Poland in particular was in no position to resist an invasion from the veteran Swedish army. The Commonwealth was already fighting a war on two fronts; in an attempt to ensure continuing Tatar support, most of the Crown army had been committed to the Ukraine, stripping Great Poland of most of its regular troops.[122] Opaliński, who, as General of Great Poland was responsible for the province's defence, was aware of the difficulties he faced, and had contacted Frederick William of Brandenburg on his own initiative to ask for protection in the event of a Polish-Swedish war.[123] The contacts were renewed after the Sejm, when the Elector sent Zawacki to talk directly with Great
Poland representatives in Poznań. Although at first it seemed as if the Brandenburg offer might be accepted, the szlachta proved more suspicious than Opaliński of Frederick William's desire to occupy a series of fortresses and strongpoints. Nevertheless, at this meeting, there was a general feeling that, in the event of an immediate attack, the province was unable to defend itself.[124]

There was good reason for these fears. The King considered that Royal Prussia, not Great Poland, would be the main Swedish target. Should the Swedes take Danzig, Marienburg or Elbing, it would be difficult to dislodge them, given Polish deficiencies in artillery and infantry. Such regular troops as could be spared were therefore sent from the Ukraine to Prussia rather than Great Poland, which was to be defended by the janowa infantry and the noble levy. There was little time to organise before the Swedes crossed the Oder on 14th July.[125] The King only issued the first two calls-to-arms for the noble levy on 21st and 25th July, naming the assembly date as 24th August, and the final summons only after Ujście, for which he has been criticised by Wimmer.[126] In John Casimir's defence, it should be pointed out that he did not expect Frederick William to grant the Swedes free passage so quickly at a time when he was hoping for the Elector's support. Furthermore, as Koryciński had argued, it was dangerous to call the levy before enemy intentions were clear, since the szlachta had a tendency to return home if nothing happened immediately.[127]

The course of events at Ujście makes it seem unlikely that the surrender was the result of long-term planning. Contemporary
accounts give an impression of confusion and uncertainty, which was to be expected since Opaliński had minimal experience as a soldier. Wittemberg, with 14,000 men, mostly infantry, and 72 cannon, was faced by 13,000 from the noble levy, and a mere 1,400 lanowa infantry, of whom 400 garrisoned the strongpoint of Drahim.[128] The Poles were drawn up on the south side of the river in a good defensive position which forced the Swedes to approach across marshy ground.[129] Any Polish advantage was nullified by the fact that the vast majority of their forces consisted of cavalry, not best suited to defending a river crossing against seasoned infantry, especially since the Poles had few cannon and little gunpowder.[130] If a surrender was envisaged from the outset, why did Opaliński allow Grudziński, Voivode of Kalisz, to resist the Swedes for five hours at the head of the infantry? Grudziński only called off his resistance when he ran out of ammunition.[131] When news came that the Swedes had seized a crossing further down at Dziembow threatening to outflank the Poles, neither Opaliński nor the noble levy showed any desire to fight.[132] In the circumstances, the decision to surrender almost certainly averted a humiliating rout.

While Wimmer accepts that the task was impossible, he still blames the surrender on Opaliński's treachery:

"There is no doubt that the attitude of several of the leaders directly influenced the defeatism of the levy; Opaliński, who had long been in contact with Sweden, was especially to blame."[133]

There is no firm evidence of such contacts on the part of Opaliński or of any other magnate from Great Poland before the arrival of Radziejowski's letter in the camp at Ujście on 18th July. It is true that many blamed John Casimir for provoking the invasion, but this
view was by no means unanimous. If it is possible, as Czapliński alleges, that Opaliński never really considered mounting significant resistance, others among both senators and szlachta were of a different opinion.[134] A significant number of those present did not sign the document of surrender. Three senators followed Opaliński's lead: Grudziński, Maksymilian Miaskowski, Castellan of Krzywiń and Paweł Gembicki, Castellan of Międzyrzecz.[135] After a heated debate, Rozdrażewski, Voivode of Inowrocław, who was related to Radziejowski, and Piotr Opaliński, Voivode of Podlasie and Krzysztof's cousin, both refused to sign.[136] Grudziński argued strongly against the surrender before signing with expressions of deep regret at being forced to comply with such an unpatriotic act.[137] Such evidence supports Sajkowski's conclusion that the decision to surrender was taken only in the camp at Ujście.[138] Once the Swedes outflanked the Poles and the noble levy began to flee, surrender was the only real option left. In the absence of convincing evidence to the contrary, Ujście must be seen as a military defeat, not premeditated political treason.

Ujście and Kiejdany did not result from any coordinated plan. Nevertheless, the collapse of resistance in Great Poland had a profound effect on events in Lithuania, seeming to vindicate Radziwiłł's view that Poland had abandoned Lithuania to its fate. At last the political situation had changed sufficiently for Radziwiłł to hope that he might attract wider support for the deposition of John Casimir. With no hope of Polish reinforcements, a decision had to be taken swiftly. Lithuania faced not one enemy but two. In the spring of 1655, the Muscovites resumed their offensive. Alexis left
Moscow on 21st March, crossing the Berezina with the main army on 4th July. A week later, Minsk fell to the Muscovites, who now seemed unstoppable.[139] Although Alexis feared the arrival of a Polish army under the King, the Poles showed no sign of hurrying to Lithuania's aid; indeed, the few Polish troops still in the Grand Duchy had left to garrison Marienburg.[140] The capture of Dyneburg by Sweden on 19th July and the fall of Wilno to Alexis on 9th August made the Lithuanian position untenable. News of Ujście seemed to confirm that Lithuania had been abandoned to its fate. Radziwiłł wrote to Koryciński of the impossibility of carrying on unaided:

"Not only do we bear the full brunt of the enemy's attack,...but we also hear disturbing reports from our Polish brothers. We are already destitute of all the ordinary means of saving ourselves with our own resources; it only remains for the Commonwealth to harvest the fatal bounty in this as in all else: since loyal and well-intentioned counsel for the pacification of the Commonwealth has either been ignored or has been wilfully misinterpreted, the unhappy and parlous state of the Fatherland has been aggravated."[141]

Since Lithuania had been abandoned by Poland, Radziwiłł wrote that many had decided to follow the example of Ujście in order to avoid a terrible subjugation.[142] He could even suggest that he had official backing for talking to Sweden, since John Casimir had written after Ujście giving permission for armistice talks with Muscovy, or at least with Sweden.[143]

Military defeat had given Radziwiłł the opportunity to realise his political aims. Few regarded the prospect of Muscovite rule with anything but trepidation. Basarab's view that the Tsar's victory was achieved with the support of many Lithuanian magnates who opposed John Casimir is unacceptable.[144] The strongest opponents of John Casimir in Lithuania, led by Radziwiłł, preferred a settlement with
Sweden, while it was his supporters, such as Gosiewski, who looked more to Muscovy. Malt'tsev argues that many Lithuanian nobles accepted the rule of the Tsar, welcoming a strong monarch capable of dealing with anti-feudal tendencies among their serfs, but fails to offer any evidence beyond a general quote from Lenin.[145] He suggests that Orthodox nobles welcomed Muscovite rule, but the Orthodox Church in the Grand Duchy rejected the claims of the Patriarch of Moscow, and although the Muscovites tried to play the Orthodox card, it was not one which necessarily attracted support.

For the Catholic and Uniate nobility, the Muscovite invasion was a grave threat. The available evidence suggests that far from welcoming the Tsar's rule, many Lithuanian nobles fled westwards. Radziwiłł was not alone in fearing a ruler who subjected his nobles to the knout.[146] As the Muscovite armies swept through Lithuania, preceded by waves of refugees, reports of atrocities and forced conversions spread:

"The Muscovites are subjecting Polish [sic] cities to a tyranny the likes of which cannot be found in any story: they have put everything to the torch within 70 miles of the border and they have put everyone over sixteen to the sword, while all those under that age have been taken to Muscovy,...where they have been displayed to the Russians and pressed into perpetual slavery..."[147]

In early August, Lithuanian senators complained to the Muscovite boyars about the behaviour of the Tsar's armies.[148] The day before Alexis entered Wilno, he instructed the boyars that if the Lithuanians wished to talk of an alliance, the whole Grand Duchy must submit to his rule.[149] His proclamation following the fall of Wilno demanded that everyone "bowed their head" to his power.[150] Alexis was not interested in negotiation; he wanted submission.
Fear of Muscovy encouraged Lithuanian Catholics to support Radziwiłł's approach to Sweden. Jerzy Tyszkiewicz, Bishop of Wilno, signed the conditions for accepting Swedish protection sent to de la Gardie, as Radziwiłł stressed to Jan Leszczyński.[151] Even Gosiewski, who arrived in Kiejdany in early August, was prepared to countenance talks with Sweden. Yet Radziwiłł failed in his attempt to win wide support for his plans. De la Gardie was proved correct in his view that Radziwiłł would be unable to win the support of those that he had promised.[152] While Tyszkiewicz and Gosiewski were willing to await the Swedish response to the terms Lubieniecki took to Riga, they nevertheless wished to explore other options. Tyszkiewicz approached Muscovy proposing peace talks mediated by Austria, and a letter was sent from Gosiewski and Radziwiłł assuring the Tsar that all Lithuania wanted to discuss a settlement.[153] The motivation behind these letters is impossible to determine. Wasilewski believes that the initiative came from Tyszkiewicz, while Wisner suggests that Radziwiłł, in sanctioning the move, was attempting either to play for time or to raise his value to the Swedes, who were known to be in touch with Muscovy themselves.[154]

Although the submission to Sweden, signed on 17th August, was couched in moderate terms, asserting that this action had become necessary since:

"In our current situation, oppressed by a powerful enemy and unfortunately denied the arms and protection of His Majesty the King of Poland, fatal and inevitable necessity compels us..."[155]

and despite the fact that it contained guarantees of the rights of the Catholic and Orthodox churches, it failed to attract the wide support that Radziwiłł had hoped.[156] The only other Lithuanian
senators to sign were Eustachy Kierdej and Gosiewski. Radziwiłł's own brother Bogusiaw, one of the authors of the original invitation of 29th July, left Kiejdany before the signing, while his brother-in-law, Jerzy Karol Hlebowicz, Starosta of Samogitia, who was present, refused to sign.[157]

Radziwiłł had overreached himself. Although Tyszkiewicz accepted the principle of Swedish aid, he rejected the terms on offer:

"I would not be adverse to your proposals, or to any means which might prevent our complete ruin. But when I consider that we are to surrender...before we are certain of receiving any help, I fear that in trying to escape our present plight we may fall into a worse one, even though we imagine it to be better."[158]

Tyszkiewicz regarded Radziwiłł's action as premature, and was unwilling to break the Union with Poland for Swedish promises alone:

"By this surrender we are dissolving the sacred union with Poland, whose inviolability was sworn by our ancestors; those of us who sign will be branded for eternity with the mark of destruction for betraying our loyalty to our King and our Fatherland, something which will never be forgotten."[159]

He had accepted negotiations with Sweden partly because the King had sanctioned such contacts. As a Catholic bishop, however, he could not accept the breaking of the Union with Poland since, deprived of the powerful support of the Polish Catholic church, Lithuanian Catholics would face serious challenges not so much from Protestantism, but from Orthodoxy.

Although Gosiewski signed Kiejdany, he put more faith in the talks with Muscovy; due to the Tsar's hardline attitude, however, he could not afford to stand aloof from talks with Sweden. He was concerned at the prospect of Radziwiłł's dominance, however, should
the treaty come into effect, and had his own clause included urging
the appointment of Krzysztof Pac as Vice-Chancellor should a vacancy
occur.[160] Gosiewski was trying to raise his price with regard to
Muscovy. In this he was successful: Kiejdany persuaded Alexis to
moderate his position, and to send Likhariev to talk to the two
Hetmans at the end of the month.[161] While Radziwiłł was not
prepared to concede anything, Gosiewski had firm proposals for the
Tsar: he suggested an immediate armistice, playing on Muscovite
fears of Sweden.[162] Once Likhariev had departed, Gosiewski was
sufficiently confident that the Muscovites would cease operations
against the Commonwealth that he openly broke with Radziwiłł,
proposing to the troops:

"Brothers, see what is happening; let everyone understand that
my senior colleague wishes to harness you to a terrible yoke, to
place you, due to the old hatred which he bears you, in the
powerful hands of the Swedes, so that you, who once struck
terror into the hearts of all nations, must lay down your
arms."[163]

Gosiewski and other leading Lithuanian magnates were bound to be
concerned about Radziwiłł's political ambitions, and the effect that
an agreement negotiated with Sweden on Radziwiłł's initiative might
have on the balance of the factions in Lithuania. A section in
Radziwiłł's original proposals envisaged the creation of two duchies
out of Lithuanian territory for Janusz and Bogusław Radziwiłł, in
which they would be granted sovereign rights under the Swedish Crown
similar to those enjoyed by princes of the Empire.[164]

Radziwiłł's private ambitions cost him any chance of support
from his powerful magnate rivals in Lithuania, who might have been
attracted in the circumstances of 1655 by Lithuanian separatism.
Although Paweł Sapieha was in contact with the Swedes, he declined to
accept their protection.[165] On 23rd August, a group of Lithuanian szlachta signed a confederation at Wierzbółów, declaring their opposition to Kiejdany.[166] Sapieha quickly made a truce with Muscovy and concentrated on keeping Lithuanian forces together until John Casimir should return.[167] Over 1,000 signed the final Act of Union between Lithuania and Sweden at Kiejdany on 20th October, but Radziwiłł could not disguise the lack of magnate support. His panic-stricken letter to his brother, in which he berated Bogusław for disappearing, showed that he realised the extent of his failure:

"One one side we face the suspicion of the Prussian szlachta and of [Gosiewski's] faction; on the other, the Poles, who have abandoned us; on yet another, those traitors who escaped from our camp and formed a confederation, traitors who are hostile not only to our estates, but also to their friends and servants, and who intend to join the King."[168]

Ujście and Kiejdany were the result of the Commonwealth's military incapacity in the face of overwhelming odds, not the conscious choice of a widespread, coherent opposition party. Magnates and szlachta alike were affected by a profound sense of disorientation as the collapse gathered momentum and they were forced to make choices which would have seemed preposterous a few weeks earlier. By August, the Commonwealth's very existence seemed in danger. Ujście and Kiejdany had a catastrophic effect on the military position, and on the attitude of the szlachta as a whole. John Casimir had left Warsaw on 17th August, the same day on which Kiejdany was signed, and on which part of the Sieradz szlachta accepted Charles Gustav's protection.[169] By the time he arrived in Wolbórz on 4th September, it was reported that only four voivodeships remained loyal.[170] At a Council meeting two days after the defeat at Żarnów on 16th September, the King was met with demands for pay
from an army on the verge of mutiny.[171] On 25th September, a 
Cossack and Muscovite army began the siege of Lwów, while the main 
Crown army was defeated at Gródek at the end of the month.[172] The 
decision of John Casimir and many leading senators to follow Louise 
Marie into exile prompted other voivodeships to join Sweden:

"We have been abandoned by our...brethren from the Senate, 
some of whom have fled the country, while others have abandoned 
His Majesty, who has been escorted out of the kingdom, taking 
with him the insignia Regni, and priceless jewels from the 
Cracow treasury, without informing the estates of the realm. 
They gave no reinforcements to the Commonwealth, and have 
abandoned the Knightly Estate, their own lands, the szlachta 
and even the army; all have been left in the lurch."[173]

The fall of Cracow on 17th October and the decision of the bulk of 
the Crown army to surrender a few days later, seemed to end John 
Casimir's hopes of saving his kingdom.[174]

The collapse had certainly been dramatic, but the acceptance of 
Swedish protection by a substantial proportion of the szlachta 
represented the recognition of military defeat, not the treason of an 
entire class. Charles Gustav was accepted as King on condition that 
he respected the liberties of the szlachta and only because John 
Casimir appeared to have abandoned his subjects. The extent of the 
desertion should not be exaggerated: this was not a collective act of 
betrayal on the part of a whole class. While some leading magnates 
such as Radziwiłł, Opaliński, Koniecpolski and the future King, John 
Sobieski, looked to Charles Gustav for political advancement, the 
majority remained uncommitted. About thirty leading senators went 
into exile, others, such as Jakub and Ludwik Weiher, resisted the 
Swedes, while many who stayed in the Commonwealth did nothing, 
waiting to see how the situation would develop. The loyalty of those 
who had already accepted Swedish overlordship, many of them
reluctantly, depended on Charles Gustav's behaviour. Poland had been easy to conquer; with an army of 33,000, it might not prove easy to hold.

The submission of Poland to Sweden was more apparent than real. The Leszczyńskis, who blamed John Casimir for what they saw as a needless war, and who appeared keen in July and August to secure his abdication, could not obtain satisfactory terms from Charles Gustav.[175] Lubomirski, long an opponent of John Casimir, also failed to reach agreement, despite protracted negotiations during the siege of Cracow.[176] It was soon apparent that Charles Gustav was not a satisfactory replacement for John Casimir. Despite attempts to maintain discipline in the Swedish army, incidents, such as the murder of Suffragan Bishop Branicki in August, began to turn the local population against the invader. The supply of the Swedish army by techniques refined in Germany during the Thirty Years' War brought demands on the local population which they were unwilling to meet after seven years continual warfare, and which trampled over the szlachta liberties which Charles Gustav had sworn to uphold. The first signs of resistance appeared in November and spread rapidly. Charles Gustav, despite his earlier promises, proved reluctant to hold a Sejm; nevertheless, the demands of the Swedish army grew as winter approached.[177]

As disillusion with Charles Gustav grew, John Casimir's position improved dramatically. For most of 1655, an important group of senators had been convinced that Poland could only be saved by a Swedish alliance. As it became clear that Sweden was pursuing her own
aims, with scant regard for Polish interests, John Casimir's position improved. There is no evidence to suggest that anything more than a tiny minority had considered his deposition before the military collapse of 1655, although some, such as the Leszczyńskis, were willing to accept his abdication if offered, an option to which John Casimir was briefly attracted in the summer, so long as appropriate compensation could be agreed. Many who went over to Charles Gustav had serious misgivings; while a few, such as Koniecpolski, lingered in Swedish service until the spring of 1656, most returned to loyalty at the end of 1655. At least John Casimir had been elected in accordance with the constitution, by which his actions were limited. Fears increased that Charles Gustav might attempt to negotiate a partition of the Commonwealth with Muscovy, the Cossacks and other powers. By mid-November, the mood among the exiles had changed dramatically from the defeatism of a few weeks earlier, as news arrived in Silesia of the growing resistance to Sweden.[178] John Casimir, with the backing of the Senate Council, issued a call-to-arms against Sweden, and began to plan his return. Much of the Crown army returned to loyalty in the Confederation of Tyszowce, signed at the end of December.[179] The actions of Radziwiłł and Opaliński, both of whom died at the end of the year, were widely condemned as treasonable.

Most importantly, the behaviour of Charles Gustav seemed to demonstrate that John Casimir had been right to be suspicious of Sweden, while the military collapse of July and August had proved that he had been right to insist that the Commonwealth's political and military system needed to be reformed if it were to be capable of
resisting its enemies. From the autumn of 1655, political reform became an urgent topic of debate among the Commonwealth's political élite. Yet if reform were to be realised, the invaders would first have to be expelled. Despite the return of the will to fight, that would be no easy task.
News of the surrender at Ujście arrived in Warsaw on 31st July.[1] The Senate Council immediately decided on the absolute necessity of foreign aid; after Ujście, this was the only realistic policy the government could pursue, nevertheless, it has met with widespread criticism from historians:

"[it was] a desperate, hopeless move...The King and his advisers...looked for miraculous aid rather than to rescue themselves by their own efforts."[2]

Post-war historians, especially those writing in the Stalinist climate of the 1950's, supported this view, suggesting a socio-political motive for seeking foreign aid: fear of the possible consequences of an appeal to the masses.[3] Kersten argued that the inevitable logic of the class-struggle encouraged the belief that the invader could not be expelled through reliance on the "nation", but only through seeking foreign aid with no regard for the interests of the Commonwealth.[4] Śreniowski saw a direct link between the class-structure of the Commonwealth, the oligarchic nature of power and the direction of foreign policy:

"It is not difficult to demonstrate that foreign policy was directed by the oligarchs and the King, and that in fact it was ever more clearly the policy of the oligarchy, which did not take into account the interests of the state or of the nation. It is not difficult to show this...with regard to the "dynastic" policy of the Vasas, or the policy of the..."Austrian" and the "French" parties, or...with regard to individual magnates cynically selling the Commonwealth to anyone they could, be it Brandenburg, Sweden or Rákóczy..."[5]

The quest for foreign aid, however, was motivated more by military realities than from any fear of arming the people, or cynical treason on the part of an entire class. The lack of time to
organise defence and the disasters at Ujście and Kiejdany effectively destroyed any hopes of raising forces capable of defeating the Swedes in the short term. Despite the glorification of the peasantry by historians in the Stalinist era, it did not represent a force capable of defeating the Swedish army in open combat, or in the siege warfare necessary to retake the major towns.[6] What was needed above all, as Polish commanders constantly urged, was regular, professional, trained infantry, to supplement the plentiful cavalry.[7] The Cossack revolt had deprived the Commonwealth of its traditional source of infantry, while the disruption caused by the Swedish invasion meant that money could not be easily raised to recruit professional troops. The only realistic source of infantry in the short term was from abroad.

In August 1655, however, there were few states which might be willing to come to the rescue. The Commonwealth was at war with both Muscovy and Sweden. Its Tatar allies had returned to the Crimea, and were in any case of limited value in a war with a western army.[8] France, nominally friendly, was Sweden's ally and many shared Koryciński's view that it had encouraged the Swedish attack.[9] Of the powers with an interest in the Baltic, England was not as favourably disposed towards Charles Gustav as a year previously now it was at peace with the Dutch, and had a healthy concern over Swedish designs in Prussia.[10] Nevertheless, Polish Catholicism and support for the Stuarts effectively ruled out aid from this quarter; indeed, Cromwell had already snubbed de Bye, who had arrived in England in early 1655 to seek support.[11] John Casimir hoped for more from the Danes and the Dutch. He had sent Canasilles to
Frederick III in May to discuss the "common peril," without any result.[12] The Dutch, however, were more concerned about the position of Denmark, and wished to avoid provoking Cromwell into supporting Sweden by coming out on the Polish side; all de Bye's efforts in the Hague were therefore in vain.[13] The one hopeful sign was the attitude of Khmel'nyts'kyi, who was concerned at the prospect of the complete collapse of the Commonwealth in the light of the increasingly authoritarian attitude of the Tsar's government, which prompted him to adopt a more neutral attitude towards John Casimir from the autumn of 1655, hoping that the Commonwealth's plight would lead it to make concessions to the Cossacks.[14]

The Commonwealth needed immediate aid. Its best hope lay with its neighbours: Transylvania, Brandenburg and Austria. Transylvania might be able to provide troops quickly, but Rákóczy's army, largely composed of cavalry, would be of little use against Swedish professionals: only Brandenburg or Austria could supply the infantry which the Poles so desperately needed. Many hoped for help from Frederick William, Elector of Brandenburg, who had seen Stettin and the richer half of Pomerania go to Sweden in 1648. Nevertheless, despite being bound to help the Commonwealth as its vassal in Ducal Prussia, he had granted the Swedes free passage through Brandenburg with alacrity, merely marching his small standing army to Ducal Prussia to protect Königsberg.[15] The best hope of aid appeared to lie with Austria, which would be unlikely to welcome Swedish control of Poland and which was the Commonwealth's only Catholic neighbour. It was therefore to Austria that the Senate Council chose to turn: on 1st August, John Casimir wrote to Ferdinand III asking for help.[16]
The Catholic hierarchy was convinced from the outset that Austrian help was essential. Trzebicki sent a more passionate plea to Auersberg, urging him not to forget the vital interests of the Habsburgs:

"His Imperial Majesty and his August House should not suffer this neighbouring kingdom to be torn from their hands..."[17]

Austria, however, was reluctant to intervene. Ferdinand could not afford to risk reopening the Thirty Years' War, and was afraid that the situation might be exploited by discontented elements in the Habsburg patrimonial lands, where he did not wish to risk squandering the gains his father had made in the 1620's, gains which had not been overturned by Westphalia. Moreover, Ferdinand was in poor health, and faced a succession crisis after the death of his son, Ferdinand IV, in 1654, which left him with the problem of securing the acceptance of his next son, Leopold, as King of the Romans. Sweden's new influence in the Empire meant that any intervention in Poland would carry the grave risk of political problems over the election, especially since Austria would have to shoulder the main burden of the fighting.[18]

In the circumstances of 1655 there was only one offer the Poles could make which might tempt Ferdinand to intervene. Following Charles Ferdinand's death on 9th May, there was no surviving legitimate Vasa heir to the throne, which made possible an offer of the succession to Austria in return for military aid. The Council sent the Jesuit Adriano with a document signed by the King, Andrzej Leszczyński, Lubomirski, Koryciński, Trzebicki and others, which offered Ferdinand the thrones of Poland and Sweden for a member of
After Adriano had left, the Emperor's envoy, Schönhoff, arrived in Warsaw, with expressions of encouragement and sympathy, whereupon the Council granted plenipotentiary powers on 13th August to Jan Leszczyński, Bishop of Kiev and Bishop nominate of Chełmno, to discuss the terms of the offer.[20]

Historians have traditionally seen the offer to Vienna as essentially a Court initiative, the result of close cooperation with the Habsburgs:

"From the moment the northern war broke out, the Polish Court advanced the project of guaranteeing the Succession to the Polish throne after John Casimir to one of the Archdukes from the House of Habsburg, linking this matter with the winning of Austrian help in the...war."[21]

It is true that the Court had always supported the idea of an election _vivente rege_, and had made the first approach to Vienna after the death of Charles Ferdinand, when Nicolo Siri, the King's Postmaster in Vienna sounded out Ferdinand Charles, Archduke of Innsbruck, on the possibility of the candidature of his brother, Archduke Sigismund Francis.[22] It was on the initiative of the Senate Council, however, that Adriano and Leszczyński were sent to Vienna. For although the initial plan was to suggest the election of a Habsburg to succeed on John Casimir's death, the Commonwealth's desperate military situation had led some to consider the possibility of asking John Casimir to abdicate. Before John Casimir's arrival in Cracow, the Nuncio had worked hard to combat defeatist sentiments, condemning Andrzej Leszczyński's willingness to consider talks with Sweden.[23] Leszczyński, however, along with other bishops, was seriously considering the possibility of
appealing directly to Ferdinand III, over John Casimir's head, to accept the throne immediately.[24] It was the ecclesiastical senators, led by Andrzej Leszczyński, Trzebicki and Czartoryski, the Bishop of Cujavia, who took the initiative in promoting the Habsburgs as the most suitable Catholic candidates, conducting a vigorous campaign to interest Ferdinand III in the succession, and were prepared to sacrifice John Casimir if necessary.[25]

Until there was a positive response from the Austrians, however, it was important for those senators who favoured a Habsburg succession to stay loyal to John Casimir. As it became clear that Ferdinand was not prepared to send immediate aid or accept the offer of the throne, the King's position improved. The official reply of the Secret Council was not given until 8th November. In it, the Austrians refused reinforcements, offering only mediation. As for the succession, they neither rejected nor accepted it, merely thanking the Poles for the offer.[26] This noncommittal response hid a definite private rejection: Auersberg was strongly against accepting, while Lisola drily remarked that the Poles had failed to maintain their present King on the throne; what made them think they could make it safe for a new one?[27]

Vienna's failure to respond immediately soon put an end to talk of deposition or abdication and enabled John Casimir to reestablish his position to an extent among the senators still in attendance upon him. The evening of his arrival in Cracow on 19th September, there was a dramatic council meeting, attended by about 40 senators.[28] It is unclear whether news of the Vienna decision had arrived;
Leszczyński had not reached Cracow by 22nd September, when John Casimir expressed his displeasure at this fact to Vidoni.[29] The Council decided unanimously to confirm the succession offer with a new embassy, to be undertaken by Lubomirski, and swore not to abandon the King. Instructions for this mission were drawn up in Nowy Sącz on 30th September.[30] There was no talk now of an immediate assumption of the throne. Lubomirski was to assure Ferdinand of the intention of the King and the Commonwealth to arrange for the election of one of his sons, or his brother Leopold, or some other member of the Habsburg family as King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania; he was then to discuss the time and place of this election. The conditions on which the Crown was to be offered, however, demonstrate the Court's improved position: the elected or crowned King was to be "titulo solo contentum," and was to enjoy none of the rights, powers or privileges of his position during the lifetime of John Casimir, under whose direction and tutelage he was to be placed.[31]

The wider political implications of the succession plan were already emerging. If Andrzej Leszczyński, Trzebicki and other leading ecclesiastical senators supported a Habsburg election, many greeted the prospect with little enthusiasm. Traditionally, the Habsburgs had not been popular candidates among the szlachta, who still recalled 1587, when Archduke Maximilian had used force in an attempt to secure his election. More recently, the Habsburgs' destruction of political liberties in their patrimonial lands in the 1620's served as a grim warning of what might lie in store for the Commonwealth under a Habsburg monarch. Finally, Poles were aware of the dangers of a French reaction if a Habsburg were elected.[32] Even
among the episcopate, often portrayed as the blind tools of Vienna and Rome, support for the Austrian policy was by no means solid: Piotr Gembicki, Bishop of Cracow, told Vidoni that he did not agree with an appeal to Ferdinand III for aid made after a meeting of senators called by Andrzej Leszczyński in Cracow on 28th August, and would not have signed it had it not been for the urgings of Andrzej Leszczyński and Trzebicki, adding that others were of his opinion.[33]

More fundamental opposition came from Lubomirski. Although he signed the renewed appeal to Vienna, he told Vidoni bluntly that John Casimir had been to blame for the outbreak of war, and that opinion in the Cracow sejmik was highly favourable to Sweden.[34] He refused to go to Vienna, stating that there was no real hope of Austrian support, and that he did not see that his proposed mission would achieve any more; indeed it might be counter-productive.[35] He suggested a meeting with the King at Czorstyn, where John Casimir had arrived on 5th October, to discuss changes to the instructions.[36] It had been proposed that a son of the Emperor be elected, and that anyone in line for the Imperial dignity be excluded.[37] Lubomirski accepted the second point:

"but the first will never receive my assent by any means; here I abandon my character of envoy, and adopt that of senator. For I cannot permit that I should see a boy king dependent on the rule of the father, and, most likely, fathers."[38]

Lubomirski's opposition to a Habsburg election was principally motivated by his own political ambitions, not by any desire to defend the principle of free election. He refused to go to Vienna because he hoped that the failure of the plan to elect an Austrian
would help him secure the throne for Rákóczy, his own preferred candidate. He also refused to attend the important Council which met at Oppeln in mid-November, since he knew he would be defeated.[39] While the Council decided to suspend all talks with other powers until the Habsburg position was known, Lubomirski proceeded with his plans, holding his own council in Spisz, just over the Hungarian border, where a large group of leading senators were gathered.[40] On 17th November, Władysław Lubieniecki, Lubomirski's private envoy, wrote to Rákóczy, claiming that all the ecclesiastical and the majority of lay senators in Silesia and Hungary now despaired of keeping John Casimir on his throne "due to his incapacity." Jan Wielopolski, Castellan of Wojnicz, according to Lubieniecki, had just sent a letter to the King on behalf of the Senate, with a unanimous request for his abdication. Lubieniecki, in the name of the senators in Spisz, invited Rákóczy to the Polish throne, and to send an envoy for talks.[41]

Lubieniecki's assurances were premature. Although John Casimir's deposition had certainly been considered, the senators in Silesia now recognised that he was indispensable, at least in the short term. Furthermore, the improvement in the military situation as the first signs of resistance to Sweden appeared, and as it became clear that many had not gone over to Charles Gustav, worked to the benefit of the Court. In Prussia, Danzig and Marienburg still held out, while resistance spread across Poland in October and November. The political battle over the succession now gathered momentum. As Andrzej Leszczyński observed, the factions were beginning to form.[42] The victorious party had much to gain: the monarchy,
perceived as powerful by contemporaries if not always by historians, promised to emerge from the war with its position further strengthened, especially if political reform, discussed at Oppeln in November, were achieved. Not since the election of Sigismund III in 1587 had such an opportunity presented itself for a politician to emulate the achievements of Jan Zamoyski, who had risen from the ranks of the middle szlachta to become Grand Chancellor and Grand Hetman, and to enjoy fabulous wealth, through masterminding the elections of Stefan Batory and Sigismund III. Lubomirski's support for Rákóczi was clearly motivated by such considerations. Already one of the most powerful magnates in Poland, should Lubomirski repeat Zamoyski's rôle as kingmaker, his political power would be great indeed.

There was another possibility to be considered. From the outset, the Senate Council had discussed the option of a native or "Piast" candidate and, as Trzebicki told Vidoni:

"There are many senators who have discussed the matter among themselves and consider that it would be good to elect [Lubomirski] as successor. He is a Pole and is capable of ruling and of safeguarding liberty. Nobody is better-qualified than a citizen of the Commonwealth to preserve freedom."[43]

Even if Lubomirski was attracted by such a prospect, however, for the moment it would be unwise to pursue it. Although a Piast candidature was traditionally popular among the szlachta, as Trzebicki told Vidoni, Lubomirski would face serious opposition from the King, and, more importantly, from other magnates, especially the Leszczyński family.[44] Nevertheless, whether as candidate or as kingmaker, Lubomirski was determined to use the election to improve his political position.
Lubomirski recognised that a Piast candidature would not bring the foreign aid which the Commonwealth so desperately needed: once he had decided that Sweden had little to offer him, it was essential that he support plans to win foreign aid if there were to be any chance at all of realising his ambitions. He therefore advanced Rákóczy's candidature, leaving others to speculate on the election of a Piast. By November, however, it was clear that he could no longer act unilaterally with the support only of the handful of senators which had followed him into exile in Hungary. It was necessary to reconsider his plans and try to win wider support, if not of the Court, then at least of the senators in Silesia, especially Andrzej Leszczyński, who would act as interrex on John Casimir's death. The fate of Radziwiłł, who died on 31st December as Paweł Sapieha stormed the castle of Tykocin where Radziwiłł was protected by a small Swedish garrison, was a terrible warning of the possible consequences of acting in defiance of the Court.[45] Nevertheless, Vienna's rejection of the Senate Council's offer of the throne improved the chances of Rákóczy's candidature.

There were signs that John Casimir might be prepared to accept a Transylvanian candidature. In September, he sent Szumowski to Rákóczy.[46] Although John Casimir later denied that Szumowski had discussed the succession, Andrzej Leszczyński maintained that an offer had been made: "if I remember correctly".[47] Whatever the truth of the matter, Szumowski's mission raised Lubomirski's hopes that he might be able to win support among the Silesian exiles for a Rákóczy candidature. He now stressed the importance of winning over the Court. Lubieniecki assured Rákóczy that the King, and especially
the Queen, supported his candidature.[48] Meanwhile, Lubomirski tried to convince the Silesian exiles of Rákóczy's suitability, stressing that his Calvinism was not an insurmountable barrier. Des Noyers, the Queen's secretary, wrote on 23rd November:

"The Prince of Transylvania is offering to become a Catholic, and to engage all his forces for Poland, if the King will adopt his son and have him elected as his successor. I have the letters in my hands..."[49]

These assurances, as Vidoni's more sceptical report makes clear, were from Lubomirski, who recalled the successful reign of Stefan Batory, Rákóczy's Transylvanian predecessor, pointing out that Rákóczy had a large army.[50] It was Lubomirski who encouraged the hope that Rákóczy or his son would convert to Catholicism, and would be content to wait until John Casimir's death before succeeding. John Casimir's response to this is unknown, though it was not rejected out of hand: in the same despatch, Vidoni reports Koryciński as saying that now Austria had rejected the Polish offer, there could be no other candidate but Frederick William or Rákóczy, if they agreed to become Catholics.[51]

Yet Rákóczy soon made it clear that he was not prepared to convert. On 16th December, his envoy Mikes arrived at Lubowla for talks. The next day, he had a private meeting with Lubomirski, who assured him that the Poles were ready to grant the throne to Rákóczy. Since John Casimir was still alive, however, Lubomirski stressed that a way must be found to satisfy Rákóczy, without prejudicing John Casimir's rights to govern. Mikes replied that his master had no wish to be a "painted puppet." Lubomirski then drew his attention to the many examples of adoption with a view to succeeding and asked if Rákóczy would accept if John Casimir named him consortem regininis
Mikes replied that he did not know, but suspected not.\[52\] The next
day, Mikes attended a general meeting of the Lubowla exiles. When
asked directly by Jan Gembicki, Bishop nominate of Płock, whether
Rákóczy would convert to Catholicism, Mikes, while stressing the
toleration extended towards Catholics in Transylvania, again
suspected not. It was decided, nevertheless, that if Rákóczy would
accept "common government", the Poles were prepared to agree to all
his terms.\[53\]

This outcome was a serious blow for Lubomirski. It was unlikely
that John Casimir would agree to common government, and unlikely
that the Rákóczy candidature would receive the backing of other
senators without that of the King. The most important setback,
however, was Rákóczy's refusal to change religion, which meant the
certain opposition of the ecclesiastical senators at least.
Confrontation was not long delayed, following the arrival of the King
in Sobota on 29th December on his way back to Poland.\[54\] John
Casimir immediately expressed his displeasure at the dealings with
Rákóczy, making it clear that Lubomirski's talks with Mikes had no
official backing.\[55\] The King was worried that the Transylvanian
negotiations might prejudice chances of reaching an agreement with
Austria:

"We are urged to declare [Rákóczy's] son not only pro adoptivo,
but also pro socio et collega Imperii, without waiting for the
reply which the Voivode of Łęczyca is bringing us from
Vienna...\[56\]

For this, he wrote, the unanimous consent of the Senate Council
would be necessary.
John Casimir was just as aware as Lubomirski of the potential advantages to the monarchy of an election *vivente rege*. For the first time since 1569, there was substantial senate support for setting aside the normal succession procedure. In March, when John Casimir had suggested the idea, he had been met with complete hostility from the Senate Council; the Swedish invasion, however, had caused many to change their minds, to the extent that, according to Rudawski, the Oppeln Council had decided unanimously to offer the throne to the Habsburgs as hereditary, not elective monarchs.[57] As Andrzej Leszczyński pointed out, if John Casimir were to die during the war without a nominated successor, the Commonwealth could be plunged into even greater disorder, as domestic factions and foreign powers vied for the throne.[58] The best way to avoid such an outcome would be to elect or appoint a successor under the supervision of the King and the Senate Council, which would ensure that the Commonwealth's constitution would be respected.

This change of attitude on the part of leading senators furnished the Court with a great opportunity to strengthen its position. With so much at stake, it was essential that the Court should keep control of the election campaign, and prevent important magnates, such as Lubomirski, from manipulating the situation to their own private or factional advantage. Therefore it was important to find the right candidate. It is usually argued that the Court began by supporting the candidature of one of John Casimir's Habsburg relations, only to switch in 1657 to support for a French prince, as the pro-French Louise Marie imposed her views on her husband and on the Senate Council. It is true that John Casimir first looked to the
Habsburgs in the summer of 1655. It is also true that Louise Marie was accused by Andrzej Leszczyński of trying to promote French interests in December 1655; nevertheless, it would be wrong to regard either John Casimir or Louise Marie as committed at this stage.\[59\] It would have been short-sighted to have wasted this excellent opportunity to strengthen the monarchy's position by insisting on any individual candidate for reasons of personal preference.

From the outset, the Court was more flexible in its approach than is frequently argued. It was not John Casimir, but a small group of ecclesiastical senators, led by Andrzej Leszczyński, Trzebicki and Czartoryski, the Bishop of Cujavia, which proved to be the Habsburgs' most loyal supporters. The Court, in contrast, was keen to discuss as wide a range of candidates as possible. In August 1655, when the plan was first discussed, several possibilities were considered, including Mattia di Medici, younger brother of Duke Ferdinand II of Tuscany, the elector of Bavaria and Philip William, Duke of Neuburg.\[60\] Each had strong points in his favour: they were all Catholics; Ferdinand-Maria of Bavaria was young and unmarried, while Philip William of Neuburg had been married to John Casimir's sister, Anne Catherine, who had died in 1651, and had been suggested by none other than Władysław IV as a potential candidate for the throne.\[61\] Mattia had won quite a military reputation during the Thirty Years War, and was Commander of the forces of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and a successful governor of Siena.

John Casimir's favourite candidate, far from being a Habsburg, seems from an early date to have been Mattia, with whom he had fought
in the Thirty Years' War. In October 1655, the Queen said that since Ferdinand III had not suggested a Habsburg:

"the King is thinking of Duke Mattia, towards whom he has always been inclined; he made the proposal to His Imperial Majesty as he was more likely to provide support,..."[63]

She told Vidoni that John Casimir wished him to suggest the idea in Florence. Vidoni refused, saying he had no orders on this point; the Queen pressed him, however, asking if John Casimir had not spoken to him about it. Vidoni said not, but reveals in his despatch that this was because the King had indeed spoken to him, but had asked him to mention it to nobody, "nè meno la Regina." Louise Marie concluded by stating that Mattia would have a good chance of being elected, since he was a Catholic Prince, "e ben respetto d'ogni altro," and especially since the King would consent and help.[64]

John Casimir's reluctance to tell the Queen may have been due to a fear that she was too attached to the idea of a French candidature. Yet Louise Marie's response to Vidoni showed that she was prepared to consider other possibilities. The Queen has too often been portrayed as a blind servant of French interests in the matter of the succession. Although she had been brought up in France, her father, Charles, Duke of Nevers, was an Italian Gonzaga by descent, while her mother was from the House of Lorraine. Her father owed his recognition as Duke of Mantua in 1631 to French support during the War of the Mantuan Succession, but despite her undoubted gratitude to France, Louise Marie was a Gonzaga before she was French and it should not be assumed that she was merely an obedient servant of the French Crown.
For the Queen, as for John Casimir, it was the achievement of an election which was vital; the identity of the candidate was of secondary importance. Mattia was attractive because he would be less controversial than a Habsburg, yet he might appeal to those senators who favoured an Austrian. Political realities had to be faced, however; it was necessary to choose a candidate who would be able to provide military aid. Mattia might be an attractive figure as far as the Court's political plans were concerned, and he might have good military credentials, but it was unlikely that Tuscany could offer military aid on a scale sufficient to expel the Swedes. At the end of October, John Casimir sounded out the views of Bishop Jan Leszczyński on Mattia, afterwards telling Vidoni he was thinking of sending to the Italian Princes for aid; the Nuncio replied that most were too absorbed in their own affairs, and that Ferdinand II would not make a move on behalf of his brother without some positive token of interest.[65]

The only alternatives to the Habsburgs who might be able to furnish aid were Rákóczy and Frederick William of Brandenburg. Both, however, suffered from the grave disadvantage of being Protestants. Nevertheless, if the Court viewed Rákóczy with suspicion, due to the backing he was receiving from Lubomirski, it was prepared to consider Frederick William. Aware of the potential strength of opposition to a Habsburg, and angry at Vienna's refusal to help, the Court looked to the Elector as an alternative who might provide military reinforcements, and, more importantly, who might be popular:

"if the Elector of Brandenburg were a Catholic, the King and the Queen would surely have him elected, since the nobility is rather inclined towards him."[66]
Three days before the Oppeln council opened, Des Noyers reported that:

"if the Elector wishes to declare himself and give his son to be raised at the Polish Court, he would be elected successor of the Kingdom."[67]

If there is some doubt as to whether the Court offered the succession to Rákóczy, an approach was certainly made to Frederick William. Jan Tański had been sent from Silesia to the Estates of Royal Prussia in October to offer the Elector sovereignty in Ducal Prussia and the cession of John Casimir's rights over Sweden and Livonia, in return for military aid. He also made an offer of the succession.[68]

It looked for a time as if Frederick William might be willing to respond. On 12th November, he signed the Treaty of Rinsk with the Estates of Royal Prussia, offering them his protection.[69] It was the first sign of foreign willingness to help the Commonwealth, but any hopes that the Elector would be able to offer substantial aid were soon dashed, as Frederick William rapidly changed his mind when Charles Gustav threatened to invade Ducal Prussia. The Elector hastily agreed to the Treaty of Königsberg [17th January 1656] in which he accepted Charles Gustav as his feudal suzerain in Ducal Prussia and agreed to remain neutral in the war.[70] This blow was followed by Austria's rejection of the new terms brought by Jan Leszczyński; Rákóczy now seemed the only possible source of aid for the spring campaign.

The failure of hopes in Austria and Brandenburg improved Lubomirski's chances of winning support for Rákóczy. John Casimir
was unwilling, however, to sanction a candidate supported so enthusiastically by someone of such transparent ambition, with whom he had long been on poor terms.[71] In his perplexity, John Casimir turned to the primate for advice. After suggesting that the long delay in the King's return had led Lubomirski's group to appeal to Rákóczi out of desperation, Leszczyński admitted that he found it extremely difficult to decide on the matter. Nevertheless, in the light of the failure of his cousin's mission, which showed that reinforcements were unlikely not only at present, but also in the spring, since the Imperial forces on the border had gone elsewhere, Leszczyński confronted the reality of Poland's position:

"let nobody imagine that we can revive our fortunes sine externis auxiliis. The Tatars are unreliable: they merely attack, lay waste the land, and then return home...Although we now have a firm peace with the Cossacks, we still cannot much trust them. From these sources, however, we would not receive such aid as is necessary for such an enemy, who allows himself to be chased easily enough out of some voivodeships, only to transfer the whole belli molem to Prussia and Great Poland, shutting himself up in fortresses to prolong the war. Whom ex principibus we should approach, I do not know; I see no aid coming from the Empire, and even if it were found, it would come eadem cunctatione. The King of France, being an ally of the Swedes, cannot rescue us from them, unless by mediation and peace talks, for which we would have to pay cum enormi Reip-cae damnio."[72]

He bluntly stated the King's position:

"As...the Elector himself is in need of reinforcements, it is hard for him to send us any. You have neither quicker nor more certain aid than from the Prince of Transylvania, who promises to rescue us with both men and money."[73]

While Leszczyński made it plain that he did not like the situation, nevertheless, he suggested that the religious problem should not deter the King:

"Religion creates all kinds of obstacles, but when we receive from Catholics are commiserations in place of assistance, we need to seek aid without scruple wherever we can, whence not only our political status, but our religion can be saved, whence not by oppression, but by election we, or our
children, will have a king following Your Majesty's death."[74]
He then urged John Casimir to consider the dangers if the election
and signature of the *Pacta Conventa* were not carried out during his
lifetime. His final message was unambiguous:

"if you wish a speedy pacification for yourself and for the
Commonwealth, do not miss this opportunity, and do not withdraw
ex hac adoptione."[75]

Leszczyński's reply makes it clear, however, that he was
referring not to the candidature of Rákóczy himself, but of his son,
Casimir. John Casimir told Vidoni that he would not consider Rákóczy,
and that if he had to consent to a heretic, he would prefer Charles
Gustav, who was at least his relation.[76] In his reply to
Leszczyński, he expressed his preference for the adoption of
Frederick William's son: "ob consanguinitatem genti Polonae magis
favere debeat."[77] He proposed that Rákóczy be offered a rich
*starostwo*, not the throne, in return for aid, remarking that it was
difficult for an old man to change his religion.[78] He expressed his
readiness to do anything to save the Kingdom, "sed debitis modis,
ante omnia religionem conservaturi," and emphasised his opposition
to any scheme for joint rule. Two kings at once, in his view, could
not be tolerated: he was ready to agree to any successor designated
with the consent of the Estates, "sed non ad actum et societatem
regnandi." Finally, he doubted the ability of Rákóczy to save the
Commonwealth. Hungarian troops, in his opinion, were ignorant of
modern warfare and therefore of little use. If Poles and Tatars
feared the crash of firearms, the Hungarians were equally seized with
this dread.[79]
This lukewarm attitude was reflected in the official approach to Rákóczy made by Crown Grand Secretary Mikołaj Prażmowski in the spring of 1656. Prażmowski was to ask for military and financial aid; if Rákóczy wished anything in return, Prażmowski was to propose the adoption of his son by John Casimir "in spem successionis fortunarum Regiae Domus." If this was unacceptable, he was to propose the election of the son as successor by the Estates of the Commonwealth. Prażmowski was instructed, however, not to agree easily to this. If, nonetheless, he could not avoid it, stringent conditions were to be laid down: the future king was always to live at John Casimir's side; he was to be raised as a Catholic and was to be educated in the laws and customs of the realm. The major officials of his court were to be Poles, appointed by John Casimir, although he could bring his own servants with him.[80] If the candidature of Rákóczy were insisted upon, Prażmowski was only to accept as a last resort; this, too, was to be surrounded by conditions so severe that Rákóczy was unlikely to agree: as a Protestant, even if elected, he could not be crowned, he was not to be allowed to come to Poland while John Casimir lived, the estates and citizens of the Commonwealth were to have no dealings with him during this time, [a condition plainly directed against Lubomirski], the Transylvanian army could only enter Poland if specifically requested by John Casimir, and finally, Rákóczy could only use the title Electus Poloniae Rex.[81]

If the Court's attitude meant that Rákóczy's candidature was unlikely to succeed, its proposal for the election of Rákóczy's son proved unacceptable to Lubomirski. In January, he rejected the adoption idea, arguing instead for the election of Rákóczy himself,
and claiming that the Austrian refusal left the Poles with little choice, and that it was better to have an elected King who would swear to uphold his subjects' liberties than one who was imposed by conquest, who would make laws as he pleased. He stated that Rákóczy was not prepared to allow his son to be adopted by John Casimir with a view to succeeding.[82] He later expressed complete hostility to the candidature of Rákóczy's son, stating that the Commonwealth: "non deve esser governato da un Putto."[83]

The clash between Lubomirski and the Court over this issue demonstrates the extent to which the succession had become a vital issue of domestic politics. It was not, however, a battle over whether or not an election should take place, but over control of the future king-elect. John Casimir was determined to prevent Rákóczy's election, for he would then face the prospect of a reversionary interest led by a man with whom he had never enjoyed good relations. The King's mistrust of Lubomirski led to his blatant preference for Stefan Czarniecki, the defender of Cracow, as a military leader in 1655-6. Lubomirski, himself a talented soldier, resented such favouritism, but Vidoni considered that the Rákóczy issue was the main cause of ill-feeling between the two men.[84] In March, Schaum, Rákóczy's agent, reported a violent scene between the King and Wielopolski, one of Lubomirski's closest associates, in which John Casimir angrily declared that he considered as his enemy anybody who offered his Crown to anyone, be it Charles Gustav or Rákóczy.[85]

John Casimir was prepared to accept the candidature of Rákóczy's son, however, on condition that he could adopt him and
bring him up at the Polish Court. This was a subtle suggestion: the idea that Rákóczy's son should be considered probably came from Lubomirski, as a means of winning support for a Transylvanian candidature, but he quickly realised that he would gain little if the infant remained under Court influence. Furthermore, the plan would appeal to the Catholic Church more than the candidature of Rákóczy himself, since Casimir would be brought up as a Catholic. Finally, the scheme would appeal to senators in general, since the infant could be educated in the Commonwealth's political traditions before he succeeded. As far as the Court was concerned, however, the important thing was that the king-elect should be subject to its influence: this, indeed, was the main idea behind the scheme, first suggested in connection with the proposed adoption of Rákóczy's son, possibly by Jan Leszczyński, to marry the heir to Louise Marie's niece Anne Henriette, daughter of the Queen's sister Anne of Gonzaga and of Edward, son of Frederick V, Elector Palatine.[86] This scheme, usually seen as proof of selfish concern with dynastic politics on the part of the Court, should be viewed in the context of this factional struggle to control the future king-elect. From now on, the Court sought an unmarried candidate, preferably a minor, who could be adopted and married in due course to Anne Henriette. If a minor candidate could not be found, the marriage plan might still provide a means of tying an adult candidate to the Court: it was important therefore that an adult candidate should be a bachelor.

For Lubomirski, however, such an outcome would be disastrous. Should Rákóczy's son come directly under Court influence, Lubomirski could expect no political advantages whatsoever. His insistence that
Rákóczy refused to allow the adoption of his son meant that there was little chance of the Court accepting a Transylvanian candidature. It is doubtful whether John Casimir ever intended Prażmowski's mission to succeed. Prażmowski himself only agreed to go with extreme reluctance, foreseeing the difficulties he would face; he told Vidoni that:

"The instructions he has been given by the Grand Chancellor are rather strict, since the Chancellor does not agree with the opinion of the Grand Marshall [Lubomirski] on this matter."[87]

Prażmowski was right to be pessimistic: he was condemned to a long, frustrating, fruitless stay at Rákóczy's court.

John Casimir's lack of enthusiasm for Rákóczy, therefore, was not primarily motivated by any desire to promote a Habsburg. Indeed, he was still bitter about Vienna's failure to aid the Commonwealth. He rejected a proposal by the Spanish ambassador in Vienna for the candidature of the Archduke of Innsbruck, Ferdinand Charles, stating that the proposal was only made to hinder other negotiations and should be ignored.[88] He pinned his hopes more on a new mission by Podłodowski to Frederick William, while continuing to show an interest in Mattia, who was a bachelor and who had responded favourably to Court feelers in October 1655.[89] In April 1656, Vidoni reported that John Casimir's greatest preference was still for Mattia, "if Mattia could be persuaded to make up his mind."[90]

Shortly afterwards, in rejecting Rákóczy's pretensions, John Casimir again expressed his interest in Mattia. He was annoyed at the delays and problems which bedevilled contacts with Mattia, but his hopes were raised once more in August when Mattia decided to send an envoy to discuss the succession, appointing Abbot Martinozzi to act in his
Vidoni's rôle as intermediary in these negotiations demonstrates that the Vatican was prepared actively to support any suitable Catholic candidate, and was not merely a blind tool of the Habsburgs, as is sometimes suggested. It was keen that the election should succeed, but it sought only that a good Catholic be elected. Vidoni's instructions following the death of Charles Ferdinand stated:

"His Excellency will act with due application and will use every opportunity to persuade His Majesty and the Queen to cast their eyes upon some Catholic figure."

This attitude did not change. In June 1656 Vidoni, when asked the Pope's view, said he was:

"indifferent in this matter, so long as a candidate is elected who is pious and zealous in the interests of the Catholic Church and of public order."

While Vidoni considered that the Austrians offered the best hope of aid, this did not mean he opposed other candidates. The Vatican was prepared to accept either Neuburg or Mattia:

"Information has been received that it is under consideration to appoint a coadjutor for the King of Poland, and that it is impossible to carry this out if not in the person of the Duke of Neuburg, or of Duke Mattia; their great merit and valour enable one to hope for the public benefit of that kingdom and of the Catholic religion."

It was dissension among the Poles themselves which blocked agreement on a suitable Catholic alternative to the Habsburgs. The Elector of Bavaria was swiftly ruled out, since it was felt that his candidature would be opposed by Vienna. From the outset, advocates of Mattia and of Neuburg were unable to agree. While the King was strongly inclined to Mattia, he was equally strongly opposed by
Andrzej Leszczyński. When Vidoni sounded out Bishop Jan Leszczyński about Mattia in October 1655, he was told in confidence that Andrzej Leszczyński would not agree to the suggestion, but rather inclined to Neuburg.[96] Vidoni, in his report, then extolled the latter's virtues:

"on account of his parentage he is both popular and well-known here; he might also provide much aid."[97]

The reasons for this disagreement remain obscure. Both candidates were Catholics, both were attractive from the military point of view. Although he stated an interest in Neuburg, Andrzej Leszczyński's general attitude suggests that he consistently supported a Habsburg despite Vienna's reluctance to respond to the succession offers, and that he was unwilling to consider alternatives. The Court, on the other hand, was not keen on Neuburg, who was married. Moreover, as an ally of France, Neuburg's selection might upset the Austrians, which could jeopardise chances of receiving Austrian aid. Furthermore, he had family connections with Charles Gustav, who had supported his candidature in the past.[98] Finally, the long-running dispute between Neuburg and Brandenburg over the Cleves-Julich succession was another complicating factor. Rumours of a planned attack by Neuburg on the Elector reached the Polish camp in July 1656, when the King was making a last, desperate appeal to Frederick William to abandon the Swedes.[99] When Gise and Leers, two envoys from Neuburg, discussed the possibility of a grand anti-Swedish alliance of Poland, Neuburg, Austria, Denmark and the United Provinces at Krosno in December 1656, Vidoni reported that although the proposal was acceptable to the Catholic Church, it was opposed by Poles who favoured Brandenburg.[100] John Casimir,
despite Frederick William's support of Sweden in 1656-7, still hoped to win him for the Commonwealth's cause; if Neuburg were adopted as a candidate, chances of persuading Frederick William to abandon the Swedes might be affected.

The internal manoeuverings over the succession, however, had once more to take second place to the need to win foreign aid after July 1656. In the first half of 1656, the Commonwealth's military position had improved, which encouraged hopes that the war might soon be over. By April 1656, the vast majority of Poles had abandoned Charles Gustav, who narrowly avoided a catastrophic defeat when trapped by the Polish and Lithuanian armies in the confluence of the rivers Vistula and San. Lubomirski defeated the King's brother, John Adolf, at the Battle of Warka on 5th April, while in June the spring campaign was triumphantly crowned by the recapture of Warsaw. Nevertheless, any optimism aroused by these successes was premature. The change in his fortunes merely persuaded Charles Gustav to modify his aims and to adapt his tactics. Unable to hold the whole of Poland, he now sought to secure control of Livonia and Royal Prussia, thereby returning to the more traditional Swedish policy of seeking to dominate the Baltic coast. Although he had failed to take Danzig, his control of so many important Polish cities, including Cracow, Elbing, Poznań and Thorn, meant that he possessed important bargaining-counters which the Poles were unable to retake due to their deficiencies in artillery and infantry.

Moreover, Charles Gustav was now using diplomacy in addition to his superior army to try and force a quick end to the war. In June he
finally persuaded Frederick William to support him openly. At the Treaty of Marienburg, the Elector promised to aid Sweden with all his forces in return for four voivodeships in Great Poland, which he was to be granted as sovereign, although he was to remain a Swedish vassal in Ducal Prussia.[101] Shortly afterwards, at the Battle of Warsaw, [28th-30th July], the new allies defeated a large force in which the Polish and Lithuanian armies were joined by the Tatar Horde.[102] John Casimir was forced to abandon his capital once again and withdraw to Lublin. Any thoughts that the Commonwealth might be capable of defeating Sweden unaided had been dispelled by the superiority of the Swedish army displayed at Warsaw. Once again, foreign aid was vital if a quick end to the war were to be achieved. Once again, the succession became an important bargaining-counter. For the next year, thoughts of domestic political advantage had to take second place to diplomatic negotiations: nevertheless, the changing diplomatic situation had important implications for the succession question.
The second half of 1656 was marked by increased foreign interest in the Polish-Swedish war. French concern at Swedish involvement in the Commonwealth was growing, as Mazarin feared that the Austrian Habsburgs would intensify support for Spain while Sweden was distracted in Poland and wished to involve Charles Gustav more heavily in Imperial politics as an election loomed. In the summer of 1656, Antoine de Lumbres was sent to Warsaw with the task of persuading the Poles to settle with Sweden; meanwhile d'Avaugour, the French ambassador to Sweden, sought to moderate Charles Gustav's demands.[1] De Lumbres was given a frosty reception when he arrived in Warsaw on the eve of the battle; nevertheless John Casimir told Vidoni that there was a feeling that Charles Gustav might prove conciliatory and be content with a few Prussian towns, although the attitude of Andrzej Leszczyński and Trzebiicki did not lead the Nuncio to suppose that the idea had much chance of success.[2]

Some, however, were prepared to listen: de Lumbres suggested that Poland should cede Samogitia to Sweden in exchange for Prussia, which, he reported, was not badly received in some quarters.[3] Immediately after the battle, Charles Gustav sent Gżycki, a Polish nobleman, to John Casimir offering an agreement in order to turn on the Muscovites.[4] Although in their despair, John Casimir and his ministers initially raised hopes of a settlement by agreeing to talks without mediators, majority opinion was strongly anti-Swedish.[5] Feelings ran high against Charles Gustav after the capture of Warsaw and the revelation of the extent of damage and looting carried out by
the Swedes during their occupation:

"[the French ambassador] constantly pesters us to agree to talks with Sweden, but nothing will come of it, because they have destroyed everything here: all the palaces, including the Royal Palace, have been stripped bare; the royal gateway has been razed to the ground and they even wanted to take the statue of Sigismund III."[6]

As it became clear that Charles Gustav was unable to follow up his victory at Warsaw, the Polish government rejected talks without Austrian mediation.[7] De Lumbres reacted angrily, threatening that if the plan were not accepted, Sweden would cede Livonia to the Tsar to win his aid against the Commonwealth.[8]

This was an empty threat. By the end of July, John Casimir knew that the Muscovite ambassador to Charles Gustav had left Thorn empty-handed, and de Lumbres admitted that since his first proposals had received a sympathetic hearing:

"They are now certain of the rupture between the Tsar and [Charles Gustav], whom they have seen once again looking for peace, and who is now reduced to a simple defensive campaign. They do not wish to speak of surrendering anything."[9]

The Swedish successes in 1655-56 had worried Alexis, and although Charles Gustav tried not to offend him, relations deteriorated rapidly. In December, the Swedish envoy to Muscovy was told of Alexis's displeasure at Charles Gustav's invasion of Poland. The Swedish drive into Lithuania threatened the Tsar's plans for a breakthrough to the Baltic; Alexis accordingly acted to safeguard Muscovite interests, moving troops into Swedish-held Livonia, where he began the siege of Riga on 22nd August.[10] If Muscovy should launch an all-out attack on Sweden, it would reduce a great deal of the pressure on the Commonwealth.
Even if this breakdown in Swedish-Muscovite relations is disregarded, the Commonwealth's military situation was by no means as bad as it had seemed in the immediate aftermath of defeat at Warsaw. The Dutch, worried about trade, had sent a fleet to support Danzig, while John Casimir was able to withdraw to Lublin with his army intact, since Frederick William's refusal to support an offensive into central or eastern Poland and the return of his army to Ducal Prussia frustrated Charles Gustav's hopes of forcing a swift military solution. After taking Radom, the Swedish army withdrew to Prussia, giving the Poles time to regroup.[11] In the autumn, John Casimir launched a new campaign, marching north to Danzig to take advantage of the Dutch presence and hoping to put direct pressure on the Swedes. Meanwhile, Gosiewski, with the main Lithuanian army and a force of Tatars, was to strike at Frederick William in Ducal Prussia, with the aim of forcing him to abandon Sweden.[12] It was hoped that this twin strike might bring success, especially since at last there were signs that Austria might be prepared to offer support: reports of the Emperor's willingness to consider an alliance arrived in Lublin on 19th August, and a few days later instructions were drawn up for Andrzej Morsztyn for preliminary talks, while a full-scale embassy was planned, to be undertaken by Jan Leszczyński, now Voivode of Poznań, and Jan Wielopolski.[13]

These apparently favourable changes in the international and military situation, however, brought the Commonwealth little concrete advantage in the second half of 1656. Ferdinand was not concerned enough to send aid immediately: Leszczyński and Wielopolski had to bargain for reinforcements sufficient to defeat
Sweden; moreover, despite the outbreak of hostilities between Sweden and Muscovy, the Muscovite successes of 1654-1655 masked the real problems they had faced after the fall of Wilno: plague, which had broken out in 1654, ravaged the country into 1656 and beyond, while hunger and war-weariness threatened a repeat of the serious popular unrest seen in 1648.[14] Piotr Galiński, in Moscow in April 1656, reported:

"A terrible and considerable devastation...there is a lawless desert in the towns and villages, and especially in the capital itself. The Muscovite waged war on the Commonwealth and the Lord God waged war on him in the form of a terrible plague. Food is expensive, especially bread; with the men away at war, the fields were not sown and famine is to be expected in Moscow. The people are strongly opposed to going to war; they have to be driven to it by force, leaving few people in Moscow."[15]

Under such circumstances, Muscovy was in no position to launch a major strike against Sweden. Nevertheless, although the King and the majority on the Senate Council would have preferred to rely on Austria, Vienna's slowness in reaching agreement meant that consideration had to be given to a Muscovite alliance.

Galiński had originally been sent to Muscovy by Paweł Sapieha in the autumn of 1655.[16] On his return, he was sent back, this time on behalf of the government. Leaving Lwów in February 1656, he arrived in Moscow in late April.[17] The optimism aroused by the apparent improvement in Poland's position in the spring of 1656 ensured that a firm line was adopted in his instructions:

"We believe that the use of arms is unjustified only in your case, and that we bear the scars for our defence of liberty; [your use of arms] is in breach of treaties, is against all considerations of justice and has caused the shedding of Christian blood, for which crime God will be the judge...The whole world bears witness to our innocence; we insist that we have violated nothing and have broken no agreement."[18]

According to Kubala and Wójcik, Galiński's talks with the
Muscovites took place in a friendly atmosphere.[19] Galinski's diary of the expedition, however, paints a different picture: his herald was arrested in Smolensk, and only released on the personal intervention of the Tsar; Galinski himself was held for two days when only six miles from Moscow, only being released on signing a testimony that he was from the King and the Senate.[20] When talks finally began, the Muscovites demanded the retraction of Polish complaints at the shedding of blood and burning of churches and the claim that Muscovy was solely responsible for the outbreak of war.[21] They attacked the Poles for not using the Tsar's correct titles, which must have seemed strange, considering that Alexis had unilaterally adopted in 1655 the title of Grand Duke of Lithuania and others relating to Byelorussia.[22] Pretensions were also advanced to Wilno; it was claimed that the Poles had lost it as a divine punishment for their sins, a point Galinski was reluctant to concede. Finally, Galinski was prevented from seeing the Imperial ambassadors, Lorbach and Alligretti, who were supposed to be mediators.[23]

The Muscovites did, however, agree to formal talks, which were to start on the last day of July. Galinski returned with this answer to the royal camp at Warsaw in early June.[24] Instructions were drawn up for the Polish and Lithuanian commissioners in early July, before the Battle of Warsaw; they therefore adopted a hard line: a long preamble contained bitter complaints about Muscovite behaviour, while the commissioners were urged to obtain a conjunctio armis against the Swedes as the main priority, with the minimum of territorial concessions.[25] Alexis, however, wanted more than
territory in return for an alliance. A letter from the commissioners in Wilno, which arrived on 31st August, informed the Court that the Tsar refused to evacuate any of the occupied lands, and demanded his election to the Polish throne in return for an anti-Swedish league.[26] The Poles must have expected such an approach. Codello suggests that Galiński had offered the succession to the Tsar in April, but gives no source.[27] Alexis had already expressed his interest in April, while Allegretti heard constant talk of the Polish succession, and reported that the Muscovites expected Galiński to bring an official offer.[28] Yet the commissioners had received no instructions regarding the succession.

Alexis's interest was by no means welcome; over the next two years, it was seriously to complicate the Court's efforts to use the succession as a means of strengthening royal power. For opinion in the Commonwealth was immediately and bitterly divided over the issue. Many Lithuanians were prepared to support such a candidature, if only as the quickest means to secure a return to their estates, now under Muscovite occupation.[29] Many Poles, however, led by Koryciński, were horrified at the prospect, feeling that the Tsar's election would threaten Polish liberties:

"For although the Emperor has done nothing for us to date, it is one thing to ask someone to rescue me et in pristinum statum restituat, another to proclaim as Lord him who invades me..."[30]

Koryciński voiced his fears of the danger to the Polish constitution should the Tsar, with his despotic background, be elected. Furthermore, the Tsar's election would bring the Commonwealth new enemies:

"Muscovy has demanded the harsh condition of the election of
the Tsar himself and of his son after His Majesty's death, or the cession of whole provinces, which we shall be unable to avoid unless [the Emperor] sends aid, and quickly at that. Then we should soon deal with Sweden, and Muscovy would be more tractable; otherwise, if we settle with Muscovy and concede the succession, we would have their help against Sweden, but in that case, the Cossacks, Tatars, and Rákóczi with the Hospodars [of Moldavia and Wallachia] would certainly declare war on us; this is the reason that Khmel'nyts'kyi will conclude nothing with us; he will only enter a new alliance if we break with Muscovy.[31]

Fear that Alexis might become king convinced Koryciński that it was better to pursue the option of peace with Sweden through French mediation. In common with his colleagues, immediately after the battle of Warsaw, he had supported a Muscovite peace, and opposed talks with Sweden. He wrote to Jan Zawisza, the new Bishop of Wilno, denying that anything had been agreed with de Lumbres, and expressing a firm desire for an agreement:

"Let [the Tsar] settle quickly and turn all his force against the Swedes; let him urge the Cossacks to send reinforcements."[32]

Two days later, he adopted a similar tone, expressing his great joy at the good news contained in the first letter of the commissioners [dated 14th August], angrily reporting that the Swedes and Brandenburgers were burning their way to Radom, and stating that the Court was in great suspense waiting for news of the talks with Muscovy.[33]

Once the Tsar's demands became known, however, Koryciński immediately expressed opposition. The Wilno commissioners received conflicting instructions during August, from Koryciński, Trzebicki and John Casimir. Trzebicki and the King urged the commissioners to make the conjunctio armis their first priority, while Koryciński...
played down this aspect:

"The Emperor is still wondering what to do. The King of Sweden has dismissed the Austrian ambassador Pötting, saying that he did not want him as a mediator. When the French came to us in Warsaw,...we declared that we were not opposed to peace, and that we were willing to have the Emperor, the King of France, the Danes and the Dutch as mediators...We will be able to make of this what we choose."[34]

He sought to avoid any commitment to an attack on Sweden, hoping to keep open as many options as possible by adopting a cautious approach. He urged the commissioners to play for time:

"[Austria] will invade the Mark and Pomerania by early October at the latest. It is certain that agreement will be reached [in Vienna] solely ex mutuo commoda and that the Emperor will not be concerned with the succession, for he sees that it would harm him rather than help him."[35]

He denied that talks were proceeding with the Swedes, and urged the commissioners to treat in accordance with their instructions, drawing their attention to the Dutch fleet protecting Danzig.[36]

Despite this denial, Koryciński was already advocating peace with Sweden. Those who supported the offer of the throne to Alexis, such as the Leszczyńskis and Trzebicki, shared Koryciński's doubts about his suitability, but were prepared to agree to his candidature as a tactical ploy.[37] Andrzej Leszczyński was angered by Koryciński's proposal for talks with Sweden:

"I do not know that you could find anyone who wishes his country well who would advise Your Majesty to enter [talks with Sweden], considering the inconvenience, danger and downright ruin of the Commonwealth which would ensue."[38]

He saw little chance of any territorial restitutions, "but rather a ruin of abomination and desolation which the Swedes have created everywhere," arguing that the Commonwealth could not expect reinforcements from the Swedes for any campaign against Muscovy, since they had:
"other interests; they cannot preserve the present position of their kingdom without waging war with someone or other."[39]

The Leszczyński family felt that once a treaty of military cooperation was signed with Muscovy, Austria would join the war, as promised, on the Polish side; this alliance, it was thought, would be too powerful for the Swedes to resist, and they would quickly sue for peace on more reasonable terms, and, it was hoped, withdraw from Prussia.[40] If the promise of the succession was necessary to achieve an agreement, then it should be made. In contrast to the offer made to the Habsburgs in 1655, however, when the Senate Council had been prepared to grant the succession outright, the offer to Muscovy was to be dependent on the calling of a Sejm, which was to be held as soon as possible. Such a condition at least gave the Poles the chance to play for time by delaying the Sejm:

"later it will be possible to withdraw [from the election] on the grounds that this is an act which breaks the laws of the Kingdom, and since the Muscovites did the same when they rejected Władysław IV after having accepted him as their Grand Duke..."[41]

Meanwhile, as Jan Leszczyński argued, the alternative to accepting the Muscovite terms was even worse:

"As I understand it to be inevitable that if we do not achieve peace the Commonwealth will be torn apart,...it is better to keep the state together under one lord, even if chosen in a premature election, since an elected king is better than a conqueror, and although we would appear to breach ancient custom with regard to elections, the important compensation is not only the restoration of occupied territories, but also the conservation of the status universi, so long as we are careful always to conserve the right of free election in the future."[42]

There was another reason for this tactical support for a Muscovite election. Habsburg supporters hoped that acceptance of the Muscovite terms might encourage the Austrians to respond to the
Polish offer of the throne in order to prevent the Tsar's election, to which Vienna was certainly opposed. It was repeatedly stressed that the Austrian failure to send aid left the Poles no choice but to agree to the Muscovite conditions. There were hopeful signs that Vienna was finally about to respond. In September, after a discussion of the merits of Alexis and Mattia di Medici as potential candidates, John Casimir told Vidoni:

"that the Emperor is now not at all far away from putting forward one of his own family; it is hoped that this means that aid will...soon be forthcoming, as the Polish ambassador in Prague maintains."[43]

John Casimir felt that for the Austrians:

"a decision is necessary; it does not make sense [for the Emperor] to keep his army idle at such great expense, and he believes that the Emperor is not far from making a bid for the succession."[44]

In this situation, John Casimir was determined to block any talks with Sweden; accordingly, when de Lumbres arrived in Danzig in mid-November, with a new peace offer in which Charles Gustav proposed to exchange Cracow and Thorn for Elbing and Marienburg, he was accorded a poor welcome by the King, complaining to Mazarin that nobody seemed interested, and that he was kept waiting for an audience.[45] John Casimir wished to hear from both Vienna and Wilno before he would even see de Lumbres, who reported that the majority of senators, and especially the Lithuanians, desired peace with Muscovy rather than Sweden, and that although Koryciński seemed to prefer the Swedes, he had thereby acquired several enemies, who accused him of having been corrupted by the French.[46] For John Casimir and his supporters, de Lumbres' suggestion that Poland should cede Prussia to Sweden was unpopular: it was hoped that once
the Muscovite treaty was achieved, Sweden would prove unable to resist two such great powers. [47] As far as the King and supporters of a Muscovite agreement were concerned:

"The mutual mistrust is so great and the hatred which the Poles feel for the Swedes is so violent that they not only prefer peace with Muscovy, but are also ready to elect [the Tsar] or his son as successor." [48]

Nevertheless, de Lumbres' prospects were better than they had at first appeared. The key factor was the state of morale in the army, which had been marched north to put pressure on Sweden and Brandenburg. Despite retaking Łęczyca, Kalisz and Chojnice, after its triumphal reception in Danzig on 12th November, it showed little desire to fight until it was paid. John Casimir's consequent inability to put pressure on Charles Gustav meant that Gosiewski could not force Frederick William to abandon Sweden, despite his victory over the Elector's forces at Prostki on 8th October, where Bogusław Radziwiłł, who had remained in Ducal Prussia since Kiejdan, was captured. [49] In the absence of military backing from John Casimir, Gosiewski departed from his instructions by ceasing hostilities and opening talks with Frederick William. [50] Although the Tatars continued to lay waste the countryside, John Casimir was worried that Gosiewski might concede too much to win Frederick William's support. The King ordered him to follow the instructions sent after his departure from Lublin, not the terms of the plenipotentiary powers he had been given. [51] These powers were granted, he said:

"with the express condition that while negotiating Gosiewski did not stop hostilities until the Elector effectively abandoned Sweden, yet he pursued the opposite course of action and negotiated a truce, squandering a magnificent opportunity to make significant progress...and to force the enemy into a
The King was in no mood to be conciliatory: Gosiewski was to demand that Frederick William should abandon the Swedes immediately and join his forces with those of the Commonwealth, and to insist that the Elector accepted his vassal status in Ducal Prussia. In return, all that John Casimir offered was a pardon for having abandoned the Commonwealth. This hard line was unlikely to succeed. Despite the defeat at Prostki, Frederick William was still in a good position, especially since the Crown army at Danzig was in no state to launch an offensive against him. He stressed that he did not wish to abandon the Swedish alliance, and asked Gosiewski to obtain plenipotentiary powers to negotiate with Sweden, so that a league could be formed against Muscovy, consisting of Sweden, Poland, Brandenburg, Transylvania, the Cossacks and the Tatars.

Frederick William had already signed a non-aggression treaty with Alexis on 22nd September. Gosiewski was worried about the possibility of a Muscovite alliance with Brandenburg, which he thought would cost Lithuania dear. He wished peace with Muscovy and a conjunctio armis above all, and was worried by reports that John Casimir was about to settle with the Swedes in Prussia. To prevent this happening, Gosiewski sought to detach Frederick William from Sweden as quickly as possible, which meant that he was willing to concede far more than John Casimir to obtain an agreement. This was his policy even before his defeat by Stenbock and Waldeck at Filipów on 22nd October, which made it more likely that major concessions would have to be made to tempt Frederick William away from Sweden. After Filipów, Gosiewski further dashed royal hopes
of forcing Frederick William to abandon Sweden by concluding a three month armistice at Wierzbołów.[57] This enabled the Elector to transfer Stenbock's army to the Danzig front, which further weakened John Casimir's position.[58]

The initial reaction of the Court to Wierzbołów was hostile. Louise Marie attacked Gosiewski for the defeat and for allowing Bogusław Radziwiłł to escape, instead of executing him as he had been ordered.[59] John Casimir was also annoyed:

"she told me that the King had complained at [Gosiewski's] shortcomings in one of his letters, for not having followed up his victory, for abusing his plenipotentiary powers, for sparing [Radziwiłł] when he had him in his hands, and finally for the way in which he had conducted the talks with Brandenburg."[60]

Gosiewski, however, did not have sufficient military force to inflict a major defeat on Frederick William, especially after the departure of the Tatars. He was anxious to persuade the Muscovites:

"to send us some of their musketeers and some good cannon...since with regard to my own forces I am destitute: only about one third of my men remain, the others having returned home with their booty; of the Tatars, who promised to return with 7,000 men, there is still no sign, and I cannot get any word of them. This has forced me to withdraw over the border, and I cannot stay here long. If I do not receive reinforcements, soon I shall have to join the Muscovite army."[61]

John Casimir was forced to admit that without military aid, Gosiewski could achieve little, telling him to keep the armistice for the moment.[62] He told Frederick III of Denmark of his hopes of detaching Frederick William from Sweden, but ordered Gosiewski to prepare for the continuation of hostilities on the expiry of the armistice.[63] A few days later, he urged that if Frederick William did not move against Sweden very quickly, the armistice should be
abandoned as soon as possible:

"Although we have word from that quarter that this armistice is only for show, and that the Elector is sending his regiments to help the Swedes against us. We have held back our forces on your word from invading the Mark, although they were willing and ready; we will order them to wait a while yet, so that the Elector might see that we do not desire to shed blood or see his destruction, but we will only do this if...he settles with us."[64]

He complained at the Elector's slowness in sending envoys for talks, and urged Gosiewski to prepare for military action as soon as the armistice expired, expressing his hope for Muscovite support.[65]

Piwarski suggests that the Polish desire to draw closer to Frederick William followed:

"pressure from Vienna, which was trying hard to detach the Elector from the Swedish camp, in order to use him to further Austrian policy in the Empire."[66]

In this, Piwarski alleges, the Court defied public opinion:

"In the opinion of a significant number of Poles, the vassal-traitor ought to have been punished; in the opinion of Vienna, it was necessary to reach an understanding. Imperial diplomacy acted in this spirit, underlining to the Polish Court the importance of Brandenburg-Prussia as a military factor."[67]

In fact, the decision to talk to Brandenburg had been taken before the Austrian ambassador Lisola arrived in Danzig, at a time when Austrian delays in coming to Poland's aid made it unpopular.[68] It was military incapacity, not pressure from Austria which decided Polish foreign policy. Gosiewski's army, consisting mostly of cavalry, could not expect to inflict a comprehensive defeat on Frederick William; indeed Gosiewski had completed the task set for him by the Court of keeping the Elector's forces busy and away from Danzig.[69] If anything further were to be achieved, the main army would have to take a more active rôle; by the end of October, this seemed increasingly unlikely. Nevertheless, Gosiewski did not
concede anything of significance to Frederick William, especially on the vital issue of sovereignty.[70]

The pressure on Frederick William to desert the Swedes was increasing, as his wife, a majority of his councillors and the Dutch urged him to abandon Charles Gustav; furthermore, Muscovy threatened that he would no longer be considered neutral if he did not do so.[71] Despite signing the Treaty of Labiau with Sweden on 20th November, in which Charles Gustav recognised Frederick William as sovereign in Ducal Prussia, the Elector did little to fulfil his obligations.[72] Having obtained recognition of sovereignty from Sweden, there was little reason for him to support Charles Gustav further, especially since Swedish designs in Royal Prussia constituted a direct threat to his own interests. Frederick William was now more interested in gaining recognition from his true feudal superior, John Casimir. The pro-Swedish Waldeck was dropped from the Elector's Council in favour of Schwerin, and immediately after Labiau, Hoverbeck wrote to Jan Leszczyński, who had always seen Brandenburg as a potential saviour of the Commonwealth, to explore the possibility of a settlement.[73]

Despite such favourable signs, pressure was growing in Danzig for peace with Sweden. If the Court was still fully committed to war, Koryciński was by no means isolated in his support for peace talks, as is sometimes argued.[74] Indeed, he claimed that most Poles supported him.[75] It was reported from Danzig that a major split was emerging between Lithuanians, who wanted to settle with Alexis, and Poles, a large number of whom wished peace with Sweden.[76] Support
for peace with Sweden was motivated by more than simple fear of a Muscovite election: while all were agreed on fighting the Swedes if the Emperor should join the coalition, reports from Jan Leszczyński in Vienna suggested that there was little hope of an agreement.[77]

The army remained the most important source of support for peace with Sweden. Potocki, Lanckoroński, Koniecpolski and a large number of others urged the King to settle. More alarmingly, Austrian unpopularity was so intense that some even talked of joining Sweden in an anti-Habsburg league:

"It does not seem that anything more than promises can be expected from the Pope, and even if his intentions and efforts are still good, nevertheless, in the Council summoned by the King, His Majesty had to defend the Pope, since opinion in the army suggests that he does not care for the interests of the Catholic Church. The King, the Queen, the Archbishop of Gniezno, the Crown Grand Marshall, the Crown Vice-Chancellor, the Grand Secretary and the Referendary have expressed their doubts in vain about the proposal to settle with Sweden and to form a confederation against the Emperor with Sweden, Brandenburg and the Prince of Transylvania...In conclusion, the aforementioned Generals...say that peace with Sweden is necessary whatever the cost..."[78]

Confederation was in the air, and Vidoni was worried that Poland might see a second Cromwell or Khmel'nyts'kyi.[79] Those who favoured Austria came under attack:

"I have heard people talk ill of His Grace the Archbishop of Gniezno...and I must say that things are going from bad to worse, as crimes remain unpunished, while neither merit nor virtue is rewarded, and finally, as people say, there are more rebels than loyal subjects."[80]

The problem was that John Casimir and Trzebicki were isolated in Danzig, since the Queen had returned to Silesia following the army's departure from Lublin. Although Pac opposed peace with Sweden, there were too few Lithuanians in Danzig to counteract its supporters: Pac
complained that the three Lithuanians present were always outvoted by the six Poles on the Council, led by Koryciński, who were even ready to cede Lithuanian territory to Alexis to avoid a Muscovite succession.[81] Potential supporters of peace with Muscovy were absent: Jan Leszczyński was in Vienna, and although Louise Marie and Andrzej Leszczyński were on their way to join the King, the presence of Swedish troops in the vicinity meant that they were unable to complete their journey and had to stay in Kalisz. John Casimir and Trzebicki argued with spirit and were able to prevent any binding resolution being adopted, nevertheless, it was questionable how much longer they could resist pressure for peace talks with Sweden. John Casimir urged Louise Marie to come to Danzig as soon as possible. Meanwhile, however, he had to inform Vidoni of Charles Gustav's expressions of goodwill and offers of peace preliminaries, and express his hopes for peace.[82]

The divisions between Poles and Lithuanians were worrying. The Lithuanians resented Polish opposition to a treaty with Muscovy and accused the Poles of attempting to sabotage the talks. In April, Galiński had already complained to Krzysztof Pac that the instructions he had been given by the Senate Council represented a grave obstacle to the achievement of an agreement:

"my hands were tied by my Lords Senators, who allowed me to conclude nothing of import..."[83]

Pac was angered by the activities of Koryciński, who was in a unique position to hinder the talks. Following the death of Kazimierz Leon Sapieha, the Lithuanian Vice-Chancellor, and the illness of the Grand Chancellor, Albrecht Stanisław Radziwiłł, who was also shortly to die in his Prussian exile, Koryciński had temporary charge of the
Lithuanian Chancery, an opportunity which he used to frustrate the negotiations:

"But several noble lords [from Poland], especially he who has temporary charge of the Chanceries of Lithuania...are placing great obstacles in the path of a settlement; frequently, it is said, declarations intended for you have been changed; he almost succeeded in blocking that first proposal concerning the election, wishing rather to treat with the Swedes, although this certainly will not happen."[84]

A month later, Pac apologised for the complaints reaching the commissioners from the Court:

"Which was not the intention of His Majesty, and which he did not order. But it is always thus when the Crown Chancery meddles in Lithuanian affairs."[85]

There was good reason to fear that a failure to reach agreement with Muscovy might provoke the Lithuanians into unilateral action, and even bring about the collapse of the Union:

"The Lithuanians desire peace with the Muscovites and say that if it is not given voluntarily [by Poland], they will settle separately."[86]

Reports from the Grand Duchy indicated that this was no idle threat, as individual Lithuanians took matters into their own hands. Galiński had written to Pac in April:

"The worst thing is that many of our Lithuanian brothers have come of their own accord and submitted to the Tsar, and have accepted baptism [into the Orthodox faith], and have freely sworn oaths of loyalty. Others have also given in, not wishing to suffer imprisonment."[87]

Krzysztof Pac's own brother Michał was among those who went over to the Muscovites.[88] John Casimir found such reports worrying:

"through these talks [with the Swedes]...it is quite clear that all Lithuania will be lost, for Lithuanians must look to their own fortunes...we would also face the prospect of war with Muscovy which would reach the very gates of Warsaw, not to mention the offence we would give to Austria,..."[89]

Andrzej Leszczyński emphasised the importance of the Lithuanian
attitude:

"Given the loss of Lithuania, which Muscovy has already almost completely overrun,...it is certain that the citizens of Lithuania in present circumstances will follow the safe course, rather than await an uncertain outcome."[90]

Opponents of a Muscovite alliance, however, failed to prevent the commissioners from reaching a settlement with Muscovy, which was signed at Niemieży near Wilno on 3th November.[91] A last-minute attempt to secure the candidacy of the Tsar's son Alexis, rather than that of the Tsar also failed: Trzebicki told the commissioners that agreement would be far easier to achieve in the Commonwealth for the Tsarevich than for the Tsar himself, and urged them to point out the difficulties that one man would face in ruling such a large state.[92] In late November, before he knew the terms agreed at Wilno, John Casimir wrote that many senators saw only great problems with the Tsar's candidature.[93] Nevertheless, the commissioners were grudgingly given permission to promise that a Sejm would be held as soon as possible to elect the Tsar to the Polish throne. In return, Alexis promised his full commitment to the war against Sweden.

There have been some rather optimistic assessments of the significance of the Treaty of Wilno. Lewitter suggested that:

"For the Poles, and particularly for the Lithuanians, this form of association with Russia was desirable in so far as it held out the prospect of security in the east."[94]

Gawlik regarded the treaty as the result of a genuine desire for union:

"In 1656, both sides reached agreement, seeing the election as possible, and the union of Poland with Russia as beneficial. The negotiations were open and honest, and areas of disagreement
were referred to the Sejm."[95]

The assumption of the existence of a large degree of support for a union leads Gawlik to explain the subsequent failure of the treaty in terms of foreign interference. This is a view accepted by Kurzon, and by Wójcik in 1955:

"Poland was caught up in the whirlwind of French and Austrian policy, which, although opposed in virtually every aspect, were completely in harmony as to their negative positions with regard to the agreement between Poland and Russia, particularly over the issue of the Russian succession. This is wholly understandable if we take into account that both France and Austria were attempting to win influence over Poland's domestic policy and were aiming to win the Polish throne for their own candidates."[96]

Historians working in the 1950's had perforce to present Polish-Russian relations in a favourable light. Wójcik's later assessment of Wilno, freed from some of these constraints, is more realistic, recognising that it was not based on firm foundations.[97] There was a large body of Polish opinion which not only opposed the Tsar's succession, but also further hostilities against Sweden, while Wilno did nothing to resolve the fundamental disputes dividing the two sides: the Muscovite occupation of Byelorussia and the status of the Ukraine. The consideration of these issues, at the suggestion of the Muscovites, was postponed to the next Polish Sejm, along with the equally thorny problem of the succession. As Tomkiewicz argues, such tactics:

"were a skilful trick, as the King was sure that the Sejm would never consent to such a plan."[98]

Nevertheless, the commitment made at Wilno to elect Alexis as John Casimir's successor was a serious obstacle to the realisation of the Court's plans to use the succession to improve its domestic position. Its original hope that it might persuade Alexis to allow
the candidature of the Tsarevich, who might fulfil the rôle previously assigned to Rákóczy's son, were soon dashed, when Alexis insisted on his own candidature, despite the willingness he had expressed in April to consider the possibility of his son's election, and even of his education as a Catholic.[99] Almost as soon as the Treaty was signed, the Court began to seek ways to postpone the Sejm:

"The Sejm which is to be held in January, so they say, will be of great consequence and will be extremely turbulent...I fear it for the fatigue it is bound to cause me. All the pretenders to the succession will be intriguing; the Muscovites act openly, our Austrian and Transylvanian neighbours intrigue publicly and secretly."[100]

Those Polish senators who had supported a settlement with Muscovy on tactical grounds, agreed that it was essential to avoid holding a Sejm as long as possible:

"Lubomirski does not praise the idea of holding a Diet in January, giving many reasons, especially the controversies to which it will probably give rise, over the election of the Muscovite as well as other matters. The Queen and Monsignor the Archbishop of Gniezno agree..."[101]

There was a strong desire to postpone the Sejm until March, in order to await developments elsewhere.[102] By now, the Queen was determined to stop the election of the Tsar:

"Her Majesty is of the opinion that it should secretly be arranged that France, Denmark, the Prince of Transylvania and the Turk send their ambassadors to campaign for the maintenance of the right of free election of the monarch in the Commonwealth, and against the Muscovite election."[103]

There were initial signs that such a policy might be popular, even among Lithuanians. For supporters of Wilno were swiftly disappointed by the Tsar's failure to evacuate Lithuania. Wilno changed nothing essential in Polish-Muscovite relations. After Wilno, as before, the two sides were united solely by common hostility to Sweden. Despite the pious phrases about conjunctio
The treaty brought no close military cooperation: both sides continued much as before; indeed, Alexis withdrew his forces from Riga, while the non-aggression pact he signed with Brandenburg in September provoked doubts as to his commitment to fighting Poland's enemies.[104] The most important advantage of Wilno as far as the government was concerned was that the promise of the succession to Alexis had meant that the Commonwealth had not been forced to make any territorial concessions in Lithuania or the Ukraine. Most importantly, despite the optimism of the commisioners, who wrote to John Casimir of their hopes for an evacuation of Lithuania at least as far as the Berezina river before the Sejm, the Muscovites showed no signs of moving before they were sure of the succession.[105] Even Krzysztof Pac, long the bitter opponent of Koryciński and the supporter of peace with Muscovy, approached de Lumbres, who wrote of:

"the frankness with which M.Patz...spoke to me...He is an extremely able man and he has great influence with the King and Queen,...and what is more important, is that he assures me that he is a supporter of France by inclination."[106]

Pac's support for Wilno and a Muscovite alliance did not result from any great desire for a union, but was motivated by tactical considerations just as much as the Court's. Lithuanians were well aware of the nature of Muscovite rule; Lithuanian sejmiks had already complained to John Casimir in August about Muscovite demands for total submission.[107] If the Muscovites were not prepared to evacuate the Grand Duchy as Pac had hoped, then it might be necessary to explore the possibility of a swift peace with Sweden. Pac was receptive to de Lumbres' suggestion that Ferdinand III only desired a prolongation of the Polish-Swedish war in an attempt to prevent war breaking out in Germany.[108] For Pac, such an outcome was the last
thing he wanted. De Lumbres was assured:

"that the commissioners have exceeded their powers in several points, and that in any case it will not take effect until it has been ratified by the King and the Senate, which has not yet happened..."[109]

If the Muscovites could not be persuaded to evacuate Lithuania, it was essential to avoid a long war with Sweden. Without rejecting Wilno outright, Pac began to sound out de Lumbres on the possibility of a quick peace with Sweden.

The attraction of such a policy was increased by Jan Leszczyński's failure to win large-scale support from Austria. Austrian delays and prevarication caused Leszczyński to regret ever having come to Vienna.[110] When an agreement was eventually signed, its terms were desperately disappointing. Under the Treaty of Vienna of 1st December, Austria offered a mere 4,000 men, all of whom were to be paid by the Commonwealth.[111] The failure of Wilno to persuade the Austrians to commit themselves to the war on any significant scale was a great blow to Andrzej Leszczyński and those who saw Austria as the Commonwealth's saviour. Their policy had failed: neither Austria nor Muscovy had produced aid on the scale necessary to defeat the Swedes, while few had any desire to put Wilno into effect. Yet if they did not, the Commonwealth faced the hostility of Muscovy as well as Sweden, and the renewed danger of partition.

Despite the failure of hopes in the Austrians and despite his opposition to the implementation of Wilno, John Casimir was reluctant to settle with Sweden, the attitude of the army notwithstanding. Nevertheless, he could not resist pressure for a new approach to Sweden through de Lumbres, although he did what he
could to ensure that concessions were minor: he was unwilling to cede territory to Charles Gustav, although he was prepared to surrender the title of King of Sweden.[112] Vidoni accurately summarised John Casimir's predicament:

"The King is now shut up in Danzig like a prisoner and talks both of making peace on the enemy's terms and of fighting, which the army does not want, finally of the dangers of trying to escape."[113]

While de Lumbres hoped to bring about a meeting of the two kings, John Casimir wrote secretly to Louise Marie that the Swedes were traitors worse than Turks or Tatars and urged her not to trust the French, who appeared too partial to the enemy.[114] Yet in the absence of effective aid from Austria or Muscovy, there was little else he could do.

Hopes for a quick settlement with Sweden were soon dashed, however. Charles Gustav was in no mood to accept the Polish terms, and was already seeking to break the deadlock by launching a new diplomatic initiative. He hoped to attract foreign support through a new plan to partition the Commonwealth. The Treaty of Labiau had been the first expression of this new policy; he now looked towards the Cossacks and Transylvanians, who had signed a treaty of eternal friendship in September.[115] Rákóczy, despite the efforts of Lubomirski to win him for the Polish cause, had long been in contact with Sweden. Charles Gustav had at various times tempted him with promises of Polish territory, which Rákóczy was to rule as Sweden's vassal. In the autumn of 1656 rumours of renewed Polish offers of the succession to the Habsburgs persuaded Rákóczy to turn a more favourable ear towards Sweden. On 6th December, Sweden, Transylvania and the Cossacks signed the Treaty of Radnot, which envisaged a
partition of the Commonwealth: Rákóczy was to take much of Little Poland and Lithuania, with the title of King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania; the Cossacks were to take the Ukraine; Brandenburg was to receive the parts of Great Poland it had already been granted at Marienburg, while Sweden was to receive Royal Prussia.[116] If Frederick William still showed no sign of offering Charles Gustav his active support, the bait proved enough to tempt Rákóczy. A manifesto was issued to the Poles on 31st December; on 22nd January 1657, Rákóczy entered Poland with an army of 41,000.[117]

Rákóczy's invasion radically altered the military and diplomatic situation and provoked a fundamental reappraisal of the situation by the various political factions in the Commonwealth. Once more, hopes of a diplomatic settlement had been dashed: if peace were to be achieved, a military solution was necessary. Furthermore, the rejection of hopes for a quick peace with Sweden brought renewed tension between Poles and Lithuanians, as the latter revived demands for a swift implementation of Wilno. Once more, the future was deeply uncertain; once more it was vital to attract foreign aid, aid more substantial and effective than that granted in the Treaties of Vienna and Wilno. At least the threat from Rákóczy spurred the army into activity; in February, it moved south to confront the new invader, abandoning Prussia for the moment to the Swedes. Once again, the Commonwealth was fighting for its very existence, with no agreement as to the best means of salvation. In order to decide on the political and diplomatic line to be adopted, John Casimir called an extraordinary convocation of senators and representatives of the szlachta to assemble at Czestochowa. Here, he hoped, he would find
sufficient support to reject the calls for an ignominious surrender to Sweden.
The new Swedish coalition destroyed French hopes for a quick negotiated settlement. Koryciński complained to de Lumbres that he had been deceived:

"after telling me that [Charles Gustav] has shown that he is little inclined towards peace, and that the more that Poland moderates its pretensions, the more Sweden distances itself from an agreement, he dwelt upon the efforts he had made to persuade the Poles to accept [such a settlement]."[1]

Koryciński was bitter on account of:

"the reproaches he had suffered for having delayed the [Muscovite] negotiations in order to facilitate this one, which makes no progress, and which seems to have little chance of success. This gives good sport to his enemies and to those who wish to criticise his conduct. He reproaches himself for the credulity which he has shown towards the Swedish proposals."[2]

Despite de Lumbres' attempts to console Koryciński with news of "les civilités" which Mazarin was offering him, the Chancellor continued to show "beaucoup de ressentiment."[3] French hopes of mediation in the short term were dead: Charles Gustav merely temporised, demanding that John Casimir call a Sejm to approve the powers of the Polish commissioners. John Casimir told de Lumbres that if no reply were forthcoming by the end of January, he would leave Danzig to put Wilno into effect.[4] When the reply finally came in March after the meeting of Charles Gustav and Frederick William at Preussisch-Holland, it offered new talks, but although Charles Gustav hinted that he might be prepared to evacuate Poland for the right price, there was no indication of a major change of heart.[5] Koryciński wrote angrily to Mazarin of his disappointment:

"With regard to the peace negotiations, I consider that my noble intentions and efforts for the good not only of the kingdoms of Poland and Sweden, but of all Christendom, have been welcomed by Their Excellencies the ambassadors of His Most Christian Majesty. But the reasons for the failure of our talks
are to be found in Swedish dishonesty and lack of faith in success, which do not permit the achievement of peace in a reasonable way."[6]

The Commonwealth had failed to end the war by diplomatic means, yet it still was in no condition to force a military solution without substantial foreign aid. As Lisola remarked:

"The Poles will certainly never finish this war, despite their superiority in numbers...unless they secure foreign help."[7]

The government's most pressing task at Częstochowa would be to secure support for its preferred policy of a new approach to the Habsburgs, without exacerbating the divisions which existed among senators. While Lithuanians such as Gosiewski and Pac reaffirmed their faith in Wilno and urged its swift implementation as the only hope of achieving a return to their estates, the Court and those Poles who had supported Wilno on tactical grounds had begun to reconsider their position. The treaty had failed to attract immediate large-scale Muscovite support, which it was now clear would only be forthcoming after the Sejm had ratified Wilno, a prospect which few relished. If the implementation of Wilno were to be avoided, however, it was vital to find an alternative source of support. It was to be hoped that the prospect of Alexis as king of Poland and the threat posed to Austrian interests in Hungary by Rákóczy's alliance with Sweden might induce the Habsburgs to take a more positive line; the Treaty of Vienna, inadequate though it was, and the movement of Austrian troops to the Silesian border indicated that Ferdinand might at last be concerned enough to act.[8]

The first essential was to persuade Ferdinand to offer more support than he had agreed to provide in December. Although Lisola
had been warmly welcomed by the King when he arrived in Danzig at the end of January, his reception generally was not so cordial, as de Lumbres provoked anti-Austrian feeling by spreading the story that the Poles had signed a treaty to elect Archduke Leopold William as successor to the Polish throne.[9] Austrian policy was criticised even by those who were generally well-disposed to Vienna:

"I notice, however, the common opinion, held both by the King and by senators of every faction, that the help promised by Your Majesty is far too little and far too burdensome to have any great value or general utility."[10]

The government was wary of committing itself finally to the Habsburg alliance when the level of support it afforded was so small; indeed, if the treaty were ratified, it might drive the Muscovites into a league with Sweden. Given the government's problems in paying the Polish army, few believed that it would be possible to support even the small number of troops the Austrians appeared willing to send.[11] Led by Koryciński, the senators in Danzig refused to ratify the treaty, on the grounds that there were not enough present to do so.[12] Lisola was constantly lobbied and criticised over the terms and doubted whether he would secure ratification.[13] He was not told of the failure of the French peace initiative, while it was stressed that ratification of Vienna was conditional on the Austrians producing better terms. Garnier, the Austrian envoy to Częstochowa, was presented with a list of demands, including an immediate 12,000-15,000 men to face Rákóczi, and a request that Vienna reply at once, otherwise peace would be made with Sweden.[14]

The King was anxious to head south and join forces with the Queen and the Leszczyńskis, who were more favourably disposed towards Austria. He left Danzig on 10th February and arrived at
Częstochowa on 2nd March. [15] Many senators had gathered before the King's arrival, which gave them a chance to discuss the issues before the Convocation formally opened on 3rd March. [16] The Leszczyński's were angry at the refusal of the Danzig senators to ratify Vienna. Jan Leszczyński condemned Koryciński's campaign to block Wilno, criticising him for "trumpeting the cause of war with Muscovy." [17] He hoped that John Casimir would support him:

"I shall simply propose ratification, for the King will certainly and indubitably approve [what] has been decided here." [18]

Leszczyński felt that the talks with Sweden breached the decisions of the Senate Council taken earlier in the year, and had increased Austrian uncertainty. [19] The Leszczyński's had nevertheless been unsure of the King's attitude, even if they wished no hint of this to reach Vienna. Andrzej Leszczyński told Vidoni that he was determined to combat Koryciński and all thoughts of peace with Sweden, complaining that the King and his advisors wished to destroy themselves and everybody else. [20] Leszczyński was worried that the King might make concessions to Sweden to obtain peace, including possibly the cession of Danzig or Royal Prussia. [21]

The Leszczyński's were prepared for a confrontation, but were unsure of the attitude of Lubomirski, who had been a strong opponent of the offers made to Austria in 1655-56:

"I suspect that our agreement will not be to the taste of His Grace the Bishop of Cracow [Piotr Gembicki] or of the Grand Marshal, since the terms are open to doubt...and all reinforcements are conditional. We have acquired a small amount of aid; we must win more." [22]

Leszczyński was worried that if Lubomirski supported peace with Sweden, ratification would fail. Lubomirski arrived in Częstochowa
on 27th February.[23] The discussions which followed were heated, but Jan Leszczyński was pleased with the outcome:

After many objections...it was decided to ratify the Vienna Treaty; I do not doubt that it will be sent by the second post, since His Majesty only arrives tomorrow...in Częstochowa: we await him so that ratification can take place without any further problems."[24]

Evidently the betrayal of his trust by Rákóczi had persuaded Lubomirski that only the Habsburgs could now save the Commonwealth. Although Jan Leszczyński expected further opposition from Koryciński, Lubomirski's support reassured him that the Chancellor would not succeed in blocking ratification.[25] He was proved right; despite the inadequacy of Austrian aid, the treaty was ratified on 7th March, although Bogusław Leszczyński was to go to Vienna with plenipotentiary powers to negotiate for better terms.[26]

The Court did not, however, rely merely on the dramatic deterioration in the Commonwealth's military position to induce Vienna to send more aid. Once again, Leszczyński was to offer the Polish throne to the Habsburgs. Faced with the prospect of having to implement Wilno, the Court and Austrian supporters in the Senate sought an alternative to the election of Alexis. Although Ferdinand had rejected the earlier offer, he was known to oppose the Tsar's candidature, which might persuade him to send substantial reinforcements and to accept the new approach in order to preempt Alexis. From the Court's point of view, an Austrian candidature fitted better with its wider plans for reform: Ferdinand's second son Charles Joseph was young enough for plans of adoption by John Casimir and marriage to Louise Marie's niece to be feasible, and as a Catholic, would have the backing of the Church. Finally, there was
good reason to hope that the prospect of a Muscovite succession might overcome traditional hostility to an Austrian candidature.

The offer was not, however, officially approved by the Częstochowa Convocation. It was formally proposed by John Casimir, and opposed by Koryciński, but no firm commitment was made.[27] Primarily this was due to concern at the effect such a commitment would have on Lithuanian opinion: an Austrian candidature was bound to alienate Lithuanians, who still saw the Muscovite succession as essential if they were to secure a return to their estates. While Jerzy Zawisza, Krzysztof Pac and possibly Teodor Łacki were the only Lithuanians present, nevertheless, Zawisza had been the leader of the Wilno commissioners and the Lithuanians could expect the support of Krasiński, who had been the Polish representative at the Wilno talks and was a strong supporter of the treaty.[28]

There was much in Court policy in early 1657 to worry Lithuanians. Bąkowski had been despatched to Moscow in January to apologise for the failure to hold a Sejm, offering Rákóczi's invasion and an outbreak of plague in excuse.[29] Meanwhile, John Casimir wrote an angry letter to the commissioners, complaining at the lack of a conjunctio armis:

"Our position must be affected somewhat by the fact that the most necessary condition, which was laid down in your plenipotentiary powers, and which we strongly confirmed in so many subsequent letters, namely the conjunctio armorum, was treated in a most cold manner by your Excellencies."[30]

Lithuanians were worried by such signs; Zawisza expressed his concern to Vidoni that the Convocation would reject Wilno, and warned of the possible consequences:
"besides it is certain, as I was told by the Bishop of Wilno, that the Lithuanians would accept [the rule of the Tsar] if they fail to achieve peace together with the Poles."[31]

Sapieha's group, meeting in Brest, also expressed support for Wilno, urging John Casimir to reassure the Tsar over the lack of progress towards its implementation.[32]

The Court had to take account of such sensibilities. To have pushed the Austrian succession too enthusiastically would have been to risk an open breach and an alliance between the Lithuanians and anti-Austrian elements in Poland which might jeopardise the Court's election plans. As it was, Lithuanians still blamed Koryciński for the problems surrounding the Wilno negotiations and for attempting to block the implementation of the treaty.[33] When the Convocation discussed relations with Muscovy, there were serious differences of opinion. Nevertheless, it was decided to endorse Wilno, which, John Casimir told Vidoni, was unavoidable.[34] The Wilno commissioners and supporters of the treaty had argued their case forcefully. In the face of such strength of feeling, supporters of an Austrian succession had to act circumspectly: there could be no question of adding to the Commonwealth's enemies by alienating Alexis through an offer of the Crown to the Habsburgs while opinion remained so divided. Until such time as Ferdinand committed himself, it was necessary to keep any succession offer secret. Austria was still widely unpopular and the election plan could only succeed if the Habsburgs offered substantial and effective aid.

Such considerations induced the Court to confine knowledge of the plan to a few sympathetic senators. Louise Marie had outlined
Court tactics to Vidoni a few days before the Convocation opened. She said that both Alexis and Charles Joseph had their supporters; Vidoni replied that the latter would be better for the Catholic religion, but asked how Alexis could be prevented from joining Poland's enemies. The Queen replied that the Poles would have to pretend to pursue negotiations with Muscovy, but keep in contact with Austria and await the right moment to strike.[35] To prevent unilateral action by Lithuania, it was decided to send Pac to Muscovy to inform the Tsar that a Sejm was to be held as soon as possible with the purpose of putting Wilno into effect, while urging him to send military aid immediately. Although this decision was officially to be kept secret from Vidoni, the King informed him that the Sejm was planned for 25th May, but that everything depended on the Tsar's reply.[36] The Court was playing for time; it was essential to stall the Muscovites long enough for Ferdinand to respond to the succession offer and to intervene in strength:

"they are hoping that much time will elapse between the election and the coronation. They say that before they take this step, they should swear that they only do so out of necessity, at a time when their fortunes are at a low ebb and reinforcements are hard to come by. They hope that this will be of advantage when circumstances improve."[37]

Talk of calling a Sejm in May was designed to put pressure on Ferdinand to accept the Polish offer and to intervene immediately.

Until the Court was sure of Ferdinand's attitude, and until the arrival of large-scale and effective Austrian aid, it was essential to keep the succession offer secret. The document taken by Leszczyński was not formally agreed in full council, as the 1655 offer had been; rather it was the work of a small group, acting in collusion with the Court, but without the knowledge of many senators.
Leszczyński's plenipotentiary powers were drawn up in Koryciński's Chancery, but Koryciński knew nothing of the succession offer.[38] The original of this document has disappeared. Walewski, who had seen neither it nor the copy now in Warsaw, supposed that it was a binding promise of the throne by the Senate.[39] In fact, Leszczyński promised in the name of the King:


This document was not a "new assurance of the succession to the throne for the Habsburgs" as Piwarski maintains, but an offer made on behalf of a small group of leading senators, who were not in a position to make any kind of guarantee, given the opposition of so many senators, both Lithuanian and Polish. It gave notice of the establishment of a political party in Poland dedicated to the promotion of the Habsburg election, but the success of the plan depended on Vienna. As Louise Marie later wrote to Frederick William:

"There is a great difference between promising the Crown and merely offering one's support in an election."[41]

Should Austria help to bring the war to a successful conclusion, it was hoped that Charles Joseph would be elected out of gratitude to the Habsburgs, and because he would be a more popular candidate than Alexis. The Commonwealth's armies could then be turned against Muscovy in a war they were more suited to winning.

The offer to the Habsburgs was an attempt to create a political alternative to the Muscovite succession. The plan had some chance of
success: fear of an interregnum had revived after Rákóczy's invasion, while a substantial body of opinion existed which was hostile to the Tsar. The signatories of the document taken by Leszczyński to Vienna included some of the most important senators in Poland, while the backing of the Catholic Church had been given by Vidoni, anxious to avoid the election of Alexis. While Lithuania remained a problem, Pac's attitude at the end of 1656 suggested that Lithuanian support for Wilno might evaporate if Austrian aid forced Charles Gustav to settle quickly. Finally, the Court was aware that the presence of Austrian troops in the Commonwealth might prove necessary for the realisation of the election, in the event of resistance:

"there is no lack of those inclined to support someone from the House of Austria; if during the Sejm, the Emperor had a sizeable army in the kingdom, it would be possible to make some move."

Much depended on the Austrian response to Leszczyński's mission. Although the Court had outmanoeuvred its opponents very effectively at Częstochowa, Koryciński, who complained bitterly that the Court wished to reduce him to the status of a scribe, still believed that the szlachta supported him.[43] Fate now struck a cruel blow. While Ferdinand ratified the December treaty on 30th March, his death three days later, before Leszczyński even arrived in Vienna, deprived Poland of any hope of immediate aid and seriously hindered attempts to win greater support. Ferdinand's son Leopold I, not yet King of the Romans, was more circumscribed in his actions than Ferdinand had been: Leopold's main concern was the Imperial election, the first since the end of the Thirty Years' War, and the first in which Sweden would have any influence.[44] The Poles could
only expect further delays from Vienna.

These delays put a great strain on supporters of the Austrian succession. At the end of March, even before Ferdinand's death, Jan Leszczyński wrote to Cieciszewski:

"If it has been difficult for you awaiting ratification, it has been far more difficult for us awaiting reinforcements...there is hope for us if they are content with the ratification; if we were to receive these reinforcements quickly, we would know how to proceed, but at the moment we are in ultima desperatione.[45] Delays made it difficult to justify the policy decided at Częstochowa:

"I am accused of raising false hopes, and I do not know what to reply; let them at least declare that they are not withdrawing their support...it is the ultimate cruelty not to reply to someone who wishes you well."[46]

When Bogusław Leszczyński arrived in Vienna, he found that Leopold was extremely cautious, refusing to commit himself on the succession and requesting further guarantees from the Poles. Jan Leszczyński reacted angrily:

"I must confess that I am outraged that after so many declarations of our sincere affection, they dare to treat in such an evasive way, renewing their scruples and doubts over those 4,000 men which they promised to send; in truth I despair of even that which has been agreed ever actually taking effect."[47]

The King was also desperate: even before he heard of Ferdinand's death, Vidoni found him:

"greatly disturbed at the present state of affairs, complaining bitterly about His Imperial Majesty, whom he has informed of his displeasure; nonetheless, he does not expect a decision."[48]

There was good reason for this anxiety. The military position was now so bad that if help did not arrive soon, John Casimir knew he might have to implement Wilno or settle with Sweden on whatever terms he could win. With a mutinous army and a desperate shortage of
infantry, he could not think of mounting a new campaign against Charles Gustav, and he seriously considered capitulation.[49] The longer the delays in Vienna, the more acute the crisis became. In May, Lisola reported:

"I foresee that it is certain that they will be driven by circumstances to desperate measures and that the whole Polish people will regard us with implacable hatred."[50]

As chances of Charles Joseph being elected by a grateful Commonwealth receded, Austrian supporters began to reconsider. The extent of Lubomirski's commitment to the plan had always been in doubt. His support had been a great coup for the Leszczyńskis, who had seen the chance to win him over when his hopes for Rákóczy's succession were finally smashed in January 1657, but he had long been anti-Austrian. In the light of his behaviour after Częstochowa, it is unlikely that his consent to the succession offer sprang from conviction. Rákóczy's treachery had forced him to reconsider his position; for the moment, it was to his advantage to cooperate with the Leszczyńskis and the Court: at Częstochowa John Casimir was to appoint a successor to Lanckoroński, who had died in February, as Polish Field Hetman. Lubomirski's main rival was Stefan Czarniecki, Castellan of Kiev and the King's favourite. The problem of the Hetman's baton was one of the most difficult faced at Częstochowa; while the King wished to grant it to Czarniecki, he was faced with the determined opposition of a large section of the Senate. Kersten suggests that Czarniecki's relatively humble origins explain this opposition. Yet, as he admits, this explanation is weak; it will not do for the Leszczyńskis, who had allowed Czarniecki's daughter to marry into their family a year previously, but who supported
It seems more likely that the Leszczyńskis saw an opportunity to win Lubomirski's support for the succession plan by a promise to back his candidature for the hetmanship instead of Czarniecki. Kersten agrees that such motives lay behind John Casimir's grant of the baton to his old political enemy. There is no direct proof that such a deal took place, nevertheless it may be significant that Koryciński was excluded from the Council meeting at which Lubomirski's promotion was approved. Such a deal would explain why Lubomirski signed a document supporting a policy of which he had previously been the leading opponent. Once Lubomirski had been granted the baton, however, there was no guarantee that he would continue to support the Habsburg succession plan, since he could not be deprived of his office.

If the Austrian delays gave Lubomirski an excuse to move away from support for Court policy, they also infuriated more convinced advocates of Charles Joseph and revived the position of de Lumbres, who rejoined the Court at Danków in early May. He had nothing new to offer; nevertheless, the doubts and divisions which he found at Court gave him an ideal opportunity to recover lost ground. There was widespread anger at the demands made in Vienna to Bogusław Leszczyński, especially the request for Austrian troops to garrison strongpoints on the Vistula and Warta rivers: Hazfeldt reported that such sentiments ensured that the majority of senators, led by Koryciński, were pro-French in sympathy. Lubomirski stated that the army was desperate, believing that the Austrians were toying with
the Commonwealth. He now urged peace with Sweden unless the Austrians sent immediate aid.[55] When de Lumbres confronted the Queen over rumours that several leading senators, including the Leszczyńskis, supported an Austrian succession, she admitted the existence of the plan, though she denied her part in it, saying:

"that the ambassadors, against their orders and without the participation of the King and the Commonwealth, have promised their votes, and those of their friends, to allow the Kingdom, or at least Great and Little Poland, to fall into the hands of the King of Hungary."[56]

Despite the Queen's protestations of innocence, and despite de Lumbres' report that she still seemed little satisfied with the Habsburgs, such sentiments should not be seen as evidence that the Queen wished to move closer to France, or supported peace with Sweden.[57] She complained frequently at French attempts to prevent a rapprochement between Poland and Brandenburg, telling de Lumbres that the envoys to Vienna had been expressly forbidden to discuss the succession, and attempted to persuade him that Sweden was scheming with Austria against France.[58] The strength of the Queen's displeasure at Austrian delays is not to be doubted, but her cultivation of de Lumbres was motivated essentially by a desire to put pressure on Vienna by indicating that a settlement with Sweden was unavoidable if help did not come swiftly: Lisola was gravely worried in May by a new French suggestion that Louis XIV should offer to underwrite a deal in which Royal Prussia would be returned to Poland for a cash payment of 2,000,000 livres.[59] As yet, however, de Lumbres was unable to channel this resentment, since he had no official backing for this offer. While Charles Gustav campaigned actively with Rákóczy, the Queen remained loyal to the policy of war.
and prospects for a settlement looked bleak.

It was essential to force a quick decision from Leopold, as Alexis stepped up the pressure by launching new diplomatic and military initiatives in the spring. A Muscovite envoy arrived in early May to press for the implementation of Wilno. He left on 10th May with assurances that a Sejm would be held as soon as possible. As the new campaigning season opened, the Muscovites moved into Livonia, seemingly willing once more to take the offensive. De Lumbres reported growing support not only for the Muscovite alliance, but even for the election:

"If peace with Sweden is not made soon, I see everyone here proceeding to make this nomination [of the Tsar]; the Lithuanians eagerly, since the prince occupies all their country, and the Poles, because he is offering them great advantages, promising to restore all the conquests he has made, and to conquer Livonia, to incorporate it in this kingdom. Those who previously opposed this seem presently to consent to it. Their reasoning is that the evil of which they wish to rid themselves is actual and that which they might fear is yet to come and uncertain, since it is possible that the King of Poland will outlive the Grand Duke. The rule of the latter will be less harsh and more supportable than might be supposed, since he is cultured enough and smacks little of the barbarian, treating the Lithuanians with all the consideration one would wish."[63]

It was essential, however, for the Court and Austrian supporters to give such an impression, for it was feared that the acceptance of Austrian aid, and rumours of the Austrian succession offers, might provoke the break-up of the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, Vidoni was confident that once the Austrian army had entered the Commonwealth, the election plan would succeed:

"It is not hard to imagine that when the German reinforcements enter the kingdom and garrison the designated cities the King of Hungary will advance his claim to the throne for himself or his brother. Many have indeed declared that he would be more welcome than the Muscovite."[64]
He was worried, however, that the acceptance of an Austrian king would guarantee that the Tsar would continue to hold Lithuania, which would prejudice the interests of the Catholic Church.[65] De Lumbres hinted at a possible split between the voivodeships on the far side of the Vistula, together with Lithuania, and the rest of Poland, talking about a small group of Lithuanians:

"but since it is still small, this cabal conducts its affairs in close secrecy. It contents itself with spreading alarm and protesting that if Poles do not consent to the nomination of the Grand Duke, they will break the Union."[66]

It is hard to determine the exact level of support for either a Muscovite or Austrian candidature. The government's hints that it might proceed with the implementation of Wilno were partly designed to worry France and Austria, in an attempt to persuade them to adopt a more energetic approach, and partly to pacify Alexis. De Lumbres was certainly worried, reporting that the majority of the nobility supported the Muscovite election, while Vidoni also feared in early May that it might succeed, since even some that might be expected to share his opposition to the plan were waver:

"The matter is extremely delicate and I have made clear my opposition to those who support this move, who include some of the greatest figures in the kingdom. My protest may well provoke a great storm, which will be hard to contain and could cause irreparable damage. The Bishop of Cujavia, with whom I talked recently with all the zeal that I must devote to this matter, warned me not to speak to others in the same way, which should give Your Excellency good cause to reflect on the degree of circumspection with which I must proceed."[67]

Vidoni was worried enough to approach de Lumbres to urge him to use his influence to break any Sejm held to elect the Tsar.[68] De Lumbres replied that Charles Gustav wanted the election of the Tsar, or of an Austrian, hoping that this would provoke the Turk into moving against Poland.[69] Vidoni was determined to delay the
calling of a Sejm, which de Lumbres felt was due to his desire to secure the succession for the Habsburgs. De Lumbres admitted the potential danger to Catholicism should Alexis be elected, but added that there were signs that he was moderating his position, including a suggestion of a conference between envoys of the Pope and the Patriarch of Moscow to discuss a possible reunion of the churches. Despite this concern, the government made no attempt to call a Sejm, although it spread rumours that it was about to do so, largely to put pressure on Austria to reach a decision.

The Court's position was eased considerably by the eventual conclusion of the second Treaty of Vienna [27th May], in which Austria finally promised further support, in the shape of 12,000 men and artillery. The cost, however, was still to be born by Poland; Cracow and Poznań were to be held by the Austrians until the end of the war as surety, while Vienna was to receive half the proceeds from the lucrative Wieliczka and Bochnia saltmines. Nevertheless, when news of the treaty arrived at the Polish Court on 6th June, it was received with joy and relief.

"The settlement...is of a miraculous excellence, since such significant reinforcements have been negotiated for such a small amount of money and such small rewards."[74]

John Casimir immediately issued a declaration rejecting talks with Sweden until Charles Gustav and his allies had left the Commonwealth and restored the status quo of 1655.

The most useful aspect of the treaty, however, was not so much the Austrian help, as the fact that it finally brought Denmark into the war. The Danes had long been preparing an attack on Sweden, but
had not dared to move until the Habsburgs were committed. Once news of Austria’s involvement reached Copenhagen, war was declared immediately, on 11th June. In July the Danes signed a formal treaty of with the Commonwealth by which time they had already launched an attack on Swedish territory, aiming to win back the lands lost at Bromsebro in 1645.[76] It was this Danish threat to Swedish territory, rather than the entry of Hazfeldt’s troops in June, which transformed the military situation. Charles Gustav had found Rákóczi to be a disappointing ally, and Sweden’s military position had not changed significantly in the first half of 1657. On receiving news of the Danish incursion, Charles Gustav almost gratefully took the opportunity to leave the tangled political situation in Poland. He abandoned the hapless Rákóczi to his fate, returning via Stettin to Sweden in early July. The Poles soon forced Rákóczi to surrender on 22nd July; shortly afterwards the remnants of his army were completely crushed by the Tatars. From this point on, the war changed fundamentally in nature. The Swedes no longer had a large army in Poland, although they still held a number of important cities, including Thorn, Cracow and Elbing, which were important bargaining-counters. The direct danger to Poland had lessened dramatically; nonetheless, final victory was still a distant prospect, as each Swedish garrison had to be reduced in turn.

The Treaty of Vienna meant that negotiations with Sweden could finally be rejected. On 18th June, Trzebicki gave de Lumbres the Polish terms for a settlement, which called for the evacuation of all occupied territory by Sweden and its allies as a precondition for negotiations.[77] Nevertheless, despite this hardline attitude,
Koryciński's forecast had proved accurate: the reaction of many senators and of the szlachta in general to the terms of Vienna was negative. Stanisław Potocki wrote of his concern, shared by many. He was anxious to know more about the terms of the Treaty, and of the way in which agreement had been reached. He was particularly annoyed by the assignation of Cracow and Poznań after their capture to Austria as surety for the payment of the costs of the campaign, warning that this represented a danger to Polish liberty:

"We must have certain reservations about something the dangers of which we have been warned by our forebears: namely the garrisoning of cities such as Cracow and Poznań by foreigners...It behoves me to warn you that both soldiers and civilians are saying that thereby we will not have hereafter the monarchs we desire, but those that we deserve."[78]

The Court could only hope that the long-awaited appearance of Austrian reinforcements would transform the situation. Initially, circumstances seemed promising. There were even hints that Koryciński might be willing to consider supporting an Austrian candidature:

"Her Majesty believes that [Koryciński] is greatly displeased because he suspects that secret negotiations have taken place to grant the throne to someone from the House of Austria,...He is not necessarily opposed to this move, but would like to be party to it."[79]

In June, a joint Austrian and Polish army began the siege of Cracow, while in July, the defeat of Rákóczy and the recapture of Poznań from Brandenburg suggested that the tide had turned at last. Nevertheless, prospects for the successful accomplishment of the succession plan were poor, especially since the Austrians showed no sign of taking up the offer, or of agreeing to the marriage of Charles Joseph to Louise Marie's niece. Rumours of the offer abounded, however, while the Tsar's response to the presence of an
Austrian army in the Commonwealth was a cause for concern:

"The Queen is afraid that the Muscovite will be offended by the appearance of German reinforcements, since [he will suspect] that the King of Hungary is seeking the throne."[80]

If such problems were to be overcome, it was essential to force Sweden to settle as soon as possible. It was to this end that the government sought to strengthen the anti-Swedish coalition by tempting Frederick William away from his alliance with Charles Gustav. The successful realisation of this campaign in the Treaty of Wehlau-Bromberg, has long been criticised by Polish historians:

"Was it necessary in the circumstances? Certainly not, taking into account not only the essential interests of Poland, but also the possibilities that existed for manipulating the situation to Poland's advantage."[81]

Given the improvement in the military situation in the summer of 1657, Piwarski argues that the concessions made to entice the Elector away from Sweden, especially the surrender of Polish sovereignty over Ducal Prussia, were unnecessary and gravely weakened the Commonwealth:

"The surrender of sovereignty...signified the cutting off of Poland from the Baltic along a wide strip of coast; at the same time it represented a major threat to Poland's tenuous control of the mouth of the Vistula from the dynamic state of Brandenburg-Prussia."[82]

Kamińska agrees:

"There can be no doubt that it ended Polish influence on the Baltic...By signing the treaty...Poland, as the future was to show, sealed the fate of her remaining lands on the Baltic...The treaty also marked the decline of her importance in the European political arena. This decision was due not only to Poland's loss of her Prussian fief, but above all to the rise of Brandenburg-Prussia."[83]

Such damaging concessions, it is argued, were only made due to Austrian pressure:
"Austrian diplomacy exercised a great influence over the change in Poland's position, pressurising John Casimir into agreeing to talks. Lisola tried to persuade John Casimir and senators to reach a settlement."

Austria was thinking of her own interests rather than those of the Commonwealth:

"For the Austrian Court wished absolutely to detach the Elector from his alliance with Sweden in order to win him for its policy in Germany. Under pressure from Austria, John Casimir agreed to talks mediated by Lisola."

Not only did John Casimir allow Lisola to act as a mediator, however; it was to Lisola that he assigned the secret instruction allowing the concession of sovereignty should Frederick William refuse to make peace on any other terms. Piwarski regards this as conclusive proof of Austrian dominance over Court policy:

"In this context, one may wonder at the obedience of the Polish Court to the Imperial directives; the explanation may lie in the Queen's hopes for the realisation of her dynastic plans: that is for the marriage of her niece Anna to Archduke Charles, long seen as a future King of Poland in the plans of the Court and of a section of the Senate, especially the bishops, acting in the spirit of directives from Vienna and Rome."

He argues that the Senate Council accepted this arrangement and the concession of sovereignty because senators regarded the matter as unimportant:

"[Frederick William] could set the terms, since in the opinion of the Polish Court and of influential magnate circles, which desired a quick end to the war with Sweden in order to renew the war with Muscovy over the Ukraine and Byelorussia, he was necessary as an ally of the Commonwealth."

Assessments of the Treaty of Wehlau-Bromberg are frequently informed by a post-partition perspective which fails to take account of the complexity of the political and diplomatic situation. The importance of the granting of absolute sovereignty in Ducal Prussia to Frederick William for the subsequent rise of Brandenburg-Prussia
is undeniable; nevertheless, historians should not criticise John Casimir and his advisers if they were more concerned with the immediate problems they faced than with possible long-term consequences. Contemporary politicians were aware of the dangers of conceding sovereignty, which they agreed to not because they were stupid, or lacking in foresight, or indifferent, but because the alternatives seemed more damaging to the Commonwealth's interests: when the desire for a settlement with Frederick William first reemerged at the end of 1656, before Lisola arrived at the Polish Court, and long before the second Treaty of Vienna, the Commonwealth was faced with the prospect of immediate partition following the Treaty of Radnot. Later, despite the Austrian and Danish alliances, the government still faced enormous problems: it was essential to end the war with Sweden quickly to avoid the necessity of implementing Wilno without risking a Lithuanian secession, while the terms of Vienna required the Commonwealth to bear the whole cost of Austrian intervention at a time when it was finding it impossible to pay its own troops.

The best way to achieve a quick end to the war was to construct as broad an anti-Swedish alliance as possible. Jan Leszczyński had already talked of a general alliance of the Commonwealth, Austria, Muscovy, Denmark, the United Provinces, Brandenburg and Courland as the solution to the Commonwealth's problems.[88] He urged that the channels to the Elector be kept open, feeling that a settlement was possible, and keeping in touch with Hoverbeck through Nowiejski, Canon of Warmia, sent to Poland ostensibly by Wacław Leszczyński, Bishop of Warmia, but carrying in fact peace feelers from the
Elector. Jan Leszczyński believed that:

"as soon as [the Elector] declares for His Majesty, a general peace will immediately follow."[89]

His desire to tempt Frederick William away from Sweden did not mean, however, that he was prepared to settle at any price. He expressed his anger at Gosiewski for agreeing to the Wierzbół armistice:

"although he signed an unnecessary armistice, Your Majesty was entitled to ignore it, since he did not have the necessary powers."[90]

He still mistrusted the Elector:

"one cannot despair of the Elector, but one cannot wholly trust him."[91]

If Jan Leszczyński supported talks with Frederick William, others were hostile. Many had wanted to deprive him of his duchy after the Battle of Warsaw; this ill-feeling survived into 1657. A Brandenburg army had entered Great Poland under Derflinger at the end of August 1656 and had taken over many strongpoints from the Swedes. The majority of the szlachta of Great Poland had rejected the Elector's call to accept his protection and had joined Jakub Weiher, Voivode of Marienburg, in besieging Kalisz, looking for support from the royal army as it marched north to Danzig.[92] Kalisz fell on 22nd October 1656 and in November, forces from Great Poland raided Brandenburg itself; being primarily a cavalry army, however, and lacking artillery, these forces could achieve little of significance. At talks in Sulęcin, the Great Poland delegates, led by Grzymułtowski demanded the evacuation of all Brandenburg forces from Great Poland and for free passage for Polish troops to Swedish Pomerania. On 12th December a compromise was reached, in which Frederick William agreed to evacuate Zbąszczyn and Międzyrzecz, and
to consider the cases of Kalisz and Poznań. In return, a two-month armistice was signed, which was extended in March 1657.[93]

If Great Poland was ready to compromise with the Elector due to the lack of expected military support from the main royal army, others remained hostile to a settlement. Opposition was led by supporters of peace with Sweden, with Koryciński once more playing a leading rôle. His doubts proved an important stumbling-block.[94] He was supported by several senators:

"Firstly, therefore, with regard to the details of the talks with the Elector, although several leading senators have mounted strong opposition...I have persuaded the King and most of the important ministers to show me the terms proposed to the Elector."[95]

Koryciński wished to prevent the Poles settling with the Elector, which would jeopardise prospects of peace with Sweden:

"His Majesty already understands the Elector's problems, or rather his reluctance to break his links with Sweden. This recent display of a desire for peace on the Elector's part is dishonest."[96]

Although Lisola succeeded in extracting terms on which the Poles were prepared to settle, Rákóczy's invasion and Frederick William's own decision to break contacts with Poland put an end to any immediate prospect of a settlement.[97] At Częstochowa in February-March 1657, nothing was decided with regard to Brandenburg; hostility over its continued adherence to the Swedes prevented any closer contacts on the part of the Court.

Nevertheless, if the government abandoned the idea of a settlement with Brandenburg in the immediate aftermath of Rákóczy's invasion, Gosiewski continued to work for one. In February 1657, von Wreich approached him with instructions to negotiate a new armistice
and closer relations. Wreich reported that Gosiewski was favourably disposed towards the conclusion of a general armistice, but was apprehensive of the reception that his initiative would have at Court:

"Gosiewski is afraid that he will be poorly regarded by the Polish Court if he allows himself to become too close to the Elector."[98]

Wreich knew from Sapieha that Gosiewski was not trusted by the Court, despite Gosiewski's assurances that he had been given complete authority by the King and that any talk to the contrary was a French intrigue stirred up by his enemies.[99] Nevertheless, Wreich's information was accurate. The Court was angry at Gosiewski's latest diplomatic venture:

"It is said that Gosiewski has again signed an armistice with Brandenburg, and that nothing good will come of it, since it is not accompanied by any concessions on the Elector's part. The King is highly displeased with him: he ought to have been more cautious in his handling of such a vital matter."[100]

Many senators, far from being indifferent to the terms of an agreement, felt that Gosiewski was willing to concede too much to win over the Elector, and were suspicious of his motives.[101] In April, Gosiewski had suggested that peace could be made with Brandenburg for the price of the Bishopric of Warmia.[102] The suggestion was poorly received, as it had been in January, when it had first been made by senators in Danzig. Vidoni's reaction had been hostile, as had that of Jan Leszczyński, who maintained:

"that he would never believe it and that in any case one should not start disposing of what belongs to God and that there were other means by which the Elector could be satisfied."[103]

Vidoni sought to exploit such sentiments:

"I spoke of the dishonour which would result for Monsignor his brother [Wacław Leszczyński, Bishop of Warmia] and for his
family if, being so numerous and powerful, they consented to something which was so damaging to the Commonwealth.[104]

Leszczyński's objection is significant. The Commonwealth was not in as strong a position with regard to Brandenburg in the summer of 1657 as Piwarski and others have argued. The policy of trying to force Frederick William to desert Sweden had failed: the royal army had been unable to put any pressure on the Elector after marching north to Danzig; it was partly the lack of support which had forced the szlachta of Great Poland to suspend its attacks on Brandenburg, while Gosiewski was also not strong enough to win a major victory unaided. Since neither Muscovy nor Austria was willing to turn their armies against Brandenburg, a military solution was impossible.

Frederick William was negotiating from a much stronger position than in 1655-56, or even in the autumn of 1656 when he had faced direct military pressure from Great Poland and Gosiewski, and the threat of the royal army at Danzig. The Elector could now negotiate on the basis of what he had won in the three treaties he had made with Sweden: recognition of sovereignty in Ducal Prussia, plus the voivodeships of Poznań, Kalisz and Łęczyca, and the territory of Wieluń. While he had lost the cities of Łęczyca and Kalisz in October and Poznań in July, he still held important strongpoints such as Piotrków Czarniecki and Kościan, which he had not yet surrendered, despite the December armistice with Great Poland. These were important bargaining-counters which he could use in his campaign to win territory he really coveted: the bishopric of Warmia [Ermland], a wedge of territory which thrust deep into the heart of Ducal Prussia, or at least Braunsberg, and the important prize of Elbing. The demand
for Warmia was subtle: the Church would fight the suggestion, which meant that he was more likely to receive some other prize in compensation, such as Elbing, a much more important city than Braunsberg. Such, indeed, was the tenor of the Polish instructions:

"It is not possible to allow garrisons in places subject to the Bishop of Warmia. We therefore grant the possession of Elbing to the Elector iure feudali under the direct sovereignty of the Kingdom of Poland."[105]

It was a desire to avoid the cession of territory to Brandenburg which led the Poles to consider the concession of sovereignty. The Poles were concerned that, apart from the objections of the Church, to cede Warmia to the Elector would strengthen his strategic position to the Commonwealth's detriment.[106] When the Senate Council discussed the matter in July, the issue of sovereignty seems not to have provoked much discussion; far more time was spent on territorial concessions. The Council rejected Frederick William's pretensions to Warmia and Allenstein, offering only the starostwa of Lauenberg and Bitau.[107] Major opposition to the concession of sovereignty seems to have come only from Koryciński, who was not invited in case he caused trouble.[108] Jan Leszczyński's letters show no great concern with the matter: when he learnt of its concession, he merely expressed his opinion that the talks must be close to success, now that such a vital point had been settled.[109] This lack of interest does not indicate that the senators thought the settlement with Brandenburg unimportant, merely that their priorities were different from those which most historians believe they ought to have had. The senators in 1657, while they realised the implications of surrendering sovereignty, were more concerned to protect actual territory than a theoretical sovereignty which meant little without
the ability to back it with force. By 1657, the Poles had already made the Elector at least three offers of sovereignty: before the Treaty of Rinsk in 1655, and in March and June 1656, offers which they could not expect him to forget.[110]

Frederick William was negotiating from a position of strength, and Jan Leszczyński, who was empowered to concede sovereignty in his talks with Hoverbeck, was worried that this might not be enough:

"it seems to me that this incentive alone will be insufficient...to tempt him to ally with us and to join the war on our side."[111]

It was the territorial concessions which might be necessary which caused Leszczyński concern, not the issue of sovereignty, which he felt was a sacrifice which was justified by the rewards it would bring.[112] It was inevitable that Frederick William would insist on sovereignty; the Poles therefore had to use this as a bargaining-counter to ensure that he received as few as possible of the territorial demands he was making. It was this concern, not Austrian pressure, which persuaded the government to concede this point.

There were internal political problems to consider as well. The Court was concerned that Gosiewski was seeking an agreement with Brandenburg as a means of promoting his own desire for a Muscovite succession. Gosiewski's thinking is revealed in his instructions to Medeksza for the latter's mission to Alexis in 1656:

"With regard to the Elector...tell [the Tsar] that although I had nearly persuaded him to desert Sweden, and was on the point of reaching an agreement, I delayed the negotiations while I awaited His Imperial Majesty's reinforcements, whose arrival would demonstrate his good intentions towards the Commonwealth; this is important with regard to the election, even if the need for reinforcements is not pressing at present: I do not wish the King of Hungary alone to claim responsibility for persuading
the Elector to break with Sweden, but for the Tsar also to act as an intermediary.\[113\]

While Gosiewski sought an agreement with Frederick William to promote the Muscovite election, the Court was concerned firstly to ensure that Gosiewski did not concede too much in his desire to win over the Elector, and secondly that any diplomatic triumph would reflect well on Austria. It was essential to work closely with the Austrians to ensure that they, not Gosiewski and the Muscovites, derived the credit for any agreement, and it was vital to move quickly, for Gosiewski, heartened by the Tsar's move against Livonia and Ingria, had announced a new initiative:

"The King has recently received letters from Gosiewski, who says that he is under arms and is ready to invade Ducal Prussia with 5,000 cavalry, 4,000 infantry and suitable artillery. He claims he is in a good position to put pressure on the Elector to force him to reach a settlement, with regard to which he earnestly requests plenipotentiary powers so that he can combine force with negotiation to achieve peace."\[114\]

Circumstances had changed since the spring, however, and Gosiewski's request now provoked a hostile response from John Casimir and the Senate, although Louise Marie was more favourably disposed. John Casimir suggested that Gosiewski's forces were insufficient to achieve the desired end, and asked Lisola whether the Austrians were ready to use their army to force the Elector to settle, to which he received an evasive reply.\[115\] If Gosiewski succeeded, the position of supporters of the Tsar's election would be greatly strengthened.

Piwarski is therefore right to underline the importance of the Court's own plans for the succession in motivating its support for an agreement with Brandenburg, but wrong to suggest that it was merely acting under orders from Vienna and Rome. Such orders do not exist.
Austria's concern to lure Frederick William away from Charles Gustav was motivated by a desire to be sure of his vote in the forthcoming election, not by a desire to win the Polish succession: the latest Polish offer had already been rejected. It was the Polish Court which needed a quick settlement in order to preempt Gosiewski and keep control of the succession issue. There was still hope that the Habsburgs might accept the offer; even if they did not, however, it was essential to block Alexis. Louise Marie, who had not yet abandoned the idea of Charles Joseph, was one of the strongest supporters of a settlement with Brandenburg, helping to overcome John Casimir's doubts about the wisdom of agreeing the concession of sovereignty before even the Treaty of Vienna. De Lumbres later wrote that Louise Marie sought to win over the Elector whatever the price.[116] She was in direct contact with the Electoral Court, emphasising her efforts on the Elector's behalf in her letters to Frederick William's mother, Elizabeth Charlotte:

"The Queen therefore, out of consideration for Your Highness, has worked very effectively to persuade the King and the senators to forget the past and even to agree with His Highness the Elector."[117]

She emphasised her rôle in persuading the King not to deprive Frederick William of his duchy, but hinted that if Frederick William did not settle quickly:

"[she] would be forced to abandon him to the just vengeance of the Poles."[118]

Thus there were important domestic reasons behind the government's willingness to grant sovereignty. Similarly, there was good reason for the acceptance of Lisola's suggestion that he act as a negotiator on John Casimir's behalf, not just as mediator.
Historians have criticised John Casimir for accepting this suggestion which, it is alleged, subordinated Polish to Habsburg interests. The view of John Casimir as the simple puppet or dupe of the wily Austrian ambassador is not confined to Polish historians:

"Repeated conferences with Frederick William had persuaded [Lisola] that for nothing short of sovereignty in Prussia would this ruler renounce the Swedish connection. This concession, therefore, the Austrian diplomat set himself by hook or by crook to wrest from John Casimir...Only on the assumption of this guardian-ward relationship between them can we understand how it came about that the cowed John Casimir authorised Lisola to treat with Frederick William in his name."[120]

The uncritical acceptance of Lisola's own account of the negotiations has led many to underestimate the subtlety of John Casimir's diplomacy. He was certainly convinced that a pro-Austrian policy represented the best means of finishing the war quickly and therefore of avoiding the need to implement Wilno. He also believed that it was vital to win over Frederick William, as a means of hastening the end of the war. Finally, it was essential to prevent Gosiewski from negotiating an agreement with the Elector, partly to block plans to advance the Muscovite succession, partly because Gosiewski was suspected of being willing to concede too much to win over Frederick William. It was these considerations which persuaded John Casimir to listen to Lisola, who, observing with some justification that Gosiewski might constitute a threat to the success of the talks were he refused plenipotentiary powers, suggested that he should be forbidden to agree anything with the Elector without the sanction of Lisola and Jan Leszczyński, at that point the proposed Polish envoy.[121] Lisola's suggestion neatly outflanked Gosiewski: taking him at his word with regard to his expressed desire for a settlement with Frederick William, it ensured
that he would not be able to manipulate that settlement in favour of his political programme.

There was another reason for the acceptance of Lisola's suggestion. The official instructions to Gosiewski and Wacław Leszczyński maintained the position adopted in January, when the concession of sovereignty had been rejected. The secret instruction in which the King agreed to the concession of sovereignty if all else failed to persuade Frederick William to desert the Swedes, was entrusted to Lisola alone, not to Leszczyński and Gosiewski.[122] The instruction, however, contained an important proviso:

"Quod reliquum est ratificatione ordinum in proximus Comitijs spondebunt Commissarij nostri. Insuper cavebunt, ne ad suspensionem armorum, vel ad neutralitatem se ulla ratione induci patiantur."[123]

This explicit condition shows that the King was by no means abandoning all control to the Austrian ambassador. John Casimir knew better than most that he could not promise that a Sejm would ratify anything; furthermore, the fact that it was Lisola, not Leszczyński or Gosiewski, who was given the right to concede sovereignty meant that a future Sejm could refuse ratification on the grounds that the granting of plenipotentiary powers to a foreign envoy, who was in addition technically only the envoy of the King and not the Commonwealth, was illegal. Even if sovereignty had to be conceded to win over the Elector, this ploy left much room for future manoeuvre. As with the Muscovite succession, there was hope that a necessary concession could later be redeemed.

Furthermore, after the capture of Poznań on 28th August, John Casimir wrote to Lisola specifically forbidding the concession of
sovereignty. Historians have suggested that this proves John Casimir's indecisiveness, and have used Lisola's deliberate suppression of this inconvenient instruction as final proof that Polish interests were subordinated to those of Austria. Yet coupled with the qualifications given in the instructions, this letter could be used in the future to contest the sovereignty issue should it be felt this was necessary or desirable. Lisola was the King's ambassador, not the Commonwealth's; by writing his letter, John Casimir made it appear that Lisola had disobeyed his direct order. The Commonwealth, if it chose, could repudiate Lisola's action. Meanwhile, the King and Queen could travel to Bromberg and sign the treaty on 6th November.

There was good reason for the Poles to be satisfied with the treaty: in the short term, they had achieved much for relatively little sacrifice. In contrast to the Treaty of Vienna, the Commonwealth was not to bear the cost of Brandenburg's involvement in the war, while even if sovereignty was granted, major territorial concessions had been avoided: Poland kept Warmia, and while it ceded the starostwa of Lauenberg and Bitau, these were small territories that had only been Polish for twenty years, and over which Poland retained feudal suzerainty. Elbing was ceded at Bromberg, but Frederick William signed a document promising its return in exchange for a reduction of the aid he was required to send Poland in time of war, and the payment of 40,000 thalers. Finally, Draheim was given to the Elector for three years as security for the payment of 120,000 thalers in compensation for war damage.
Piwarski, who considered that the treaty was forced on the Commonwealth, argued that its resolutions:

"were certainly regarded by members of the ruling class...as something of secondary importance, which might be capable of adjustment in more favourable circumstances."[129]

He is wrong that the treaty was seen as unimportant. There was sufficient opposition to the treaty to indicate that a future Sejm might well repudiate it. Koryciński stated that he intended to protest against the treaty at the Sejm, pointing out that the Elector had given no guarantees of his future good faith, asking if losses so large could be made good in the future, and enquiring what would happen if Austria and Brandenburg should unite in the future against Poland.[130] He challenged the validity of the plenipotentiary powers granted to Lisola, which had been sealed by Trzebicki.[131] Lubomirski also expressed his opposition:

"His Excellency still takes umbrage at His Majesty's continued support for the Germans, and even more so over the agreement with the Elector, which he considers to be prejudicial to freedom and the product of the turbid minds of the Jesuits."[132]

While Vidoni assured Lubomirski that the King had acted out of his interest in peace and the well-being of the kingdom, the Nuncio had his own doubts about the settlement:

"I advanced all the reasons I could think of, adding finally that all the Elector's forebears had shown themselves to be enemies of the Crown and of the kingdom and that while he might seem inclined to peace at present, how much is this due to the necessity of the moment."[133]

The King listened, but stated that the matter was too far advanced to turn back, and that the King of Hungary and the majority of senators supported a settlement.[134] Vidoni's doubts, provoked by his concern for Catholic interests, show that Piwarski's belief that Vienna and Rome were acting in concert on this issue to be misguided.
The Nuncio's concern was shared by some Polish Bishops: Czartoryski was worried about the rights of the church in Bitau, nevertheless, most seem to have followed Andrzej Leszczyński's lead in approving the treaty as a whole, which was ratified by nineteen senators.[135]

Piwarski is right in one respect, however: the Poles did see a chance that the terms might be contested in future years. John Casimir's conduct of the sovereignty issue left the Poles room for manoeuvre. If in practice, no real attempt was ever made to reassert Polish sovereignty, the Commonwealth did outmanoeuvre Frederick William with some success over the territorial clauses. When the Swedes marched out of Elbing in 1660, the Poles moved in; despite never paying the required indemnity, they successfully held on to the city until 1772. Braunsberg was returned to Poland by Frederick William in 1663, although an attempt by the Commonwealth to keep Draheim provoked the Elector to seize it by force in 1668.[136] For the loss of the two small starostwa of Lauenberg and Bitau, the town of Draheim and a sovereignty that was more important in practical terms to the inhabitants of Ducal Prussia than to the Commonwealth, the Poles achieved substantial benefits: Frederick William's participation in the war after 1657 was considerable. The fact that the political problems of the Commonwealth after 1657 left it unable to reverse the tactical concession of sovereignty, which it had an opportunity to challenge in 1669 at the accession of Michael Korybut Wiśniowiecki, when the Treaty had to be reconfirmed by both sides, should not blind historians to the possibilities created by John Casimir's handling of the talks. If Poland ultimately lost out after 1668, it was more to do with her internal state than the Treaty of
Wehlau-Bromberg. That was something the statesmen could not foresee in 1657.
By the end of 1657, with the withdrawal of the main Swedish army, Rákóczy's defeat and the construction of the anti-Swedish coalition, the immediate danger to the Commonwealth appeared to have passed. For the first time since 1656, it seemed that a quick end to the war was attainable, and thought could be given once more to questions of the succession and political reform. Yet the optimism felt after the agreement with Brandenburg was soon dissipated. The Poles were anxious to take the offensive in the autumn of 1657 and to fulfil their obligations to Denmark. Between September and November, Czarniecki mounted two expeditions into Swedish Pomerania with about 5,000 men.[1] The Commonwealth's new allies, however, were more reluctant to commit themselves. Although Frederick William, denied Stettin and Western Pomerania in 1648, was keen enough to support Czarniecki, he was dissuaded by the Austrian reluctance to fight outside the Commonwealth. With a delicate Imperial election facing him in 1658, Leopold could not afford to risk breaking Westphalia by attacking Swedish possessions in the Empire: he had entered the war to prevent the partition of the Commonwealth, not to reopen the Thirty Years' War.

This lack of support caused great political problems for the Polish government and had serious implications for its election plans. The Treaty of Vienna committed it to supporting the 12,000 Austrian troops now in the Commonwealth, but it could ill afford the extra burden.[2] Czarniecki's force, which consisted almost entirely of cavalry, could only mount a series of raids on Swedish garrisons,
which did little to take the pressure off Denmark. Although a Council of War at Poznań on 26th January 1658 agreed in principle that Denmark should be helped by her allies, no firm plans were drawn up; instead the Polish and Austrian armies were assigned to winter quarters.[3] This marked the start of real anti-Austrian feeling; as troops entered their winter billets, local discontent grew apace, while the Austrians complained that the Poles were not meeting their obligations under the Treaty of Vienna.

The majority of complaints came from Great Poland, where most of the Austrians were billeted. In October 1657, Jan Leszczyński was already writing that:

"These insolent Austrians are highly displeasing to our people"[4]

Anger grew as it became clear that noble and church land would not be spared.[5] The effects of such billets on Polish estates were described by Piotr Opaliński, who asked for the burden to be spread by the enforcement of contributions from other voivodeships:

"There is little that can be done when so many of our brothers have abandoned their devastated lands. Perhaps they will more swiftly fall prey to desperation...for they already see themselves as lost and impoverished by contributions exacted with such violence from their estates. The number of such malcontents will rise so long as the country suffers such terrible oppression."[6]

The rapid growth of anti-Austrian feeling was a serious blow to Court plans. Since 1655 the Court and the Senate Council had persistently attempted to interest Vienna in the succession. Vienna's reluctance to prosecute the war with any urgency, however, and the rapidly-escalating unpopularity of the Austrian troops destroyed Court hopes that a grateful Commonwealth would agree to the
election of an Austrian prince. The fear was already being expressed that Austria intended to seize the throne by force in order to destroy the liberties of the szlachta.

It is usually argued that this development provided the perfect opportunity for de Lumbres to win over the Queen, who had always been ambivalent about the proposed Austrian candidature:

"Mazarin's diplomacy, ably exploiting the tension between Warsaw and Vienna, achieved ever greater influence at the Polish Court."[7]

The Queen, it is suggested, was only too willing to listen to these approaches:

"Seeing, however, that Leopold did not wish to commit himself to a promise to send his brother to Poland and to marry him to the Queen's niece, the offended Queen became the enemy of Austria and turned her eyes to France."[8]

Kubala's view is endorsed by Bąkowa:

"The Queen, sensing a lack of support in the country for an Austrian candidate, especially in Great Poland where the szlachta suffered most from the pillaging of the Austrian troops, and having received no clear declaration by the Austrian Court concerning the election, began to look for a new candidate, whom she decided to choose in agreement with the French Court. Despite the fact that the King still wished to grant the crown to the Habsburgs, the Queen began dealings with Mazarin."[9]

It is true that Louise Marie had been a rather reluctant supporter of a Habsburg candidature and had been keen to explore alternatives. She had suggested a French candidate in 1655, and there is no reason to doubt that she favoured a candidate from the land where she had grown up. Nevertheless, in the summer of 1657, she still shared the general mistrust of the French which de Lumbres reported was growing after the Treaties of Vienna and Copenhagen and the entry of Austrian troops into Poland.[10] He was unable to
convince her that French diplomatic efforts in Istanbul, Königsberg, Moscow and Copenhagen were not directed against the Commonwealth:

"I could not entirely obliterate the impression which she has formed that these efforts are in Sweden's favour, and that we are espousing Swedish interests against the King of Poland...Her attitude to France has cooled, and although she still has a great aversion to the House of Austria,...it is to be feared that she might change her mind and rejoin that side, unless France tries to win her back soon."[11]

Despite this evidence of Louise Marie's displeasure with the French in the late summer of 1657, Kubala argues that it was precisely from this period that the French succession plan became the main motivating force for all her actions. He describes the exchange between de Lumbres and the Queen, but suggests that the anger stopped a few days later when de Lumbres confronted Louise Marie with a copy of a letter she had written to Bogusław Leszczyński stating her hostility to France for its championing of Sweden. According to Kubala, Louise Marie then stated that she desired the candidature of the Duc d'Anjou or some other French prince, swearing that Leszczyński had not been empowered to offer the throne to Leopold for his brother or any other Habsburg prince.[12]

In the despatch on which Kubala bases this assertion, which he even reproduces in his notes, the Queen's attitude towards a French candidature seems much less categorical than he implies:

"Elle m'interrompit disant qu'elle avait grand regret de ce que je ne suis venu plus tôt et me voulut croire qu'avec l'estime et la créance qu'elle dit que j'ai acquise auprès du roi et parmi tous les ministres et les sénateurs, il m'eut été aisé d'obtenir ce que j'eusse souhaité pour la France et même la ligue contre la maison d'Austrique, en faisant la paix avec la Suède pour le mauvais traitement que les Polonais recevaient alors de cette maison. Elle parla ensuite de diverses propositions qu'elle a faites pour faire tomber la Couronne de Poloigne sur M. le duc d'Anjou ou quelque autre prince français..."[13]
This is not a firm declaration of intent. It occurs in the midst of a heated discussion, in which the Queen's main purpose is to deny that the Vienna treaty had included any firm offer of the throne. Far from expressing any commitment to a French succession, she was merely reminding de Lumbres of past offers, to stress that it was not just Austria which had been approached about the succession. At the most, it was a hint that if the French wished to take the matter further, offers had already been made which might be revived.

The audience ended on an unfriendly note: the Queen dismissed de Lumbres with more barbed comments, declaring that the alliance with Austria had only been made "à la derniere extremité" because Charles Gustav had rejected the Polish terms, and complaining about the recent treaty between France and England, which she saw as pro-Swedish.[14] As Kubala himself points out, the Queen was deliberately misleading de Lumbres about the offer to the Habsburgs:

"the Queen cannot be accused of mendacity, since she had offered the throne to Ferdinand III, not the King of Hungary, and it was possible to believe her when she said that she was not personally responsible for the idea of the marriage of her niece."[15]

It was not until the end of September that Louise Marie went any further:

"The Queen has hinted on several occasions, and last night gave herself to be understood more clearly, that if France wished to aspire to the throne for one of its own, she would demonstrate that she has not lost the affection which she owes to her native land, or her obligation to Their Majesties and to Your Eminence, and that she would do all she could to ensure the success of the plan."[16]

Despite this apparent enthusiasm, Louise Marie's approach was largely exploratory. She suggested that 200,000 écus would be necessary to ensure the success of the plan, for the purposes of
raising support.[17] For the moment, however, she was still principally concerned with the negotiations with Brandenburg, which the French wished to disrupt. Until the Swedes proved more reasonable, Louise Marie, far from serving French interests, supported building up the military pressure on Charles Gustav. She had complained frequently about d'Avaugour's efforts to sabotage the Brandenburg talks.[18] In October, she still maintained official government policy, telling Akakia that the Commonwealth refused to treat with Sweden without the participation of its allies.[19] More significantly, de Lumbres was deliberately kept away from Bromberg since:

"It was not considered apropos that he should be present at the meeting with the Elector, since he would certainly tell him that he was making a mistake by settling with [the Commonwealth]."[20]

Blondel's attempt to win the Queen's support for peace talks with Sweden earned him a sharp rebuke.[21] Louise Marie's enthusiasm suggests that she was by no means convinced that the French were able or willing to deliver what they promised. For the rest of 1657 and in the first half of 1658, she kept in close contact with Frederick William, urging him to use his position as an Elector to put pressure on Leopold in the period leading up to the Imperial election in July in order to persuade the Austrians to adopt a more active role in the war.[22]

Nevertheless, Louise Marie was aware that even if Austrian military support was vital, prospects for an Austrian election were poor, despite the fact that Vienna, conscious of Austrian unpopularity, had at last decided to respond to the Polish offers. Auersberg presented a memorandum to the Secret Council on 6th
December advocating a more active pursuit of the succession, while in a bid to placate Louise Marie, Leopold confirmed the grant made to her by John Casimir of the Silesian duchies of Oppeln and Ratibor.[23] When Lisola arrived to propose the Austrian succession, however, he was rebuffed by the Queen, who told him that the King was in good health and that there were no plans at the moment to appoint a successor.[24]

The Austrian response came too late. Louise Marie had been prepared to support an Austrian candidature when there had seemed to be broad support for the idea from the Senate Council. By the end of 1657, however, leading senators were expressing their hostility to the idea and their fears about the presence of Austrian troops in the Commonwealth. Lubomirski, who had attempted to stop the Austrians from garrisoning Cracow after it fell to the allied armies told Vidoni:

"of the jealousy with which he is regarded by the Court over the issue of the German garrison in Cracow. He justified himself by saying that he had only intended to return the capital city to liberty, and that the German garrison should never have been allowed. What displeases him most is that due to this affair, the nobility have come to loathe the House of Austria, feeling that it intends to win the throne by force, and that it is said that the Crown might as well be given to the Swedes as to the Austrians."[25]

The existence of such fears did not mean that senators opposed an election in principle. Indeed, fear of an Austrian seizure of the throne increased support for the election of a candidate who might be brought up at Court under the watchful eye of the Senate Council. The Commonwealth's position was still weak enough for many to fear the consequences should John Casimir die before the war ended. As Vidoni remarked:
"I still consider it necessary to work towards the election of a successor to His Majesty, since, during the time that I have been with him, he has suffered from various indispositions, and although the times are unpropitious for dealing with such a matter, nevertheless, I feel it is worthwhile in every respect,...if there were an interregnum without a designated successor, I envisage the division of the kingdom between Heretics and Schismatics."[26]

De Lumbres had reported similar sentiments among leading senators in September:

"the majority of...government ministers wish an election while the King is still alive, to avoid the divisions which, they believe, would inevitably occur if they waited until he should die. I understand that the King and Queen support this move, even though it has been suggested to them that their power would thereby be significantly reduced,...if the successor is not dependent upon them...For the sun is more appreciated when it is rising than when it sets."[27]

Louise Marie's interest in the possibility of a French candidature grew as the extent of the concern about Austrian intentions became apparent. It was further encouraged by Mazarin's positive response to the feelers she had put out in the autumn:

"Concerning the offer you were made with regard to the succession...you may tell the Queen on my behalf that having informed Their Majesties, they commanded me to tell you to thank her...and you may tell her that we will happily make available the sum she suggested to help ensure the succession for a French Prince, or for someone who is a friend and ally of this Crown."[28]

He added that the French would be guided by the Queen in this matter. This response was encouraging, for the Queen had already told de Lumbres in September that she had serious doubts about the suitability of other candidates: Alexis offered little hope of conversion for himself or his son, and although Charles Joseph had his supporters, including John Casimir:

"many would oppose him: those who have not forgotten the old enactment, accepted but not written down, forbidding the election of a prince from the House of Austria, so that liberty might not be destroyed, as happened in Bohemia and
Louise Marie certainly realised that a French candidature might be viable, if only because of the unsuitability of those previously considered. Nevertheless, the extent to which she was committed has been exaggerated. Bąkowa accepts Kubala's assumption that she henceforth dedicated all her efforts to the achievement of a French election, arguing that she had already created a solid nucleus of support by early 1658, and had won over Czarniecki, Lubomirski, Jan Leszczyński, Wielopolski, Wydżga, Andrzej Morsztyn, Prażmowski and Gosiewski.[30] Kersten states that Czarniecki was recruited in December 1657.[31]

Kubala, however, uses the evidence carelessly, conflating passages from de Lumbres' despatches, sometimes even from different letters, and interpreting them in the light of his assumption that the Queen's actions were all directed towards the achievement of a French election. He talks prematurely of the existence of a coherent group working for a French election. In November, de Lumbres reported that:

"Plusieurs ministres et senateurs m'ont aussi témoiné ne pas désirer un roi de cette maison [Habsburg] et proteste que par les traités de Vienna il n'y a aucune promesse ni obligation pour cela..."[32]

Kubala paraphrases this, not only mistranslating "plusieurs" [several] as "wielu" [many], but also inserting a phrase not present in the original:

"...many ministers and senators revealed their desire for a successor from the House of France and assured me that the Vienna Treaty, a copy of which I was shown by the Queen, contains no promises or undertaking with regard to the throne."[33]
It was one thing to oppose an Austrian succession, quite another to support a French candidate. Bogusław Leszczyński, who had taken the succession offer to Vienna in the spring, had also changed his mind with regard to the Habsburgs:

"he has promised his own vote in favour of a Habsburg prince, and has even given the Austrians hope of those of his family, but having discovered the lack of sincerity of that House, he has completely changed his mind."[34]

Nevertheless, Leszczyński did not openly state that he favoured a French candidature.

There is no doubt that, with the encouragement of de Lumbres and Louise Marie, the growth of anti-Austrian feeling caused some to consider the possibility of a French candidature:

"The aversion felt here for Austria is so great that it is beginning to be said openly that one should not consider electing a king from there, but from France."[35]

There is no evidence, however, that a French candidature was discussed as yet in anything but the most general of terms. In November, de Lumbres reported a long conversation with Lubomirski, who stressed:

"that liberty is something which is cherished by the Poles, who would lay down their lives to preserve it, and that the example of the kingdoms of Hungary and Bohemia, which [Austria] has turned into hereditary monarchies from elective and free realms, causes Poles to fear the same fate."[36]

De Lumbres suggested that to preserve liberty it might be expedient to elect a Pole, or a foreign prince who was not a neighbour, and therefore would be less able to threaten Polish liberties. Lubomirski passed over the first remark in silence, but with regard to the second "il demeurra d'accord."[37]
Opposition to an Austrian candidature should not be seen as evidence of pro-French sentiments. Lubomirski's reaction to de Lumbres' far-from-explicit hint that he might consider a French prince was non-committal. Nowhere did he express actual support for a French candidature. De Lumbres goes on to say that both Koryciński and Krzysztof Pac were "well-intentioned" towards France, but says nothing about their attitude towards a French candidature, although Kubala assumes they must have supported it.[38] According to de Lumbres, as late as April, Louise Marie had only confided fully in Lubomirski, Krzysztof Pac and Gosiewski:

"and more openly to the last two, who are her creatures, than to the former."[39]

Czarniecki had been told, but only in more general terms.[40]

If a French candidature was as yet merely a possibility, hopes for a quick settlement with Sweden rose after the withdrawal of the main Swedish army to Denmark. The September offer to return Prussia for a cash payment underwritten by the French was the first sign of a change in Swedish attitudes, though the refusal by de Lumbres to put the offer in writing provoked doubts as to Charles Gustav's sincerity.[41] Nevertheless, as disillusion with Austria grew, so did interest in peace. Although Poland was committed to talking with Sweden only in concert with her allies, and had rejected Akakia's proposal of separate talks in November, the Austrian failure to fulfil her commitments under the Treaty of Vienna could be used as a justification for Poland entering separate peace talks.[42] Kubala and others have assumed that for the Queen and the "French Party", the succession was the main priority; in reality it was the prospect of peace with Sweden which was initially attractive. If this were
achieved, thought could then be given to the succession; if it were not, a French candidature was unlikely to succeed. This suited Mazarin: although he responded favourably to approaches concerning the succession, he pointed out that for France the achievement of peace was the main priority.[43] If the French could persuade the Swedes to moderate their demands, then a more active pursuit of a French succession might be possible:

"we would not find as many problems for our plan as one might imagine, if we are able to restore peace to Poland, and if the Queen uses her influence as she promises, and if we can engage the most important ministers and senators in our cause."[44]

The government, however, was still committed to stepping up the military pressure on Sweden. Anti-Swedish feeling remained strong. Lubomirski suggested that now the Commonwealth had such powerful allies and now that Rákóczy had been destroyed, it might be able to wage war successfully on Sweden:

"and, with the help of God, bring to his knees this public Ravager of Christendom, for such I must call the Swede, who fights not out of the justice of his cause, but solely because of his lust for war...Truly one should have little faith in the Swedes;...the more they offer, the less they are to be trusted."[45]

The government continued its efforts to persuade Austria to pursue the war more actively. In January, talks were held in Berlin in which Frederick William, the Danish Ambassador and Jan Leszczyński tried to extract a firm commitment to a Pomeranian campaign from Montecuccoli and Lisola.[46] Despite the Queen's assurances to de Lumbres of her devotion to the French cause, she kept in close contact with Frederick William, and urged the immediate commencement of the Pomeranian campaign:

"It is necessary either to ruin the King of Sweden or to treat with him. To achieve the former, it is necessary by whatever
means to oblige the Austrians to join their armies to ours."[47]

If it is assumed that the Queen was wholly committed to the French at this stage, this letter is hard to explain. Kubala considers that her enthusiasm for the Brandenburg alliance stemmed from a desire for a French succession:

"It is certain that the Queen eagerly supported the Elector - she expected to find in him a faithful friend, adviser and ally over matters close to her heart: peace with Sweden in order to ensure the succession in Poland for a French Prince."[48]

This interpretation is unconvincing. Whatever else Louise Marie expected from Frederick William, he was unlikely to support a French candidate for the Polish throne. The Queen's correspondence makes no mention of the succession, beyond firm denials of any offer to the Habsburgs, and there is no indication that Frederick William was aware of the possibility of a French candidature until de Lumbres reported his lack of enthusiasm in February.[49] Louise Marie continued to encourage his desire for an offensive against Sweden, urging him to put pressure on Austria:

"nothing will persuade them more effectively than if Your Highness were to refuse to give your vote, for which the price ought to be the conquest of Pomerania."[50]

Although the French also tried to persuade Frederick William to withhold his vote, they wished to prevent an invasion of Pomerania. Far from acting in the interests of France, Louise Marie was following official policy, investigating the possibility of separate talks with Sweden, while keeping up the pressure on Austria and Brandenburg for a joint campaign. She took care to keep the Elector informed of the progress of the peace plan:

"When Akakia arrives the Queen will tell Your Highness what terms he brings. I believe that we ought to negotiate if we can; to do so would not stop us waging war, since the Austrians now
agree to fight outside Poland. The King asks you to tell him of your feelings, and for advice concerning the proposals which Akakia is bringing.[51]

Louise Marie was a sensible and practical politician. If she was swift to appreciate that a French candidate might be suitable for the implementation of the Court's wider plans with regard to the succession, she was aware that there were important obstacles to the plan in the attitude of John Casimir and the widespread suspicion, which she herself shared, that Mazarin favoured Sweden over the Commonwealth. Only if France succeeded in persuading Sweden to settle on terms acceptable to Poland, i.e. a return to the status quo of 1655, would a French candidature be viable. If Louise Marie was naturally attracted to a French candidate, and was prepared to sound out leading politicians as to their attitude, she was not going to commit herself as yet: the Commonwealth still needed military aid from Austria and Brandenburg to keep up the pressure on Charles Gustav. Meanwhile, contacts with de Lumbres were a useful means of putting pressure on Austria. In an effort to worry the Austrians, she resorted to threats, telling Vidoni of Polish fears that Austria would combine with Sweden and Brandenburg to partition Poland, and stating that if Vienna was thinking in these terms, then should Charles Gustav approach the Commonwealth, it might unite with Sweden and invade Silesia.[52] She also put pressure on the French, however, demanding to know their attitude towards the succession:

"time is short, partly since the ministers and senators, considering the lack of certainty about the King's health and the disorders which would ensue should he die during the war without a designated successor, are urging the King and Queen to consider the matter, and partly since the Austrians are making strong moves in this direction, with attractive offers to the Queen, who listens to them more than I would wish, despite the fact that those with regard for the liberty of their country
wish the exclusion of the House of Austrian from the succession."[53]

She told de Lumbres that she could not proceed without proof of French intentions, making it clear that if France failed to achieve peace with Sweden there could be no thought of any French succession and that:

"in default of France, she can only look to a Prince from the House of Austria."[54]

Her interest in the French succession was further stimulated when such proof was at last forthcoming. In January 1658, Mazarin ordered 10,000 thalers each to be sent to Koryciński and Krzysztof Pac:

"but on condition that peace is made and that they contribute to the succession plan, for it would not be right if the war continued that we should sow and then harvest nothing."[55]

He also wrote personally to leading Polish politicians such as Lubomirski, Koryciński and Pac, attacking Austrian behaviour and extolling the merits of peace with Sweden.[56] He told de Lumbres that more funds were available:

"there is something more efficacious than letters, and gifts are more eloquent than words."[57]

He urged de Lumbres to tell him precisely what would be required for the Queen, leading senators and the army, adding there was nothing France would not do to achieve peace. This was his main objective; as far as the succession was concerned, the Princess Palatine was writing directly to Louise Marie.[58] Encouraged, Louise Marie began to test opinion. Pac was persuaded by his wife to accept French money, while Louise Marie suggested to de Lumbres that more was needed for Prażmowski and especially for Andrzej Morsztyn, who was well-regarded by several important magnates, including Lubomirski,
over whom he had some influence.[59]

Yet Louise Marie was still aware that the success of such efforts was dependent on the French ability to persuade Sweden to settle. Akakia who had brought Mazarin's letter, also brought new Swedish terms, offering to treat with all the allies together.[60] These, however, were unclear enough to provoke doubt as to Swedish intentions, and de Lumbres could not prevent Trzebicki and Bogusław Leszczyński demanding "un plus grand éclaircissement."[61] Nevertheless, the Council held in Poznań shortly after Akakia's arrival voted - unanimously according to de Lumbres - to accept the French proposal to mediate peace with Sweden and for negotiations on preliminaries to commence immediately. This decision was to be put to a large convocation of senators and members of the Knightly Estate which had been summoned to meet in Warsaw in March, the largest and most important political gathering since the Częstochowa Convocation in early 1657. Louise Marie was active in this campaign:

"One could not have asked for more from the Queen, who took pains to talk to all senators and outline the reasons which I had told her, and afterwards, aware of the opposition of Vice-Chancellor Trzebicki, she even spoke very sharply to him, threatening to tell the Warsaw Convocation that he was the only obstacle to peace, which prompted Trzebicki to complain to the King; this provoked a row between Their Majesties."[62]

The debate was heated. Trzebicki and Andrzej Leszczyński strongly opposed French mediation, with Leszczyński stressing the help Austria had given Poland in the past.[63] Most of the lay senators present, however, supported the plan, as did the King.

It is important not to assume that support for French mediation implied support for a French succession. If the Queen was encouraged
by the number of senators prepared to accept French mediation, there is reason to doubt whether John Casimir's support was the result of his conversion to the Queen's ideas. According to Kubala and Bąkowa, the Queen had persuaded the King to support the French election by the end of 1657, and his acceptance of French mediation was the result of his conversion.[64] There is no evidence to support such a claim. Historians have too easily accepted Rudawski's colourful picture of the King as being completely under his wife's thumb:

"[she] ruled her husband like a small Ethiopian rules his elephant. The whole of Europe was stunned by the King of Poland and by the manifest ingratitude shown towards Austria by the whole people..."[65]

Rudawski, however, was a strong supporter of the Habsburgs and is a biased source. In reality, if John Casimir was prepared to bow to majority opinion in the Senate, which urged the acceptance of French mediation, he refused to make further concessions. He resisted Louise Marie's suggestion that talks with Sweden should start immediately without the participation of Poland's allies, and succeeded in preventing anything being put in writing with regard to peace preliminaries.[66] He won the argument. As the Queen told Frederick William:

"His Majesty wishes to do nothing without the Elector's advice. He is sure that if we stay together nothing can shake us. If the Austrians send their troops, the combining of our forces will hasten peace. We cannot, however, count on them doing so."[67]

The King was prepared to use the acceptance of French mediation as a means of putting pressure on Austria to agree to invade Pomerania, but would go no further. If the succession plan were to progress, Mazarin would have to force Charles Gustav to make further concessions; the terms brought by Akakia were unacceptable, which
stimulated doubts about Charles Gustav’s sincerity:

"although the Queen appears to remain firm in her resolve to promote the negotiations, she nevertheless is acting with more restraint, fearing that she will be criticised for her conduct if it transpires that the King of Sweden is not acting in good faith, of which she is always afraid."[68]

Such fears were swiftly vindicated when news arrived of a meeting between Schlippenbach and Schwerin in Berlin, at which the Swedes offered to talk jointly with the Commonwealth and its allies except Denmark, a few days after Aakakia had arrived with the offer to talk separately.[69] De Lumbres reported that:

"This has greatly disturbed the King,...he lets himself once more be governed by the Austrians and has abandoned all thoughts of peace."[70]

Louise Marie unceremoniously ordered de Lumbres to go to Charles Gustav in order to clear up the matter; the ambassador's protests that this would mean he would miss the Warsaw Convocation left her unmoved. If he could not resolve the matter, there was little hope for the French peace plan, let alone the succession.[71]

Rumours of the acceptance of French mediation caused a great stir in Berlin, as was intended. Lisola complained heatedly to Jan Leszczyński, who remarked:

"I confess that I do not grasp the reason why we should spurn this mediation and I am surprised that a mention of peace should so upset Vienna, whose reinforcements are so much delayed, which is causing not just damage, but destruction to our people."[72]

Leszczyński was exasperated by Austrian delays. In January he refused to leave Berlin until there was full agreement between Austria and Brandenburg:

"I cannot say how distressed I am by this delay in reaching a settlement, since it means the greatest danger for the Commonwealth; it immediately seemed to me that the Austrians were to blame, for they only offered 6,000 men, without cannon,
which is the clearest signal that this merely represents a desire to quarter their troops for a long time in Poland, which is what they have hitherto been working for. They give this Court much cause for resentment."[73]

Nevertheless, Austria finally signed a defensive/offensive alliance with Brandenburg on 9th February.[74] Leszczyński, still harbouring doubts as to Austrian sincerity, called for a Council of War as soon as possible to discuss joint operations, and for the withdrawal of Austrian troops from Poland.[75]

The Treaty of Berlin came too late to reestablish Austrian fortunes, since there was little time to exploit it before the Warsaw Convocation. Trzebicki assured Vidoni that:

"Since the King told him expressly that mediation had been accepted, he had inserted some ambiguous phrases into the reply given to the French ambassador, so as not to upset the King of Hungary and so as to leave a loophole to facilitate retraction if necessary."[76]

The King, however, was less encouraging, and Vidoni reported increasing bitterness about Austrian behaviour.[77] Despite the Berlin agreement, Austria was now insisting that the invasion of Pomerania depended on the rejection of French mediation. Such prevarication seemed all too familiar, and did nothing to improve Austria's standing.

The Warsaw Convocation opened on 20th February, with Trzebicki reading the royal proposals the next day.[78] Since de Lumbres was absent and Lisola only arrived towards the end of proceedings, two of the most informative sources for the period reveal little about its course. The strongly pro-Austrian Rudawski is unreliable; nevertheless Walewski and Kubala follow him exactly, arguing that the Court defied the wish of the majority over the acceptance of
French mediation:

"[Trzebicki] had the support of many senators, but the King stated that the matter was for him to decide, and refused to allow discussion of it."[79]

Apart from Rudawski's account, there is little evidence of opposition to the acceptance of French mediation. According to Des Noyers: "tous les senateurs y paraissent fort unis aux volontés du roi."[80] French mediation had found powerful supporters, including Lubomirski, Bogusław Leszczyński and Gosiewski. The higher clergy remained virtually isolated in opposition. Andrzej Leszczyński reminded the Convocation of the benefits Austria had brought Poland:

"One can only marvel at the whole Commonwealth and at the King for forgetting the aid they had so recently received from Austria. The Polish King, born of an Austrian mother, rescued by Austrian arms and restored to his kingdom after his exile, should be ashamed to have forgotten so quickly. If this is what our neighbours are saying, what of more distant countries? They will say that Poles are the most ungrateful of nations and that they violate friendship instead of cultivating it."[81]

Vidoni stressed the Queen's role in whipping up support for French mediation:

"The Queen has succeeded in winning the support of many senators, including some bishops, for French mediation. She openly incites everyone against the Germans; it is therefore said that she must have received some great slight from them, or some great promises from France."[82]

Rudawski suggested that the Queen was to blame for the lower clergy's refusal to support the bishops over mediation:

"The clergy,...long resisted the command of that woman until at last they agreed, compelled by Pseudo-politicians, but chiefly in the last analysis, by the wish of the King himself."[83]

There is no doubt that the Queen worked tirelessly to win support for French mediation and for the idea of peace, and that she
used promises of money or favours to this end. When de Lumbres returned to Warsaw in March, Louise Marie assured him that she had won over several senators for the French cause, especially Czarniecki:

"who, as a result of the promise made to them of pensions, has spoken out forcefully on our behalf, talking favourably of our mediation, and in order more effectively to oppose the Austrian designs, has even effected a reconciliation with Lubomirski, with whom he did not have good relations due to rivalry between them over the command of the army."[84]

Nevertheless, the Queen's efforts alone do not account for the complete failure of the bishops to block French mediation. The bishops were unable even to ensure that the clergy as a whole followed their lead, due to widespread clerical anger at the behaviour of Austrian troops, anger expressed in the Protest of the clergy of the Diocese of Poznań, issued at the end of January, which later achieved notoriety when circulated by Louise Marie's secretary Władysław Rej at the Imperial Diet.[85] This document, signed by Tolibowski, Bishop of Poznań, attacked the exactions of Austrian troops and the unwarranted demands they placed on the clerical order. Rudawski pointed out that of all the episcopate of Great Poland, only Tolibowski had signed, concluding that here was proof that the protest was unrepresentative of clerical views and had been foisted upon the clergy by the Queen.[86] Yet it was not the higher clergy on the whole which suffered the depredations of the Austrian troops, but the parish clergy and monastic houses which saw troops quartered on them, or their income drop as local people were unable to meet tithe obligations. When Vidoni took this matter up with Andrzej Leszczyński, he was told that for the moment it was difficult to do anything about such problems.[87]
Tolibowski proved more sympathetic to the complaints of the lower clergy. In January he raised the problem of troops being billeted on religious houses; Vidoni, himself in Poznań, appreciated the problem, mentioning it to Andrzej Leszczyński, who again put politics before the welfare of the clergy, declaring that the time was not right for a visitation of his archdiocese, which the Pope and Vidoni were urging.[88] While Vidoni acknowledged that the Commonwealth's needs were great, and argued that the clergy should give voluntarily and with papal approval, without prejudice to its tax-immunity, he was increasingly concerned about the effects of the aggravation caused by Austrian troops, "che veramente à inssupportabile."[89] If Tolibowski, in common with his episcopal colleagues, eventually opposed the acceptance of French mediation, the lower clergy were ready to support it.[90]

The general mood was hostile to Austria when Lisola arrived in Warsaw in early March, shortly before the Convocation closed on the 15th:

"French mediation has already been accepted by His Majesty...Everyone is full of the bitterest complaints against us. They impotently yearn for peace and attack our delays in the conduct of the war."[91]

There were complaints that Leopold was bringing even more troops into Poland than the 12,000 allowed by the Vienna treaty. Lisola blamed Louise Marie for this hostility and immediately began a campaign to secure the rejection of French mediation.[92] Kubala and Walewski, basing their opinions almost entirely on Lisola, conclude that the King was a reluctant supporter of the French mediation, forced to accept it by Louise Marie and by the mood of the country:

"Lisola did not realise that the King was forced to accept
French mediation to placate Poles angered by the excesses of the Austrian troops, and suspecting him of intriguing with Vienna."[93]

Walewski states that John Casimir's inability to stand up to Louise Marie put him in an ambiguous position:

"The King commanded that Lisola be told that he was committed, but he gave his royal word that he would delay talks insofar as it was possible, to ensure that they took place without French mediation, but he demanded that the Austrian army should move within two or three weeks, otherwise he would not feel bound by his word. The King refused to give this understanding in writing. Thus John Casimir adopted a false position: he had told France that he accepted their mediation, and the Austrians that he would do his best to obstruct it."[94]

The impression given by Walewski and Kubala, who follows him almost verbatim, is that John Casimir was eager to reject French mediation, but unable to do so. Yet Lisola's actual report, on which this account is based, gives a different picture. John Casimir was prepared to abandon French mediation, but only if the Austrians took the offensive:

"Declararat S.R.Mas., se non aliter hoc promittere, quam sub ea conditione, ut S.Mtas.Vae. exercitus iuxta pacta Berolini inita in Pomeraniam vel Holsatiam contra Suecos intra decas aut tres hebdomadas progresiatur, quo deficiente nullatenus se obligari ad hoc indentit; cumque ipsi nulla via extrema cladis evitandae supersit, quam mediatis armis vel tractatibus, omnino erit ad tractatus per mediatores recurrere."[95]

This is not a categorical promise, but a blunt statement of the position: if Leopold wished to restore Austrian fortunes in Poland, he must prosecute the war more vigorously. Far from supporting French mediation because his wife told him to, John Casimir did so in order to put pressure on the Austrians to give Poland genuine military aid. He was resolute in the face of threats from Lisola:

"Having seen relations with the King of Hungary manifestly break down, I begged His Majesty to show his zeal for public order and reach agreement. In discussing these talks, he lost his temper, saying that Lisola had threatened that the German troops would not leave the kingdom until French mediation was abandoned, and that this was not the sort of talk one expected
from friends. He threatened to summon the Tatars and Cossacks and to invade Silesia, and to tell the Tsar that the King of Hungary wished to take control of the kingdom...He says he will write to the King of Hungary to say he is willing to treat separately with Sweden."[96]

Vidoni attempted to soothe John Casimir, who asked him to make Lisola understand that it was impossible to withdraw French mediation.[97] Meanwhile, Lisola talked to the Queen, who gave him the same message, about which he complained bitterly to Vidoni, who calmed the ambassador sufficiently to win certain concessions, although he was worried that a complete breakdown in Polish-Austrian relations was imminent.[98] Lisola's attitude seems merely to have strengthened John Casimir's resolve to stand by French mediation. On his return to the Polish Court, de Lumbres testified to the King's commitment:

"The King applied himself to this with much vigour, saying that the matter had been misrepresented and that French mediation had been accepted and that he himself had given me his positive assurance..."[99]

The Court's deliberately ambiguous position certainly worried Lisola and de Lumbres, but their response was not always what the Court desired. Following the humiliating defeat for Austrian interests at Warsaw, Lisola began to work towards creating a strong Austrian party to counteract what he saw as the pernicious influence of the Queen.[100] In March, he wrote of the foundation "d'una potente fattione"[101] Inevitably, this group had an episcopal nucleus, led by Andrzej Leszczyński and Trzebicki, but their support was insufficient to recover the Austrian position. Although John Casimir was generally pro-Austrian, he was embarrassed by the rigid attitudes of such as Andrzej Leszczyński and Trzebicki, neither of whom were willing to compromise, and who failed to recognise the
political problems caused by Austrian unpopularity. Even Jan Leszczyński, who distrusted the French, felt on occasion that Austrian supporters went too far in their support of Vienna:

"I am writing to [Trzebicki], but not about everything, for he is too partisan, trusting Lisola more than us. He does not see, or does not want to see, that the prolongation of the war is necessary for the Austrians, who want our laws and those of our allies to be consumed in this war. They therefore proceed by delays, for they trust neither the Elector, nor the Danes, nor the Swedes, whom they wish to destroy. They promised to conclude an alliance with the King of Denmark nine months ago; to date nothing has happened...I do not speak without foundation, since I have a letter from Cieciszewski, who writes that the Austrians have admitted that some people, wishing to subject us to their rule, advised that they should not take up arms on our behalf, but should wait for our ultimate destruction, so that we, in complete penury and brutalised by Swedish rule, would turn in desperation to Austria and throw ourselves unconditionally on their mercy. He tries to justify the Austrians by writing that such advice was rejected; nevertheless, they do not hurry to save us."[102]

Trzebicki made strong efforts to win over senators:

"leading them to believe that they would be doing something agreeable to the King, who had accepted [mediation] against his better judgement to please the Queen."[103]

After the Warsaw Convocation, Trzebicki suspected that Louise Marie had persuaded the King to move the Court to Poznań in order to facilitate secret talks with Sweden.[104] As Vice-Chancellor, Trzebicki was in a unique position to frustrate Court attempts to move away from a pro-Austrian policy, especially since the incapacity of the dying Koryciński meant that most Government business in Poland had to be channelled through Trzebicki. At the start of April, Vidoni reported John Casimir's anger at Trzebicki for not specifying in a letter to de Lumbres the acceptance of French mediation, as he had been ordered to.[105] Trzebicki's dogged opposition to the French peace plan was a continual embarrassment. He showed Lisola important documents and leaked vital information: when
he was absent from court for three weeks in April 1658, Lisola complained that he had been unable to see a copy of Rej's instructions for his mission to the Imperial Diet in Frankfurt.[106]

It was the inflexibility of Trzebicki and other Austrian supporters, rather than commitment to the French cause which prompted the Court to move as many as possible out of sensitive posts. In August 1657, Trzebicki had been nominated to succeed Piotr Gembicki as Bishop of Cracow, despite a previous royal promise to bestow what was the richest diocese in Poland on Andrzej Leszczyński.[107] Since this position was incompatible with state office, when official confirmation was received from Rome, Trzebicki would have to surrender the Vice-Chancellor's seals, despite Austrian attempts to prevent this.[108] When Lisola suggested that the Poles seek mediation from the Imperial Diet, John Casimir agreed, but the ambassador sent to Frankfurt was Władysław Rej, the Queen's Chancellor, much to Lisola's disgust.[109] Louise Marie also worked for the recall of the blatantly pro-Austrian Cieciszewski from his post as resident in Vienna, and his replacement by her client Siri, rather than the pro-Austrian Rudawski.[110] Faced with such attitudes, Lisola threatened to leave Warsaw, only staying after a direct plea from Vidoni.[111] The unwillingness of Trzebicki and other Austrian supporters to compromise meant that, after Trzebicki's replacement by Prażmowski, a client of the Queen:

"the House of Austria will not have a single partisan in the Polish or Lithuanian chanceries."[112]

Although Prażmowski might be willing to support a French succession, to interpret his appointment as a sign that the Court was
dominated by a French party would be premature. The key to the
Court's position was flexibility. Increasingly aware of Austrian
unpopularity, it wished to consider alternative candidates for the
throne, as the climate once more seemed favourable. In March and
April, a wide range of proposals was considered, including Leopold I,
rejected as being too powerful, his brother Charles Joseph, Condé,
Mattia di Medici, the son of the Duke of Courland, Frederick William
of Brandenburg "che n'havria di buono se fosse Cattolico," and the
son of the Duke of Longueville, who was Louise Marie's preferred
candidate.[113] Nevertheless, in the search for a compromise
candidate, she had already sounded out Vidoni as to the Pope's
attitude to Mattia.[114] Yet the idea of Mattia as a compromise
candidate who would receive the Papal support which might be denied a
French candidate, was rejected by Austrian supporters. Andrzej
Leszczyński immediately expressed his opposition to any Italian or
French candidate.[115] Such rigidity was dangerous for the Court's
chances of achieving an election; when Leszczyński died in April, he
was therefore replaced not by Czartoryski as Austrian supporters
hoped, but by the less energetic and more tractable Wacław
Leszczyński, the Bishop of Warmia.[116]

Flexibility was vital because the international situation was
still too fluid to permit any firm commitment to a particular policy.
If Louise Marie had suggested a French candidature at the Warsaw
Convocation, and if the majority of senators still favoured an
election, no agreement was yet possible over the best candidate:

"One is accustomed enough to hearing discussion of the
succession among the Poles, and I have talked of it with Their
Majesties on many occasions, but I perceive that everyone sees
the matter in their own way...May it please God that such a
necessary goal be attained, but its resolution must wait, for it is not possible at present to take any decision, since I foresee that some will argue against an election vivente rege for their own purposes, especially religious dissidents, since the division of the Commonwealth helps them to advance their pretensions."[117]

It was, however, the growing polarisation between pro-French and pro-Austrian groups withing the Senate, which represented the greatest threat to the election campaign.

The situation changed dramatically once more in early March, just as it seemed that the Austro-Polish alliance might collapse, when Charles Gustav led his army over the frozen Little Belt, in a surprise attack on Copenhagen, which forced Frederick III to accept the humiliating Treaty of Roskilde [26th February 1658].[118] The defeat of Denmark was a great blow to the Commonwealth and put new strains on the alliance with Austria and Brandenburg. The most immediate worry concerned Charles Gustav's intentions: while the Poles feared he would return to finish off the work he had left incomplete in 1657, Leopold and Frederick William were afraid that he would use their alliance with Poland as an excuse to invade the Empire in an attempt to win those claims Sweden had been refused at Westphalia.

Initially it appeared as if the Danish defeat might persuade the Austrians to adopt a more positive attitude, as Leopold, worried that a failure to attack Pomerania might provoke the Poles into making a separate settlement with Sweden, and that Charles Gustav might then attack Bohemia, ordered Montecuccoli to do everything in his power to promote joint action with Frederick William against Sweden.[119] Yet Leopold's enthusiasm was almost immediately dampened by Frederick
William. Long in favour of the Pomeranian campaign, the Elector now temporised, fearing that now Charles Gustav's hands were free, he would turn on the ally who had betrayed him.[120] In mid-April, when John Casimir called a Council of War in Poznań to discuss the proposed campaign to Pomerania and Holstein, in direct contrast to the situation at the start of the year, it was Austria which favoured an active policy and Brandenburg which dragged its heels, as Lisola tried to win over Polish senators for the Austrian plan:

"to order an expedition to Pomerania. The reason [for this plan] was mainly to counteract the endeavours of the Poles to achieve peace, and the desire of the French to mediate."[121]

Lisola still insisted, however, on the rejection of French mediation as the precondition for an attack on Pomerania, which caused the Poles to suspect that the new-found Austrian enthusiasm for offensive action was merely a political ploy; they had heard enough Austrian promises in the past to justify scepticism.[122] Nevertheless, the Austrians did make a concrete offer. Lisola assured Hoverbeck and Sparr that Leopold was ready to grant 5,000 men for the campaign in Prussia, and 15,000 under Montecuccoli for the attack on Pomerania and Holstein, adding that Austria did not fear a French attack in Alsace, and had sufficient forces to meet one in any case. He could not, however, convince Brandenburg of Leopold's sincerity. Frederick William, now fearing a Swedish attack, did not wish to risk waging war outside his own frontiers. Until Charles Gustav's plans were known, he felt it was dangerous to divide his forces, or to leave Ducal Prussia unprotected.[123]
Instead, he now advocated peace with Sweden, pointing to the opposition of the Imperial Diet to any breach of Westphalia, to the support even of some Catholic Princes for Sweden, to the loss of Denmark as an effective ally after Roskilde, to the bad feeling in Pomerania after the Polish attacks of 1657, which led the inhabitants to prefer Swedish rule, to the unreliability of Austria before the Imperial election, and finally, to the danger of alienating the Tsar, the Cossacks, the Tatars and the Transylvanians. He then suggested that military operations against the Swedes be confined to Prussia, for which he was prepared to contribute troops, and that peace talks begin between Poland and Sweden, preferably at Frankfurt-on-Oder, with the acceptance of French mediation, if this could not be avoided.

The change in Brandenburg's position was a severe shock for the Polish Court and for the Queen. In 1657-1658, despite her interest in a French candidature, she had not put all her faith in France, but had maintained close contacts with Frederick William. Her last letter before the Poznań conference was confident and friendly in tone:

"Although the Queen has never doubted the resolve of M. the Elector, she was delighted to hear...of his goodwill...It is to be feared that the natural arrogance of the Swedes will cause them to stand aloof, but if they see Poland and Brandenburg united, they will moderate their position."

Louise Marie now joined John Casimir in condemning Frederick William for hindering the attack on Pomerania. Yet, even though Austria was now prepared to invade Pomerania, with the Imperial election looming in July, Leopold was unwilling to risk breaking Westphalia without Frederick William's backing. A proposal to limit
the campaign to Holstein was rejected, and all that could be agreed was a resumption of hostilities in Royal Prussia. The Council ended on 19th May, and the Poles immediately sent Morsztyn to Berlin for separate talks with Frederick William, urging a more aggressive policy.[128]

Morsztyn's discussions in Berlin went slowly. He hoped to win a promise from the Elector to help maintain the Austrian troops in Poland if he was reluctant to mount a campaign in Pomerania. More importantly, John Casimir wished to know whether Frederick William would support an attack on Pomerania after the election; if not, John Casimir demanded free passage for Polish troops through the Electorate. Frederick William, who wished to avoid this, continued his doomed peace initiative, delaying the ratification of the February treaty with Austria, and sending Schwerin and Weimann to Charles Gustav in May, only to have his offer of mediation turned down, while von der Goltz was sent to Poland to discuss peace terms. It was all too clearly an attempt to play for time until the Imperial election was over and Sweden's intentions were better known. Von der Goltz found John Casimir and Louise Marie only too pleased to support the peace initiative, but they refused to drop French mediation. Meanwhile, another council of war was called by John Casimir, which discussed the forthcoming campaign in Prussia and defensive measures to be taken by the allies against possible Swedish attacks.[129]

Despite such problems, Roskilde was an even greater blow to de Lumbres' hopes of building on the favourable outcome of the Warsaw
Convocation. Charles Gustav was in no mood for concessions, and with Poland fearing a new attack, Louise Marie's attitude towards the French cooled noticeably: she berated de Lumbres for the French failure to persuade Sweden to alter in any way its attitude to peace, while the Poles remained deeply suspicious of Charles Gustav's latest offer to restore Prussia for money.[130] De Lumbres reported that the Queen seemed annoyed at the French, behaving "si froidement dans cette affaire," stating that although she did not wish to see an Austrian prince wearing the Polish Crown, it might come to this if the French did not produce better results. Reports from Frankfurt of French approaches to Brandenburg had aroused fears that they were attempting to persuade Frederick William to abandon the Commonwealth.[131]

All thought of the succession had to be abandoned until the situation became clearer. De Lumbres continued to try and win support for a French election, but nobody was willing to commit themselves. An important target was Jan Leszczyński who enjoys a high reputation in the Commonwealth."[132] The Queen had suggested to de Lumbres that since Leszczyński's attitude was unclear, it might be apropos to pay him a pension similar to the one accorded to Czarniecki.[133] Bąkowa suggests that Leszczyński had already been won for the French candidature by the end of 1657; in reality, although he supported an election, he was not committed to any specific candidate:

"he has even stated that with regard to the election of a successor, he will follow the opinions of [Lubomirski, Krzysztof Pac and Gosiewski]. This would be a great victory, but it is necessary that he gives greater proof of his sincerity."[134]

De Lumbres was uncertain about Leszczyński:
"It is true that I have noticed a certain change in his manner, but his behaviour in the past gives me good cause for suspicion in the present, although he is the Queen's principal official, and appears to depend upon her, and although he has told her that he recognises that it would be good for Polish liberty not to fall under Austrian domination."[135]

De Lumbres was right to doubt the extent to which Jan Leszczyński was prepared to commit his support to the French peace plan. While Leszczyński was deeply disillusioned with Austrian behaviour, nevertheless he still hoped that an active anti-Swedish coalition based on the Polish-Brandenburg alliance was possible. He assured Hoverbeck that money would be forthcoming for the anti-Swedish campaign following the decisions taken on taxation at the Warsaw Convocation.[136] While he was unsure of Frederick William's position, he still felt that:

"The Elector stands by us with constancy, but I fear that the slightest thing might upset him, for there are many supporters of Sweden around him who exaggerate the dangers."[137]

Even though he was leader of the delegation appointed to negotiate peace with Sweden, Leszczyński was pessimistic about the chances of a successful outcome:

"I confess that I have no great faith in these peace proposals; apparently they wish, under the pretext of seeking peace, to obstruct the joining of forces by Leopold and the Elector. It is up to us, however, to persuade Austria and Brandenburg to attack the Swede; the Austrians, however, may still wish to wriggle out of their commitment, having already promised to move at the start of April. I do not trust them, being well acquainted with their offers. We should seek an alternative course of action."[138]

Gosiewski, frequently regarded as a supporter of the French election, was also ambivalent in his attitude. Although he responded, albeit cautiously, to the Queen's overtures in April, he did not prove as easy to persuade as Louise Marie had hoped, despite
her support for him during his clash with Sapieha.[139] He reminded
de Lumbres of the farcical short reign of Henry Valois, which was not
a good precedent.[140] Although Gosiewski finally declared his
support, it was only after intense lobbying from the Queen and de
Lumbres. In May, Gosiewski sent his agent Fantoni to Poznań to confer
with Louise Marie and de Lumbres; Fantoni was then to travel to
France to discover the intentions of Louis XIV both with regard to
the succession and to Gosiewski himself. When Louise Marie suggested
that the time was not ripe, Gosiewski took offence:

"Since at first he saw this as evidence of a certain loss of
enthusiasm on Her Majesty's part."[141]

De Lumbres had to work hard to patch up this disagreement, but was
forced to prevaricate when Gosiewski asked for money for the troops
under his command. The ambassador suspected that Gosiewski was
worried that if the succession plan succeeded solely through the
Queen's efforts:

"France would feel that it only had an obligation to her, and
would be loath to recognise the contributions of others."[142]

Gosiewski's cautious interest in the Queen's approaches,
however, was an encouraging sign that Lithuanian opinion might be
ready to shift away from support for Wilno. The reports of Medeksza,
whom Gosiewski sent to Alexis in 1658, provided little comfort for
Lithuanians. In January, he mentioned a conversation with a drunk
Muscovite:

"I learned that the Tsar greatly regretted not continuing the
war with Poland after taking Wilno, and that he did not
immediately turn on Sweden. As he said, Muscovy is once more
preparing for war, and draws near to our borders with all its
forces."[143]

Medeksza reported over 1,000 carts approaching the frontiers loaded
with provisions. In the border areas, the countryside was deserted, with more than a third of the inhabitants gone.\[144\] Reports of forced conversions to Orthodoxy continued, and Muscovite soldiers boasted that the Tsar would occupy the whole Commonwealth. Medeksza reported a plan to install Muscovite voivodes in the Ukraine; the implications of such a move for the magnate elite of Lithuania were obvious.\[145\] When at last Medeksza succeeded in putting the Lithuanian demands to Alexis on 8th February, he made little progress. All attempts to obtain a promise to evacuate occupied estates and to release Lithuanian prisoners were met with polite excuses. Lithuanians had supported Wilno to win their estates back, yet the Tsar's treatment of the occupied territories provoked doubts as to whether even if he became king, the lands and titles would be returned. Ominously, while Medeksza was kept waiting, the Swedish ambassador was received with courtesy, which bore out Frederick William's warning that Sweden wished to make peace with Muscovy whatever the cost.\[146\]

Court hopes for a softening of Lithuanian attitudes, however, were destroyed by the Tsar's renewed call for the implementation of Wilno, which, as Medeksza made clear, he was now ready to back with force. Many Lithuanians were still resentful about what they saw as Polish indifference to their plight. Zawisza had complained to Vidoni in October 1657:

"with great feeling that he sees in His Majesty neither urgency nor concern for Lithuanian interests and therefore the Poles neither know nor care, although the Grand Duchy has aided Poland. He said that it seems as if the King's plan is to finish the war with Sweden first, and then to turn on Muscovy with all his forces, which he considers is a difficult and time-consuming task which involves much danger for the Catholic Church."\[147\]
Lithuanian concern was heightened at Warsaw, where most Poles favoured war with Muscovy in the long run, to avoid the implementation of Wilno.[148] Nevertheless, war could not be considered yet; the policy of the Council was therefore to stall Alexis with promises of the throne, maintaining that under present circumstances it was impossible to hold the Sejm.[149] Alexis was determined to force the issue. He demanded strict implementation of the terms of Wilno and the appointment of plenipotentiaries to settle everything by the end of June at the latest; if not, war would be resumed.[150] The Muscovite envoys arrived in Poznań in mid-April, offering peace and joint operations against the Swedes, but "cum dura successionis conditione."[151]

Since the situation on the western front was so uncertain, it was impossible to resist Muscovite pressure any longer: on 9th May a Sejm was called for mid June.[152] It was called solely due to Muscovite pressure; in every other respect, it came at an inconvenient time. The international situation was still deeply uncertain, with Charles Gustav's intentions remaining a mystery and with the Imperial election not taking place until the end of July; only then would it become clear whether Austria's promises of more resolute action were reliable. Following the failure of the French to produce acceptable peace terms and reports that Charles was planning a new landing in Prussia, the Poles could not afford to break the Austrian alliance.[153] On the other hand, Frederick William's hesitancy and the unrealistic Austrian position with regard to Muscovy, in which Leopold desired peace to be maintained without Alexis succeeding, provoked doubts as to whether reliance on
Austria would solve the Commonwealth's problems. There was a real possibility that Poland might once more have to fight on two fronts. Despite encouraging developments in the Ukraine, the government was once more dependent on the decisions of foreign powers; no firm policy could be decided until the international situation was clearer.

The prospect of the Tsar's election, however, might prove sufficient to persuade France or Austria to break the deadlock. In early June, de Lumbres wrote to Mazarin that the peace talks were at their crisis, and that they must succeed within six weeks, since the decision had been taken to treat with Muscovy.[154] Louise Marie was already complaining at French indifference to the succession, and John Casimir doubted whether the Swedes would honour any treaty which was concluded.[155] The Queen outlined the position to de Lumbres:

"The uneasy atmosphere at this Court is caused by the lack of belief in the possibility of making peace with Sweden and by the necessity of settling with the Tsar. The failure of the former plan has so greatly embarrassed the Queen that she is doing little to advance the designs of France with regard to the succession...Her excuse is that it is impossible to achieve without a settlement with Sweden, otherwise the Poles will believe that we have little concern for their repose and well-being, and little power over the King of Sweden."[156]

Louise Marie told de Lumbres that it had been decided to nominate Alexis so that at least Poland might recover what it had lost.[157] A few days later, she said that following complaints about Rej's behaviour in Frankfurt, she had written to him asking him to act with more restraint, so as not to give too much offence.[158] With under a month to go before the Sejm, the possibility of a French success seemed unlikely.
In a last bid to force a decision before the Sejm assembled, Louise Marie visited Berlin in person at the end of June. Historians have traditionally assumed that this visit was merely another indication of her dedication to France, and an attempt to win Frederick William's support for peace with Sweden and to persuade him to put pressure on the Austrians by refusing to vote for Leopold in the Imperial election. Such was Rudawski's view:

"The Queen, in order to please the French, hastened from Poznań to Berlin to consult with the Elector of Brandenburg, whom she had already persuaded with difficulty to ally with His Majesty the King of Hungary and Bohemia. Accordingly, she persuaded the Elector, first by secret arguments, then quite openly, to desert the Austrian side and to support the Poles. For if the Elector wished to follow her advice, his son might become a Pole. The Elector replied that he could by no means abandon Austria, since if he did so, he would bring the ultimate crisis upon his head. He never desired the Kingdom of Poland for his son, nor would he even accept it, given its current miserable state...Unable to glean anything more from the Elector, the Queen returned to the King, three days after leaving Poznań.[159]

Yet Blondel, the French ambassador in Berlin, reported that Louise Marie had come to confirm Frederick William in his determination to remain allied to Poland and to persuade him to execute the decision taken at Poznań in April to invade Pomerania, which the Elector did not wish to implement.[160] While Louise Marie may have discussed the possibility of a Brandenburg candidature, she did not come to persuade Frederick William to support a pro-French policy:

"There are those who believe that she has come to prevent him abandoning the Austrians and to try and win his support for herself."[161]

Kubala follows Rudawski and ignores Blondel's despatch, stating that the Queen:

"wished to set the Elector at loggerheads with Austria and to confirm him in his alliance with Poland."[162]

In fact, Louise Marie brought a letter from Lisola, urging a prompt
offensive.[163] She expressed her support for a joint attack on Pomerania:

"Now even the Queen, whose dislike of the Habsburgs was proverbial, spoke out of necessity in favour of a joint attack on the Swedes in Pomerania. Part of her task was to win the Elector's support for such an undertaking."[164]

With Souches beginning the siege of Thorn on 2nd July, it was imperative for Poland to step up the military campaign against Sweden. Louise Marie complained bitterly to Blondel, whom she disliked, about French and Swedish behaviour, stating her opposition to any peace conference.[165] Although the Queen was well received, there is reason to doubt des Noyers's assertion that she obtained everything she desired.[166] According to Blondel, the meeting with the Elector was not a happy one:

"Her apprehension and extreme annoyance, together with that which I have discerned in the eyes of Their Excellencies the Elector and the Electress, makes me believe that they are not at all satisfied with each other..."[167]

Much had changed since the cordial scenes at Bromberg in November. The Queen failed to extract any pledge of support from the Elector, and returned disappointed to Warsaw, where she immediately persuaded a reluctant de Lumbres to go to Charles Gustav to try and obtain satisfactory terms for peace, arguing that this was the only way to prevent the Sejm throwing itself into the arms of the Tsar. As de Lumbres pointed out, this effectively prevented him from attending the Sejm since he could not hope to return in time, but he was unable to convince Louise Marie.[168] The Queen's eagerness that de Lumbres should not be present in Warsaw is hard to explain if she is held to have been working enthusiastically for the French peace plan and the French succession. She could not expect de Lumbres to
win any real concessions from Charles Gustav which would materially alter the course of the Sejm; the inference is that she wished him out of the way, as she had at Częstochowa in 1657 and at the Warsaw Convocation in 1658, to leave her hands free to pursue policies of which the French ambassador might disapprove. He had failed once again; for the moment there could be no thought of any campaign for a French election.
Despite the uncertainty of the international situation, and its inability to find a suitable candidate, the Court remained committed to an election *vivente rege*. This has long been seen by historians as a crucial and fateful error. By concentrating on the election campaign, it is argued, the Court squandered a unique opportunity to restore the Commonwealth's political system to health through reforming Sejm procedure and, above all, through sweeping away the pernicious *liberum veto*:

"From the autumn of 1657, the energetic attempts of the Queen, who exercised a great influence over her husband, to secure the Polish throne for a French candidate, introduced a whole series of complications: the formation of new pro-French and pro-Austrian parties was stimulated; a new source of disputes, intrigues and discussions was created, and above all, attention was diverted from the basic problem of reform,.."[1]

In this way, a unique opportunity was squandered:

"In truth the general situation seemed to support this reform, however the far too public policy of Louise Marie, who aimed to elect a French prince during the life of the King, ensured that the plan was not realised."[2]

Thus, it is argued, the Court pursued its own private and dynastic ends and neglected the vital issue of Sejm reform:

"the project of rebuilding royal power...arose in the Queen's circle...at the time of the forced exile of 1655...Towards the realisation of this aim, it was intended to destroy the principle of free election, which was seen as the main obstacle on the road to the strengthening of royal power, and to the eventual introduction of an hereditary throne in Poland."[3]

The Court's choice of priorities was a grave error:

"given the universal acceptance of a republican constitution, the first priority was reform of the Sejm, with the question of royal elections a secondary matter."[4]

The common assumption is that Sejm reform was essential; it failed
because the Court allowed itself to be distracted by the election campaign. Czermak asserts that the road to reform could only lie through the Sejm, yet the Sejm was in an anarchic state; thus its reform was the essential precondition for strengthening the state.[5] Ochmann agrees:

"Parliamentary reform was an integral, usually the central, part of every programme aimed at improving the political system of the Commonwealth."[6]

Once Sejm procedure was reformed and the liberum veto abolished, the problems of central authority could then be tackled:

"The fact that in discussions over reform of the Commonwealth, reform of the Sejm was considered above all else, and that this point became thereafter the main concern for supporters of reform during the Swedish war, does not at all mean that reform was restricted to this one problem. Among people soberly considering affairs of state, it was certainly realised that reform of the Sejm was the essential precondition...for the introduction of further executive, financial and even social reform."[7]

The Court, it is argued, spurned the opportunity afforded by the generally favourable attitude towards reform which emerged in the aftermath of the disasters of 1654-55. The collapse of the Commonwealth had shaken its citizens and caused them to question their assumptions concerning its internal cohesion and strength:

"It was only when the very existence of the [Commonwealth] was endangered by the Russian...and Swedish...invasions that the realisation of the weakness of the state and of the necessity of reforming the existing political system became widespread, creating favourable conditions for the most serious attempt so far to introduce parliamentary reform."[8]

This feeling, according to Czapliński, was not restricted to the Court or government:

"The years of the northern war...convinced wide circles among the szlachta that the political structure of the state, including the Sejm, was failing, and that it was necessary to repair it."[9]
From November 1655, there was certainly a favourable atmosphere with regard to reform, and no shortage of proposals to limit or abolish the liberum veto. Vidoni wrote in January 1656 of the goodwill shown by senators, which gave a chance to improve the state of the Commonwealth now that the King had returned to Poland.[10] Des Noyers reported that:

"All our senators and all our nobles are agreed that they must change their method of government."[11]

Reform was first discussed at Oppeln in November, although no firm decisions were taken.[12] The first concrete proposals, calling for the limitation or abolition of the liberum veto, emerged over the next few months:

"In this connection one can immediately state that after more senators have gathered here, the Commonwealth will be restored to its former order and reputation; i.e. liberty in all things will remain for everyone, but licentia pereundi will be destroyed, so that it will not be permitted that an individual, for any private reason whatsoever, should be able to break a Sejm, which we need in order to pay the army, cum ruina Reipublicae and at the cost of us all."[13]

Rákóczy's envoy Mikes, in his conferences with the group of exiles gathered round Lubomirski in Hungary, reported a general desire for reform of the veto:

"we do not desire licence but liberty and we will abolish this ancient and pernicious law."[14]

A more extensive set of proposals was contained in a document written at the end of 1656, when it was thought that a Sejm would soon be held to implement the Treaty of Wilno. The "Proposal for the successful Convening, Opening and Concluding of the Sejm which, please God, will soon Assemble" warned of the dangers of allowing the will of the majority to be thwarted, and suggested that the principle of nemine contradicente should be left to better times.[15] After
Rákóczy's invasion, however, plans to hold a Sejm were swiftly abandoned, and there was no further mention of reform until the autumn of 1657, when Montecuculi reported a discussion at the siege of Cracow:

"[Koryciński] and many others plan to change the form of the Government of Poland, since a dissolute licence and a great state of servitude exist under the pretext of liberty, in that a simple gentleman can block all the proceedings and the very conclusion of a Diet."[16]

This renewed interest stimulated the preparation of the most extensive plan yet for reform of the constitution: "The Decision of John Casimir that the traditional Form of Sejm Procedure should be Preserved and that Agreements reached should be faithfully Kept," possibly drafted by Łukasz Opaliński, which again recommended the limitation of the right of veto, although not its complete abolition.[17]

This document was to be submitted to the Warsaw Convocation in February 1658, in an attempt to give the Sejm a lead, and to build support for the plan.[18] Ochmann suggests that at the time it was drafted, the King and his senators took a fairly concerted view of the reform issue, with Opaliński arguing that the document should be published to stimulate open discussion and to ward off fears that the Court was planning to introduce absolute rule.[19] The lack of information on the Warsaw Convocation makes it difficult, according to Ochmann, to determine the fate of the proposals, but it was never published, and the royal instructions for the 1658 Sejm made no mention of reform of the veto, despite calls for its limitation in the instructions issued by certain sejmiks to their deputies.[20] Reform may not even have been discussed at the Sejm of July-August
1658, while the 1659 Sejm merely decided to refer the matter to a special commission.[21]

The reasons for this apparent loss of enthusiasm have never been clear. Kubala argues that the Court continued to see Sejm reform as essential for the achievement of its aims:

"The Court nevertheless did not lose hope that...it would carry everything by reforming Sejm procedure, at the same time strengthening royal power and weakening the all-powerful szlachta. Without this reform, without change and order in Sejm procedure, the talks with Muscovy and the agreement with the Cossacks could not succeed."[22]

If this view is to be accepted, then the failure of the Warsaw Convocation to approve the proposal despite the apparent support for reform of the veto and despite the fact that the Convocation seemed to go well as far as the Court was concerned, has to be explained. Either the Court lost enthusiasm and failed to give the plan adequate support, or opposition appeared among senators and deputies to the Convocation. The consensus among historians tends towards the latter interpretation. Regarding the Court as providing the impetus behind plans to curb or abolish the veto, Czapliński suggests that opposition emerged due to concern that the Court would use Sejm reform as a springboard for further constitutional change, which, he assumes, by early 1658 meant the French election:

"The effective introduction of the principle of majority voting opened up for the King - the distributor of lands and titles - broad possibilities for the realisation of all his plans,...down to the complete transformation of the constitution. We know, however, that neither Opaliński, nor his colleagues, supported too radical a strengthening of royal power, due to their fear that the fundamental rights of the szlachta-magnate state would be violated: namely the right of free election, the duty to call the Sejm, the necessity for agreement on taxation from both chambers, and religious toleration."[23]

The assumption is that the Court still saw Sejm reform as essential,
but only as the necessary preliminary to an election *vivente rege*; as senators increasingly realised that this was the case, they abandoned support for reform of the Sejm. Thus the apparent pursuit of Court interests at the expense of the interests of the state, or at least of the magnate élite, provoked opposition to Sejm reform, reform which was essential for the Commonwealth's well-being.

For Czapliński, Kersten and their followers, who suggest that the ultimate crystallisation of the magnate oligarchy did not occur until at least the mid-seventeenth century, such a split between Court and magnate élite is highly significant. For the support of many leading magnates for Sejm reform apparently runs counter to the general theory of the nature of the magnate oligarchy, which sees the magnates as being essentially responsible for the triumph of decentralist forces and the veto:

"..it was senators who spoke most frequently [with regard to reform], and in a relatively sensible way. This would appear to challenge the...theory that the magnates played a reactionary rôle; were they after all the voice of political commonsense, drowned out by the benighted szlachta masses, as bourgeois historians once argued."[24]

To resolve this apparent contradiction, Czapliński suggests that magnates saw that strengthening the state was necessary since:

"under the circumstances of the time it could not fulfil its basic function, i.e. the defence of its territory, and was unable to guarantee magnate interests."[25]

Kersten argues that magnate rule was not necessarily inconsistent with the limitation of the powers of sejmiks, or even of far-reaching Sejm reform, suggesting a conflict between the magnate desire for economic decentralisation and their interest in maintaining the internal and external power of the feudal Commonwealth, which had led them initially to support Sejm reform.[26] Ultimately, however,
magnates were responsible for the triumph of the veto. The waning of
magnate enthusiasm for reform was due to two factors: the political
power of the szlachta and the attitude of the Court:

"Support for the decentralist inclinations of an important
part of the magnate élite was found among the mass of the
szlachta. Attempts to realise the [reform] plans of the
Court...were always met with resistance not just from the
magnate opposition, but from the magnate opposition in a very
close alliance with the szlachta - i.e. with a whole
class...Despite the views of some historians, the szlachta as a
whole still represented a significant social force in the
seventeenth century; the Court could only break opposition
magnate groups when these groups did not find supporters among
the szlachta masses."[27]

Magnates were therefore prepared to support political reform
insofar as it advanced their interests as a social group. Ochmann
extends Kersten's argument, emphasising the difference in the nature
of the reform proposals put forward by particular magnate groups,
distinguishing between a maximum programme which sought to deprive
the Chamber of Deputies of all legislative initiative in important
state matters in favour of the Senate, and a minimum programme, which
sought to increase the efficiency of the Chamber of Deputies by
changes in procedure, essentially through the curtailment of the
veto.[28] Both programmes, she argues, were supported by the Court
and by magnates, but each group had a different view of the main
objectives of reform, seeking either the strengthening of the king's
position with regard to the other two estates, or to make the Senate
the dominant estate, while pretending to strengthen royal power. The
chances of reform succeeding were vitally hampered by disputes over
these priorities, since the szlachta, ever-watchful of their rights
and liberties, were innately suspicious of reform schemes.
Ochmann divides the magnate élite into regalists, who linked their ambitions and interests with the Court and republicans, who sought support from the szlachta, blurring the ideological differences separating them from the mass of the nobility and opposing the Court's alleged drive towards absolutum dominium. Thus the regalists were confronted not only by the szlachta, but also by the anti-royal opposition within their own class. The two groups within the magnate élite were only linked by a convergence of interests with regard to the rôle and prestige of the Senate, but their goals were essentially different: the regalists wished to strengthen the position of the monarch and the Senate at the expense of the Chamber of Deputies, while the republicans sought new prerogatives for the Senate at the expense of royal power, and defended the preponderance of the Chamber of Deputies, whose actual weakness made its manipulation possible.[29]

The Court's mistake was to pursue the election at the expense of Sejm reform, which many republicans were ready to accept in some form, and which would have benefitted central authority. It received support from the regalists, largely new magnates or those seeking to establish their family fortunes who were prepared to support the Court's programme in order to gain access to Court patronage and French money and favour. Ultimately, however, such men could not be relied upon. They were prepared to see an increase in the power of the Senate at the expense of the Chamber of Deputies, but it was not in their class interests to allow too great an increase in royal power. Ochmann takes up Czapliński's suggestion that regalist views on the Court's reform programme:
"while in many respects noteworthy, were typical voices ad usum delphini, intended to win favour from the King, who controlled the distribution of offices and royal land, and that in the majority of cases the promises were not matched by any real effort to implement them. Speeches on the floor of the Senate cost magnates little, but won them royal favour."[30]

She argues that reform failed because, while regalists were insincere in their support for the royal programme, their opponents could count on widespread support among the szlachta:

"...the [szlachta] was a much stronger political ally than the King. In the long run cooperation with the [szlachta] was more profitable...a fact which was well-recognised by the "elder" magnates with a well-established position. Closer links with the king were more profitable for the "new" magnates rising from the ranks of the middle [szlachta]. The weakness of the monarch's position was an undesirable fact for them. It should also be stressed that whereas the anti-regalists were obliged to seek favour with the [szlachta] all the time, the regalists could relatively easily free themselves of dependence on their royal protector...Bearing in mind that the regalists wished to be independent, one can conclude that their demand for stronger royal power could only be of a declarative nature. Hence the regalists' attitude to the king was often ambiguous, motivated by self-interest, and this was the reason for the monarch's frequently justified mistrust of them."[31]

If regalist support for royal plans rested on shaky foundations, republican support for Sejm reform disappeared as the nature of royal intentions became clearer:

"After the [Warsaw Convocation]...it became obvious that the senators were interested only in strengthening the Senate and were less enthusiastic about reforming parliamentary debates. That was the reason why the resolutions of the [Convocation] were not published and why the Sejms of 1658 and 1659 produced no results."[32]

Ochmann's underlying assumption is that the Court accepted the view that reform of the Sejm and the abolition of the veto was essential, but that increasingly it regarded Sejm reform merely as the necessary first step towards the achievement of the French election. Yet at the time of the Warsaw Convocation, when the plan appears to have foundered, the Court was not yet committed to a
French election: Louise Marie had sounded out opinion, no more, and in any case her enthusiasm waned sharply after Roskilde, while John Casimir can by no means be regarded as a supporter of a French election at this stage. There is no evidence from early 1658 to suggest that senators feared that the destruction of the veto would open the door to a French election. Vidoni's reports, which have not been used by any historian examining this question, suggest that after Opaliński presented his proposals for discussion at the end of 1657, support for reform of the veto evaporated among senators not because the Court promoted such an idea; on the contrary, because the Court itself lost interest. Although Vidoni frequently mentioned the plan to introduce majority voting in December and January, and although he subsequently discussed many of the issues actually raised at Warsaw, he made no further reference to the scheme, which appears to have foundered even before the Convocation opened.[33]

In 1659, John Casimir remarked that the establishment of majority voting might not necessarily lead to the strengthening of his power, asserting that he did not mind the *liberum veto*, for with the army on his side he could rule at will by breaking disobedient Sejms. Kubala and Ochmann suggest that he was seeking to confuse his opponents at a time when the campaign to elect a French prince was beginning in earnest; nevertheless, it is worth considering whether John Casimir was expressing his honest opinion.[34] It is true that the introduction of majority voting would have done much to expedite the progress of government business; nevertheless, even if the King had significant means at his disposal to influence the course of Sejm debates, it might also force him to accept policies which he opposed,
including further restrictions on his executive power. During discussions on majority voting in early 1658, Vidoni reported the view that:

"this would even be harmful to the kingdom, since it will be easy for the majority to combine against His Majesty, whereas [at present], when something does not please him, he can cause the breaking of the Diet."[35]

After 1652, John Casimir had been swift to appreciate the potential advantages which the veto afforded the Crown. For years, the Sejm had been the main source of the increasing restrictions on royal power; it was therefore useful for the King to be able to paralyse proceedings if necessary, either to prevent further inroads on royal authority or to put an end to criticism of royal actions, as John Casimir had done in 1654 when Białobrocki broke the Sejm with royal approval during the storm over the Lithuanian hetmanship. John Casimir saw the veto as a useful way of ensuring no damage was done to his remaining powers if the Sejm was proving impossible to control. His experience with Sejms since 1648 did not lead him to suppose that the introduction of majority voting would turn the Chamber of Deputies into an obedient and cooperative body overnight; on the contrary, it might make it more capable of attacking royal authority.

While the Court seems to have gone along with the various plans to curb the veto which emerged between 1655 and 1658, the extent of its enthusiasm is open to question. It was ready to support the introduction of majority voting with regard to the conduct of government business, as in the 1656 proposals.[36] The 1657 "Decision.." also proposed procedural reform where the ordinary
business of government was concerned: the royal agenda for the Sejm was to be kept secret until the Sejm opened, with deputies from sejmiks given plenipotentiary powers to decide on all matters in accordance with the general view, while normal Sejm business was to be decided by a majority vote, although a two-thirds majority would be required for a measure to pass.[37] Nevertheless, the Court was opposed to any further restriction of the veto. A clause in the "Decision.." specifically urged its retention with regard to constitutional matters:

"Should there be a proposal which is obviously contrary to the law and is in clear breach of the fundamental laws of the Fatherland, or plainly against enactments by the Commonwealth, then anybody who is justified by the law will have a valid right of contradiction, under condition that this does not constitute a pretext for the advancement of his private interests."[38]

This clause has not received much attention from historians, yet it calls into question firstly the assumption that magnates lost enthusiasm for reform of the veto due to fears about Court plans for an election vivente rege, since such a restriction would make it possible to block an election on constitutional grounds, and secondly the assumption that the monarchy was the most enthusiastic proponent of the curtailment of the veto. This clause safeguarded the interests of the Court by ensuring that it would be able to prevent the introduction of any further restrictions on its power. In May 1658, Vidoni, after expressing his concern at the great complexity of matters for discussion at the forthcoming Sejm, and at the possibility that a strong opposition to royal plans, since there was no lack of "cervelli torbidi et malcontenti," remarked that if the situation became impossible, the King could break the Sejm "as he has done before."[39] Why should the monarchy surrender such a valuable
weapon for an uncertain advantage. In the light of his experiences after 1648, it is at least understandable if John Casimir was unable to see a working partnership with the Sejm as practical. In his eyes a stronger Sejm was the last thing the monarchy wanted.

It was senators, not the Court, who initiated schemes for reform of the veto after 1655. From the outset, the Court was considering a more radical approach which sought to reform the executive rather than the legislature. The first reform plan which can definitely be linked to the Court, mentioned by des Noyers in January and March 1656, does include a proposal to introduce majority voting, but essentially urged a radical curbing of the power of the Sejm:

"There would no longer have to be a Sejm, or sejms would only be held to give more force to the law. The Knightly Estate would only represent, while the king would govern with the Senate; he would still appoint whomsoever he wishes to the Senate, and his vote would be worth twelve. He would be absolute, as he was previously, in the distribution of patronage, and only in matters of war and in matters of state would he be required to take a vote."[40]

The liberum veto was to be replaced by majority voting, but more significantly:

"Diets would only be held to represent the needs of the provinces and not to discuss [affairs of state]. The King and the Senate alone would govern."[41]

There has been some controversy over the significance of this evidence.[42] Kersten remains sceptical of its worth, since it is not confirmed by any other source; he justifies his doubts with the curious statement that:

"It is difficult to imagine...that Louise Marie or her foreign entourage, would suggest such a radical limitation of the king's power."[43]

Czapliński considers that the scheme was hatched by Louise Marie and
her foreign advisers and had little chance of obtaining the support of senators:

"Even assuming that there was no lack of support among senators for increasing the importance of the Senate, it is difficult to imagine that they would have agreed to such a major curbing of szlachta rights."[44]

Kersten insists on regarding the class interests of the magnate élite as necessarily antithetical to the interests of the monarchy, and concludes that if such a plan existed, since it would greatly increase the influence and serve the interests of the Court group of magnates, "which one ought not equate with the interests of the king in any way," it serves as an example of the extreme reform wing which essentially sought the strengthening of the Senate, something which Kersten regards as different from the strengthening of royal power.[45]

It is impossible, given the lack of other evidence, to come to any firm conclusions on the scheme, not least considering that des Noyers is not always accurate in his observations on constitutional matters. Nevertheless, he explicitly stated that the scheme was discussed by the senators in exile in Silesia, while his own assessment, which must have reflected that of Louise Marie, differs greatly from Kersten's view that the plan would have limited royal power:

"Here is what is proposed; afterwards, I assure you that Poland will be one of the most powerful kingdoms in Europe."[46]

Certainly, the king's twelve votes might not appear many given a Senate membership of 150, but since only a fraction of that number ever attended Council meetings and even the Sejm only attracted a minority, the King would have had a good chance of a majority on most
matters, given the proponderance of Court supporters among those who did attend; nevertheless, the implicit recognition of the principle of majority voting at Council meetings, albeit with the King commanding twelve votes, may have been designed to allay Senate doubts about the plan: the King had never previously been required to follow the majority opinion.

The main cause of concern to John Casimir was the weakness of the executive, not the legislature. The major problem faced by the government was not so much the failure of the Sejm to vote adequate taxes, but the widespread underfulfilment of the quotas agreed. It was not that the Sejm controlled supply; indeed quite the opposite was true. As Koryciński complained in 1656:

"the best way to ensure the swift payment of the army is not to wait for a Sejm, since every time the Commonwealth reaches a decision, still nothing is resolved, for its execution must be confirmed by yet another Sejm."[47]

Reforming Sejm procedure would do little good by itself: the problem lay in the relationship between the Sejm and the localities. This point was made strongly in the Oppeln proclamation of 20th November 1655, which called the nation to arms against the Swedes. It was not just the **liberum veto** which was blamed for the plight of the Commonwealth:

"This has occurred not through our neglect or oversight, but due to the behaviour of those of you who have pursued your own private interests, either by breaking whole Sejms, or by delaying so long over defence, in order finally to satisfy your ambitions. With regard to taxes voted by the Sejm, some sejmiks have simply not paid; others, who have paid, have been most profligate. Thus the army remains unpaid and is mutinous, refusing to obey the Hetmans.[48]

It was this problem which John Casimir saw as the major weakness of the Polish system, not the shortcomings of the Sejm. Wherever
possible, he tried to avoid calling the Sejm, preferring to work through the Senate Council or ad hoc commissions, which attempted to implement Sejm decisions which the government did not have the machinery to enforce. In May 1655, for example, a commission was called in Wilno to consider payment of the Lithuanian army:

"great problems have transpired with regard to pay for the army...which threaten the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with collapse, if effective payment of the army is not made by 9th August, which cannot be without public consent. A Sejm could be called, but it would have by law to be a six-week Ordinary Sejm, which is not necessary for the Poles, who have agreed to sufficient taxes until 1st January next year."[49]

After 1655, when the war made it impossible to hold a Sejm until 1658, the willingness of senators to cooperate in the exercise of executive authority and to take decisions which should normally have been referred to the Sejm, convinced John Casimir that he should base his attempt to strengthen central power on the Senate Council rather than the Sejm. Between 1648 and 1655, divisions among senators, rivalry between magnate factions, disagreements between Poles and Lithuanians, and the determined opposition of malcontent magnates had meant that the government was unable to impose its authority. Following the events of 1655, John Casimir found himself in a much stronger position. With the death in disgrace of Radziwiłł and Opaliński, and the disappointment of hopes that Charles Gustav or anyone else was prepared to act as protector of the Commonwealth's rights and freedoms, John Casimir found his senators much more cooperative and more aware of the Commonwealth's weaknesses.

In the extraordinary circumstances of the war, senators were quite willing to take responsibility themselves for decisions which
ought to have required a Sejm. Senators, while they might resist attempts by the King to govern alone, were convinced of their own rights in this respect. Already in March 1655, John Casimir had sought advice as to whether the raising of troops without calling a Sejm was permissible. Jan Wielopolski replied that while it was technically illegal "sine communi consensu," nevertheless:

"Senators are not present at Your Majesty's side merely to be the Guardians of the law, but to be its interpreters; to them, as to every Citizen, the supreme law should be the safety of the Fatherland."[50]

Following the Treaty of Wilno in 1656, John Casimir asked the Senate Council whether a Sejm should be held in January, as called for in the terms of the treaty.[51] Even Jan Leszczyński, that "good republican" was convinced that calling a Sejm was inadvisable, arguing that the Senate had the necessary powers to act without a Sejm. He recognised that holding a Sejm might pose more problems for the government than it would solve:

"This Sejm has been rather hastily called, and will bring no benefit to the Commonwealth...if the Senate cannot restore liberty, it certainly will not increase confusion...I prefer liberty, and that is why I wish to conserve, but by confusion nothing will be conserved. We cannot postpone calling a Sejm, which is absolutely necessary, since without a Sejm it is impossible to preserve liberty, but we must suggest the business with which we start and end the Sejm, since if we allow private matters to be discussed, we will face new disorder."[52]

Leszczyński, despite his evident scruples, stated clearly that should taxes be necessary, then the King should call a convocation of senators instead of a Sejm, which would avoid the problem of political confusion.[53]

Koryciński's advice was similar. While his attitude to Wilno partly explains his opposition to calling a Sejm in 1656-7, he was
also convinced that the major problem facing the Commonwealth was the payment of the army, which the calling of a Sejm in January would not help: the taxes for the second two quarters of 1655 voted by the 1655 Sejm had been due in December, but since the Swedes had invaded in July, these taxes had not reached the Treasury. Holding a Sejm would not solve the problem, since the army would probably mutiny if, as was usual, the Sejm proved reluctant to meet the government's fiscal demands, while the government might be forced to make:

"terrible promises...which we would not be able to meet. While there is no Sejm, hope of one will persuade the troops to serve longer."[54]

Since the final Quarter voted was due to run out at the start of April, he argued that the best time to hold a Sejm would be early April, which would keep the army in service under oath until 1st July, whereas a Sejm in January would only keep the troops in service until 1st March. Koryciński suggested that voivodeships should bring their unpaid taxes with them so that the army could be paid immediately:

"It will not infringe the Laws of the Fatherland, since these sejmiks will conclude nothing new, but will implement decisions...which have already been made, in the manner of relational sejmiks."[55]

Rákóczy's invasion, in the event, gave the government an excellent excuse for postponing the Sejm. Nevertheless, the problem of paying the army remained: if a Sejm could not be held, to prevent the army disbanding, money would have to be raised on the authority of the Senate Council.

The cooperation which he received from his senators after 1655 convinced John Casimir that the road to more effective government lay through the Senate Council rather than the Sejm. At least Council
debates were not marked by the confusion and disorder seen at the Sejm. As Louise Marie pointed out to Mme. de Choisy:

"Nothing can happen [at a council meeting] without the King's willing and commanding it. Matters resolved in the Senate outside the meetings of the Sejm are decided by the King, and he is not obliged to follow the majority opinion; it is sufficient for him to have the support of one senator for something to pass."[56]

During the war, John Casimir developed his policy of calling extraordinary convocations, such as those at Częstochowa in 1657 and Warsaw in 1658. These meetings, essentially the equivalent of the French Assembly of Notables, included representatives of the szlachta as well as senators. They were designed to give greater authority and legitimacy to royal policy, while allowing the government far greater control over their composition and course than would have been possible at a Sejm. It was important that they were given added authority by being seen to be more than the normal meeting of senators present at Court. This point was emphasised by Boguslaw Leszczyński in defending the controversial clause of the Treaty of Vienna which gave Austria the right to garrison Cracow after its capture:

"when the situation was already desperate, God assembled at His holy shrine at Częstochowa not a normal Council,...but more than twenty leading senators...and although the whole Senate did not gather, which never happens in truth, the most eminent were present."[57]

Leszczyński considered that the fact that the Częstochowa Convocation had not sanctioned the surrender of Cracow to the Austrians was unimportant, since it had agreed that the Commonwealth could not save itself by its own efforts; following the Austrian demand for Cracow, Leszczyński had been sent a declaration signed by John Casimir, Trzebicki and the Senate Council, which meant that:

"I had ministerial and royal authorisation, and if it was
permissible for the Senate Council to empower me, which nobody denies, the Senate Council had the authority to deal with this problem...since it was necessary for the good of the Commonwealth, and since there was no chance to consult more widely by convoking a meeting of the Knightly Estate."[58]

It was not just with regard to foreign policy that John Casimir took important decisions on the authority of the Senate Council. In this period, a determined attempt was made to tackle the financial problem which lay at the heart of the Commonwealth's plight by circumventing the powers of the Sejm.[59] Since the Sejm met so infrequently, and did not vote a proper budget, it was inevitable that the Senate Council in practice should have taken decisions on its own authority in unforeseen circumstances. If it were necessary to pay for a military expedition or a diplomatic mission, a security could be issued on Council authority to the Treasurer or another official, as a guarantee for the repayment of any expenditure at the next Sejm.[60] This practice of running up debts in the name of the Treasury, and ordering payments for extraordinary purposes encroached on the fiscal powers of the Sejm. These sums were frequently considerable: the Sejm of 1658 agreed to meet a Senate promise and repay 593,809 złoties to Paweł Sapieha; considering that the 25.5 instalments of the land tax voted in 1658 brought in a total of 4,262,377 złoties, this was a substantial sum.[61]

The Senate Council went further than this, however, in its attempt to meet the financial demands imposed by the war. In 1656, on the basis of a Council decree, an excise was introduced in several towns, especially in the voivodeship of Ruthenia, as a sales tax on all items worth more than 5 groszy. After the Częstochowa Council, a
A decree was issued, proclaiming that to meet the needs of war:

"with our lords senators and faithful advisors, gathered at our side, on the authority of the Senate Council, [we decree] a new tax for all common people in all towns and villages, both royal and, by special permission, ecclesiastical. This tax, is uniform, equal, and does not weigh more heavily on one man than on another..."[62]

It was one thing to proclaim the new tax, another to collect it. To avoid criticism from sejmiks, the Council made it clear that the new excise was subject to the approval of the next Sejm; nevertheless, it technically had no power to authorise this advance.[63] There was more to this initiative, however, than an attempt to introduce a new tax without Sejm approval. The administration of the new tax, along with the czopowe, a tax on beer and spirits, was to be taken out of the hands of the sejmiks, and given to the central state treasury.[64] This was a bold attempt, carried out with the full backing of the Senate Council, to reverse the long trend of fiscal decentralisation, which had accelerated rapidly after 1641.

The cooperation of the Senate Council in this and similar matters convinced John Casimir that the key to strengthening central authority was to increase the power and prestige of the Senate Council. Historians examining the 1657 "Decision..." have usually concentrated their attention on the clauses proposing the limitation of the veto; more important perhaps was the clause which proposed that, in addition to the senators-resident usually appointed by the Sejm, representatives of the szlachta should be delegated to attend Court and participate in meetings of the Senate Council, alongside senators and government ministers.[65] While it was emphasised that the Sejm would retain its powers to ratify council decisions, this plan nevertheless suggests that the Court was at least as interested
in the reform of the executive as of the legislature. Should the veto be retained, and should the Senate Council continue to cooperate, then the theoretical right of the Sejm to ratify Senate Council decisions might not be fatal: if the Sejm ended in anarchy or was broken, then its approval might become irrelevant. It was important that an extended council be established in order to win acceptance for its enactments.

By early 1658, enthusiasm in Court circles for Sejm reform was waning. The proposals for the limitation of the veto contained in the "Decision..." were not submitted to the Warsaw Convocation for discussion, despite Opaliński's wish to do so. Partly this was due to the fact that this assembly was not seen essentially as a preparatory meeting designed to agree on a reform programme to be submitted as soon as possible to the Sejm, as many historians have assumed: it was called primarily to deal with problems of foreign and financial policy, not Sejm reform. It was not planned to hold a Sejm in the short term; the 1658 Sejm was only called in order to stall Muscovy with regard to the succession. The most important reason for the failure to discuss Sejm reform, however, was that Court doubts about the wisdom of too drastic a limitation of the veto were increasingly echoed by important interest groups within the Commonwealth who saw the veto as a vital safeguard of their rights and liberties. The Catholic Church was the first to express its concern:

"Among the matters to be discussed...will be a reform of the laws and government of the Commonwealth; it is proposed to return to majority voting,...which I feel could be prejudicial to the clergy, since the votes of Bishops are few, and the laity would be dominant..."[66]
Given the Church's privileged position with regard to taxation, and the bitterness it had aroused during the war, this was an important point: in 1655, the Church had resisted with difficulty calls that its tax-exemption should be waived and that it should contribute to the żanowa infantry; if majority voting were introduced, it might prove more difficult to protect Church privileges.[67] Furthermore, the Warsaw Convocation also discussed the proposed terms for an agreement with the Cossacks, which included the creation of a Grand Duchy of Ruthenia on the lines of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, with seats in the Senate for representatives of the Orthodox Church; the implications of this plan for the position of the Catholic Church in Lithuania and the Ukraine, and especially for the Uniate Church and its property, had to be considered. Finally, there was the possibility of the Tsar's succession under the terms of the Treaty of Wilno: if majority voting were introduced and Alexis were elected, the Church might face growing pressure in the Sejm from Orthodox interests. Faced with these potential threats to its position, the Church saw the retention of the veto as important for the defence of its interests. The doubts of ecclesiastical senators, traditionally the strongest supporters of attempts to strengthen royal power, would only have reinforced those of the Court.

The proposal to abolish the veto also had important implications for minority groups within the multi-national Commonwealth:

"a Lithuanian participant talked at length with me on this matter, telling me that [this reform] will never happen, otherwise the Lithuanians would separate from Poland, since in that case, their votes would be inferior to those of the Poles,
to whom they would be subordinated, rather than united."[68]

It was becoming clear in early 1658 that the principle of majority voting might prove a threat to the Union. If it were allowed, the Lithuanian minority would be swamped; Lithuanians already resented the way in which their interests tended to be subordinated to those of Poland, for example over the Treaty of Wilno. At least the principle of unanimity, and the threat of the veto afforded Lithuanians some protection and made it possible to force the Poles to reconsider controversial legislation. Majority voting would deprive them even of that.

Such doubts reinforced the Court's view that it was reform of the executive, not the legislature, which was the main priority. The maintenance of the principle of unanimity and increasing anarchy at the Sejm might indeed reduce it in practice merely to the forum for the expression of szlachta grievances and the presentation of petitions envisaged in the scheme reported by des Noyers in 1656. The tendency of historians to regard Sejm reform as essential has caused them to overlook the fact that while there is no evidence that the Warsaw Convocation even discussed Sejm reform and certainly did not approve Opaliński's scheme for the introduction of majority voting, it both considered and approved the proposals for financial reform contained in the "Decision...", which criticised the fiscal structure of the Commonwealth and sought approval for the actions of the Senate Council since 1656:

"It is and has been a source of great difficulty with regard to the needs of the state that the ordinary expenditure of the Fatherland is not covered by ordinary and proportional revenues, whence military service is burdensome for the army, and it is difficult to bargain for taxes...For which reason, so that such a situation will not occur again, we pledge that the
czopowe, and the excise in the towns, will be assigned to meet the normal and constant expenditure of the Commonwealth,...which will be confirmed at the next Sejm."[69]

Czapliński, in discussing the "Decision.." makes only a bare mention of this clause, concentrating even then only on its supposed class nature:

"In fiscal matters, the project proposed that the Sejm vote a permanent czopowe and excise, to cover the costs of existing military forces. This was dictated by the class interests of the richer szlachta and the magnate élite, since the excise, a tax fashionable in contemporary Western Europe, and even in neighbouring Prussia, affected mainly the poorer elements of society."[70]

Czapliński misses the point by ignoring the fact that the decree introducing the excise specifically exempted all goods worth less than 5 groszy to ensure that the poorest people did not pay, and that such taxes in Western Europe were designed precisely to enable governments to tax nobles exempt from direct taxation.[71] The restriction of the tax to royal and ecclesiastical towns was undoubtedly to reduce opposition to its introduction from sejmiks; the important point was that this tax was to be a permanent part of the ordinary revenue of the state.[72] If reform of the legislature was not now seen as a priority, reform of the executive was seen as essential by the majority of the Senate Council; there is no evidence of any opposition to this proposal, which was later put to the Sejm.

The government hoped that, with such backing, the new tax would have become familiar enough to be accepted by the time the next Sejm met. On its introduction after the Częstochowa Convocation it had met a mixed reception from sejmiks. Two days after the original proclamation, the Środa sejmik decided to introduce the excise in royal, ecclesiastical and lay towns, which was seen as a way to
avoid the constant government demands for new taxes. Rybarski suggests that this decision, while it implied acceptance in principle of the government's right to introduce these taxes, was designed to preempt the government and keep control of the new tax at local level.[73] Some sejmiks did object to the way in which the new tax was introduced:

"Thus...the excise has been introduced...without the knowledge of the Knightly Estate, and has been operating for eight weeks, to the great inconvenience of all, although nobody is participating, and the Polish infantry has not received a single shilling from it."[74]

Nevertheless, others welcomed this form of taxation over more traditional taxes which fell directly on szlachta estates. It was to be hoped that such support might overcome objections to the crucial issue of the way in which the new taxes were to be collected. In the summer of 1657, Treasury secretaries were sent out to sejmiks to start collecting the new tax. This provoked an immediate response: the Środa sejmik sent envoys to the King asking him to suspend the excise until its envoys received a guarantee that it would continue to be administered by the voivodeships. This plea, however, was rejected by John Casimir, who ordered that the excise and czopowe be surrendered to the administration of the Treasury.[75]

The government attempted to override such objections by submitting the proposal to the Warsaw Convocation. Government propaganda tried to press home the idea that the Convocation should be regarded as having the force of a Sejm. In his decree of January 1658 justifying the introduction of the excise, John Casimir emphasised the way in which the decision had been reached:

"At the recent Częstochowa Convocation...in the presence of senators of rank, members of our Council, both ecclesiastical
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and lay, and of a considerable number of representatives of the
Knightly Estate, being unable in any way, due to constant wars
and other important reasons, to hold a Sejm at that time, this
measure was enacted by the Senate Council with unanimous
consent...It seemed to us, together with our counsellors, that
the czopowe and excise, whose administration and disposal was
at that time in the hands of the voivodeships,...should be
assigned to the care of His Excellency the Crown Treasurer, non
obstantibus quibusvis laudis particularibus, which were
abrogated by that council in the public interest."[76]

The government was backed by the Senate Council. Jan
Leszczyński, always so concerned to protect and preserve the
Commonwealth's liberties, wrote enthusiastically to Hoverbeck:

"I am certain that there will be money, for a general excise
and czopowe have been agreed, in szlachta towns as well [as in
royal and ecclesiastical towns]."[77]

The lack of opposition from the Senate may be explained by the fact
that the new tax was to be collected by the state, not the royal,
treasury, under the control of the Treasurer, who was bound to submit
his accounts to the Sejm. The plan certainly enhanced the prestige of
the Senate Council:

"If this decision had been successfully implemented, it would
have established an extremely important precedent...for the
strengthening of executive power. In this way, the Senate
Council might have become a sort of supplementary executive
body in the sphere of taxation."[78]

The approval of the excise and czopowe by the Warsaw Convocation
was an important victory for the government. The main battle,
however, over control of the new taxes had not yet been won. It was
vital that the Treasury officials trying to collect the taxes had
time in order for the system to become accepted, so that when a Sejm
was called, it could be presented with a fait accompli. It is
probable that John Casimir, far from seeing the Convocation as merely
preparatory to the meeting of a Sejm, intended to continue ruling as
he had done since 1655, not calling a Sejm, but relying on the Senate Council and periodic assemblies of notables. Unfortunately, the renewed Musovite demands meant that the Sejm could no longer be postponed. It was therefore inevitable that the new taxes would meet the scrutiny of the Sejm before they were fully established.

John Casimir made great efforts to persuade the 1658 Sejm to accept the new taxes and especially their centralised collection:

"Although His Majesty is certain of achieving eternal peace with His Majesty the Tsar at the forthcoming Sejm, nevertheless, since he has urgent problems to deal with on other fronts, particularly the unfinished war with Sweden, the army of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania...cannot be disbanded, and since it is impossible to keep it in service without supplies,...and although His Majesty and the Senate Council ought not to have introduced such taxes without the consent of the Knightly Estate, it was difficult to see any alternative."[79]

The response was mixed. Some sejmiks voiced their suspicion of the principle, at least with regard to the levy of the excise in szlachta towns:

"The levying of the excise and the czopowe on szlachta property represents a great burden on this estate and a threat to its freedom; let us hope, however, that these taxes will bring advantage to the Fatherland,...but we fear that...mountains of gold have been promised which will turn out to be illusions."[80]

Despite these doubts, however, the Wizna sejmik agreed to accept the view of others:

"nevertheless, so that we might not appear to be deficient in any respect with regard to the public good, we instruct our envoys to agree to whatever is accepted by the estates of the Commonwealth,...with this sole condition: that should anyone protest at the Sejm, our envoys will not allow the measure to pass."[81]

In general, sejmiks did not attack the tax itself, while some, like that of the Dobrzyn county approved the excise while rejecting more traditional methods of taxation, which, it was claimed, they were
unable to pay.[82] There was a favourable response to the idea from some Lithuanian sejmiks, which welcomed any plan to pay the Grand Duchy's armies:

"We well know that the army has received neither satisfaction for its services nor just reward for its labours and its courage, of the kind...which it is customary to provide...It behoves our envoys to do all they can to ensure that the means to satisfy the army, namely the excise, are put into effect."[83]

At least the principle was accepted, even if szlachta exemption was requested:

"We nevertheless recommend to our envoys that, in order that the szlachta estate should continue to enjoy the security and liberty which it currently possesses, they may not be subject to any excise, and that such a tax be not collected in szlachta villages, although we permit its gathering in royal and ecclesiastical towns and villages."[84]

Nevertheless, if the szlachta on the whole were ready to accept the excise and czopowe as necessary evils, there was opposition over the key question of control. Most sejmiks rejected the proposal that the new taxes should become part of the ordinary revenue of the state, and there was particular opposition to the levying of the tax without Sejm permission.[85] Some expressed their opposition to the whole plan, and warned of the dangers if the Crown should win control of taxation:

"The excise is a terrible yoke dreamed up for the poor szlachta and the miserable peasants in the style of the [German] Empire; a tax payable on all things sold: cattle, grain, cloth, hides, and barrels of beer brought to the Inn...Soon there will be an absolute regime, as exists in Germany, since the szlachta will not send their beer to the Inn, but burghers will bring ale from the towns to szlachta villages; the next thing will be that fathers will have to pay a poll tax on stoves, on windows and on their own poor children. Thus it is in Turkey, where first only a little is requested, but as time goes on, ever more is demanded, as much as it pleases the government to ask."[86]
Chapter 6

The government was defeated on this vital issue. The Chamber of Deputies was prepared to accept the taxes post factum, but with important reservations: they were to be regarded as extraordinary revenue, and were only to run until the next Sejm.[87] Furthermore, it was emphasised that the taxes were to be collected and administered by the voivodeships and not the central treasury, and the proceeds were to be assigned exclusively to military expenditure.[88] This represented a real defeat for royal hopes of reform: while the tax could be collected, the government had failed to wrest the initiative in taxation away from the Sejm, despite strong Senate support. Control was to remain in the hands of the sejmiks. An important battle had been lost: after the final establishment in the 1650's of the extent of the economic powers of sejmiks, there were no substantial changes until 1717.[89] The response to the government's plans for even this small measure of financial reform underlined once more that the Sejm was not ready to address the fundamental problems revealed by the disasters of 1655. John Casimir was supported by the Senate Council, which had struggled to cope with the problems of fighting a war with such a decentralised political system, only to see his plans rejected by the szlachta.

Too often, historians have seen the abolition of the liberum veto and the reform of Sejm procedure as a panacea for all the Commonwealth's ills, and assumed that John Casimir and other contemporary politicians saw matters in the same light. It is true that some would have agreed with this view, yet the problems of the Commonwealth ran deeper than the procedural difficulties of the Sejm; in the light of szlachta attitudes as displayed at the 1658
Sejm, which seemed all too familiar, John Casimir’s doubts concerning the proposition that a reformed Sejm would lead to the strengthening of central authority are understandable. If the government could not win acceptance for such a reform, when the Senate Council was united in supporting it and a mere three years after the collapse of the Commonwealth in the face of its enemies had convincingly demonstrated the need for reform, then it was to be doubted if it ever could win acceptance for more radical measures even if majority voting were introduced. Although the 1658 Sejm was not as harmonious as some observers reported, the government on the whole succeeded in pushing through its programme, which included some controversial measures, such as the acceptance of French mediation and the ratification of Wilno. Yet with regard to internal reform, it seemed that the Sejm was, as it had been throughout John Casimir’s reign, more interested in frustrating and restricting the actions of the government than cooperating in the exercise of power. The attitude of deputies in 1658 merely confirmed John Casimir’s prejudices against the Sejm and threw him back on the Senate Council, which at least seemed willing to tackle the problems of the executive. The surrender of the liberum veto under such circumstances would deprive the monarchy of an important weapon which enabled it to block further restrictions on its power, without any guarantee that effective reform would follow.

The different attitudes of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies to this reform proposal suggests that the Court was perhaps justified in relying on magnate and Senate support for its plans, something for which it has been criticised by historians, who argue
that it should have exploited anti-magnate feeling among the szlachta to break the grip of the magnates upon the political structure. There is indeed some evidence of anti-magnate feeling after the Swedish invasion. An anonymous "Proposal for the Reformation of the Commonwealth" [1657], suggested a different and more radical solution:

"the greatest reason [for the weakness of the Commonwealth] is the poverty of the state. This poverty stems from the fact that private individuals have seized control of the state's private patrimony,...which they parcel out per luxum, thereby impoverishing the country."[90]

The result of this monopoly of the proceeds from the royal domain by private individuals was that:

"The Commonwealth, deprived of its rightful income, must beg the szlachta for subsidies in time of need; the szlachta, exhausted per luxum, cannot adequately respond."[91]

The anonymous author then recommended that the proceeds from all starostwa and royal leases be removed from private hands and returned to the state Treasury, "which would meet the state's requirements, both military and non-military."[92]

The anti-magnate tone of this document is strong. It was the magnates and richest szlachta who monopolised these lucrative sources of income; indeed, as Ochmann points out, much of their economic and political power depended on this monopoly.[93] The author blamed the political disagreements which so disrupted the political life of the Commonwealth on competition for starostwa:

"The Commonwealth would be more harmonious, for this is the greatest cause of disputes and factions,...Hence sejms and sejmiks are always stormy, since all aspire to one aim, namely to acquire some of these lands of the Commonwealth...And His Majesty, unable to satisfy everyone amidst such great competition, brings down the hatred of the public upon himself, since by satisfying one, he must disappoint another."[94]
As Ochmann points out, the transformation to absolutism in Denmark in 1660 was achieved in part by a similar move, in which the power of the magnates was broken by the reduktion of royal land in magnate hands, for which Frederick III received the support of anti-magnate elements among burghers and the lesser nobility.\[95]\ She suggests that there were many "soundly-thinking" individuals among the middle szlachta, who were concerned at the disasters experienced since 1655, and that these included both strong critics of the magnates and the occasional royalist.\[96]\ She criticises John Casimir for ignoring such positive elements and for failing to seek an alliance with them:

"On the one hand, John Casimir treated the [szlachta] as a passive tool in the hands of magnates, and only through their intermediary tried to win over the mass of the [szlachta]. On the other hand, the [szlachta], seeing that the King had no desire to cooperate with them over the heads of magnates, showed all the greater dislike of the Court and was all the more willing to cooperate with the anti-royal opposition."\[97]\ 

It is difficult to see how John Casimir could have done otherwise, even if one piece of evidence suggests that some at least in Court circles were considering such a move: one scheme put forward a similar suggestion to that contained in the anonymous "Proposal. . .":

"if it were ever possible, it would be better not to distribute those accursed vacancies, which confound and impoverish the Commonwealth, but to administer them directly and to meet public needs out of the income,..."\[98]\ 

There is no sign, however, of any wider interest in this scheme on the part of the Court. If regalist currents existed among the szlachta as a whole, then John Casimir can be forgiven for not noticing them, or at least for not considering seriously an anti-magnate alliance with the szlachta. Conditions had changed since the
great days of the Execution Movement in the mid-sixteenth century and
the gap between magnates and szlachta had widened. Ochmann
criticises John Casimir for only dealing with the szlachta through
the magnates, but does not suggest how it could have been otherwise
in a vast state with a virtually non-existent bureaucracy, where the
szlachta by and large stayed on their estates most of the time and
constituted some 8% of the population. The King had no opportunities
for close contact with anything but a tiny minority of the szlachta,
and that was possible primarily at Sejms, which only met for six
weeks or so every two years. The King was utterly dependent on
magnates and senators to support his policies at sejmiks, where so
much that was important was ultimately decided, and royal
secretaries wrote countless letters to local magnates urging them to
use their influence to secure support for royal proposals. The
infrequency of Sejm sessions, the lack of a developed central
bureaucracy and the importance of sejmiks within the political
system precluded the formation of any permanent or coherent regalist
party among the szlachta as a whole.

From the King's point of view, the existence of positive
currents of thought among the middle szlachta was hard to detect. At
Sejms, he had to endure endless private or local petitions, and
frequent criticism of his actions, while the only positive
initiatives which seemed to be taken by the Chamber of Deputies
tended towards the limitation of royal power. Even the idea for a
reduktion put forward in the "Proposal.." stemmed as much from the
desire to avoid paying taxes as from a wish to strengthen the
executive:
"Respect for the majesty of the King and the authority of the Senate would be greater if revenues existed sufficient to satisfy the needs of the Commonwealth without having to depend so heavily on the szlachta when collecting taxes."[99]

The result, in the opinion of the author, would be increased freedom for all:

"The szlachta is not free either, for they are disturbed by having to make contributions and by the obligation to support the levée-en-masse...but we are all in the greatest servitude, and must, as things stand, be at the mercy of our own soldiers."[100]

Such sentiments were merely likely to confirm Court prejudices in favour of the magnates. It was among the magnates that the King could use his still extensive powers of patronage to extend his influence and to build up a regalist party; it was precisely these powers which the "Proposal.." sought to curb. Supporters of the Court might on occasion be self-seeking and insincere, but the extent to which magnate families could distance themselves from the Court should not be exaggerated. The szlachta were far too numerous for royal patronage to have any major effect. The proposal to end the granting of starostwa would deprive the monarchy of its major political weapon and would leave it with the major problem of administering the vast lands it would then control. The idea that the Commonwealth could survive as a domain state was quaint, but preposterous. If central authority were to be strengthened, then different means would have to be found.
The 1658 Sejm came at an extremely awkward moment for the Polish government. It was called out of necessity, not because the Court had any long-term plans for which it wished Sejm approval in the field either of domestic reform or of foreign policy: the uncertainty of the international situation meant that it was as yet wholly unable to commit itself. On the one hand, hopes that military support from Austria and Brandenburg would bring a swift victory over the Swedes had been disappointed by the reluctance of both these powers to take the offensive; on the other hand, the acceptance of French mediation had not opened the way to a quick negotiated settlement. Opinion among senators remained deeply divided as to the best course of action to be pursued:

"As far as the Poles are concerned, everyone without exception yearns for peace; some, however, argue that this should begin with a rapprochement with Muscovy, others that peace should be made quickly with Sweden in order to strike at Muscovite oppression; the greatest number, however, wish to subdue the Swedes, but since they see that achieving this will be a difficult, lengthy and dangerous task, they argue that it is better to try to persuade the Muscovites to accept tolerable conditions; they wish in the meantime to keep alive Muscovite hopes of peace and the succession, and to persuade them to attack the Swedes, so that the King of Sweden, alarmed at this new enemy, will of necessity be forced to make peace with Poland."

The Imperial election was not until the end of July; only then would it become clear whether Austrian promises of more resolute action were sincere. Since there were reports that Charles Gustav was planning a new landing in Prussia, the Poles could not afford to break with Austria, yet the behaviour of Austrian troops ensured that the Austrian alliance would remain unpopular. The Sejm was called
largely to stall Alexis and in the hope that the prospect of the Tsar's election would persuade Austria, Brandenburg and France to act with greater resolution. Once again, largely powerless to influence the course of events directly or decisively, the Polish government could only play for time. For the moment there could be no thought of an election; apart from the discussions over Wilno, the whole problem of the succession was not broached during the Sejm.

The government approached the Sejm without a clear programme. The royal instructions, issued on 27th May, merely called for the ratification of the treaties with Austria, Brandenburg and Denmark, for consideration of the Muscovite demands for the succession and for measures to ensure the payment of the army. John Casimir's letters to senators before the meeting of the sejmiks adopted no firm line, and did not call for political reform.[2] It is hard to accept Walewski's judgement that this was one of the most important Sejms ever held.[3] Rudawski's contemporary assessment better reflects the attitude of the government:

"This session lasted eight weeks. It produced no valuable result, but rather it harmed the Commonwealth. For the summer, which is the time for fighting, was wasted in taking counsel."[4]

The Sejm was a necessary evil. It was officially maintained, pour encourager les autres and to conciliate Lithuanian opinion, that its purpose was to settle the Muscovite succession:

"Since this Diet is only being held to satisfy the Grand Duke of Muscovy,...in order to implement the Treaty signed at Wilno, and since this Prince is also approaching with a powerful army, it has been decided to enter negotiations with him, if it is impossible to do so first with Sweden. It is not that the Poles do not fear his rule,...but they believe that there is no other way to prevent the ruin of their country."[5]
When Vidoni tried to persuade Louise Marie that talks with the Tsar must be ended, the Queen stressed that the Poles had little choice:

"she told me of the necessity of satisfying the Tsar, since with three armies surrounding the Commonwealth, not including that of Brandenburg, the Poles regard the Tsar as the least dangerous of their friends and enemies. He is the most likely to commit himself, while the King of Sweden offers no such hope; neither do the Poles expect any commitment from the King of Hungary, who has attracted much resentment due to the behaviour of his troops. Furthermore, the attitude of Lithuania gives great cause for concern: it is capable of settling with Muscovy on its own, and its lead might be followed by the Cossacks and all the territories on the far side of the Vistula,..."[6]

The Court might not wish to settle with Alexis, but it was certainly prepared to use that threat to put pressure on both France and Austria.[7] While de Lumbres asserted that the Austrians preferred talks with Muscovy to talks with Sweden, Leopold was sufficiently worried by the prospect of the Tsar's election and the acceptance of French mediation to appoint his own commissioners to negotiate with Sweden, to whom John Casimir stressed that if Leopold could secure Swedish aid in a war against Muscovy, he would be prepared to abandon French mediation.[8]

Much depended on the attitude of the Sejm. Despite the usual reports of a low attendance, when Krzysztof Pac, as Lithuanian Grand Chancellor-elect read the royal proposals on 15th July following Koryciński's death the previous day, there were 23 senators present, a relatively high number for the start of a Sejm. Others soon began to arrive: 42 senators appeared by the end of the Sejm, which made it one of the best-attended for some time. There was a particularly large number of ecclesiastical senators, probably due to the inclusion in the agenda of the Muscovite succession and the Cossack
The Court did not pursue a strongly pro-French line. Louise Marie only returned from her unsuccessful Berlin mission on 15th July, having been absent during the vital pre-Sejm period. John Casimir still favoured the Austrian alliance and he did what he could to curb anti-Austrian feeling. He cancelled a Corpus Christi procession at the request of the Austrians following a precedence dispute with the French, and when a delegation from Great Poland demanded the withdrawal of the Austrian army, he pointedly remarked that if they had not opened the gates of the kingdom to Sweden in the first place, they would not have had to endure the presence of foreign troops. While he was not prepared to abandon French mediation, on hearing rumours of Charles Gustav's intention to attack Prussia, he urged the allies not to wait until Swedish troops were in Pomerania or Prussia, but to mount a preemptive strike; he wished for more from Austria than the leisurely conduct of the siege of Thorn, which Souches had begun a fortnight earlier.

In general, Senate opinion favoured the Austrian alliance. Jan Leszczyński, so disillusioned with Austria earlier in the year, now abandoned his flirtation with the idea of peace with Sweden, stating that he had always believed that the best plan was to attack the Swedes in Pomerania. During the Sejm, he was quick to reassure the pro-Austrian Jesuit Cieciszewski:

"The interests of France are well known; there is no need to explain them. We do not trust them as much as you imagine."[14]

Hostility to Austria came principally from the Chamber of Deputies. If many sejmiks were prepared to accept the Treaty of Vienna, there
were vociferous complaints about the behaviour of Austrian troops, especially from Great Poland, and the government experienced serious difficulties before securing ratification.[15] The general sejmik of the Cracow voivodeship asked for the withdrawal of the Austrian garrison from the royal castle of Wawel, while the most common demand was that the Austrians should not again be permitted to take up winter quarters in Poland.[16] The Sieradz voivodeship demanded compensation for the destruction wrought by the Austrians on their march to Great Poland from the siege of Cracow.[17] Deputies from Łęczyca were instructed to beg the King not to deliver the voivodeship up to ultimate ruin by granting winter quarters to the Austrians:

"since we prefer to suffer any extremes rather than experience the kind of oppression that our brothers...have endured."[18]

The main complaints were that the troops did nothing while sucking the land dry, and that the Austrians were introducing more than the 12,000 allowed by the treaty.[19]

Nevertheless, the Court succeeded in persuading the Chamber of Deputies to ratify the Vienna Treaty unaltered, through first obtaining the agreement of the Senate.[20] It was to be hoped that once the Pomeranian campaign began, most Austrian troops would leave and that the storm of protest would die down. The szlachta opposed the presence of Austrian troops in the Commonwealth, not the anti-Swedish alliance, and general opinion was favourable to Frederick William, despite his reluctance to participate in the Pomeranian offensive which so infuriated the Court. While the Court vented its anger in an attack on the Elector in Karwat's opening sermon, the reaction of sejmiks to the Treaty of Wehlau-Bromberg was almost
entirely favourable. [21] Opposition came only from followers of Paweł Sapieha, who opposed the return to Boguslaw Radziwiłł of the Radziwiłł estates, promised to the Lithuanian army by John Casimir in 1656. [22] Nevertheless, Krzysztof Pac wrote to Radziwiłł of widespread support for the treaty in Lithuania, while the sejmik of Halicz welcomed the proposal to confer Polish nobility on Hoverbeck, Schwerin and Lorentz. [23] If the payment of the Lithuanian army remained a problem, the treaty was duly ratified.

Deputies generally welcomed the government's policy of using all possible means to obtain a quick and favourable settlement with Sweden. French mediation was accepted, as was the treaty of Vienna, despite the behaviour of Austrian troops. There was, however, some opposition to the Muscovite succession. Lubomirski argued in the Cracow sejmik that while he recognised the advantages of an agreement with Muscovy, he felt that it was an inopportune moment to discuss the succession: such an election would immediately lead to war against Turkey and the Tatars, and he was generally opposed to the idea of holding a Sejm at all. [24] His reservations were reflected in the instructions of the Cracow sejmik, where his influence was extensive. [25] He deliberately arrived late at the Sejm, to avoid discussion of the Wilno treaty. [26] Many sejmiks echoed his concern:

"Our laws forbid the election of a new king during the lifetime of our Serene Highness... In the name of our Voivodeship, our deputies, servatis solemnitatibus omnibus, after consulting with envoys from other Voivodeships, will make clear to His Majesty the Taar that his election will not be in accordance with our laws. With regard to this nomination: if it comes to the worst we command our deputies that, having consulted with deputies from other voivodeships, and having informed our Voivode, they will call us out in the noble levy." [27]
Despite this opposition, the government succeeded in winning support for new talks with Alexis over the conditions to be attached to his succession. It was no more attracted than Lubomirski by the idea of a Muscovite election and was determined to renegotiate the terms of Wilno: it had already appointed commissioners in May, ostensibly to discuss the treaty's implementation, in reality to renegotiate its terms. The Sejm was quite prepared to accept this policy: it was not being asked to ratify the treaty as it stood, while the treaty itself had postponed consideration of vital questions, such as the occupation of Lithuanian territory and the position of the Cossacks, which had to be settled before it could be implemented.

Moreover, changes in the Ukraine since Khmel'nyts'kyi's death in August 1657 had worked to the Commonwealth's advantage, enabling a return to the policy of playing for time. With Khmel'nyts'kyi out of the way, Alexis had increased the pressure on the Cossacks to comply with the Muscovite interpretation of the Treaty of Pereiaslav.[28] Moscow's new assertiveness widened divisions already apparent within Cossack ranks. Vyhov'skyi, elected temporary Hetman until the majority of Khmel'nyts'kyi's son Iurii, began to move away from Muscovy, supported by a significant part of the Cossack leadership. Although Vyhov'skyi first signed a new agreement with Sweden at Korsun', Charles Gustav was in no position to offer effective protection.[29] If support were to be found against Muscovy, some kind of agreement with the Commonwealth was the only practical solution.
The Commonwealth sought to exploit these feelings. Stanisław Kazimierz Bieniewski, a Volhynian Catholic nobleman with good contacts among the Cossack leadership, arrived in Chyhyryn with a new peace initiative shortly after Khmel'nyts'kyi's death. Significantly, Bieniewski not only had the backing of the King, but also of Lubomirski and Koniecpolski, both landowners whose large Ukrainian estates were occupied by the rebels.[30] In talks held during March and April, a radical new solution to the Cossack problem was devised, which envisaged the creation of a Grand Duchy of Ruthenia from the voivodeships of Kiev, Chernihiv and Bratslav. The Commonwealth would thereby be turned into a tripartite state, in which the Cossack élite would receive the recognition it had hitherto been denied.[31] The favourable reaction of Vyhovs'kyi and his supporters was encouraging. For the first time, the Commonwealth could consider breaking the Treaty of Wilno without risking a renewal of the Cossack-Muscovite alliance of 1654-5:

"It is said that the Muscovite is weak and it is believed that he can achieve little this year. The Poles are rejecting hopes for renewed talks...since they see that the King of Sweden is now tied down in Denmark, which frees the Polish armies to be thrown against the Muscovites in great force."[32]

The government had to proceed with care, however: it had to avoid precipitating war with Muscovy before peace was achieved with Sweden, since this might yet provoke a split with Lithuania, where opinion still favoured a settlement with Muscovy:

"Our deputies will ask His Majesty to confirm and keep inviolate the peace settlement reached with the Tsar...so that it might restore us in our weakened circumstances to our former glory and security."[33]

The government therefore kept up the appearance of being willing to implement Wilno, while pursuing a settlement with the Cossacks. The
Sejm accordingly drew up the terms under which Alexis was to be offered the throne, asserting the fundamental nature of Polish and Lithuanian liberties, with the basic right of free election of the monarch as the most important. Alexis was to succeed John Casimir after the latter's death, but only if he did not interfere in the government of the Commonwealth until then. It was stressed that such an election, which took place against all the laws and customs of the state, was accepted for purely pragmatic reasons and was not to be repeated: in future the right of free election was to be maintained and the Tsar was not to attempt to influence the choice of his successor. On John Casimir's death, the primiate would call a Convocation Sejm as usual, and Alexis would not begin to rule until after his coronation, at which he would have to swear to uphold the Pacta Conventa. As a mark of good faith, he was to withdraw from all occupied territory in Lithuania and begin military action against Sweden.[34] These terms might well prove unacceptable, but it was to be hoped that the negotiations would at least delay a Muscovite attack until settlements had been reached with Sweden and the Cossacks.

This policy was strongly opposed by Vidoni, who was anxious to preserve the position of the Uniate Church, hated by Muscovite and Cossack alike. He received little support, and was told bluntly by John Casimir:

"that he did not wish to sacrifice himself and the whole kingdom on account of the Uniate Church; that if the Uniates had nothing to live on, then they must die of hunger; that if his father had lived, he would have done the same thing. He pointed out that in Germany the Peace of Westphalia had abolished archbishoprics and bishoprics..."[35]

This was also the attitude of the majority of Sejm deputies,
although Vidoni's influence was sufficient to persuade the bishops to issue a formal protest against Alexis's proposed election.[36] The Polish Catholic hierarchy, however, was by no means as committed as the Vatican to supporting the Uniate Church, and some bishops were positively hostile. While Vidoni was pleased at the attitude of the most zealous, such as Trzebicki, Czartoryski, Tolibowski and Ujejski, the Bishop of Kiev, he was scandalised that others would only sign the Protest if they could make clear their reservations. Vidoni hoped to secure the signatures of Tarnowski, the Archbishop of Lwów, and the Bishops of Luts'k and Kammianets', who were not present, at the Sejm, but the division of the episcopate was a blow to his hopes of preventing the acceptance of the Tsar's candidature.[37] He was opposed most strongly by Zawisza, who, as Bishop of Wilno and a commissioner for the talks with Muscovy, protested vehemently about attempts to block the treaty.[38]

Given that the government had not wished to call the Sejm, it had some cause for satisfaction at the outcome. If its tax reform proposals had been rejected, its foreign policy had been endorsed and it could continue along the lines established by the Warsaw Council. There was, it is true, some criticism of the way in which the Senate Council had taken such important decisions on its own authority:

"[The delegates] shall ask...by what law or authority [senators] entered into agreements and pacts with foreign rulers without the knowledge or consent of the Knightly Estate."[39]

This attack was not taken up in any major way, however, and the government's handling of the war since 1655 was largely approved. Nevertheless, despite the relative harmony of the 1658 debates, and despite the approval of new taxes to pay the army, it could not be
disguised that the Commonwealth was as dependent as ever on forces beyond its control.

At last, however, events were moving in its favour. Even as the Sejm hastily concluded its deliberations at the end of August when plague arrived in Warsaw, developments were taking place outside the Commonwealth which were ultimately to bring the end of the war with Sweden, and open the way for the Court to launch an election campaign.[40] On 18th July, Leopold I was finally elected Holy Roman Emperor in Frankfurt, which stimulated Polish hopes for a more active Austrian involvement in the war.[41] Shortly afterwards, Charles Gustav ended months of speculation when he landed his army at Korsør in Zealand and marched on Copenhagen. Rejecting a return to the Commonwealth, or an attack on Brandenburg or Austria, he had decided to strike once more against Denmark, an enemy that he thought he could defeat swiftly, in the hope of winning even greater dominance in Scandinavia and final control of the Sound.

Both these events were of fundamental importance for the Commonwealth. It could now be hoped that Austria would fulfil its commitments under the Treaties of Vienna and Berlin, while the Swedish attack on Denmark ensured that the Commonwealth would not face the prospect of another invasion, which had threatened it ever since Roskilde, and gave it hope of further foreign aid: the maritime powers were concerned to keep control of the Sound divided between Sweden and Denmark. Under their treaty of 1649, the Dutch were obliged to aid Denmark, as they had not been in 1657, when Denmark had been the aggressor.[42] It was hoped that once the Pomeranian
offensive was launched, a settlement would soon follow.

Despite these changes in the international situation, the Court still did not adopt a strongly pro-French policy. It is true that the Queen's natural preference for a French candidature was encouraged by the strong anti-Austrian feelings displayed at the Sejm. She actively fostered such sentiments, lending her support to the widespread and ultimately successful opposition to the granting of Polish noble status to Lisola. When Trzebicki attempted to persuade Tolibowski to intervene on Lisola's behalf, he discovered:

"that the Queen has spoken against this idea, and that the Grand Chancellor of Lithuania [Pac] has said that Signor Lisola must speak to the others, which he has not done...Meanwhile, Signor Lisola is mortified."[43]

While Louise Marie still expressed doubt as to French sincerity over the succession plan when de Lumbres returned from his mission to Charles Gustav, she agreed to continue her work for the French cause, telling de Lumbres that the Poles did not desire the succession of the Tsar, through fear of domination, or of any German or Italian prince, and hinted that if the Duc d'Anjou was impossible, then there were several who favoured the son of the Duc de Longueville.[44] De Lumbres reported that:

"The Queen has worked marvellously during the Diet; she continues to display great affection for France and to desire a French prince in possession of this kingdom."[45]

The Queen's renewed enthusiasm was encouraged by a resurgence of interest among important senators. De Lumbres reported that Waclaw Leszczyński, who as primate would act as interrex following John Casimir's death, had expressed his support.[46] Many of the major officers of state were now filled by men potentially favourable to a French candidature, such as Boguslaw Leszczyński, Prażmowski,
Krasinski, Laskowski and Morsztyn:

"All these people are creatures of the Queen, who wishes a French successor for this kingdom, if the French will support the plan."[47]

Nevertheless, neither the international situation nor John Casimir's attitude permitted an active pro-French campaign. Charles Gustav's new offer, which demanded Livonia and the payment of 5 million thalers for the return of Prussia, was rejected.[48] If the Sejm was willing to consider the cession of Livonia, the Court, hoping for an early offensive in Pomerania, felt that the Commonwealth might do better.[49] Louise Marie urged Frederick William to take the offensive:

"Your expedition into Prussia was approved by everyone while an enemy attack was feared, but now the Queen cannot refrain from mentioning that she believes that it would be much more honourable and advantageous to enter Jutland with support for the King of Denmark,...since the forces of [Lubomirski] and Souches are sufficient for reducing the Swedish garrisons [in Prussia]."[50]

At two inconclusive meetings between Lisola and Polish representatives [17th and 20th August], the Poles argued that an offensive campaign against Sweden must be launched immediately and that those Austrian troops not involved should withdraw to Silesia.[51] Eventually, Polish persistence was rewarded, and the long-awaited Pomeranian campaign began in August, once Frederick William, relieved that Charles Gustav did not intend to attack Ducal Prussia, regained his enthusiasm. The government was following the course laid down since the end of 1657: attempting to force Sweden to negotiate by attacking Pomerania in conjunction with Austria and Brandenburg, while keeping up more informal contacts through the French. Until this policy bore fruit, there could be no thought of an
active election campaign.

Three basic obstacles still remained: Lithuanian support for the Treaty of Wilno, which meant that the Union might be threatened if the Court officially pursued an alternative candidate to Alexis; the dependence upon both Austrian military support and French mediation; and the lack of agreement both at Court and within the Senate Council over the most suitable candidate. The extent of anti-Austrian feeling at the 1658 Sejm, and the interest expressed by several leading senators in a French candidature did much to persuade Louise Marie that such an option was feasible; nevertheless, John Casimir still favoured Austria, especially once the Pomeranian campaign was launched.

This position did not change for as long as the war with Sweden lasted. From the second half of 1658, the allies conducted a war of attrition in the Commonwealth, picking off the remaining Swedish garrisons, while taking the offensive in Pomerania and Denmark. This campaign and the attitude of England, the United Provinces and France, who signed the first Concert of the Hague in May 1659, which called for peace between Sweden and Denmark on the basis of Roskilde, ensured that Charles Gustav's second Danish war was far less successful than the first. The Pomeranian campaign went relatively well, while the English and the Dutch defeated the Swedes at sea and kept trade flowing. Although Charles Gustav was still planning new campaigns in early 1660, his premature death in February and the accession of the infant Charles XI at last opened the way to a settlement. Sweden quickly concluded peace with the Commonwealth,
Austria and Brandenburg at Oliva [3rd May 1660] and with Denmark at Copenhagen [6th June]. The result was reasonably favourable for the Commonwealth: John Casimir surrendered his claim to the Swedish throne, and the Commonwealth recognised de jure Swedish rule of most of Livonia, which Sweden had already controlled de facto in 1655. After five years of fighting, Sweden had obtained virtually nothing from the Commonwealth. It was a vindication of the policy which the government had pursued consistently since early 1658, a policy which sought to use both the Austrian alliance and French mediation to achieve a reasonable settlement.[52]

The government had played a weak hand with some skill. Unable to end the war unaided, and finding it difficult to attract effective support, it had successfully played off one side against the other, using the threat of reaching a settlement with Sweden mediated by France to persuade Austrian to pursue the war more actively, without giving in to French pressure to accept unsatisfactory peace terms. While charting such a tricky course, it was impossible for the Court to commit itself with regard to the succession once its original offers had been rejected by Vienna and the behaviour of Austrian troops had destroyed hopes that a Habsburg would be accepted easily by a grateful Commonwealth. Nevertheless, the Court's interest in an election had not abated; indeed it had intensified in 1658, when its plans for financial reform had been rejected by the Chamber of Deputies.

It was only in 1660 that the obstacles were finally cleared away and the road was opened to an election campaign. The first obstacle
to be removed was the problem of Lithuania, where the situation changed dramatically and suddenly. The conflicting interests of Poland and Lithuania with regard to foreign policy had been a major destabilising factor between 1654 and 1658, when there was an ever-present danger of a collapse of the Union. Disputes had continued throughout the spring and summer of 1658. Gosiewski, despite his flirtation with the idea of peace with Sweden in the spring, soon reverted to his former support for a settlement with Muscovy, once more expressing his fear that the interests of Lithuania were to be sacrificed, and reviving the spectre of a Lithuanian split should peace be made with Sweden rather than Muscovy.[53] Reports of Lithuanian displeasure with Crown policy in April were confirmed in June by Stanisław Potocki:

"there are voices in the Lithuanian army which are calling in great secrecy for a settlement with Muscovy and news has also arrived that [Gosiewski] is working to persuade many nobles to support this policy, since there is no hope of any aid from Poland."[54]

Gosiewski's attitude was worrying:

"Gosiewski himself...warns against beginning peace talks with Sweden before a settlement with Muscovy is achieved, lest we expose ourselves to the danger not only of war with Muscovy, but also of the secession of all Lithuania from the Commonwealth."[55]

Gosiewski was just as ready to lead Lithuania out of the Union if necessary as Radziwiłł had been in 1655, even if he preferred to see Alexis rather than Charles Gustav in the rôle of Lithuania's saviour:

"[Gosiewski] always took the side of the Tsar, and has taken control in Lithuania, which he will not leave with his troops. He is waiting to see where victory will come; let Poland do what it likes, [he] will gather the szlachta around him and, expressing his good wishes to the Tsar, will not obey His Majesty's orders if commanded to attack, but will act as a wise
head seeking to find a way of mediating..."[56]

It was reported that Gosiewski was prepared to fight for the Tsar, something that even Janusz Radziwill had rejected in his dealings with Sweden:

"should Poland attack Muscovy, and if [Gosiewski] is in control of the Grand Duchy, he might break the Union and join forces with the Tsar."[57]

Gosiewski was optimistic that he would be followed by Sapieha's army, alleging that Sapieha was more concerned with Polish than with Lithuanian interests. His position in the weeks before the Sejm was worrying, since the Tsar was making a determined effort to attract support for his campaign to achieve the succession, promising resolute action should he be elected; such talk merely increased Polish opposition to the plan.[58]

It was vital, therefore, that if the war with Muscovy were to resume, the Poles should not be seen as the aggressors, for that might alienate Lithuania finally and irrevocably. Despite his earlier expressions of support for peace with Sweden and for the French succession, and his close identification with Louise Marie and the Court, Krzysztof Pac had not abandoned hope of a settlement with Muscovy, which he still regarded as the best solution for Lithuania, and he took a close interest in 1657-1658 in Gosiewski's negotiations with Alexis. During the Sejm, he wrote to Brzostowski of Lithuanian attempts to ensure that a commission was appointed to ratify any agreement made at Wilno without the need to call another Sejm.[59] He warned Brzostowski to ignore any orders from Warsaw which did not emanate from the Lithuanian Chancery:

"We are aware that certain private ordinances are reaching you which do not proceed from the Lithuanian Chancery and which urge
you to delay the talks...You must be careful to pay no heed to such documents; on the contrary, you must settle as swiftly as possible, for such is the wish of Their Majesties. If any more such letters arrive, I ask you to note from which Chancery they derive, and to send me copies."[60]

Signs, however, that Gosiewski's hopes of a settlement with the Tsar were unreasonable had been evident as early as March. Alexis showed little interest in the prospects of a settlement splitting Poland and Lithuania, insisting upon the full implementation of Wilno. He ignored Gosiewski's overtures and preferred to look for an agreement with Sweden, appointing ambassadors to start talks with Charles Gustav and beginning military preparations long before the Sejm:

"having allowed Poland to revive, he is not inclined to believe that it will keep the agreement...Although Muscovy has postponed consideration of everything until this new commission meets, nevertheless, powerful armies have been ordered to advance towards the Ukraine and Lithuania."[61]

Medeksza's reports of the Tsar's treatment of the occupied areas and of the warnings of Commonwealth prisoners also indicated that prospects of a reasonable settlement were receding. He warned that Muscovy was not to be trusted and reported that he had heard threats from Muscovite soldiers that all of Poland and Lithuania would be occupied.[62]

The deadlock was broken by Alexis. When the Sejm failed to vote for the full implementation of Wilno, he finally lost patience. On 27th August, news arrived in Warsaw that the Muscovite commissioners had left Wilno without waiting for the arrival of the Commonwealth's envoys.[63] The Muscovites even refused to talk to Gosiewski, and John Casimir wrote to Frederick William blaming
Muscovy for the non-implementation of the Treaty of Wilno.[64] Shortly after the end of the Sejm, Muscovy began military action against Lithuanian forces. When Gosiewski returned to Lithuania, he had to abandon his intention of relieving Wolmar in Livonia, which was under attack from Sweden, to turn against Muscovite troops in Samogitia.[65] His pro-Muscovite policy in ruins, Gosiewski was defeated and captured after a surprise Muscovite attack at the Battle of Warki on 21st October.[66]

The option of peace with Muscovy, which had attracted many Lithuanians, was now closed. Their support for Wilno had always been tactical: they were just as wary as the Poles of Muscovite despotism, of which many had direct experience, hoping that with Polish support, Alexis would be forced to accept constitutional restraints on his power, and that they would be allowed to return to their estates. Yet for two years, suspicions that Polish lack of enthusiasm for Wilno might lead to the permanent occupation of Lithuania by Muscovy had seriously undermined Lithuanian faith in the Union. Now, however, Polish military support was vital if the Muscovites were to be driven out. An early settlement with Sweden was therefore necessary to release Polish forces for the war in the east. Pac and other Lithuanians were now ready to listen to French arguments that the Austrians were only interested in dragging out the war in order to prevent any Swedish intervention in the Empire: Pac, although hopeful that a settlement with Muscovy was still possible, and despite his feeling that the Poles bore a great deal of the responsibility for preventing one, expressed support for the French peace plan:
"Your Grace can see what sort of state Poland is currently in,...and that we must fall under the domination of one of these two powers, either of Austria or of Muscovy...Peace with Sweden will be the source of happiness for our ravaged Fatherland and for our neighbours..."[67]

By the end of August, Lisola reported that Pac had been completely won for the French cause.[68] If the government had failed in its attempts to delay the start of war with Muscovy, at least it was Alexis, not the Poles, who appeared to be responsible for breaking off negotiations. For the first time since 1656, Poles and Lithuanians seemed to have a common interest in ending the war with Sweden as soon as possible, in order to turn on Muscovy.

The Court could now promote an election vivente rege without risking the collapse of the Union: indeed, henceforward Lithuanians were to be amongst the most dedicated supporters of the idea. Furthermore, the fear that Alexis might seize the throne now that war had once more broken out meant that many were prepared to support an election to ensure the preservation of Polish liberties. Yet the international position still prevented the Court from launching a campaign. It is usually assumed that the Court was by now strongly backing a French candidature. Yet although the Queen had certainly explored the possibility with increasing interest, and although she had suggested a French candidature in several discussions of the election, neither she nor John Casimir was as yet committed. The Commonwealth still needed Austrian military support, and the presence of Austrian troops in the kingdom might create problems if, as was by now certain, an Austrian candidate were not backed by the Court. It was the achievement of the election which was vital; the identity of the candidate was important, but secondary. The Court
could not risk backing a candidate who did not enjoy the widest possible support among senators. It was aware that szlachta attachment to the principle of free election was strong; if this were to be overcome, the election campaign would have to be managed with great care. It was vital not to risk squandering the almost universal support among senators for the principle of the election by pushing a particular candidate too strongly. Any attempt to nominate a successor would be met with instant opposition; it was important that the Court allow a proper election to take place, in which it at least appeared to be neutral.[69]

The Court therefore concentrated after 1658 on nurturing Senate support for the principle of an election, while seeking to promote as wide a measure of agreement as possible over suitable candidates, without openly committing itself. Support for an election remained strong and, following pessimistic reports about John Casimir's health from the royal doctor, there was extensive discussion of suitable candidates. In December 1658, a meeting called by Lubomirski discussed several possibilities. The express desire to exclude neighbouring princes as a potential danger to liberty effectively ruled out an Austrian candidature. Among those discussed were the brother of the Elector of Bavaria, Mattia di Medici and James, Duke of York. Two French candidates were mentioned: the son of the Duc de Longueville and the Duc d'Enghien, although doubts were expressed about the latter, whose father was still in rebellion against the French Crown. Although no firm decision was taken, it was decided explicitly to exclude the Habsburgs from consideration.[70]
Yet even now de Lumbres was doubtful about the Queen's intentions. He noted in his despatch describing this meeting that Louise Marie had not spoken a word to him about it, and expressed his concern that the Queen was once more listening to the Austrian proposals.\[71\] The Queen's reticence may have been motivated by a desire to pressurise Mazarin into giving official backing to a French candidate, but other evidence suggests that the Court was still considering the possibility of a compromise candidate who might be less politically sensitive than an Austrian or Frenchman. When Vidoni discussed the matter with Louise Marie for over an hour in March 1659, urging her not to miss this golden opportunity, she replied that:

"the proposed French and Austrian candidates would encounter great difficulties, as would other German princes, and that it would be a good idea for the Holy Father to suggest a better candidate..."\[72\]

The Queen's proposal may not have been entirely serious, and it is possible that her statements to Vidoni were designed to camouflage her support for a French candidature to which the Vatican might object. Yet at no point after 1655 had Vidoni ever expressed hostility to a French candidate, though he knew that French candidates had been discussed. There are other indications that the Court was still actively considering alternatives. In March 1658, Louise Marie asked Vidoni whether the Pope would approve the candidature of Mattia, and was told that he would be perfectly acceptable for all who cared for the Catholic faith and for the well-being of the Commonwealth.\[73\] In April 1659, she asked once more for further information concerning his suitability, since John Casimir continued to favour him, which suggests that the King still had his doubts about a French candidature.\[74\] In July, talks were still
proceeding between Mattia and Fantoni with regard to a possible candidature.[75] There was some concern, however, that Mattia was too old, especially from the point of view of the plan to marry the candidate to the Queen's niece, who was still only 13.[76]

Mazarin was unenthusiastic about the Queen's preference for Longueville or d'Enghien. His preferred candidate was the Duke of Neuburg, whose son could marry the Queen's niece. He also suggested Prince Almerico d'Este of Modena, whose nephew was married to Mazarin's niece, Laura Martinozzi.[77] Both candidates, along with the Duke of York, were still under consideration in the summer of 1659, when Vidoni again discussed the succession with Boguslaw Leszczyński. The Nuncio was quite prepared to support any of the candidates suggested by Mazarin. He was attracted by Almerico d'Este, but John Casimir was worried that he was too young and inexperienced to succeed: if the Court was going to argue that one of the most pressing reasons for suspending the normal electoral process was to avoid the danger of an interregnum in time of war, it would be tactically unsound to propose an infant.[78] Vidoni also praised the virtues of Neuburg, but apart from being too old, he was also married, while his son, whom Mazarin proposed as a suitable candidate for the hand of Louise Marie's niece, was too young. It was felt that the Elector of Bavaria's brother would not be interested, but a case was made by Prażmowski for the Duke of York, whose candidature, he felt, would be unwelcome to Sweden.[79]

The weight of evidence suggests that the Court, far from seeking the election of a French candidate at all costs, were searching for
someone with the widest possible support among senators, who would yet be capable of being tied to the Court through a marriage to Anne Henriette, thus preventing the formation of a reversionary interest. In August 1659, it seemed as if its efforts were bearing fruit when a secret document was signed by leading senators, in which the need for an election was stressed, and in which John Casimir promised to abide by the decision of the Senate and the szlachta, and that he would not treat unilaterally with any pretender to the throne. The senators agreed in return to three conditions put forward by John Casimir: that the candidate should be a Catholic, that he should be younger than the King and that he should marry the Queen's niece.[80]

In 1660, the Court decided to back d'Enghien. He was young enough to be a viable candidate for the hand of the Queen's niece, while being old enough to fulfil the rôle of king-elect. The end of the war with Sweden in 1660 removed the need for Austrian military support, while Austrian behaviour in 1659 had finally persuaded John Casimir that an Austrian candidature was out of the question.[81] Furthermore, despite Lisola's urgings, Leopold I was reluctant to allow the betrothal of Louise Marie's niece to Archduke Charles, while the fact that Anne Henriette was in France under Mazarin's control rendered the prospect of an Austrian marriage unlikely.[82] The Peace of the Pyrenees, in which Condé was rehabilitated, removed one further obstacle. D'Enghien's apparent virtues contrasted with the drawbacks of his main rivals: France was willing to provide financial backing which would be vital the election campaign were to succeed, and if the Court were to realise its wider political plans, while many senators were prepared to accept a French candidature,
feeling that since France was not the Commonwealth's neighbour, it was less likely to threaten noble liberties than Austria or Muscovy. Louise Marie wrote to her sister in February arguing that a German or Italian prince would not be powerful enough to persuade Poles to take such a stand against Austria, while doubts about the ancestry of d'Enghein's leading French rival, the son of the Duc de Longueville, which was tainted with illegitimacy, provoked worries that he would not be well-regarded in Poland. Moreover, the Queen's sister let it be known that she considered d'Enghien to be the most suitable candidate for her daughter's hand. Faced with such pressure, Mazarin finally relented. News of his consent reached Poland in October 1660, while an official sanction was issued on 30th November. De Lumbres was issued with plenipotentiary powers to negotiate the succession; his instructions, drawn up on 20th December, reached Poland in early February 1661.[83] At long last, the Court could launch its election campaign.
It is incontestably true that the campaign to elect d'Enghien aroused substantial and growing opposition after 1661, in which the dangers of absolutum dominium were loudly trumpeted. It is also true that the Court's campaign between 1661 and 1668 intensified the tendency among the szlachta to regard the interests of the state and the interests of the monarchy as fundamentally different, and helped ensure the triumph of Fredro's view of the veto as necessary for the defence of szlachta liberties against royal pretensions. Furthermore, it is probable that the failure of political reform and the triumph of the veto marked the last real chance the Commonwealth was to have of constructing a political system capable of resisting the ambitions of its neighbours. Yet close study of Court policy between 1655 and 1660 makes it possible to challenge the views firstly that the Court adopted the election campaign essentially for private dynastic reasons and secondly that its defeat was a foregone conclusion. Historians have often been too prone to accept opposition assessments of Court intentions and to assert that the Court's ultimate aim was the introduction of hereditary monarchy and absolutism, which would necessarily involve the destruction of szlachta liberties. Yet nowhere was such a programme outlined by the Court or its supporters, who were always careful to stress that its plans represented the only practical way of preserving the Commonwealth's freedoms.

This thesis has argued that the Court, while always aware of its political position and interests, adopted the election campaign
because it saw the election, not Sejm reform, as the key to the transformation of the Commonwealth's political system. Too often, this choice of priorities has been condemned by historians who either, like Lelewel, regard democratic republicanism as the embodiment of a romantic "national idea", or who believe that, with a few procedural adjustments, the Sejm would have developed into an effective, modern parliamentary body. Yet the experience of the seventeenth century did not lead the monarchy to suppose that this was possible. Despite the spread of the Sarmatian ideal of the szlachta nation, the Commonwealth's nobility remained in practice divided by ethnic, provincial and local rivalries. Just as the spread of English language and culture within the British Isles did nothing to stem the growth of Scottish, Welsh and Irish national feelings, so the spread of the Polish language and Polish culture among the Lithuanian and Ruthenian nobilities did not lead them to abandon their national or provincial loyalties; in many ways it strengthened them. The monarchy had always to be aware of these feelings; indeed it often attempted to play off one group against the others in its struggle to implement its chosen policy.

Criticisms of the monarchy for its attitude towards the Sejm frequently depend upon a set of anachronistic and Whiggish assumptions derived from knowledge of modern systems of parliamentary democracy. Yet the Sejm was not essentially regarded by the szlachta as a partner in government, but as a check upon it: it was a watchdog whose main function was as a forum for the expression of private and local grievances, in which government proposals could be scrutinised to ensure they did not contravene
local rights and privileges and the limits of royal power could be further defined. It was the King's task to initiate policy, the Sejm's to approve it or reject it. From the monarchy's point of view, therefore, the Sejm appeared to be the main source of the ever-increasing restrictions on its freedom of action. The main concern of the royal government was to carry out affairs of state; after 1569, the Sejm proved an increasingly troublesome and obstructive barrier.

Too many historians have allowed their natural prejudices in favour of parliamentary democracy to cloud their judgement with regard to the vital question of whether reform of the Sejm in the 1650's through the introduction of majority voting would have been the panacea for all the Commonwealth's ills which its supporters, both at the time and subsequently, have alleged.

For the monarchy, the main problem after 1569 was how to manage the Sejm in practice, to prevent the increase of restrictions on executive power, and to ensure that taxes were raised and government business was carried out. Just as important was the need to manage the local and provincial sejmiks which played such a vital rôle in the execution of Sejm enactments. Historians have tended to assume that the introduction of majority voting would have solved this problem. In the 1650's and 1660's, however, John Casimir saw the veto as a useful weapon in his perennial battle to manage both Sejm and sejmiks. With hindsight, the destructive effects of the liberum veto seem only too apparent, yet before 1668, it appeared to have certain advantages from the King's point of view. The ability to break Sejms and sejmiks enabled him to avoid or block further restrictions on his power, and to put an effective end to criticism when it got out of
hand. John Casimir sanctioned Białobłocki's veto of 1654, and seriously considered breaking the Sejm of 1662, to prevent it banning further consideration of the election, only desisting because it needed the taxes which the Sejm proved willing to vote in order to pay the army.[1] In the struggle over the impeachment of Lubomirski in 1664-5, the Court found the veto an extremely useful weapon: by breaking the general sejmiks at Środa and Proszowice, Court supporters prevented the appearance at the 1664-5 Sejm of deputies from two of Lubomirski's most important power-bases, which did much to ensure that the impeachment was successful.[2] Despite attempts by Lubomirski's supporters to break the Sejm and thereby prevent a verdict, Court supporters, who were in the majority, successfully blocked the use of the veto until Lubomirski had been sentenced. Once that was achieved, the Court was happy to allow Telefus to lodge a successful veto.[3]

It was not just the King who had doubts about the desirability of introducing majority voting. Important interest-groups within the multi-national and religiously plural Commonwealth were concerned about the implications for their own interests. Such concerns had surfaced in 1658, and reappeared in June 1660, when a new commission met to consider proposals for Sejm reform, including two drawn up in 1659, both of which called for the curtailment or abolition of the veto.[4] Several senators, including Trzebicki, Jan Leszczyński, Sielski, Wielopolski and even Łukasz Opaliński, supposed author of the 1657 plan, opposed the introduction of majority voting. Once again, Lithuanians were prominent in attacking the proposal.[5] Although Sejm reform was included in the royal agenda for the 1661
Sejm, it was pursued with a singular lack of enthusiasm by senators: Trzebicki strongly opposed it in his *votum* at the start of the Sejm, and only three other senators [Krzysztof Pac, Ujejski and Lubowiecki] mentioned it at all. By referring it once more to a commission, the Sejm effectively declared its lack of interest.[6]

In practice, the principle of unanimity before 1652 had frequently served the positive function of enabling minorities to invite the Sejm to think again and work out a compromise which took account of their interests. Given the doubts of substantial interest-groups about the implications of majority voting and the apparent usefulness of the veto as a weapon of the last resort for the monarchy in its battle to manage Sejm and sejmiks, it should not be regarded as surprising that Sejm reform failed after 1655. More mature parliamentary bodies than the seventeenth-century Sejm have failed to solve the problem of convincing ethnic and religious minorities that their interests can be safeguarded within the framework of majority rule. The introduction of majority voting might well have saved the Sejm as an effective parliamentary body; it might just have easily have led to the break-up of the Commonwealth.

It was the Senate Council, not the Sejm, which John Casimir saw as the key to effective government. His experiences between 1655 and 1660 undoubtedly confirmed him in this view. Receiving the backing of his senators, he governed effectively, considering the circumstances, and developed the technique of securing support for important political initiatives by summoning large-scale convocations of senators and representatives of the szlachta, which
were not subject to the procedural handicaps of the Sejm, and where majority decisions were sufficient to decide policy. While there is no evidence to suggest that John Casimir envisaged doing away with the Sejm, the summoning of such convocations suggest that he was seeking more effective ways of carrying out the business of government: the example of French Assemblies of Notables is clear, while senators were keen to assert their powers to consent to all manner of government initiatives.

John Casimir left no political testament or statement of his political philosophy and aims; nevertheless, on the evidence of his practice in the 1650's and 1660's it is perhaps not fanciful to suggest that he envisaged a solution to the problems of executive government through the development and gradual extension of the powers and competence of the Senate Council and of Convocations of Notables, while neutralising the ability of the Sejm and of sejmiks to place further restrictions upon his freedom of action through judicious use of the liberum veto. In France, Louis XIV never abolished an office or an institution, but sought ways of managing or circumventing bodies or individuals which hindered the execution of government policy. John Casimir adopted similar tactics: the decline of the Sejm and its growing paralysis through the increasing use of the veto potentially gave the political initiative to the king and the Senate Council. With the Sejm effectively deprived of its capacity to place further restrictions on royal power through the king's ability to engineer its premature end if necessary, the onus of government would in practice increasingly be thrown back upon the Senate Council, as it had been between 1655 and 1658; the Sejm would
remain as a forum for the expression of grievances, as envisaged in the plan mentioned by des Noyers in 1656.

It was not just the Sejm, however, which was capable of placing restrictions upon royal power: the election of a new monarch and the redrafting of the Pacta Conventa gave opponents of royal policy ample opportunities to redefine the limits within which the king could operate. Moreover, his experiences between 1648 and 1655 had demonstrated all too clearly to John Casimir that even if it were possible to keep his Senate Council under reasonable control, he had few remedies against the opposition of powerful magnate figures such as Janusz Radziwiłł, Krzysztof Opaliński and Lubomirski. Although his control of patronage and of the distribution of starostwa ensured that the king could always command a substantial body of royal supporters, royal finances were too limited to allow the king to exert the sort of dominance which might enable him to counter more effectively the challenge from great magnates, whose courts were more magnificent and whose private armies were more extensive than anything the king could afford.

The plan for an election vivente rege was designed to confront both these problems. The Court hoped to be able to mobilise its extensive influence at the election Sejm to block as far as possible the inclusion of further restrictions on royal power, something which a king elected in the usual way was unable to do, since he could only activate his extensive patronage powers after his Coronation. Secondly, the election of a foreign prince would give the monarchy a power-base outside the Commonwealth for the first time
since 1600, which might reduce royal dependence upon the Sejm in matters of finance. Its increased wealth, allied to potential foreign backing at critical moments, would enable the monarchy once more to raise itself above the great magnate factions and restore its position of dominance, by increasing its already considerable power to manage and manipulate the political system.

It was these latter considerations which finally determined the selection of d'Enghien. Although the Court was aware of the dangers of choosing a Bourbon or Habsburg candidate, and devoted much effort between 1655 and 1660 to searching for a less contentious alternative, ultimately the extensive financial, political and, if the worst came to the worst, military backing which only France or Austria could provide, was essential not just for the successful management of the election campaign, but also if the monarchy were to be able to play the sort of political rôle envisaged by the Court, and dominate the various magnate factions. Although less contentious alternatives, such as Mattia di Medici, proved attractive, none of them commanded the sort of resources which would enable them to avoid the risk of falling into the same state of financial dependency upon the Sejm which had so afflicted the Vasas after 1600. Since it was clear by 1660 that an Austrian candidature was out of the question, the only realistic alternative was to look to France.

Not only did the Court have sound political reasons for embarking on the election campaign, it appeared in 1660 to have a reasonable chance of success. It was Sejm reform, not the principle of an election vivente rege which aroused most concern amongst
senators, whose support for an election had been solid since 1655. The dangers of an interregnum while the Commonwealth was still at war loomed large, and had not entirely abated in 1660 despite the peace of Oliva: most of Lithuania was still occupied by Muscovite troops, and the prospect of a seizure of the throne by Alexis, or of the Muscovites and Austrians battling for the crown in the event of John Casimir's death before the end of the war, was sufficient to persuade the vast majority of senators to back the scheme. It was to be hoped that fear of such an outcome would attract sufficient support among the ordinary szlachta for it to succeed. John Casimir sought to exploit such fears, reminding the szlachta in his instructions to sejmiks before the 1661 Sejm that only the election of Władysław IV in 1632 had been entirely peaceful, and that was only because the candidate had been the previous King's son: precedent suggested that civil war was likely if there were to be a contested election between rival foreign candidates. Such a conflict in time of war might threaten the Commonwealth's very existence. In a major speech to the united chambers of the Sejm on 4th July 1661, the King warned that if the election did not proceed, the Commonwealth faced the prospect of partition between rival powers fighting for dominance, a danger which had been only too evident since 1655.[7]

Despite the apparently favourable circumstances in 1660-1, and despite a vigorous and persuasive campaign by the Court, the election campaign was to fail. Before the formal introduction of the proposal in 1661, the Court established the Commonwealth's first newspaper, the Merkuriusz Polski, run by royal secretary Hieronim Pinocci, which enthusiastically reported the restoration of the Stuarts in
Britain, and the introduction of hereditary rule in Denmark.[8] Louise Marie and John Casimir embarked on a long tour of the Commonwealth, visiting local sejmiks to try and drum up support for the plan. Although there was some response, it was not enough for the idea to succeed. While the 1661 Sejm did not reject the idea outright, growing opposition led to a ban on its further consideration by the 1662 Sejm. Undeterred by this rebuff, the Court pinned its hopes on the use of more dubious tactics, including the possible recourse to military means, something which it had considered since at least 1658. Its plans received a setback when soldiers of both the Lithuanian and Polish armies, some of whom had not been paid since 1653, formed Confederations in 1661, which expressed strong opposition to the election.[9] When the Court approached France in the hope of securing sufficient money to buy off the confederates, the sums it required were far greater than the French were prepared to grant. Nevertheless, in 1663, the marriage of d'Enghien and Anne Henriette took place, while the Court succeeded in winding up the military Confederations with the help of the taxes voted by the 1662 Sejm.[10]

It now prepared to strike against Lubomirski, whom it increasingly identified as the main barrier in its path. Although a leading supporter of a French candidate in 1659-60, Lubomirski had soon passed into opposition, and had used his influence at the Sejms of 1661 and 1662 to secure the rejection of Court plans. His successful impeachment at the Sejm of 1664-5 merely deepened the political crisis, however, as the Court's tactics provoked outrage, seeming to confirm opposition claims that it sought absolutum
dominium. The Sejms of 1664-5 and 1665 were both broken by use of the veto, while Lubomirski fled to Silesia, where he sought the protection of the Habsburgs, who were determined to block the French election. In 1665, he raised the standard of rebellion. Although he won a bloody victory over royalist forces at the Battle of Mątwy in 1666, he failed to secure his full rehabilitation, withdrawing once more to Silesia, where he died in January 1667.[11]

Despite its inconclusive outcome, Lubomirski's rokosz effectively ended Court hopes of achieving the election. Both the Sejms held in 1666 were broken, as was the first Sejm in 1668. On the Queen's death in 1667, John Casimir, weary of the long struggle, decided to play his last card and implement a plan which had been under consideration since 1662. In 1668 he declared his intention to abdicate, after securing the promise of a pension from Louis XIV. His hope that d'Enghien would at last be elected, was nevertheless to be disappointed. Despite a great effort by French supporters, the 1669 election saw the rejection of all foreign candidates in favour of a native nonentity: Michael Korybut Wiśniowiecki, son of Jarema, the great popular hero of the early years of the struggle against the Cossacks. The breaking of Wiśniowiecki's Coronation Sejm before even it had run its six-week course, the first time this had occurred, was an ominous portent of what was to follow. It was an appropriate death-knell for the last plan to reform the Commonwealth's political system which might have rescued its international position.

Most historians have argued that the attachment of the szlachta to the principle of free election and their fear of absolutism meant
that the plan had never really had a realistic chance of success. Although the election enjoyed substantial support among senators, it is suggested that this support was largely insincere, and dependent on the king's patronage powers and on French bribes, neither of which was sufficient to overcome the growing forces of opposition. Leading magnates such as Jan Leszczyński and Lubomirski, who had originally supported the plan, were increasingly dubious about the Court's intentions, and soon passed into opposition, using their extensive influence among the szlachta, who were still a powerful political force and who, it is argued, ultimately would never accept a plan which appeared to be such a threat to its liberty. Ochmann argues that the Court failed to exploit szlachta feelings of resentment against the magnates, while its crude methods ["blatant bribery on a scale never before known"] alienated szlachta opinion. Its willingness to contemplate the use of force after 1662, she suggests, was the ultimate and fatal error, which enabled the magnate opposition to exploit the situation in its favour.[12] Klaczewski argues that the defeat of the King at the Sejms of 1664-5 marked the final end of hopes for an alliance between the monarchy and the szlachta, arguing that: "power in the state passed all the more into the hands of the magnate oligarchy."[13]

Yet Klaczewski's own work suggests that the political situation was far more complex. The tendency to treat the szlachta and the magnates as collective entities, each with essentially one political outlook, and to represent the political alternatives after 1655 in terms of a struggle between szlachta democratic-republicanism and absolutism, is too simplistic. Too often, the opposition's
definition of the aims and motives of the Court has been accepted uncritically, and the extent of support which John Casimir enjoyed has been played down or explained away in terms of mere self-interest which could not have been sincere. Yet if it is true that the nucleus of Court support was usually formed by a rising group of "new" magnates seeking to establish their social and political fortunes, even established magnate families had to look to Court patronage to preserve their economic and political interests, and to maintain their position with regard to their fellow magnates with whom they competed for local and provincial power. The magnate élite did not consist of a closed group of families inevitably opposed to Court interests. It is quite clear that the Commonwealth was a class state in the sense that it was dominated by a class-conscious nobility which deliberately excluded all other classes from a share in the exercise of political power. This does not, however, imply that the ruling class was united in its political outlook, or acted as a collective political entity. Factional rivalry was intense, and the monarchy could in practice exploit this situation to win support from even the most powerful and economically independent magnates.

Between 1655 and 1668, both szlachta and magnates were deeply and fundamentally divided, not over the basic ideals of the Commonwealth's political system, which all accepted, but over the best means to preserve them. If the Court was accused by its enemies of seeking to destroy those liberties and to introduce absolute rule, there were many who, conscious of other dangers to the Commonwealth and its liberties, were prepared to support it. Klaczewski's account of the 1664-5 crisis is still based upon the assumption that the
middle of the seventeenth century saw the triumph of a magnate oligarchy made possible by the failure of the Court to exploit a potential alliance with the szlachta. He argues that there were three forces in the Commonwealth: the King, the szlachta and the magnates, suggesting that the magnates "as a whole" realised the necessity for the existence of a strong state structure.[14] Yet his own account of the Sejms of 1664-5 demonstrates that in political terms, both the szlachta and the magnates were divided amongst themselves, and that the King received substantial support from both magnates and ordinary nobles. One province which provided consistent support for royal aims, indeed, was Mazovia, where the petty szlachta was dominant, and where magnate influence was at its weakest.[15] Such findings call into question the assumption that the szlachta acted as a collective political entity, or that it was naturally and inevitably opposed en masse to royal aims.

The striking feature about the 1660's is the extent of support for the Court, not its absence. At the 1661 Sejm, despite the reservations expressed about Sejm reform, only one senator - Andrzej Olszowski - spoke out in his votum against the election plan. One other, Łukasz Opaliński, did not refer to it directly; all other senators who expressed their opinion in this way either supported it strongly, like Krzysztof Pac and Lubowiecki, Castellan of Chełm, or accepted it in principle.[16] The Sejm was being asked to decide on the principle of an election, and the Court had kept secret its backing of d'Enghien, maintaining that it supported a free election in which it would not interfere or make any proposals. Yet despite the fact that Court support of a French candidature was well-known to
leading senators, Andrzej Trzebiicki, for so long one of the most prominent supporters of an Austrian candidature, and who expressed his opposition to Sejm reform, supported an election.[17] When the King discussed the election with the Senate, only Olszowski, Czartoryski and Fredro opposed it, with the first two merely arguing for its postponement to more settled times and only Fredro opposing it outright. By June 8th, 50 senators had expressed their agreement.[18]

If the Senate was largely united in support of the principle in 1661, the szlachta was divided. Although no detailed instructions have survived from Lithuanian sejmiks, opinion in the Grand Duchy, still occupied by Muscovite troops, was overwhelmingly in favour. Caillet reported that only one sejmik opposed it. Krzysztof Pac succeeded in winning the support of 18 sejmiks, while the Vice-Chancellor Naruszewicz influenced a further 5.[19] The attitude of Polish sejmiks is better known. Significantly, if the majority were opposed to Sejm reform, with only the Kiev sejmik regarding it as necessary, attitudes to the election were mixed. Although the important sejmik at Środa, along with those of Halicz, Wizna, Czersk and Zakroczym rejected the idea outright, others were prepared to accept it with certain reservations. There was a general concern that the principle of free choice be meticulously observed, and if most sejmiks ignored the King's request for deputies to be granted plenipotentiary powers to agree to the election, this was by no means unusual, and most instructed their deputies to decide on the basis of their discussions with representatives of other voivodeships. If only the sejmiks of Sieradz, Wieluń, Żytomierz and Royal Prussia
expressed their support, this should be considered together with the widespread support from Lithuania.[20] If, as Ochmann states, the szlachta was far from expressing complete approval, which was hardly to be expected, neither did it reject the idea outright.

Attention usually focusses on the way in which this cautious attitude on the part of the szlachta and leading senators turned increasingly to opposition. Yet if the opposition grew in strength and became increasingly vocal, the Court maintained a level of support which cannot be explained away in terms of simple bribery. One foundation of this support was Lithuania, which had been such an obstacle to royal plans in 1656-8, but which now supported Court policy as the best means of driving out Muscovy and preventing the Grand Duchy's domination by the Tsar. At the 1661 Sejm, M.K.Pac and Jewiśzewski warned that Lithuania could only be saved if the election were agreed.[21] When opinion among Polish deputies seemed to be drifting away from support for the election, Krzysztof Pac publicly declared in the name of the Grand Duchy that Lithuanians were ready to take up arms in support of the election and, as he repeatedly stressed, were even prepared to break the Union if the Poles rejected the idea.[22] These threats were repeated in a published manifesto signed by 40 Lithuanian senators and deputies. Of the leading Lithuanian magnates, only Paweł Sapieha did not sign.[23]

It is true that this support proved insufficient in the long run to ensure the success of the election. The Court was unable to secure the backing of the 1661 Sejm, and the 1662 Sejm banned further
consideration of the matter. The Commonwealth's success in driving
the Muscovites out of much of Lithuania deprived the Court of a
powerful argument in favour of the election plan, and directed the
attention of magnates and szlachta alike to what might lie beyond it.
In this respect, the Court's tactics were unwise. The Merkuriusz
Polski dwelt too much on the virtues of strong royal government and
the restoration of hereditary monarchy in Denmark and Britain in
1660, while the Court's blatant refusal to accept the 1662 ban on the
further pursuit of the election and its willingness to countenance
the use of force provoked genuine concern as to its intentions. The
Court failed to appreciate that Senate support for the election
derived largely from a desire to protect the essence of the
Commonwealth's political system. In the face of the possibility of
partition, or of the seizure of the throne by Austria or Muscovy, an
election vivente rege seemed the only means of ensuring that the
death of John Casimir would not be followed by the destruction of
szlachta liberties by a foreign ruler. If the Court saw the election
essentially as a means of increasing its political power and
influence by bringing up a successor under its influence, senators
saw the scheme as a means of ensuring that the king-elect was brought
up to respect the fundamental principles of the "Golden Freedom". The
Court's vague and ambiguous position merely provoked fears that it
saw the election as the first step on the road to absolutum dominium,
something which it made little effort to deny, and which its
willingness to continue to pursue the election after it had been
explicitly forbidden by the 1662 Sejm seemed merely to confirm.
The Court therefore lost the propaganda battle by failing to accept explicitly that there were limits to its authority. This lost it sufficient support in the Senate to ensure its ultimate defeat. Yet it is hard to see what else it could have done in 1662 but continue its campaign. It was convinced that reform was still necessary, even if the confidence of many in the Commonwealth's political system had been falsely restored after 1661. It had revived the idea of abolishing the veto at the 1661 Sejm, but this was largely an attempt to ease the path of the election; it pursued the plan with no more enthusiasm than it had in 1658 and swiftly dropped it when leading senators expressed their doubts. Yet as historians have often pointed out, if majority voting had been introduced before 1661, royal support would probably have been sufficient to secure agreement for an election. John Casimir, however, was reluctant to surrender the veto: unable to envisage a working system of parliamentary government and conditioned by his experience to regard the Sejm in a negative light, he was reluctant to abandon the protection afforded to his remaining powers by the veto. He therefore failed to appreciate the potential advantages which majority voting might bring in terms of royal ability to manage the Sejm.

For this failure, he has been widely condemned. Yet it would have taken someone of wider political vision than John Casimir to turn the multi-national, religiously plural Commonwealth into an effective parliamentary monarchy, examples of which were singularly lacking in mid-seventeenth century Europe. Concentration on the veto sometimes obscures the extent to which the Sejm suffered from other grave procedural handicaps: the shortness of the sessions, the long
gaps between its meetings, the requirement by which all the enactments of a particular Sejm were regarded as a whole and, above all, its inability to impose its will on the provinces; these handicaps made effective government difficult if not impossible. In 1661, after the backing he had received from his senators during the war, it is hardly surprising if John Casimir turned away from Sejm reform and preferred to rely on his Senate Council. The majority of senators still supported an election in 1661, if not necessarily the candidature of d'Enghien. Once again, it was the Chamber of Deputies which appeared to be the barrier to progress. It was such considerations which led the Court to ignore the 1662 ban on further pursuit of the election and to start down the road which led to Mątwy and to the triumph of Fredro's view of the veto.

In the last analysis the Court proved unable to manage the rival and competing forces within the Commonwealth's ruling class to produce an alliance strong enough to force through its programme. What it faced was not a challenge from a united magnate oligarchy over control of the "helm of state", or a simple ideological battle between "absolutism" and democratic-republicanism, in which the latter was always bound to win, but a complex and shifting situation in which the issue among leading magnates was not so much whether central power should be strengthened, but which factions or factional alliances were to dominate politics at the centre once reform was achieved. Many leading magnates, such as the Pac family, were quite content to back royal plans, not because they wished to advance their own private interests before reverting to a basic belief in democratic republicanism, but because they expected, in
the event of a successful realisation of Court plans, to benefit in the long term from the strengthening of royal power. Given the bitter factional rivalry within the magnate élite, it was impossible for the Court to avoid provoking the opposition of magnates who feared that their rivals would benefit in this way.

So long as the war with Sweden lasted, and the danger to the Commonwealth's existence continued, support for the Court's programme remained more or less solid among the vast majority of magnates, most of whom were prepared to back its approved candidate for the throne, since the alternatives seemed to be partition or foreign domination. The problem was that the military and diplomatic situation before 1660 precluded the launching of an election campaign when it had the greatest chance of success. There was widespread support for an Austrian candidate between 1655 and 1657, but the Habsburgs showed no interest until it was too late. Unfortunately for the Court, however, an important group of senators, led by most of the episcopate, usually a reliable source of support for plans to increase royal power, continued to back an Austrian candidature which was increasingly impracticable, frustrating attempts to reach agreement on an alternative, while Lithuanian support for the Treaty of Wilno prevented any open move before 1658, while the need for Austrian aid and France's ambivalent diplomatic attitude to the war precluded a French candidature until after Oliva. Yet once the immediate danger to Poland had passed, although support for the principle of an election initially remained fairly solid among senators, private factional interests swiftly reasserted themselves.
Thus, while the threat of partition remained, the majority of senators were ready to back Court policy as the best means in such a difficult situation of preserving the constitution and of strengthening the state, confident in the Senate Council's ability to act as *custodes legis et regis*. It proved impossible, however, before 1660 to find a candidate who was willing to stand and who fulfilled the two essential criteria: he had to be able to defend the Commonwealth against its enemies, and he had to be capable of playing the rôle envisaged for him by the Court. Before 1660, there did not seem to be any contradiction between these two aims. The Court's suggestion that the candidate should be a young adult who would be brought up under its supervision was clever: while it appealed to senators as a means of ensuring that the future king would be instructed in Polish ways, so that when he succeeded, the constitution would be preserved, it would also ensure that the king-elect would remain under Court influence, especially if he married Louise Marie's niece. Yet from the outset the implications of such a plan were clear, especially to politicians like Lubomirski who were not part of the Court circle. While the threat to the Commonwealth's existence remained, such fears were overshadowed by fear of partition, or of the seizure of the throne by the Tsar or the Emperor. After 1660, they reemerged.

Even then, the battle was not necessarily between those who supported an election and those who opposed it in principle, but a continuation of the struggle for control of the king-elect which had already been apparent in 1655-6. The complex forces which operated are well illustrated in the case of Lubomirski, the Court's most
prominent opponent in the 1660's. In 1655-6, Lubomirski had promoted a Transylvanian candidature, in the hope that his close links with Rákóczy would ensure his influence after the election. He strongly opposed, however, the Court's suggestion of the election of Rákóczy's son, since that would place the new king under the control of the Court. His hopes for Rákóczy's own election were destroyed after the Transylvanian invasion of 1657, and for a time it seemed as if Lubomirski supported the Court's line over the election. He signed the offer to the Habsburgs in the spring of 1657, and later was a prominent supporter of the Queen's campaign to find an alternative candidate to a Habsburg. In December 1658, it was Lubomirski who called the convocation of senators in Thorn which discussed possible candidates for the throne, and which issued a declaration implicitly excluding an Austrian candidate, while explicitly suggesting that a French candidature might be compatible with the preservation of the Commonwealth's liberties.

Lubomirski's interest was occasioned more by a fear of the alternative than genuine support for the Court. Although he had signed the 1657 offer to the Habsburgs, he was horrified by the terms of the second Treaty of Vienna, which not only awarded the Austrians the rich proceeds from the salt mines at Bochnia and Wieliczka near Cracow, long enjoyed by the Lubomirski family, but also allowed them to garrison Cracow. The latter proposal affected Lubomirski in two ways. He shared in the growing concern that the presence of a large Austrian army within the Commonwealth, was part of a plan to seize the throne and to trample upon noble liberties, as the Habsburgs had done in Bohemia thirty years earlier. Secondly, the Austrian
garrison in Cracow struck a blow at Lubomirski's most important power-base: as General of Little Poland, he was responsible for the defence of that province, and his great popularity among the local szlachta ensured that he could rely on them if necessary for military support, as became clear in 1665-6. Given John Casimir's clear support for an Austrian candidature, which remained strong at least into 1659 if not beyond, Lubomirski had a great deal to gain by supporting Louise Marie.

Once the danger from Austria had passed, following the withdrawal of Austrian troops from the Commonwealth, all Lubomirski's old inclinations reemerged. Although he later justified his opposition to the election on the grounds that it was a threat to szlachta liberties, it was not the principle of the election to which he was opposed, but the domination of that election by the Court.[24] He had long had his own ambitions with regard to the election, of which his support for Rákóczy in 1655-6 was but one manifestation. From 1655, Lubomirski regarded himself as a potential candidate for the throne. When the possibility of an election had first been discussed in 1655, one of the vital criteria in the selection of potential candidates was the amount of military or financial aid they could afford the Commonwealth in the war with Sweden. Nevertheless, from the outset the possibility of a "Piast" or native candidate was also aired. The name most frequently mentioned in this connection was that of Lubomirski. If Lubomirski was attracted by the prospect, for the moment it would be unwise to pursue it. Although a Piast candidature might be popular among the szlachta, it was viewed with great suspicion by magnates, since the monarchy's great patronage
powers would give a native candidate a golden opportunity to favour his own family and clients over their rivals. Nevertheless, Lubomirski knew that a native candidate was traditionally popular among the szlachta, while he had good reason to believe that his candidature would be welcomed by ordinary nobles, among whom he enjoyed great popularity. Despite his dealings with the Swedes in 1655, he had not gone over to Charles Gustav and his reputation did not suffer like those of Radziwiłł or Opaliński. His military feats after 1655 won him great popularity, while he possessed a firm power-base in his domination of the politics of Little Poland in general and the Cracow voivodeship in particular.

Suspicions about Lubomirski's ambitions were an important source of tension between the Marshal and the Court, which continued throughout 1656. Lubomirski strongly opposed the marriage of his relation Jan Zamoyski to Maria Casimira d'Arquien, one of the Queen's French entourage, fearing that this would lure Zamoyski into the Court circle.[25] Meanwhile, John Casimir proved extremely reluctant to trust Lubomirski in military matters, although he was finally forced to appoint Lubomirski Crown Field Hetman at Częstochowa in March 1657, instead of Czarniecki, his preferred candidate. The King's reluctance to put military power into Lubomirski's hands clearly stemmed from his fears as to the Marshal's ambitions. Jan Leszczyński told Vidoni during the Częstochowa Convocation:

"that the Marshal is capable of competing for the Crown and that he does not see any great obstacles apart from the enmity which the King bears him."[26]

Suspicions about Lubomirski continued into 1658, when many
questioned the motives behind his intervention in the talks with the Cossacks:

"Several senators are highly jealous that the Marshal has intervened in the talks with the Cossacks, feeling that he is most concerned to advance his own interests, rather than those of the Commonwealth."[27]

Lubomirski was prepared to support the Court's proposals so long as these consisted of a general commitment to the principle of an election. He backed the Queen so long as there was a danger that John Casimir and the episcopate might secure the acceptance of an Austrian candidature which might be backed by military force. Once the Austrian army had withdrawn, and the Court began to enlist the support of an impressive array of senators for the candidature of d'Enghien, Lubomirski feared for his own position. He therefore moved into open opposition. He took this step not because he was opposed to strong royal government, despite the pious platitudes of his Manifesto, but to strong royal government over which he had no influence and from which he could expect no benefit. In this, his attitude was typical of his fellow magnates.

Yet if Lubomirski was successful in blocking Court plans, the Court was equally successful in frustrating his ambitions, and he died in exile two years before a native candidate was indeed elected in 1669. It is unlikely, however, that Lubomirski himself would have been elected had he lived: he had too many important magnate rivals. Although Wiśniowiecki was the scion of a great and famous house, and although he was the son of Jarema Wiśniowiecki, who had been the sort of popular hero in the early years of the Cossack Revolt that
Lubomirski had become after 1655, he was too young and too inexperienced to cause his peers any great concern. The leading magnates who had supported the French election campaign, and who had tried to secure d'Enghien's election in 1669, immediately passed into opposition and such prominent figures as Krzysztof Pac and John Sobieski set about frustrating royal policy in precisely the same way that Lubomirski had frustrated them in the 1660's.[28] This was not because they had reverted to a "natural" tendency on the part of the magnate stratum to resist central authority, but because they had suffered a temporary setback in the battle between magnate factions for central control which raged behind the rhetoric about noble freedom.

Central authority in the mid-seventeenth century Commonwealth was paralysed not because the monarchy finally surrendered its authority to a "magnate oligarchy" with an inherent bias towards decentralisation, but because it did not prove quite powerful enough between 1655 and 1668 to break the vicious circle of magnate rivalry by raising itself above the struggle sufficiently to dominate it. The monarchy could and did win support from a significant proportion of the magnate élite, but it could never win quite enough to overcome its opponents. The Commonwealth's political system and its local and regional rivalries offered malcontent magnates too many opportunities to frustrate and block government policy if they chose, while the lack of homogeneity in what was such a diverse and pluralist state, created problems on a scale unknown in any contemporary European state, with the exception of Austria, where the Habsburgs had been able to exploit the Bohemian Revolt to destroy
many of the particularist and local restraints on central authority which remained so strong in the Commonwealth.

It has been the aim of this thesis to explain royal policy after 1655, not to justify it. The campaign to elect d'Enghien vivente rege was not an irresponsible irrelevancy which fatally diverted attention away from the more important task of Sejm reform, but the centrepiece of an attempt to end the crisis of government in the Commonwealth by strengthening the executive through strengthening the position of the monarchy. Central to this concept was a partnership between Crown and Senate Council which had seemed to emerge after the shock of 1655, but which gradually broke down after 1660, as rivalries between magnate factions, and between magnates and the King, reemerged. If the Court could still win enough support for its plans to appear dangerous, it could never quite win enough to triumph. Nevertheless, the campaign for an election vivente rege under John Casimir came closer than any attempt before the late eighteenth century to breaking the political stalemate which was the true source of the Commonwealth's weakness. Unfortunately, it was a plan which could not be launched before 1660 and which was much less likely to succeed thereafter, when the means by which it was pursued permanently entrenched suspicion of royal motives among the szlachta, confirming for many that the interests of the state and the interests of the monarchy were different. Once the plan was defeated, the way was opened for the large-scale foreign intervention in the Commonwealth's internal affairs which it had originally been designed to prevent. After 1668, the Commonwealth was left behind, as its neighbours transformed themselves into military powers with
which it no longer had a chance of competing. For that, the failure of the campaign for an election *vivente rege* must bear a great deal of the responsibility. That failure, however, was by no means inevitable: John Casimir may have been over-optimistic; he was not wilfully irresponsible.
AGAD Archiwum Górnegakt Dawnych
AKW Archiwum Koronne Warszawskie
AMChod. Archiwum Miłnowskiego Chodkiewiczów
AP Archiwum Pinocchich
APPot Archiwum Publiczne Potockich
ARadz. Archiwum Radziwiłłów
ASang. Archiwum Sanguszków
ADz.Tarn. Archiwum Dziekowskie Tarnowskich
B.Jag. Biblioteka Jagiellońska
B.Nar. Biblioteka Narodowa
BPANCr. Biblioteka Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Cracow
BOZ Biblioteka Ordynacji Zamoyskiej
BUW Biblioteka Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego
CPA Correspondance Politique: Austria
CPD Correspondance Politique: Danzig
CPP Correspondance Politique: Pologne
CPS Correspondance Politique: Suède
EFE Elementa ad Fontium Editiones
LL Libri Legationum
Ossol. Biblioteka Zakładu im. Ossolińskich
PAN Polska Akademia Nauk
PSB Polski Słownik Biograficzny
PODWP Lepszy, K. [ed.]: Polska w okresie drugiej wojny południowej
SMHW Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości
SMHSW Studia i Materiały do Historii Sztuk Wojennych
Sobótka Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka
T.Łuk. Teki Łukasa

T.Żrz. Teki Rzymskie

WAPCr. Wojewódzkie Archiwum Państwowe, Kraków

WAP Wawel Wojewódzkie Archiwum Państwowe, Kraków: Oddział na Wawelu

Z.Bow. Zbiory Baworowskie
1. "Articuli Pacis & Conventionis inter Illustrissimis et Excellentissimis Dominum Arfid Wittemberg,...& Palatinatum Posnaniensem et Calicensem,...Actum in Castris sub Uscie die [25th July 1655.]" AGAD AKW, Szwedzkie, k.11b no.21


6. A.M.Fredro: Scriptorum seu togae et bellum notationum fragmenta... [Danzig, 1660]

7. Kiev was initially granted to Muscovy for three years, but the Commonwealth was in no position to insist on its return. It was lost forever in the peace treaty of 1686; Wojcik: Traktat Andruszowski 1667 i jego geneza [Warsaw, 1959] pp.255-7


11. For a general account of the economic situation, see Mączak: "Problemy gospodarcze" in Tazbir [ed.]: Polska XVII wieku [Warsaw, 1974] pp.97-137. For a more detailed analysis of the problem of the "second serfdom", see Kula: An economic theory of the feudal system. Towards a model of the Polish economy 1500-

12. For the extent of destruction, see Rusiński: "Uwagi o zniszczeniach po wojnach z połowy XVII w." PPD WP II pp.427-449


15. In 1641, the number of senators resident was increased from four to seven. Czapliński has shown that for the reign of Władysław IV, four out of seven was the highest number of senators resident which attended individual meetings of the council, a figure that was attained at only one in every thirty-five sessions, usually following a banquet. Czapliński: "Senat za Władysława IV" Studia historyczne ku czci Stanisława Kutrzeby I [Cracow, 1938] p.38

16. It is true that the king frequently had difficulty in persuading his chancellors to accept controversial decrees. Albrecht Stanisław Radziwiłł, Lithuanian Grand Chancellor, refused to put his seal to a decree in December 1649 until it accorded with Lithuanian law. A.S. Radziwiłł: Memoriale Rerum Gestarum in Poloniæ IV p.150

17. Senators treated the requirement to keep minutes of Council meetings in a cavalier fashion. At the Sejm of 1649-50, John Casimir explained that the Council minutes could not be read since Piotr Gembicki, the Regent of the Chancery, had left them in Zamość. Częśćek: Sejm Warszawski w 1649-50 roku [Wrocław, 1978] p.77


20. Czapliński has suggested that the turning-point in terms of szlachta support for royal aims came at the end of the reign of Sigismund III. Czapliński: "Polityka Rzeczypospolitej polskiej w latach 1576-1648" Pamiętnik VIII Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich w Krakowie 14-17 września 1958 III [Warsaw, 1960] p.96. For Polish policy with regard to the Thirty Years' War, see Czermak: "Polska wobec wyniki wojny 30-letniej" Studia Historyczne [Cracow, 1901]; Czapliński: Władysław IV wobec
wojny 30-letniej [Cracow, 1937]. For the Turkish war plans, see Czermak: Plany wojny tureckiej Władysława IV [Cracow, 1895]; Wisner: "Litwa i plany wojny tureckiej Władysława IV. Rok 1646" Kwartalnik Historyczny 85 [1978]; Myciński: Ladislao IV Vasa et les Cosaques. L’échec des deux dernières tentatives du militarisme royal en Pologne Unpublished doctoral thesis, State University of Lille [1970]


24. For background to the Cossack Revolt, see Sysyn: op. cit.; Wójcik: Dzikie pola w ogniu. O kozaczyźnie w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej 3rd edition [Warsaw, 1968]

25. ib. p.140


31. Serejski: Naród a państwo p.170

32. Plebaniński: Jan Kazimierz Waza, Maria Ludwika Gonzaga. Dwa obrazy historyczne [Warsaw, 1862]

33. Few historians have represented John Casimir in a favourable light. The most prominent was the strongly pro-Austrian Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Polski za panowania Jana Kazimierza, 1655-1660 [Cracow, 1866-1868], and Historia wyzwolonej Rzeczypospolitej wpadającej pod jarzmo domowe za panowania Jana Kazimierza [1655-1660] [Cracow, 1870]. More
influential have been two negative nineteenth-century views: Plebański: Jan Kazimierz Waza, Maria Ludwika Gonzaga. Dwa obrazy historyczne and Czermak: "Jan Kazimierz, próba charakterystyki" Kwartalnik Historyczny 3 [1889]; John Casimir's most recent biographer is not quite so damning, but does not challenge the basic view of a feeble and irresolute monarch dominated by his wife: Wasilewski: Jan Kazimierz. Ostatni Waza na polskim tronie [Katowice, 1984] and Jan Kazimierz [Warsaw, 1985]


35. Śreniowski: "Państwo polskie w połowie XVII w." PODWP I p.16

36. Czapliński: "Rządy oligarchii w Polsce nowozytniej" pp.134-8


40. Dworzaczek: "Uwagi o genezie magnaterii" p.3; Kersten: "Warstwa magnacka. Kryterium przynależności" p.11

41. ib. pp.11-12

42. ib. p.5

43. Maciszewski: "Społeczeństwo" p.164

44. ib. pp.149,165

45. ib. p.164

47. ib. pp.481-3; see also: Kaczmarszyk: "Oligarchia magnacka w Polsce jako forma państwa" Pamiętnik VII Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich w Krakowie I [Warsaw, 1958] pp.223-4


50. Czapliński: "Rządy oligarchii w Polsce nowożytnej" p.162

51. Kersten: "Problem władzy w Rzeczypospolitej czasu Wazów" p.36

52. ib. p.25

53. Czapliński: "Rządy oligarchii w Polsce nowożytnej" p.140

54. Kersten: "Problem władzy w Rzeczypospolitej czasu Wazów" p.25

55. ib.

56. ib. p.26

57. ib. p.32

58. ib. p.33

59. ib. pp.35-6

60. Olszewski: Sejm Rzeczypospolitej epoki oligarchii pp.303-4


62. Wyczanski: "The system of power in Poland, 1370-1648" in Mączak, Samsonowicz and Burke [eds.]: East-central Europe in transition. From the 14th to the 17th century [Cambridge, 1985] p.152


68. For magnate rivalry in Lithuania after 1660, see: Codello: "Rywalizacja Paców i Radziwiłłów w latach 1666-1669" Kwartalnik Historyczny 71 [1964]; Rachuba: "Opozycja litewska wobec wyprawy Jana Kazimierza na Rosję [1663/1664r.]" Kwartalnik Historyczny 89 [1982]; Rachuba: "Zabiegi dworu I Jerzego Lubomirskiego o pozyskanie Litwy w 1664 roku" Przegląd Historyczny 78 [1987]
Notes

Introduction


71. Kubala: Wojna moskiewska r.1654-1655 [Warsaw, Cracow, 1910]; Wojna szwedzka w roku 1655 i 1656 [Lwów, 1913]; Wojna brandenburska i najazd Rakoczego w roku 1656 i 1657 [Lwów, Warsaw, 1917]; Wojny duńskie i pokój oliwijski [Lwów, 1922]

72. Lepszy [ed.]: Polska w okresie drugiej wojny polnocnej [Warsaw, 1957]

73. The nineteenth-century French historian Émile Haumont is one of the few to stress the essential unity of the wars of John Casimir's reign. Yet although he talks of a "Twenty Years' War of the North" [1648-1667], he only deals with the war with Sweden. Haumont: La guerre du Nord et la Paix d'Oliva [Paris, 1893]. For military aspects of the war, the best introductions are: Wimmer: Wojsko polskie w drugiej połowie XVII wieku [Warsaw, 1965]; Wimmer [ed.]: Wojna polsko-szwedzka 1655-1660 [Warsaw, 1973]

74. Kersten: Stefan Czarniecki, 1599-1665 [Warsaw, 1963]


76. De Lumbres' memoires were published by Lhomel: Relations de Lumbres Antoine, ambassadeur en Pologne et en Allemagne touchant ses négociations et ambassades [Paris, 1912]. Copies of de Lumbres' despatches are in the Ossolineum library in Wrocław: T.Luk.2976, 2978. Where possible, I have consulted the originals in the British Library and the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères in Paris. Many of Lisola's despatches have been published by Pribram: Die Berichte der Kaiserlichen Gesandten Franz von Lisola aus den Jahren 1655-1660 Archiv für

2. Wimmer: Wojsko polskie w drugiej połowie XVII wieku pp.20-1

3. ib. p.35; For the legal basis of private magnate armies, see Dembski: "Wojska nadworne magnatów polskich w XVI i XVIIIw." Zeszyt naukowy Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza 21, nr.3 [Poznań, 1956]. Czapliński and Długosz doubt whether magnates maintained such large forces in practice, but it remains true that magnates could raise troops far more quickly than the king in an emergency. Czapliński and Długosz: Życie codzienne magnaterii polskiej w XVIIIw. [Warsaw, 1982] p.62

4. Wimmer: Wojsko polskie w drugiej połowie XVII wieku pp.35-6


6. Wimmer: Wojsko polske w drugiej połowie XVII wieku p.77. In 1649, the government asked for 30,000 troops. The Sejm accepted 19,042, but only voted enough money for 10,000. Częscik: Sejm Warszawski w 1649-1650r. [Wrocław, 1978] p.27. Even when the money was voted, it arrived but slowly. Of the 2,738,000 złoties voted for Poland and the 1,220,000 for Lithuania in the autumn Sejm of 1627, only 50% had been collected by May 1628. All Sigismund III could do was to call another Sejm, where he faced the same problems. By December 1628, the debt to the army was 1,526,384 złoties. Sejm of 1628 and 1629 did little to help. As Sigismund remarked: "sufficient resources were never agreed for this war; even when funds were voted by the Sejm, at the sejmiks, everything was ruined." Filipczak-Kocur: "Problemy podatkowo-wojskowe na sejmie w roku 1628" Zeszyty naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej im. Powstańców Śląskich w Opolu Seria A; Historia XVI [Opole, 1979] pp.23-27, 37

7. John Casimir to Stanisław Laskowski, Castellan of Podlesie, Grodno, 6.II.1653 WAP Wawel, ADz.Tarn.1232 no.25

8. Tyzenhaus to his brothers gathered at the sejmik, 19.V.1655; Czart.148 no.29, p.127. Printed in Kubala: Wojna szwecka p.43


12. Czaplinski: Dwa sejmy w roku 1652 pp.125-6


14. For the Muscovite campaign in Byelorussia in 1654, see Mal'tsev: Rossiia i Belorussiia v seredine XVII veka [Moscow, 1974] pp.31-65

15. Wimmer: Wojsko Polskie w drugiej połowie XVII wieku pp.82-3


17. Fragstein to Dietrichstein, 30.VIII.1654; Leszczyński: "Dwa ostatnie sejmy przed potopem szwedzkim w oczach dyplomaty cesarskiego" Sobótka 30 [1975] p.293, n.24

18. Wisner: "Działalność wojskowa Janusza Radziwiłła 1648-1655" p.93


21. The Swedes were only willing to pay John Casimir a sum of money as compensation, and grant him a military alliance and 4,000 men if Poland were attacked; Zaborovskii: "Politika Shtetsii nakanune pervoi severnoi voiny [vtoraia polovina 1654 - seredina 1655g." Voprosy Istoriografii i Istochnikovedeniia Slaviano-germanskich Otnoshenii [Moscow, 1973] p.207


"Geneza decyzji Karola X Gustava o wojnie z Polską w 1655 r."


27. J. Leszczyński to A. Leszczyński, 23.IV.1655; Czart.384 no.94, p.216. Cf. Jan Leszczyński to Krzysztof Opaliński, Warsaw, 8.III.1655; Czart.384 no.84, p.192

28. Canasilles suggested in 1652 that John Casimir should receive Ducal Prussia in return for resigning his rights to Sweden and for the Commonwealth resigning its claim to Livonia. Frederick William would be compensated by receiving Bremen from Charles Gustav. Kubala: Wojna szwecka pp.22-3. In 1654, John Casimir proposed that Charles Ferdinand should be given part of Livonia, since he wished to marry. ib. pp.27-8


30. Kubala, Wojna szwecka p.21

31. J. Leszczyński to A. Leszczyński, 2.III.1655, Czart.384 no 82, p.188; J. Leszczyński to A. Leszczyński, 4.III.1655; Czart.384 no. 83, p.190

32. J. Leszczyński to A. Leszczyński, 4.III.1655; Czart.384 p.190

33. Kubala: Wojna szwecka p.33; Czapliński: "Rola magnaterii i szlachty w pierwszych latach wojny szwedzkiej" p.150; Kersten: Hieronim Radziejowski p.382

34. J. Leszczyński to A. Leszczyński, 4.III.1655; Czart.384 p.190


37. Damus: Der erste nordische Krieg bis zur Schlacht bei Warschau, aus Danziger Quellen [Danzig, 1884] p.22

38. Czapliński: "Rola magnaterii i szlachty w pierwszych latach wojny szwedzkiej" p.169

39. Bengt Skytte mentions the approach in a letter to Per Brahe, 27.XI.1648; Carlson: Geschichte Schwedens [Gotha, 1855] IV, p.27. There is no proof, however, that it was from Radziwiłł.
Czapliński originally thought it was, but later expressed his doubts: Czapliński: "Rola magnaterii i szlachty w pierwszych latach wojny szwedzkiej" p.152; "Parę uwag o tolerancji w okresie Kontreformacji" in O Polsce siedemnastoleczej p.121. Nowak and Wasilewski are convinced that Radziwiłł was responsible: Nowak: "Geneza agresji szwedzkiej" p.102; Wasilewski: "Zdrada Janusza Radziwiłła w 1655r. i jej wyznaniowe motywy" Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce 18 [1973] p.128


42. ib.


44. The definitive biography of Radziejowski is by Kersten. See also: Szajnocha: "Hieronim i Elżbiety Radziejowscy" Szkice Historyczne Seria 1-2 [Warsaw, 1876]; Kubala: "Proces Radziejowskiego" Szkice Historyczne Serya 2 [Lwów, 1923] pp.223-63;

45. Nowak: "Geneza agresji szwedzkiej" p.117


47. Nowak: "Geneza agresji szwedzkiej" p.109; cf. Czapliński: "Rola magnaterii.151; See Sajkowski's criticisms of these views: Krzysztof Opaliński p.227


49. According to Adersbach, these families: "sich in vertrauter Confidenz so fast miteinander verbunden und veralliiert, dass eine für alle und alle für eine stehen und ohne einziger durch wessen Bewegniss es auch immer versucht würde Zertrennung an einander halten wollen." Adersbach to Frederick William, 14.III.1654; Urkunden und Aktenstücke VI p.685

50. Nowak: "Geneza agresji szwedzkiej" p.111; Czapliński: "Rola magnaterii i szlachty w pierwszych latach wojny szwedzkiej" p.151; The letter is published in Follak [ed.]: Listy Krzysztofa Opalińskiego do brata łukasza 1641-1653 [Warsaw, 1957] p.501; Many recipients of Radziejowski's letters either destroyed them or gave them straight to the King, to avoid being implicated. Kersten: Hieronim Radziejowski p.327
51. Sajkowski: Krzysztof Opaliński pp.227, 232, n.100

52. Kersten: Hieronim Radziejowski pp.333-5

53. ib. p.357. Radziejowski wrote to Leszczyński and to members of the Queen's circle, including Butler and her confessor, Fleury. Kersten suggests that there were certainly more letters which have not survived, which seems probable, but he can find few replies and none that go beyond a certain sympathy with Radziejowski's fate. ib. pp.382, 633. For a noncommittal reply, see J.Leszczyński to Radziejowski, Warsaw, 25.V.1655; Czart.384 no.98, p.222, which is not as warm in its tone as Kersten suggests. Leszczyński certainly expressed sympathy, but stressed the problems Radziejowski faced in winning rehabilitation.


55. Sajkowski: Krzysztof Opaliński p.214

56. A.Leszczyński to J.Radziwiłł, 18.IX.1654; BUW 66 p.88

57. ib. p.89

58. Trzebicki to A.Leszczyński, Grodno, 11.X.1654; Czart.384 pp.133-4

59. Radziwiłł to A.Leszczyński, Minsk, 2.XII.1654; Kotłubaj: Życie Janusza Radziwiłła Dodatek XV, p.397


61. A.S.Radziwiłł: Memoriale rerum gestarum in Poloniae IV pp.34-5

62. Adersbach to Frederick William, Warsaw, 7.III.1654; Urkunden und Aktenstücke VI p.685

63. Hoverbeck to Frederick William, Warsaw, 23.III.1654; Urkunden und Aktenstücke VI p.686

64. Cf. Czapliński: "Rola magnaterii i szlachty w pierwszych latach wojny szwedzkiej", especially pp.144-8

65. Kubala: Wojna szwecka p.35. Cf. "Szwedzi do Polski za Karola Gustawa"; Wojcicki [ed.]: Biblioteka starożytna pisarzy polskich pp.187-8. Many in Great Poland refused to believe that the Swedes were really coming, even when they were already on their way from Stettin. ib. p.188
66. K.L.Sapieha to P.Sapieha, Warsaw, 14.VIII.1655; BPANCr.354 p.270

67. J.Leszczynski to Trzebicki, Thorn, 12.VI.1655; Czart.384 no.101, p.228

68. J.Leszczynski to J.Radziwili, Warsaw, 22.III.1655; Czart.384 no.88, p.200; For Catholic objections to the cession of Livonia, see Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Polski I p.53, based on a report by Koch and Lilienthal; in general ecclesiastical senators were more willing to consider war with Sweden, since they sensed an opportunity to recover Livonia. Pufendorf: De rebus a Carolo Gustavo I p.38. The Bishop of Samogitia, part of whose diocese was in Swedish hands, was present at the Warsaw meeting, and was unlikely to agree to the transference of control: Vidoni to Orsini, Warsaw, 15.III.1655; T.Rz.8418 no.7, p.12

69. Kubala: Wojna szwecka p.34

70. "Puncta nomine ilmi. principis Radzivilli sermo Transylvaniae principi proponenda"; Szilágyi: Transsylvania et bellum boreo-orientale I p.310


72. Wasilewski: "Zdrada Janusza Radziwiłła w 1655r. i jej wyznaniowe motywy" p.129

73. Wisner: "Dzialalnosc wojskowa Janusza Radziwiłła 1648-1655" pp.91-2

74. Fragstein to Dietrichstein, 30.VIII.1654; Leszczyński: "Dwa ostatnie sejmy przed potopem sz

75. Damus: op. cit. p.19

76. Stade: op. cit. p.38

77. Damus: op. cit. p.19. Copy of John Casimir's Proclamation to the Cossacks, Warsaw, 4.V.1655; BPANCr.2254 p.411

78. Vidoni to Orsini, Warsaw, 9.V.1655; T.Rz.8418 no.10, p.20


80. Koryciński to John Casimir, undated, Czart.402 pp.79-80

81. ib.

82. ib. p.81. For the military problems faced in 1655 see Majewski: "Polska sztuka wojenna w okresie wojny polsko-szwedzkiej" SMHW 21 [1978] p.333

83. Czapliński: "Rola magnaterii i szlachty w pierwszych latach wojny szwedzkiej" p.151
84. Kersten: Hieronim Radziejowski p.383

85. Wisner: "Działalność wojskowa Janusza Radziwiłła 1648-1655" p.101

86. ib.

87. Copia listu z Warszawy z Seymu Ostatniego przed zawieruchą ta wielka od wszech Nieprzyjaciół Rzeczypospolitej, 27.V.1655; Ossol.3564 p.325


89. Leszczyński: "Dwa ostatnie sejmy przed potopem szwedzkim" p.293

90. Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Rzeczypospolitej I p.60

91. Copia listu z Warszawy z Seymu Ostatniego przed zawieruchą ta wielka od wszech Nieprzyjaciół Rzeczypospolitej 27.V.1655; Ossol. 3564 p.326; Leszczyński: "Dwa ostatnie sejmy przed potopem szwedzkim" pp.298, 300

92. Royal instructions to sejmiks of the duchies of Zator and Oświęcim; Akta sejmikowe województwa krakowskiego II p.534

93. John Casimir to Jan Branicki, Warsaw, 5.IV.1655; Czart.148 no.24, p.123; Another copy: Czart.400 p.361

94. Vidoni to Orsini, Warsaw, 23.V.1655; T.Rz.8418 no.12, p.24

95. Lauda opatoviensis oblata, 28.IV.1655; Teki Pawińskiego 8338 p.191

96. Wimmer: "Wojsko i finanse Rzeczypospolitej w czasie wojny ze Szwecją 1655-1660" in Wimmer [ed.]: Wojna polsko-szwedzka p.60

97. ib.; Laudum Contributionis in Conventu Gen. Graudentansi, 4.V.1655; Czart.977 p.372

98. Lauda sejmiku średzkiego, 28.IV.1655; Czart.1774 pp.299-300


100. Hoverbeck to Frederick William, 16.VI.1655; Urkunden und Aktenstücke VI p.698
101. *Instructio palatinatus Syradiensis*, 28.IV.1655; Teki Pawińskiego 8342 pp.623-4

102. Wimmer: "*Wojsko i finanse Rzeczypospolitej w czasie wojny ze Szwecją [1655-1660]*)" pp.64-5

103. *ib.* p.65

104. Wisner: "*Działalność wojskowa Janusza Radziwiłła 1648-1655"* p.64

105. J.Radziwiłł to Slomin District, Mogilev, 7.IV.1655; Czart.148 no.26, p.139


107. J.Radziwiłł to Slomin District, Mogilev, 7.IV.1655; Czart. 148 no.26, pp.127, 136

108. *ib.* p.138

109. For the Obuchowicz affair see: Leszczyński: "*Ostatnie dwa sejmy przed potopem szwedzkim"* p.294; Wasilewski: "*Zdrada Janusza Radziwiłła w 1655r. i jej wyznaniowe motywy*" pp.131-2. Obuchowicz had made his early career as a protegé of the Sapiehas: Przyboś: "Filip Kazimierz Obuchowicz" PSB XXIII p.474

110. Wisner emphasises Radziwiłł's popularity in the Commonwealth: "*Działalność wojskowa Janusza Radziwiłła 1648-1655*" p.92. For criticisms of Radziwiłł over the Obuchowicz affair see: Mienicki: "*Utrata Smolenska w r.1654 i sprawa Obuchowicza*" Kwartalnik Litewski 1 [1910] p.58


112. Medeksza: *Księga pamiętnicza* p.1

113. Leszczyński: "*Dwa ostatnie sejmy przed potopem szwedzkim*" p.296


115. For example the Sieradz sejmik: Instructions, Teki Pawińskiego 8342 p.625; Instructions of the Cracow sejmik, Akta sejmikowe województwa krakowskiego II no.209, p.537. Leszczyński: "*Dwa ostatnie sejmy przed potopem szwedzkim*" p.296

116. Hoverbeck to Frederick William, 10.VI.1655; Urkunden und
Tyzenhaus to his brothers gathered at the sejmik, 19.V.1655; Czart.148 no.29, p.127. Printed in Kubala: Wojna szwecka p.43

118. ib.

119. Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Rzeczypospolitej I p.60

120. Articuly na Sejm Anni 1655, Lublin 28.IV.1655; Czart.395 p.211

121. Volumina Legum IV pp.480-1; Wimmer: "Wojsko i finanse Rzeczypospolitej w czasie wojny ze Szwecją [1655-1660]" p.62

122. Kersten: Chłopi polscy w walce z najazdem szwedzkim p.65 Sajkowski: Krzysztof Opalinski p.218; Kubala: Wojna szwecka pp.44-5. Jarochowski claims that troops were available which could have been used; Jarochowski: Wielkopolska w czasie pierwszej wojny szwedzkiej od roku 1655 do 1657 [Poznan, 1864] p.23

123. Sajkowski: Krzysztof Opaliński p.218

124. Damus: op. cit. p.23

125. Wimmer: "Przegląd operacji w wojnie polsko-szwedzkiej 1655-1660" in Wimmer [ed.]: Wojna polsko-szwedzka [Warsaw, 1973] p.137. Great Poland, unlike Royal Prussia, was short of modern fortifications: Majewski: op. cit. p.335. Royal Prussia, following the wars of the 1620's, was the only area of the state with adequate fortifications: Stankiewicz: "System fortifikacyjny Gdańska i okolicy w czasie wojny 1655-1660" SMHW 20 [1974] pp.73-121


127. Koryciński to John Casimir, [April 1655]; Czart.402 pp.80-1


129. Wimmer: "Przegląd operacji w wojnie polsko-szwedzkiej 1655-1660" p.139

130. ib.

131. ib. pp.139-140. The confusion of the fighting is well described by a contemporary witness: Jarochowski: "Przejście województw wielkopolskich do Szwedów pod Ujściem w roku 1655, z współczesnego rękopisama." Przyjaciel Ludu 6 no.53 [1840] p.411; Cf. "Causa deditiones albo sposób y przyczyny Podania się Szwedom Wielgopolanów 1655" BNAR BOZ 934 p.273
132. Wimmer: "Przegląd operacji w wojnie polsko-szwedzkiej 1655-1660." p.140; Czapliński also blames the szlachta in part: "Rola magnaterii i szlachty w pierwszych latach wojny szwedzkiej" p.154; Jarochowski, however, suggests that the military task was hopeless: Wielkopolska w czasie pierwszej wojny szwedzkiej od roku 1655 do 1657 p.31

133. Wimmer: "Przegląd operacji w wojnie polsko-szwedzkiej 1655-1660" p.140

134. Czapliński: "Rola magnaterii i szlachty w pierwszych latach wojny szwedzkiej" p.154

135. "Actum in castris sub Uscie...." AKW Szwedzkie k.11B/21; Sajkowski: Krzysztof Opaliński p.233

136. ib.

137. "O Woynie Polskiey z Szwedskim Królem Carolem Gustavem" Czart.1657 p.229 For the clash between Grudziński and Opaliński, see Sauter: Krzysztof Żegocki, pierwszy partyzant Rzeczypospolitej, 1618-1673 [Poznań, 1981] p.35; Two other senators present, Czarnkowski and Gajewski, also did not sign.

138. Sajkowski: Krzysztof Opaliński pp.227-8

139. For the Muscovite campaign in 1655 see Mal'tsev: Rossiia i Belorussiia v seredine XVII veka pp.66-131; Longworth: Alexis, Tsar of all the Russias [.London, 1984] pp.106-9

140. Wisner: "Dysydeni litewscy wobec wybuchu wojny polsko-szwedzkiej" p.128

141. Radziwiłł to Koryckiński, 7.VIII.1655; Czart.917 p.1371

142. ib. pp.1373-4

143. K.L.Sapieha to P.Sapieha, Warsaw, 14.VIII.1655; BPANCr. 354 p.270


145. Mal'tsev: Rossiia i Belorussiia v seredine XVII veka p.138

146. Radziwiłł to J.Leszczynski, 4.VIII.1655; Czart.384 p.282

147. Theatrum Europeum VII p.764


149. Zaborovskii: "Russko-litovskie peregovory vo vtoroi polovine 1655g." Slaviane v epokhu feodalizma: k stoletiu Akademika
V.I. Pichety [Moscow, 1978] p.207

150. ib. pp.207-8

151. Radziwiłł to J. Leszczyński, 4 VIII. 1655; Czart. 384 p. 282

152. Wisner: "Rok 1655 na Litwie: pertrakcje ze Szwecją i kwestia wyznaniowa" p. 87

153. "Akta ugody kiejdanskiej 1655 roku" pp. 199-200

154. Wisner: "Rok 1655 na Litwie: pertrakcje ze Szwecją i kwestia wyznaniowa" p. 89; Wasilewski: "Zdrada Janusza Radziwiłła w roku 1655 i jej wyznaniowe motywy" p. 137; Zaborovskii: "Russko-litowskie peregovory vo vtoroi polovine 1655g." p. 207

155. Wisner: "Rok 1655 na Litwie: pertrakcje ze Szwecją i kwestia wyznaniowa" p. 90


157. "Akty ugody kiejdanskiej 1655 roku" p. 189

158. Wisner: "Rok 1655 na Litwie: pertrakcje ze Szwecją i kwestia wyznaniowa" p. 93

159. ib. p. 94


161. "Akta ugody kiejdanskiej 1655 roku" pp. 198-9

162. Zaborovskii: "Russko-litowskie peregovory vo vtoroi polovine 1655g." p. 211

163. Medeksza: Księga pamiętnicza p. 15

164. "Akta ugody kiejdanskiej 1655 roku" p. 179


167. Czapliński: "Rola magnaterii i szlachty polskiej w pierwszych latach wojny szwedzkiej" p. 162
168. J. Radziwiłł to B. Radziwiłł, 26 VIII. 1655; Kotłubaj: Życie
Janusza Radziwiłła Dodatek XIV, no. 7, p. 387

169. Kersten: Stefan Czarniecki p. 220

170. Unknown bishop to Vidoni, Wolbórz, 5 IX. 1655; T. Rz. 8418 p. 66

171. Relation von der Königl. Polnischen Armee, 13 IX. 1655;
Czart. 148 no. 112, p. 575. Cf. Lanckoroński to John Casimir,
Wojnicz, 3 X. 1655; Czart. 917 p. 1385

172. Herbst: "Wojna obronna 1655-1660" PODWP II p. 63

173. Manifestatia Wdwtwa Sendomierskiego pod Nowym Miastem
Korcynem, 5 X. 1655; Czart. 1156 p. 674

174. Wimmer: "Przegląd operacji w wojnie polsko-szwedzkiej 1655-
1660." p. 151

175. For the efforts to secure the abdication of the king, see
Adersbach, Relation, Warsaw, 5 VIII. 1655; Urkunden und
Aktenstücke VII p. 374

176. See: Wittemberg to Lubomirski, Cracow, 9 X. 1655; Czart. 148
no. 124, p. 625; Charles Gustav to Lubomirski, Cracow, 12 X. 1655;
Czart. 148 no. 127, p. 637; Lubomirski to Wittemberg, Lubowla,
30 X. 1655; Czart. 148 no. 145, p. 699; Lubomirski and Zasławski to
Charles Gustav, 10 XI. 1655; Czart. 148 no. 157, p. 731

177. For the murder of Branicki see Rudawski: Historiarum Poloniae V
p. 165. Another priest was murdered at the Bernardine monastery:
Jarochowski: Wielkopolska w czasie pierwszej wojny szwedzkiej
od roku 1655 do 1657 p. 37. Cf. K. L. Sapięha to P. Sapięha,
14 VIII. 1655; BPAN Cr. 354 p. 270. On arriving in Poznań, the
Swedes immediately began demanding contributions for the army
in the shape of money, food and grain, which the local szlachta
found insupportable. Jarochowski: op. cit. p. 41

178. Czapliński: "Emigracja polska na Śląsku, 1655-1660" Sobótka 10
[1955] pp. 588-9

179. Kersten: "Z badań nad Konfederacją Tyszowiecką" Rocznik

2. Kubala: Wojna szwecka w roku 1655 i 1656 [Lwów, 1913] p.95

3. Czaplinski: "Rola magnaterii i szlachty w pierwszych latach wojny szwedzkiej" PODWP I p.191

4. Kersten: "Rola i udział mas ludowych w walkach z najazdem szwedzkim" PODWP I p.212

5. Śreniowski: "Państwo polskie w połowie XVII w. Zagadnienia ekonomicznej i politycznej władzy oligarchów" PODWP I p.37


7. e.g. Stanisław Potocki to John Casimir, undated; Czart. 402 p.256

8. For the Tatar alliance, see Baranowski: "Tatarszczyzna wobec wojny polsko-szwedzkiej w latach 1655-1660" PODWP I pp.453-89

9. Des Noyers, Oberglogau, 27.X.1655; Lettres no.3, p.6


12. See report of Barkmann, Damus: Der erste nordische Krieg bis zur Schlacht bei Warschau p.34. Instruction to Canasilles, 29.V.1655; EFE 33 no.67, p.89


17. Trzebicike to Auersberg, Warsaw, 1.VIII.1655; ib. no.XXX, p.xlvi

18. "Relazione de sensi della Corte Imperiale circa le cose di Polonia, et soluzione di tutti le difficoltà nel'Negotiar con essa gl'aiuti" Czart.2576 p.335; This account was probably by Visconti, the Polish resident in Vienna: Targosz: Hieronim Pinocci; studium z dziejów kultury naukowej w Polsce w XVII wieku [Wrocław, Warsaw, Cracow, 1967] p.36, n.1

19. Vidoni, cipher, 9.VIII.1655; T.Rz.8418 p.6. Lisola was shown a copy in October, signed by 23 senators. Lisola, Stettin, 6.X.1655: Berichte no.11, p.111


22. Nani to Signori, Pressburg, 17.VI.1655; Zherela XII p.349

23. Vidoni to Orsini, Cracow, 19.IX.1655; T.Rz.8418, Listy i Avvisi p.71

24. Cf. Visconti's report to Ferdinand, 19.XI.1655: "[Trzebicki] mi scrive...dell 30 Augusto che starebbe bene a V.Ces.M. à unirsi con li Polacchi e così far acquisto per la Sua Augssima Casa del gran Regno di Polonia, almeno da Cracovia sin’a Danzica, e che la Nobilta sin hora non essendo ne dal partito sueco ne da quello del suo Rà, all'arrivo delle Armi Imperiali subbito si farebbe ardita e si coniungerebbe, e che però V.M.Ces. non lasci si bella occasione mettendo in consideratione, che se li Suetesi pigliaranno Cracovia, non sarà libera la Silesia dalla loro potenza con la quale poi si stendevano anche più oltre." Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Polski I, Document XVII, pp.xv-xvi
25. A. Leszczyński to Ferdinand III, Neisse, 5.XI.55; Walewski: Geschichte der hl. Ligue und Leopolds I II, abt.1 no.xxxvii, pp.1-11; Czartoryski to Ferdinand III, Neisse, 29.X.1655; ib. no.xxxvi, p.1

26. Minutes of the Secret Council, 8.IX.1655; Walewski: Geschichte der hl. Ligue und Leopolds I II, abt.1 no.xxxiii, p.xlviii

27. Vidoni, cipher, 27.X.1655. T.Rz.8418 p.29; Lisola, Stettin, 6.X.1655. Berichte no.11, p.110


29. Vidoni, cipher, Cracow, 22.IX.1655; T.Rz.8418 p.20

30. "Instructio ad Aulam Caesaream Illrmo. Supremo Marschallo nomine SRM, Data in Nova Civitate Sandecensi, 30.IX.1655. AGAD, LL33 p.91; "Instructio a Senatu Legato ad Aulam Caesaream data ut supra"; AGAD LL33 p.92; Extracts printed in Zherela XII pp.352, 354. Plenipotentiary powers from King and Senate, [copies] dated November, with blanks left for the names of the envoys, AGAD AKW Cesarskie, karton 25, fasc I nr.3

31. "Instructio ad Aulam Caesaream"; AGAD LL33 pp.91-92; Zherela XII pp.352-3

32. Cf. letter from Munich, December 1655; Czart.2576 p.399

33. Vidoni, cipher, Cracow, 29.VIII.1655; T.Rz.8418 pp.9-10: According to Vidoni, the letter was signed by the two Archbishops, four bishops and by 20 others. ib., p.9. Cf. Kubala: Wojna szwecka p.95; Seredyński op. cit. p.208. For the letter see Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Polski I Document XIV, p.xiv

34. Vidoni, cipher, Cracow, 29.VIII.1655; T.Rz.8418 p.9

35. Lubomirski to Korycki, 6.X.1655. Czart.917. p.1378


37. Lubomirski to Korycki, 6.X.1655; Czart.917 p.1379

38. ib. pp.1379-1380

39. Lubomirski to John Casimir, 9.XI.1655; Czart.148 no.153, p.717

40. Among those present in Spiz were: Piotr Gembicki, Bishop of Cracow; Jan Gembicki, Bishop nominate of Plock; Władysław Dominik Zasławski, Voivode of Cracow; Jan Tarło, Voivode of Lublin; M.K.Czartoryski, Voivode of Volhynia; Jan Wielopolski, Castellan of Wojnicz; Jan Boguski, Castellan of Czechów and Jan

42. A. Leszczyński to John Casimir, 20.1.1656; Grabowski: Oyczyste spominki II p.93

43. Vidoni, cipher, Podoliniec, 1.I.1656; T.Rz.8419 p.3

44. ib.

45. Kotlubaj: Życie Janusza Radziwiłła [p.214]

46. Hatzfeldt to Ferdinand III, 21.XI.1655; Zherela XII pp.357, 359; Kubala: Wojna szwecka pp.244-5


48. Szilágyi [ed.]: Transsylvania et bellum boreo-orientale I p.496

49. Des Noyers, Oppeln, 23.XI.1655; Lettres no.7, p.18

50. Vidoni, cipher, Oppeln, 22.XI.1655; T.Rz.8418 pp.40-1. Des Noyers's version is accepted uncritically by Hudita: Relations diplomatiques entre la France et la Transylvanie au XVIIe siècle [1635-1683] [Paris, 1927] p.159; Vidoni's report justifies Zarzycki's scepticism about the rumour reported by des Noyers; Zarzycki: op. cit. p.54, n.5. Lubomirski wrote again, a few days before Mikes arrived for talks: Lubomirski to Louise Marie, Lubowla, 12.XII.1655; Des Noyers: Lettres no.17, p.45

51. Vidoni, cipher, Oppeln, 22.XI.1655; T.Rz.8418 p.42

52. Kubala: Wojna szwecka p.245. Based on Mikes's account; Szilágyi: Transsylvania et bellum boreo-orientale pp.511-7

53. ib.

54. Vidoni to Orsini, Podoliniec, 1.I.1656; T.Rz.8419 no.4, p.148

55. Vidoni, cipher, Podoliniec, 1.I.1656; T.Rz.8419 p.4

56. John Casimir to A. Leszczyński, Krosno, 8.I.1656; Grabowski: Oyczyste spominki II pp.87-88

57. Rudawski: Historiarum Poloniae VI p.206

58. A. Leszczyński to John Casimir, 20.I.1656; Grabowski: Oyczyste
59. Leszczyński to Grzymultowski, 18.XII.1655; Czart.148 no.182, p.824; Cf. Vidoni, cipher, Oppeln, 22.XI.1655; T.Rz.8418 p.41
60. Vidoni, cipher, 9.VIII.1655, T.Rz.8418 p.6. For a long and well-argued case supporting the Elector of Bavaria, see the anonymous letter from Munich, possibly from Nowiejski to Jan Leszczyński, dated 23.XII.1655; Czart.2576 pp.395-6
63. Vidoni, cipher 5.X.1655; T.Rz.8418 p.23
64. ib.
65. Vidoni, cipher, 27.X.1655; T.Rz.8418 p.30
66. Des Noyers, 27.X.1655: Lettres no.3, p.5
67. Des Noyers, 12.XI.1655; Lettres no.6, p.13
71. For the history of relations between John Casimir and Lubomirski, see Kubala: Wojna szwecka pp.254-8
72. A.Leszczynski to John Casimir, 20.I.1656; Grabowski: Oyczyste spominki II p.91-2
73. ib. p.92
74. ib.
75. ib. p.93
76. Cf. Leszczyński's later assertion that everything he had said in
his previous letter had been meant to refer to Rákóczi's son, not
Rákóczi himself. A. Leszczyński to John Casimir, 19.II.1656;
Temberski: Roczniki p.338

77. Vidoni, cipher, Łanckut, 24.I.1656; T.Rz.8419 p.8

78. John Casimir to A. Leszczyński, Sambórz, 4.II.1656; Temberski:
Roczniki p.337

79. ib.; Zarzycki suggests that John Casimir may even have offered
Rákóczi Lubomirski's possession of Spíž. op. cit. p.338

80. Instructions, 10.IV.1656; Zherela, XII p.373

81. ib.; For Prażmowski's missions see Zarzycki: op. cit. p.42ff.

82. Vidoni, cipher, Lwów, 25.I.1656; T.Rz.8419 pp.16-7

83. Vidoni, cipher, 27.VI.1656; T.Rz,8419 pp.49-50

84. Vidoni, cipher, Oppeln, 22.XI.1655; T.Rz.8418 p.8

85. Zarzycki: op. cit. p.41

86. "Relacja wojny Szwedzkiej od 1655"; Czart.425 p.12; printed in
Kubala: Wojna Brandenburska p.325, n.7

87. Vidoni, cipher, 25.II.1656; T.Rz.8419 p.17. Cf. cipher
16.II.1656; ib. p.13

88. Vidoni, cipher, 25.II.1656; T.Rz.8419 p.17. Cf. cipher
16.II.1656, ib. p.13

89. Kubala: Wojna szweczka pp.311-12; Mattia was interested, but
doubted that anyone apart from the king "e qualche duno altro"
had much enthusiasm for him. Vidoni, cipher 2.XI.1655; T.Rz.8418
p.34

90. Vidoni, cipher, 5.IV.1656; T.Rz.8419 p.30

Polonia; BNar. ZBaw. 261 p.7

92. Instructions to Vidoni, Rome, 19.VI.1655; T.Rz.8418 p.51

93. Vidoni, cipher 27.VI.1656; T.Rz.8419 p.49

94. Cf. Vidoni, cipher 5.X.1655; T.Rz.8418 p.23; cipher 22.III.1656;
T.Rz.8419 p.25

95. Instructions to Vidoni, Rome, 23.X.1655; T.Rz.8418 p.57

96. Vidoni, cipher, 27.X.1655; T.Rz.8418 p.29
97. ib. p.30

98. J.Leszczyński to Louise Marie, 24.IV.1656; Czart.384 pp.439-440

99. Vidoni, cipher, 11.VII.1656; T.Rz.8419 pp.55-6

100. Vidoni, cipher, 23.II.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.12


1. De Lumbres: Relations II p.ix
2. Vidoni, cipher, 28.VII.1656; T.Rz.8419 p.61
3. De Lumbres, duplicata du 17.XI.1656; CPD p.245
4. Trzebicki to Wilno Commissioners, Lublin, 22.VIII.1656; Czart.386 p.179
5. De Lumbres and d'Avaugour to Brienne, Frauenburg, 28.VIII.1656; CPS 21 p.136
8. J.Leszczynski to Schönhoff, Częstochowa, 9.VIII.1656; Czart.384 p.447. Leszczyński replied that the Poles preferred Muscovy to Sweden; ib.
9. De Lumbres, duplicata du 17.XI.1656; CPD p.245
10. Kubala: Wojna brandenburska p.31
12. Gosiewski left Lublin with 12-13,000 men on 8.IX.1656; ib. p.174
13. Instructions for Morsztyn to the Emperor, 1656; AGAD, LL33 p.101 [27.VIII.1656]; Kubala: Wojna brandenburska p.104; Piwarski: "Rywalizacja francusko-austriacka o wpływy w Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1655-1660" PODWP I p.389
18. Summa literarum regiarum ad Magnum Ducem Moschoviae, quibus
Senatus suas quoque ad Senatores Moschoviae adiecit. Rudawski: Historiarum Poloniae VI p.229

19. Wójcik: "Polska i Rosja wobec wspólnego niebezpieczeństwa szwedzkiego" PODWP I p.348; cf. Kubala: "Galiński was eagerly awaited and welcomed with joy." Wojna brandenburska p.30


21. ib. p.137

22. Gawlik: "Projekt unii rosyjsko-polskiej w drugiej połowie XVIIIw." p.78


25. Instrukcja od króla JM komisarzom do traktowania na dnia 10.VIII.1656 z posłami cara mosk. wyznaczonym. Warsaw, 7.VII.1656; Czart.386 no.1, p.1

26. Kubala: Wojna brandenburska p.44

27. Codello: "Piotr Galiński" PSB VII p.226


29. The Muscovites swiftly established their own system of administration in the occupied territories; Mal'tsev: Rossiia i Belorussia v seredine XVII veka pp.135-195


31. Koryciński to Pinocci, 14.X.1656; BPANCr.426 p.127

32. Koryciński to Zawisza, Lublin, 18.VIII.1656; Czart.386 no.26, p.113

33. Koryciński to Commissioners, 20.VIII.1656; Czart.386 no.27, p.115

34. Koryciński to Pinocci, 14.X.1656; BPANCr.426, p.127; Kubala: Wojna brandenburska pp.33-4

35. Koryciński to Brzostowski, Lublin, 14.X.1656; Czart.386 no.33, pp.140-1

36. ib. p.141

37. See B.Łeszczyński's long letter to Koryciński, 12.X.1656; AGAD
38. A. Leszczyński to John Casimir, Częstochowa, 18.IX.1656; Czart.149 no.117, pp.377-8

39. ib. pp.379-80

40. J. Leszczyński to A. Leszczyński, Wrocław, 22.IX.1656; Czart.384 p.478

41. Vidoni, cipher, Wolbórz, 11.X.1656; T.Rz.8419 pp.79-80. Jan Leszczyński made the same point: J. Leszczyński to A. Leszczyński, Wrocław, 3.X.1656; Czart.384 pp.485-6. Władysław, then Crown Prince, had been elected Tsar in 1610 during the Time of Troubles by a group of boyars opposed to Tsar Vasilii Shuiski. He surrendered his claim at the Peace of Polianovka in 1634.

42. J. Leszczyński to A. Leszczyński, Wrocław, 22.IX.1656; Czart.384 pp.477-8

43. Vidoni, cipher 27.IX.1656; T.Rz.8419 p.75

44. Vidoni, cipher 4.X.1656; ib. p.77

45. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Danzig, 17.XI.1656; CPD p.243

46. ib. Cf. John Casimir to A. Leszczyński, Lublin, 12.IX.1656; Czart.149 no.110, pp.357-8; Masini to Vidoni, Borucin, 13.X.1656; T.Rz.8419 p.122

47. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Danzig, 17.XI.1656; CPD p.245

48. D'Avaugour and de Lumbres to Mazarin, Danzig, 24.XI.1656; CPD p.249


50. Gosiewski wrote on 16th October informing John Casimir of Frederick William's inclination to negotiate: John Casimir to Gosiewski, 6.XI.1656; BPANCr.363 p.233. Worried by Gosiewski's long silence, John Casimir commanded him to carry out his orders: ib.

51. John Casimir to Gosiewski, 11.XI.1656; BPANCr.363 p.231; For the Tatar raids, see Hizigrath: "Die Tatareinfälle in den Jahren 1656 und 1657" Heimatblätter für Stallupönen 5 [1925] pp.4-10

52. John Casimir's confessor to Vidoni, 14.XI.1656; T.Rz.8419 pp.103-4

tractował." quoted by Kubala, Wojna brandenburska pp.309-310, n.118; Cf. John Casimir to Gosiewski, Danzig, 22.XI.1656; BPANCr.363 p.235

54. Gosiewski to unknown, 19.X.1656; B.Jag.6357 p.237

55. ib.

56. For the defeat at Filipów, see Wimmer: op. cit. pp.175-6; Herbst: op. cit. p.99


58. Majewski: op. cit. p.343

59. Vidoni, ciphers, Wolbórz, 11.XI.1656 and 18.XI.1656; T.Rz.8419 pp.90, 93, 96; Krzysztof Pac, seeing an opportunity of destroying Radziwiłł power in Lithuania, had urged John Casimir to poison Radziwiłł, or have him killed; John Casimir seems to have agreed, wanting at least to intern Radziwiłł for life. Wasilewski: Introduction, B.Radziwiłł: Autobiografia [Warsaw, 1979] p.70

60. Vidoni, cipher, Wolbórz, 18.XI.1656; T.Rz.8419 pp.96-7

61. Gosiewski to unknown, 19.X.1656; B.Jag. 6357 p.237


63. John Casimir to Frederick III, 29.XI.1656; EFE XX p.198; John Casimir to Gosiewski, 1.XII.1656; BPANCr.363 p.239

64. John Casimir to Gosiewski, Danzig, 4.XII.1656; BPANCr.363 p.241

65. John Casimir to Gosiewski, 20.XII.1656; BPANCr.363 p.244

66. Piwarski: "Stosunki szwedzko-brandenburskie a sprawa polska w czasie pierwszej wojny północnej" PODWP I p.446

67. Piwarski: "Rywalizacja francusko-austriacka o wpływy w Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1655-1660" PODWP I p.393

68. Lisola arrived in Danzig on 25.I.1657; De Lumbres to d'Avaugour, Danzig, 26.I.1657. He received a mixed reception, with many echoing Vidoni's opinion that if the Treaty of Vienna had come a year earlier, the war would have been over by now; Vidoni, cipher, 27.I.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.5

69. Majewski: op. cit. p.343

70. "es sei doch sehr bedenklich, das alte Lehnsverhältniss
umzustossen, welches vor so langer Zeit aufgerichtet, von so vielen Herzögen in Preussen beachworen und dadurch "nunmehr gleichsam canonisirt" sei." Relation über geführte Verhandlung mit Gonsiewski. Dat o.O. [Königsberg?] 13.XI.1656; Urkunden und Aktenstücke VIII p.201

71. De Lumbres and d'Avaugour to Mazarin, Danzig, 2.XII.1656; CPD p.253


73. Hoverbeck to J.Leszczynski, 21.XI.1656; Czart.388 p.5

74. Wójcik: "Polska i Rosja wobec wspólnego niebezpieczeństwa szwedzkiego" PODWP I p.361

75. Koryciński to unknown, 1656; Czart.149 no.185, p.671

76. Unknown to Orsini EFE XIV p.47. The letter is undated, but is clearly written in the autumn of 1656.

77. De Lumbres and d'Avaugour to Mazarin, Danzig, 24.XI.1656; CPD p.249; Unknown to Orsini, 1656; EFE XIV p.47

78. ib. p.48

79. Vidoni, cipher, Wolbórz, 1.XII.1656; T.Rz.8419 p.101. Potocki and Lanckoroński wished the army to enter winter quarters in Great Poland; Kersten: Stefan Czarniecki pp.317-8

80. Vidoni, cipher, Wolbórz, 1.XII.1656; T.Rz.8419 pp.101-2

81. K.Pac to Brzostowski, 23.IX.1656; Czart.386 no.38, p.159

82. Cf. Masini to Vidoni, Danzig, 21.XI.1656. T.Rz.8419 p.258


84. K.Pac to Brzostowski, 23.IX.1656; Czart.386 no.38, p.159

85. K.Pac to Brzostowski, 29.X.1656; Czart.386 no.40, p.170

86. Vidoni, cipher, Lublin, 13.IX.1656; T.Rz.8419 p.72

87. Galiński: "Transactia ostatniego Rozgoworu" Czart.2103 pp.140, 143

88. Rachuba: "Michał Pac" PSB XXIV p.739

89. John Casimir to A.Leszczycński, Lublin, 12.IX.1656; Czart.149
90. A. Leszczyński to John Casimir, Częstochowa, 18.IX.1656; Czart.149 no.117, pp.377-8

91. Text: AGAD APPot.45 pp.118-22; AGAD ARadz. II, 21 pp.281-2, 284, 289; Rudawski: Historiarum Poloniae VII pp.282-4

92. Trzebicki to Commissioners, 9.IX.1656; Czart.386 no.45, p.183

93. John Casimir to Commissioners, 25.XI.1656; Czart.386 no.57, p.219


95. Gawlik: op. cit. p.108

96. Wójcik: "Polska i Rosja wobec wspólnego niebezpieczeństw szwedzkiego w okresie wojny późnocnej" p.370; Cf. Korzon: Dola i niedola Jana Sobieskiego 1629-1674 [Cracow, 1898] I p.159


99. Vidoni, cipher, 27.IX.1656; T.Rz.8419 p.75; Cf. Louise Marie's attitude as described by K.Pac to Brzostowski, Lublin, 14.IX.1656; Czart.386, no.35, pp.148-9: "cale inclinata na to partito względem Syna, y kazal mi WMMPP oznaymic, ze Carewicza za dziecie własne mieć chce, tylko żeby Wiara swięta, wolność praw y swobód Electio libera nieginęta." Cf. the offer made by the Muscovite envoy in April: "ut velle illum ablata restituere, modo vel ille, vel filius ejus successor sit ad Regnum, quem in Catholica fide educandum vult dare." Rykaczewski [ed.]: Relacje Nuncyuszów Apostolskich II p.297

100. Louise Marie to Mme.de Choisy, 12.XI.1656; T.Luk.3008 p.27

101. Vidoni, cipher, 18.XI.1656; T.Rz.8519 pp.95-6

102. ib.

103. Vidoni, cipher, Wolbórz, 13.XII.1656; T.Rz.8519 pp.106-7: "e che con questo potesse poi la Repubblica con ragione secedere dalla promessa, e publicare allora la pace con la Suetia, nella quale fra gli altri patti sia nè una parte, nè l'altra fare la pace con li Moscoviti, già che il fare lega per questo sarebbe difficile, non havendo noi modo di mantener quello prometissimo, e così i Suetesi da una parte, e noi dall'altra indurre i Moscoviti alla ragione.." ib. p.107

104. "Neutralität-, Freundschafts- und Handels-Vertrag zwischen dem Zaar Alexei Michailowicz von Russland, seinem Erben Alexei
Notes Chapter 3  341


105. Commissioners to Koryciński, 13.XI.1656; Czart.2113 p.102

106. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Danzig, 8.XII.1656; CPD p.258

107. John Casimir to Commissioners, Lublin, August 1656; Czart. 386 no.6, p.27

108. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Danzig, 15.XII.1656; CPD p.265

109. De Lumbres to d'Avaugour, Danzig, 18.XII.1656; CPD p.266

110. J.Leszczynski to B.Leszczyński, Vienna, 22.XI.1656; Czart.385 p.520

111. For the text of the treaty see Wojcik: Traktaty polsko-austriackie z drugiej połowy XVII wieku [Warsaw, 1985] Document I pp.31-5

112. Pufendorf: De rebus a Carolo Gustavo IV p.250. De Lumbres believed he could persuade John Casimir to change his mind on territorial concessions. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Danzig, 8.XII.1656; CPD pp.257-8

113. Vidoni, cipher, Kalisz, 19.I.1657; T.Rz.8520 p.3

114. ib.


117. Herbst: op. cit. p.103
1. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Danzig, 12.I.1657; CPD p.286
2. ib.
3. ib.
4. De Lumbres to Mazarin, 19.I.1657; Harl.4532 pp.7-8
6. Koryciński to Mazarin, Danzig, 9.II.1657; CPP XI p.189
7. Lisola, memorandum, Vienna, 23.III.1657; Berichte no.54, p.255
8. Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Polski II pp.25-7
10. Lisola, despatch, Danzig, 3.II.1657; Berichte no.51, p.232
11. Vidoni, cipher, 27.I.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.5
12. Lisola, despatch, Danzig, 3.II.1657; Berichte no.51, p.236
14. Walewski, Historia wyzwolenia Polski II p.31; Kubala: Wojna brandenburska p.111; Louise Marie showed Garnier a letter from Mazarin, calling on the Poles to make peace with Sweden, and offering French aid, in order to provoke a more urgent approach; Walewski, Historia wyzwolenia Polski. p.27
15. Kersten: Stefan Czarniecki p.328; there is no evidence to support Nani's assertion that he arrived on 24th February; Nani to Signori, Zherela XII p.450. For his arrival on 2nd March, see Chronicle of Zygmunt Koniecpolski, Częstochowa, 2.III.1657; BPANCr.1056 p.58
17. J.Leszczynski to A.Leszczynski, Breslau, 8.I.1657; Czart.388 no.10, p.19
18. J.Leszczynski to Cieciszewski, Częstochowa, 15.II.1657; Czart.388 no.27, p.42
19. J. Leszczyński to Lubomirski, Częstochowa, 14.II.1657; Czart. 388 no.26, p.40
20. Vidoni, cipher, Częstochowa, 9.II.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.6
21. ib. p.8
22. J. Leszczyński to Cieciszewski, Breslau, 12.I.1657; Czart. 388 no.12, p.22
23. Vidoni, Avvisi, Częstochowa, 3.III.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.199
24. J. Leszczyński to Cieciszewski, Częstochowa, 1.III.1657; Czart. 388 no.43, pp.59-60
25. ib. p.60
27. "Il Re mi parlo pur poco bene del Gran Cancelliere, chiamandolo maligno, e con tale occasione mi disse che propendosi in consiglio se nell'Istruzione si dava al Gran Tesiore si dovesse toccar cosa alcuna della successione, che egli rispose di no." Vidoni, cipher, 26.III.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.17
28. For the presence of Zawisza, see Kochowski: Annalium Poloniae Climacter Secundus II p.205. For the presence of Pac, see AGAD ARadz. II 21 p.381; Lacki signed the plenipotentiary powers for Tobias Morsztyn's mission to Denmark on 16.III.1657; EFE 33 p.97. For Krasinski's presence, see AGAD ARadz. II 21 p.387
29. Bąkowski's instructions were drawn up in Danzig on 20.I.1657; AGAD LL33 p.98
30. John Casimir to Commissioners, Danzig, January 1657; Czart. 150 p.8
31. Vidoni, cipher, Częstochowa, 16.II.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.10
32. Puncta na Convocatiey Brzeskley WXL Concludowane dnia 17.III.1657; Czart.1657 p.240
33. Cf. Zawisza's complaints to Vidoni: cipher, Częstochowa, 16.II.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.10
34. Vidoni, cipher, Częstochowa, 8.III.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.15
35. ib.
36. Vidoni to Orsini, Częstochowa, 8.III.1657; T.Rz.8420 pp.109-11
37. ib.
38. Vidoni, cipher, Częstochowa, 26.III.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.17
39. Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Polski II p.51. The document was returned to John III Sobieski by Leopold I in 1683 as part of the alliance against the Turk, but subsequently disappeared, along with the rest of the Sobieski family papers: Walewski, ib. n.6; Dogiel [ed.]: Codex Diplomaticus Regni Poloniae et Magni Ducato Lithuaniae [Wilno, 1758-64] I p.340

40. Obligatio super electionem regis ex domo Austriae, 27.V.1657; Copy, AGAD AKW Cesarskie, karton 25a, no.10; Wójcik: Traktaty polsko-austriackie z drugiej połowy XVII wieku [Warsaw, 1985] Document 5, p.51

41. Louise Marie to Frederick William, 2.I.1658; Urkunden und Aktenstücke VIII p.275

42. Vidoni, cipher, 26.III.1657; T.Rz.8420 pp.17-18

43. Vidoni, cipher, Częstochowa, 1.IV.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.19

44. For the Austrian ratification of the December treaty, see Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Polski II p.51; Zherela XII p.455.

45. J. Leszczyński to Cieciuszewski: Częstochowa, 31.III.1657; Czart.388 no.55, pp.82-3

46. ib. p.83

47. J. Leszczyński to B. Leszczyński, Kalisz, 26.IV.1657; Czart.388 no.72, p.117

48. Vidoni, cipher, 1.IV.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.20

49. Vidoni, cipher, Częstochowa, 26.III.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.18; Cipher, 1.IV.1657; T.Rz.p.20

50. Lisola, despatch, Danków, 18.V.1657; Berichte no.57, p.271

51. Kersten: Stefan Czarniecki pp.334-5; Czarniecki had married the daughter of Wacław Leszczyński, Andrzej's nephew, in 1656. ib. p.304

52. ib. p.335

53. Vidoni, cipher, Częstochowa, 1.IV.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.19

54. Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Polski II p.62

55. ib. p.67.

56. De Lumbres to Mazarin, 23.V.1657; CPP XI p.221

57. De Lumbres to Mazarin, 20.IV.1657; CPP XI p.197

58. ib.

59. Lisola, despatch, Danków, 17.V.1657; Berichte no.57, pp.271-2
60. He had his first audience on 2nd May; Vidoni: Avvisi, T.Rz.8420 p.202

61. De Lumbres to Mazarin, 15.V.1657; Harl.4532, p.69

62. Medeksza: Księga pamiętnicza p.29

63. De Lumbres to Mazarin, 20.IV.1657; CPP XI pp.197-8

64. Vidoni, cipher, 15.V.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.32

65. ib.

66. De Lumbres to Mazarin, 23.V.1657; CPP XI p.221

67. Vidoni, cipher, 7.V.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.30

68. De Lumbres to Mazarin, 15.V.1657; Harl.4532 p.69

69. Vidoni, cipher, 15.V.1657; T.Rz.8420 pp.32-3

70. De Lumbres to Mazarin, 15.IV.1657; Harl.4532, p.69

71. ib.

72. Wójcik: Traktaty polsko-austriackie Documents 2-4 pp.38-49

73. Lisola, despatch, Danków, 6.VI.1657; Berichte no.61, p.281

74. J.Leszczynski to A.Leszczynski, 20.V.1657; Czart.388 no.87, p.145

75. For a copy of John Casimir's declaration, see Harl.4532, p.83

76. Copia Confoederationis Dano-Polonicae contra Regem Sueciae, Copenhagen, 28.VII.1657 EFE 33 p.92

77. De Lumbres to Brienne, Częstochowa, 19.VI.1657; CPP XI p.239

78. Potocki to Trzebicki, 30.VIII.1657; Kubala: Wojna brandenburska Dodatek XXI pp.426-7

79. Vidoni, cipher, 13.VI.1657; T.Rz.8420 pp.41-2

80. Vidoni, cipher, 6.VI.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.40

81. Piwarski: "Rywalizacja francusko-austriacka o wpływy w Rzeczypospolitej" p.399

82. ib.


86. Piwarski: "Rywalizacja francusko-austriacka o wpływy w Rzeczypospolitej" p.398

87. Piwarski: "Stosunki szwedzko-brandenburskie a sprawa polska w czasie pierwszej wojny północnej" PODWP I p.449

88. "Rationes ob quas perpetua ac firma Alliantia inter Imperatorem Domum Austriacum, Regem Danaiae, Magnum Moschoviae Ducem, Electorem Brandenburgicum, Ordines Foederati Belgii, Ducum Curlandiae ab altera parte quam priorum contra Suecos concluenda sit." Czart.388 no. 56, p.83

89. J.Leszczyński to Hoverbeck, Kalisz, 20.I.1657; Czart.388 no.15, p.28; Cf. J.Leszczyński to Nowiejski, Kalisz, 24.I.1657; Czart.388 no.18, p.32

90. J.Leszczyński to Trzebiicki, Danków, 16.II.1657; Czart.388 no.28, p.45

91. ib. cf. J.Leszczyński to Koryciński, Danków, 16.II.1657; Czart.388 pp.46-7

92. Czapliński: "Wyprawa Wielkopolań na Nową Marchię w r.1656 i układ w Sulęcinie" Roczniki Historyczne 23 [1957] p.262

93. ib. pp.262-72

94. J.Leszczyński to Lubomirski, 21.I.1657; Czart.388 no. 16, pp.29-30; Printed in Kubala: Wojna brandenburska Dodatek XV p.419

95. Lisola, despatch, Danzig, 3.II.1657; Berichte no.51, p.231

96. Koryciński to Grzymułtowski, 25.II.1657; Czart.400 no.42, p.221; copy in Czart.150 p.31. Koryciński also blocked an attempt to pardon Bogusław Radziwiłł, an important demand of Frederick William: Vidoni, cipher, 16.II.1657; T.Rz.8420 pp.10-11

97. Kubala: Wojna brandenburska p.241


100. Vidoni, cipher, Opole, 12.IV.1657; Levinson: Die Nuntiaturberichte p.84

101. Lisola, memorandum, 23.III.1657; Berichte no.54, p.250

102. Vidoni, cipher, 27.IV.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.27
103. Vidoni, cipher, Kalisz, 27.I.1657; T.Rz.8420 pp.5-6

104. ib. p.6

105. Instructio Regis Poloniae pro Episcopo Varvienis et Domino Gąsiewski; Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Polski II Dodatek XV p.xv; Cf. Vidoni, cipher, Kalisz, 27.I.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.6

106. ib.

107. Vidoni, cipher, 6.VIII.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.57

108. ib. pp.57-8


110. The offer in October 1655 was made by Jan Leszczynski, Bishop of Kiev and Bishop nominate of Cheīmno: cf. Vidoni's conversation with Andrzej Leszczyński: "e in confidenza mi disse ch'in questa conformità si spedisse Mons. Vescovo di Kiovia suo fratello al detto Electore per chiarirsi meglio di suoi pensieri, e ritrovandolo ben disposto, offerirle la Prussia Ducale libera, dove hora la gode in feudo." Vidoni to Orsini, 27.X.1655; T.Rz.8418 p.86; Piwarski: Dzieje Prus Wschodnich p.120. The 1656 offers were made by Podłodowski: Piwarski: Dzieje polityczne Prus Wschodnich [1621-1772] p.41

111. J.Leszczynski to Cieciszewski, Breslau, 2.VII.1657; Czart.388 no.95, p.166

112. J.Leszczynski to Trzebicki, Breslau, 24.VI.1657; Czart.388 no.93, pp.159-60

113. Gosiewski, w obozie pod Szrzednikiem, 1.VIII.1657; Medeksza: Księga pamiętnicza p.156

114. Lisola, rel. ad imp., Danków, 16.V.1657; Berichte no. 56, p.269

115. ib.

116. De Lumbres: Relations II p.147

117. Louise Marie to Elizabeth Charlotte, [June 1657]; Urkunden und Aktenstücke VIII p.202

118. ib. p.204

119. Piwarski: "Rywalizacja francusko-austriacka o wpływy w Rzeczypospolitej" p.396


121. Lisola, despatch, Danków, 16.V.1657; Berichte no.56, p.269

122. Instructio Regis Poloniae pro Episcopo Varvienis et Domino
Gąsiewski, Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Polski II Dodatek XV p.x.v; Instructio secreta pro tractata cum Electore Brandenburgica a Rege mihi soli...commissas. Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Polski II Dodatek XVIII p.xviii

123. ib. p.xix

124. Lisola: despatch, Königsberg, 4.IX.1657; Berichte no.75, p.317

125. Piwarski: "Rywalizacja francusko-austriacka o wpływy w Rzeczypospolitej" p. 396

126. The treaty of alliance was signed at Wehlau by Wacław Leszczyński and Lisola on behalf of the Commonwealth, and by Schwerin and Somnitz for Frederick William. Neuber: op. cit. p.138; Gosiewski signed at Wehlau on 19th September, with reservations, which were cleared up when the treaty was ratified at Bromberg on 6.XI.1657: The best account of the treaty is given by Kamińska, who criticises Moerner and others for inaccurately presenting its terms: Kamińska: op. cit. p.11


128. ib. pp.15-17

129. Piwarski: "Rywalizacja francusko-austriacka o wpływy w Rzeczypospolitej" p.399

130. Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Polski II p.163

131. Vidoni, cipher, 1.VIII.1657; ib. p.55

132. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 5.XI.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.71; Levinson: Die Nuntiaturberichte p.105

133. Vidoni to Orsini, Cracow, 22.IX.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.159

134. ib.

135. Soll to Vidoni, Bromberg, 6.XI.1657; Levinson: Die Nuntiaturberichte no.164, p.105; Piwarski: "Rywalizacja francusko-austriacka o wpływy w Rzeczypospolitej" p.399

136. Kamińska: op. cit. p.16
1. Kersten: Stefan Czarniecki p.363

2. "Konwencja dodatkowa do traktatu z 27.V.1657 r. w sprawie sum i świadczeń ze strony Królestwa Polskiego na rzecz wojsk posiłkowych." Wójcik [ed.]: Traktaty polsko-austriackie z drugiej połowy XVII wieku Document 4 pp.46-9


4. J.Leszczynski to A.Leszczynski, Gosłina, 18.X.1657; Czart.388 no.139, p.269

5. Vidoni to Orsini, Poznań, 16.XII.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.187

6. Piotr Opaliński to John Casimir, undated; Kubala: Wojny duńskie p.422, n.8


8. Kubala: Wojna brandenburska p.264


10. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Częstochowa, 3.VII.1657; CPP XI p.253

11. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Korczkiew, 4.VIII.1657; CPP XI p.268


15. Kubala: Wojna brandenburska p.264; Cf. Mazarin's reply: "Je n'ai rien à vous répliquer touchant la succession du roi de Pologne qu'on suppose avoir été promise au frère du roi d'Hongrie, [si ce n'est qu'il n'y a rien qu'on croit si véritable à Prague et en toutes les cours des Princes d'Allemagne,] mais j'ai tant de respect et de vénération pour ce qui vient de la part de la reine [de Pologne] que je n'hésite pas à voir que cela n'est pas puisqu'elle l'assure ainsi." Mazarin to de Lumbres, Paris, 16.XI.1657; Lettres du Cardinal Mazarin VIII p.210


17. ib.
18. It is true, however, that at this point Louise Marie argued in favour of Brandenburg's neutrality in the war with Sweden, whereas John Casimir insisted on its participation. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 12.XI.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.72; Levinson: Die Nuntiaturberichte no.165, p.106

19. Trzebicki to Vidoni, 29.X.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.87

20. Des Noyers: Bromberg, 1.XI.1657; Lettres no.128, p.349; De Lumbres to Mazarin, Warsaw, 18.X.1657; Harl.4532 pp.124-5. Andrzej Leszczyński's plea that de Lumbres be banned from Court altogether was rejected. Louise Marie and Krzysztof Pac advised him to stay in Warsaw. ib.

21. [Blondel] "ne réussit pas bien dans une audience qu'il eut avec la reine;...il la poussa indiscretèment et sans raison, en lui voulant persuader que, si elle voulait, on ferait la paix. Elle lui dit qu'elle le désirait plus que personne, et ensuite lui fit voir qu'elle n'était pas seule en Pologne, qu'il y avait des ministres et des sénateurs, et un conseil. Mais il rebâtit toutes les fois sa première instance avec une telle opiniâtreté, qu'elle s'en impatienta, et dit, après qu'il fut sorti, mais tout bas, qu'il n'y avait pas moyen de traiter avec cet homme-là" Des Noyers, Poznań, 20.1.1658; Lettres no.138, p.377


23. Auersberg's proposal: Presentatum et lectum in Consilio Secret. die 6.XII.1657; Copy, CPA XVII p.166/335; Confirmation of the duchies of Oppeln and Ratibor, Vienna, 28.1.1658; Copy, CPA XVII pp.353, 366

24. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Poznań, 28.XII.1657; CPP XI p.352; Des Noyers reported the poor reception accorded the new offer: "je puis vous assurer qu'il y a tant d'aversión entre les deux nations que malaisément ils s'assujetiraient à cette maison." Poznań, 1.XII.1657; Lettres no.131, p.359

25. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 5.XI.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.70


27. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Warsaw, 30.IX.1657; CPP XI p.305


29. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Warsaw, 30.IX.1657; CPP XII p.305

30. Bąkowa: op. cit. p.21

31. Kersten: Stefan Czarniecki p.364

32. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Warsaw, 10.XI.1657; CPP XI p.327

33. "...i wielu ministrów i senatorów objawiło życzenie sukcesji dla
francuskiego Domu i zapewniali, że w traktacie wiedeńskim, którego kopię królowa mi pokazała, nie ma żadnej obietnicy ani obowiązania w sprawie sukcesji." Kubala: Wojna brandenburska p.265

34. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Poznań, 7.I.1658; CPP XII p.7
36. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Warsaw, 10.XI.1657; CPP XI p.327
37. ib.
38. Kubala: Wojna brandenburska p.265
39. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Poznań, 20.IV.1658; CPP XII p.73
40. ib.
41. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Poznań, 26.I.1658; CPP XII pp.24-7
42. Kubala: Wojna brandenburska p.264
43. "mais qu'avant de remuer cette matiè re il est absolument nécessaire que la paix des deux couronnes se fasse qui facilitera le reste..." Mazarin to de Lumbres, 14.XII.1657 CPP XI p.349
44. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Poznań, 26.I.1658; CPP XII p.24
45. Lubomirski to B.Radziwiłł, 13.XII.1657; WAP Wawel, ASang.86 pp.107-8
47. Louise Marie to Frederick William, 26.XII.1657; Urkunden und Aktenstücke VIII p.274
48. Kubala: W o j n a b r a n d e n b u r s k a p.262
49. Cf. Louise Marie to Frederick William, 2.I.1658; Urkunden und Aktenstücke VIII pp.275-6; De Lumbres to Mazarin, Hamburg, 23.II.1658; CPP XII p.44
50. Louise Marie to Frederick William, 26.XII.1657; Urkunden und Aktenstücke VIII p.274
51. Louise Marie to Fredrick William, 19.I.1658; Urkunden und Aktenstücke VIII pp.277-8
52. Vidoni, cipher, Poznań, 4.I.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.5; Levinson: Die Nuntiaturberichte p.110

54. ib.

55. Mazarin to de Lumbres, 11.I.1658; CPP XII p.5

56. Cf. Mazarin to Lubomirski, 4.I.1658; CPP XII p.2

57. Mazarin to de Lumbres, 4.I.1658; CPP XII p.4

58. ib.

59. Pac only accepted after consulting the Queen: De Lumbres to Mazarin, Poznań, 20.IV.1658; CPP XII p.77. He had also, however, accepted 5,000 thalers from Frederick William in September 1657 for his part in achieving the agreement at Wehlau: Frederick William to Hoverbeck, Wehlau, 21.IX.1657; Urkunden und Aktenstücke VIII p.218. With almost all his estates under Muscovite occupation, Pac was in desperate need of money: De Lumbres to Mazarin, Cracow, 10.XI.1657; CPP XI p.351. De Lumbres reported, with some degree of exaggeration, that Morsztyn governed Lubomirski absolutely: De Lumbres to Mazarin, Poznań, 20.IV.1658; CPP XII p.77

60. Des Noyers, Poznań, 1.II.1658; Lettres no.140, p.381


62. ib.

63. Kubala: Wojny duńskie pp.41-2; Piwarski: "Rywalizacja francusko-austriacka o wpływy w Rzeczypospolitej" p.408

64. Bąkowa: op. cit. p.21

65. Rudawski: Historiarum Poloniae IX p.398


67. Louise Marie to Frederick William, 26.I.1658; Urkunden und Aktenstücke VIII p.278

68. De Lumbres to Brienne, 26.I.1658; CPP XII p.26; Copy to Mazarin, Harl.4532 p.160

69. J.Leszczynski to Lubomirski, Berlin, 11.II.1658: "[de Lumbres] nam przecie ofiaruie pokoy etiam inclusis Collegatis." Czart.388 no.175, p.353. There was more than this in Schlippenbach's proposal, however: he offered Frederick William a further share of Poland in a partition between Austria, Sweden and Brandenburg. Blondel to Mazarin, Berlin, 12.II.1658; Urkunden und Aktenstücke II p.154

70. De Lumbres to Brienne, Poznań, 2.II.1658; CPP XII p.36
71. ib. Cf. Des Noyers, Poznań, 1.II.1658; Lettres no.140, p.381

72. J. Leszczyński to Cieciszewski, Berlin, 8.II.1658; Czart.388 no.172, p.345

73. J. Leszczyński to A. Leszczyński, Berlin, 11.II.1658; Czart.388 no. 174, p.347. For the threat to leave Berlin, see Lisola, despatch, Berlin, 14.II.1658; Berichte no.92, p.368

74. "Foedus reciproce defensivum zwischen Leopold, König von Ungarn-Böhmen, und Kurfürst Friedrich Wilhelm von Brandenburg gegen Schweden und seine Confoederirten" Moerner: Kurbrandenburgs Staatsverträge v. 1600-1700 p.229; The treaty was ratified by Leopold on 27th February and by Frederick William on 6th March.

75. Declaration by Jan Leszczyński, 9.II.1658; ib. p.232

76. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 16.II.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.11; Levinson: Die Nuntiaturberichte no.178, p.114

77. "Gli soggiunge che passerano dieci mila in Pomerania, se gli daranno centomila tallari, come da principio fu loro promesso, ma S.Maesta mi disse, che sarà difficile farlo hora tanto più che dicono se vogliono introdur 10 mil. altri nel Regno, che sarebbe aggravio doppio per i quartieri di questi. Il medesimo Segretario ha esposto a S.Maesta il tutto lo quale mi suppone gli rispose altamente e che non credesse l'Isola di haver che fare con un putto, che gia aveva accettata la mediatione di Francia, e che non voleva dare i centomila tallari, anzi leveragli i quartieri, di che si mostra molto disgustato." Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 16.II.1658; T.Rz.8421, p.11

78. Chrapowicki: Diariusz pp.151-2


80. Des Noyers, Warsaw, 21.II.1658; Lettres no.142, p.384

81. Rudawski: Historiarum Poloniae IX p.399

82. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 4.III.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.13; Levinson: Die Nuntiaturberichte no.180, p.115

83. Rudawski: Historiarum Poloniae IX p.398

84. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Poznań, 11.IV.1658; CPP XII p.63

85. Querelae universi cler i in Maiori Polonia et diocesi Posnaniensi super Barbara Austriaci Militis Insolentia in Ordinem Ecclesiasticum et Christi Patrimonium Exercita ad Sacram Regiam Maiestatem Hungariae et Bohemiae etc. [Poznań, 1658]

86. Rudawski: Historiarum Poloniae IX pp.399, 406

87. Vidoni to Orsini, Poznań, 16.XII.1657; T.Rz.8420 pp.187-8
88. Vidoni to Orsini, Warsaw, 12.II.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.86
89. Vidoni to Orsini, Warsaw, 23.II.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.91
90. Rudawski: Historiarum Poloniae IX p.399; De Lumbres to Brienne, Poznań, 11.IV.1658; CPP XII p.67
91. Lisola, despatch, Warsaw, 10.III.1658; Berichte no.94, p.384
92. ib. pp.384-6
93. Kubala: Wojny duńskie p.43
94. Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Polski II p.248
95. Lisola, despatch, Warsaw, 18.III.1658; Berichte no.94, p.391
96. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 11.III.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.15
97. ib.
98. ib.
99. De Lumbres to Brienne, Poznań, 11.IV.1658; CPP XII pp.67-8; Copy to Mazarin, Harl.4532 p.197
100. Lisola: Relat. ad Regem, Warsaw, 10 & 28.III.1658; Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Polski II p.246
101. Lisola to Portia, Warsaw, 26.III.1658; quoted by Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Polski p.249
102. J.Leszczynski to B.Leszczynski, Berlin, 24.I.1658; Czart.388 no.160, pp.312-3
103. Trzebicki had been nominated on 30.VIII.1657; EFE III p.29; this was confirmed by the Vatican on 25.II.1658; ib. For the promise to Leszczynski, see Vidoni, cipher, 26.VII.1657; T.Rz.8420 pp.49-50
104. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Poznań, 27.IV.1658; CPP XII p.79
105. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 1.IV.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.19
106. Lisola, despatch, Poznań, 10.IV.1658; Berichte no.96, p.397
107. Lisola, despatch, Warsaw, 18.III.1658; Berichte no.94, p.392
108. Kubala: Wojny duńskie p.43
110. De Lumbres to Brienne, Poznań, 11.IV.1658; CPP XII p.67; Copy to Mazarin, Harl.4532 p.197
111. Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Polski II p.252
112. De Lumbres to Brienne, Poznań, 4.V.1658; CPP XII p.90
113. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 9.IV.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.20
114. Vidoni, cipher, 4.III.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.13
115. ib.
117. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 9.IV.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.20
118. News of Frederick's defeat reached Warsaw on 24.II.1658: Chrapowicki: Diariusz p.152
119. Opitz: op. cit. p.85
121. Opitz: op. cit. p.86
122. Lisola, Poznań, 24.IV.1658; Berichte no.98, pp.398-402
123. Opitz: op. cit. p.87
124. ib. p.88
125. ib.; Masini reported that Frederick William might abandon his allies if he were threatened by Charles Gustav: "crescono i sospetti dell'elettore se persisterà con noi è nò e si credeva, che il rè di Suetia non assaltaria i suoi stati per non necessitarlo à stare unito con noi, credendo li Suetesi, che Sua Altezza non si vorrà disgustare e discostarsi molto da suoi domini, il che stimo gli basterà." Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 6.V.1658; Levinson: op. cit. no.195, p.126
126. Louise Marie to Frederick William, 13.VI.1658; Urkunden und Aktenstücke II p.282
127. Opitz: op. cit. p.89
129. Opitz: op. cit. pp.92-5
130. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Poznań, 11.V.1658; Harl.4532 p.212
131. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Rogoźno, 25.V.1658; CPP XII, p.102
132. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Poznań, 20.IV.1658; CPP XII p.73
133. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Poznań, 11.IV.1658; CPP XII p.68
134. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Poznań, 20.IV.1658, CPP XII p.73
135. ib.
136. J.Łeszczyński to Hoverbeck, 20.III.1658; Czart 388 no.180, p.377
137. J.Łeszczyński to Lubomirski, 25.III.1658; Czart 388 no. 188, p.383; cf. his view in May: "przecie nie najgorzzy osobliwie kiedy Kurfirszt JeM tak constanter przy nas zostaje o czym iakom nigdy nie wątpie...bom tak zawsze sędzież że attakować Szweda w Pomorstwie było optimum consilium." J.Łeszczyński to Turski, 26.V.1658; Czart.388 no.191, pp.393-4
138. ib. p.383
139. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Poznań, 11.IV.1658; CPP XII p.63
140. ib. p.64
141. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Poznań, 11.IV.1658; CPP XII p.96
142. ib.
143. Medeksza: Księga pamiętnicza p.114
144. ib.
145. ib. pp.110, 147
147. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 20.X.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.69
148. Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Polski II pp.277-8
149. ib. p.274
150. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 1.IV.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.19
151. Lisola, despatch, Poznań, 3.V.1658; Berichte no.98, p.405
152. Konopczyński: Chronologia sejmów polskich p.153
153. Opitz: op. cit. pp.111-3
154. De Lumbres to Mazarin, 8.VI.1658; CPP XII p.110

155. De Lumbres to Mazarin, 1.VI.1658; CPP XII p.108; De Lumbres to Mazarin, 8.VI.1658; CPP XII p.110

156. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Sieraków, 15.VI.1658; CPP XII p.116

157. De Lumbres to Brienne, Sieraków, 22.VI.1658; CPP XII p.125

158. ib.

159. Rudawski: Historiarum Poloniae IX pp.414-5

160. Blondel to Mazarin; Berlin, 2.VII.1658; Urkunden und Aktenstücke II p.172

161. ib.

162. Kubala: Wojny duńskie p.57


164. Opitz: op. cit. p.102, based on a letter from John Casimir to Montecuccoli, 29.VI.1658, preserved in the Vienna Archives.

165. Blondel to Mazarin, Berlin, 2.VII.1658; Urkunden und Aktenstücke II p.174

166. Des Noyers, Sieraków, 7.VII.1658; Lettres no.159, p.418

167. Blondel to Mazarin, Berlin, 2.VII.1658; Urkunden und Aktenstücke II p.174

1. Czapliński: "Próby reform państwa w czasie najazdu szwedzkiego" PODWP I p.318


4. Czapliński: "Próby reform państwa" p.303


7. Czapliński: "Próby reform państwa" p.303

8. Ochmann, "Plans for parliamentary reform" p.169

9. Czapliński: "Sejm polski w latach 1587-1696" p.280

10. Vidoni to Orsini, Lwów, 20.II.1656; T.Rz.8419 no.16, p.165


13. A.Leszczynski to John Casimir, undated [January 1656]; Grabowski: Ojczyste spominki II [Cracow, 1845] p.94


15. "Szczęśliwego żołżenia, zaczęcia i konkludowania sejmy da P. Bog blisko przyszłego sposób" BPANCr.1062 pp.150-1; Ochmann: "Plans for parliamentary reform" p.172

16. Montecuccoli to unknown, 1.IX.1657; Walewski: Historia wyzwolenia Polski II Dodatek X p.viii

17. "Decyzja Jana Kazimierza że sposób sejmowania starożytny zachowany będzie, że związki zawarte wiernie dochowane zostaną"
18. Czapliński: "Próby reform państwa" p.318


22. Kubala: Wojny duńskie p.62

23. Czapliński: "Próby reform państwa" p.317

24. ib. p.306

25. For example in the Ukraine, where the state was incapable of providing the infrastructure which would enable the magnates to extract maximum economic advantage from their estates, and which many had observed in Western Europe. ib. p.307

26. Kersten: "Problem władzy w Rzeczypospolitej czasu Wazów" p.34

27. ib. p.35


29. Ochmann: "Plans for parliamentary reform" p.166


31. Ochmann: "Plans for parliamentary reform" pp.166-7

32. ib. p.176

33. Cf. Czapliński's demolition of the theory that Jan Leszczyński collected signatures after the end of the Convocation on a document endorsing plans to reform the sejm: "Próby reform państwa" p.320; Bąkowa nevertheless still accepts the document as valid: op. cit. p.23

34. Kubala: Wojny duńskie pp.348-9; Ochmann: "Plans for parliamentary reform" p.177
35. Vidoni, cipher, Poznań, 2.I.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.4

36. Ochmann suggests that the 1656 "Proposal..." was possibly a draft of the King's instructions to regional sejmiks; if this was the case, it remained a draft and was never circulated. "Plans for parliamentary reform" p.171

37. Decyzja Jana Kazimierza; Kubala: Wojny duńskie Dodatek XII p.535

38. ib. pp.535-6

39. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 19.V.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.24; Cf. de Lumbres: "...cette Diète ne se tiendra que pour faire voire au Moscovite qu'il l'on se met en devoir de la contenter, afin que, pendant cette Diète que se peut trainer ou rompre comme l'on voudra, il ne se porte à temuer aucune chose contre ce Royaume..." De Lumbres to Brienne, Poznań, 4.V.1658; CPP XII p.90

40. Des Noyers, Oberlogau, 26.I.1656; Lettres no.22, pp.64-5

41. Des Noyers, Oberlogau, 30.III.1656; Lettres no.41, p.126

42. See Czapliński: "Próby reform państwa" p.311; Ochmann: "Plans for parliamentary reform" pp.170-171

43. Kersten: "Problem władzy w Rzeczypospolitej czasu Wazów" p.34

44. Czapliński: "Próby reform państwa" p.311

45. Kersten: "Problem władzy Rzeczypospolitej czasu Wazów" p.34

46. Des Noyers, 26.I.1656; Lettres no.22, p.65

47. Koryciński to unknown, 1656; Czart.149 no.185, p.674

48. Royal Proclamation, Oppeln, 20.XI.1655; Michałowski: Księga pamiętnicza no.340, p.777

49. Royal Proclamation to the inhabitants of the Pinsk District, 23.II.1655; Akty otnosiąsce się do wojny za Malorossiiu XXXIV no.32, p.34

50. Jan Wielopolski to John Casimir, 4.III.1655; AGAD APPot.45 I p.16

51. John Casimir also asked whether the Sejm should last three weeks. John Casimir to Grzymułtowski, 24.X.1656; Czart.3487 p.93. John Casimir to Weiher, Chojnice, 24.X.1656; Czart.149 no.143, p.475

52. J.Leszczynski to A.Leszczynski, Vienna, 18.XI.1656; Czart.384 no.257, p.507


54. Koryciński to unknown, 1656; Czart.149 no.185, p.673
55. ib.

56. Louise Marie to Mme.de Choisy, 12.XI.1656; T.Luk.3008 p.27

57. Boguslaw Leszczyński to Stanisław Potocki, Cracow, 16.IX.1657; Czart.1656 p.394

58. ib. p.397


60. ib. p.27

61. Volumina Legum, IV pp.521-2; Rybarski: op. cit. p.102


63. ib. p.315

64. ib. p.317

65. Decyzja Jana Kazimierza; Kubala: Wojny duńskie Dodatek XII p.536

66. Vidoni, cipher, Poznań, 27.XII.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.82

67. Vidoni to Orsini, Warsaw, 20.VI.1655; T.Rz.8418 no.19, p.35; Hoverbeck to Frederick William, Warsaw, 20.VI.1655; Urkunden und Aktenstücke VI p.700. In fact the Church contributed to state taxation, and on the same footing as the laity with regard to extraordinary taxation. Karbownik: Ciężary stanu duchownego w Polsce na rzecz państwa od roku 1381 do połowy XVII wieku [Lublin, 1980] pp.161-2. Nevertheless, it was widely perceived as occupying a uniquely privileged position, and faced serious pressure to increase its contributions.

68. Vidoni, cipher, Poznań, 2.I.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.4

69. Decyzja Jana Kazimierza; Kubala: Wojny duńskie Dodatek XII p.536

70. Czapliński: "Próby reform państwa" p.318; Bąkowa sees the significance of the measure, but does not pursue the matter any further: "Warto zwrócić uwagę, iż stały podatek na armię byłby w przyszłości gwarantem wzmocnienia władzy królewskiej." Bąkowa: op. cit. p.23

71. Rybarski: op. cit. p.324

72. ib. p.74

73. Rybarski: op. cit. pp.315-6

74. Instrukcja od Koła Rycerskiego z Województwa Podolskiego za uniwersałem JKMści, Kam'ianets, 9.XI.1657; Czart.402 p.221

75. Rybarski: op. cit. p.320
76. Royal Proclamation, Poznań, 9.I.1658; Rybarski: op. cit. pp.316-7

77. Jan Leszczyński to Hoverbeck, Warsaw, 20.III.1658; Czart.388 no.186, p.377

78. Rybarski: op. cit. p.317

79. Royal Instructions to the Pinsk sejmik, 26.III.1658. Akty otnoshiashecia ko vremeni vojny za Malorossiiu XXXIV no. 107, p.122

80. Laudum Conventus Particularis Viznensis, 21.VI.1658; Teki Pawińskiego 8350, pp.211-212

81. ib.

82. Rybarski: op. cit. p.321

83. Instructions of Kowno sejmik for Deputies to Sejm, 21.VI.1658; Medeksza: Księga pamiętnicza p.171

84. ib.


86. Speculum...Prawdziwe Synom...Koronnym Czart.151 no.159, p.726

87. ib. p.322

88. Volumina Legum, IV pp.524-5

89. Lityński: Szlachecki samorząd gospodarczy w Małopolsce [1606-1717] [Katowice, 1974] pp.45, 69


91. Rada do Poprawy Rzeczypospolitej, 1657; Czart.150 no.94 p.401

92. ib. p.402

93. Ochmann: "Anonimowy projekt reformy skarbowej z 1657 roku" p.304

94. Rada do Poprawy Rzeczypospolitej, 1657; Czart.150 no.94, pp.408-9

95. Ochmann: "Anonimowy projekt reformy skarbowej z 1657 roku" p.307. For the strongly anti-magnate feelings of certain sejmiks, see: Leszczyński: "Siedemnastowieczne sejmiki a kultura polityczna szlachty." in Gierowski [ed.]: Dzieje kultury politycznej w Polsce [Warsaw, 1977] p.59. The Lublin sejmik, for example, usually voted all the taxes it was asked to under the Vasas. ib. p.60, n.35; Cf. Śladowski: Skład społeczny, wyznaniowy i Ideologia sejmiku lubelskiego [Lublin, 1960]
96. Ochmann: "Plans for parliamentary reform" p.168

97. ib. pp.167-8


99. Rada do Poprawy Rzeczypospolitej, 1657; Czart.150 no.94, p.410

100. ib. p.411
1. Lisola, Poznań, 16.V.1658; Berichte no.100, pp.412-3

2. Cf. John Casimir to Krzysztof Gembicki, 20.V.1658; BPAN Kórnik, 1618 p.57

3. Walewski: Historia wyzwolonej Rzeczypospolitej wpadającej pod jarzmo domowe za panowania Jana Kazimierza [1655-1660] [Cracow, 1870] pp.11-12

4. Rudawski: Historiarum Poloniae IX p.415

5. De Lumbres to Brienne, Rogoźno, 25.V.1658; CPP XII p.99

6. Vidoni, cipher, Sieraków, 11.VI.1658; T.Rz.8420 pp.26-7

7. Cf. Vidoni: "si venga all'Eletzione del Gran Duca di Moscovia, non solo perché mancherevano contrarietà si da quei che v'intervengono come facilmente d'altri Prencipi, che non considereranno di veder uniti Domini si potenti." Cipher, Warsaw, 19.V.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.24


9. For reports of low attendance, see: Bogusław Radziwiłł to Gosiewski, Königsberg, 20.VII.1658, BPAN Cr.342 p.783; Krzysztof Racki to unknown, B.Jag.5 p.795; The figure of 42 is based on the names given in Theatrum Europaeum VIII, 2 pp.653-4; Vidoni: Avvisi; T.Rz.8421 p.238; Chrapowicki: Diariusz p.170, and the signatories of the plenipotentiary powers for the commissioners for the talks with Muscovy, drawn up in Warsaw on 25th July; Czart.387 no.4, pp.19-20. The attendance of fourteen bishops was considerably higher than the best figure for the reign of Władysław IV, which was nine: Czapliński and Filipczak-Koczur: "Udział senatorów w pracach sejmowych za Zygmunta III i Władysława IV" Przegląd Historyczny 69 [1979] p.676. Indeed, the figure of 42 senators is higher than for any of Władysław IV's Sejms, and is only surpassed in the early seventeenth century by those of 1627 and 1631. ib.

10. Chrapowicki: Diariusz p.167


12. John Casimir to Montecuccoli, Warsaw, 24 and 30.VII.1658; Opitz: Österreich und Brandenburg im schwedisch-polnischen Krieg 1655-1660 pp.111, 113; Nowak: Oblężenie Torunia w roku 1658 [Toruń,
13. Jan Leszczyński to Turski, Goslina, 26.V.1658; Czart 388 no.191, p.394

14. Jan Leszczyński to Cieciszewski, Warsaw, 28.VII.1658; ib. no.209, p.461

15. Cf. the Instructions of the Zator sejmik, 17.VI.1658; Akta sejmikowe województwa krakowskiego II p.619; Instructions of the Kowno sejmik, 21.VI.1658; Medeksza: Księga pamiętnicza p.170; Kubala: Wojny duńskie p.74

16. Instructions for deputies from the Cracow voivodeship, 21.VI.1658; Akta sejmikowe województwa krakowskiego II p.638; Instructions for deputies from the Sieradz voivodeship, 21.VI.1658; Teki Pawińskiego, 8342 p.692

17. ib. pp.692-3

18. Instructions for deputies from the Łęczyca voivodeship, 21.VI.1658; Teki Pawińskiego 8327 pp.691-2

19. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 13.VIII.1658; Levinson: Die Nuntiaturberichte no.208, p.131

20. Kubala: Wojny duńskie p.75

21. Frederick William complained of this to Louise Marie in a letter dated 29th July: Urkunden und Aktenstücke VIII p.285; He also complained to John Casimir of the treatment of Protestants in Poland; Theatrum Europaeum VIII, 2 p.654

22. J. Leszczynski to Hoverbeck, Warsaw, 16.III.1658; Czart.388 no.182, p.370; For the problems with regard to the Lithuanian army, see Codello: "Konfederacja wojskowa na Litwie w latach 1659-1663" SMHW 6 [1960] pp.20-46

23. Krzysztof Pac to Bogusław Radziwiłł, Wilkowiszki, 20.VI.1658; AGAD ARadz. dz.V teka 251, II, 208 pp.77-8; Instruction for deputies from the Halicz sejmik, 17.VI.1658; Akta grodzkie i ziemskie XXIV p.143; Cf. Instruction of the sejmik of the Duchy of Oświęcim and Zator; Akta sejmikowe województwa krakowskiego II p.622

24. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 8.VII.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.31

25. Instructions for deputies from the Cracow voivodeship, 21.VI.1658; Akta sejmikowe województwa krakowskiego II p.636

26. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 6.VIII.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.38

27. Instructions for deputies from the Sieradz voivodeship, 21.VI.1658; Teki Pawińskiego 8342 pp.686-7

28. For the differing interpretations of Pereiaslav, see Basarab:
29. The text of the Korsun' agreement is in Arkhiv Iugo-Zapadnoj Rossii III, VI p.333


32. Lisola, report, 3.IX.1658; Berichte no.111, p.446

33. Instructions for deputies from Kowno District, 21.VI.1658; Medeksza: Księga pamiętnica p.170

34. Instructions for Commissioners to treat with Muscovy, Warsaw, 25.VII.1658; Czart.387 no.7, p.31; The Commissioners were Jan Zawisza, Gosiewski, Paweł Sapieha, Jan Kazimierz Krasinski, Cyprian Paweł Brzostowski and Stanisław Sarbiewski: ib.

35. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 23.VII.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.32

36. For Alexander VII's endorsement of the protest see his letters to John Casimir and the Sejm, Rome, 10.IX.1658; Theiner: Vetera Monumenta III pp.534-6

37. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 30.VII.1658; T.Rz.8421 pp.34-5

38. ib. p.35

39. Instructions for deputies from the Sochaczew sejmik, 21.VI.1658; Teki Pawińskiego 8346 p.2

40. The Sejm ended on 30.VIII.1658 at 11.00 a.m.; Chrapowicki: Diariusz p.171

41. Spielman: Leopold I of Austria p.31


43. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw 3.IX.1658; T.Rz.8421 pp.43-4

44. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Warsaw, 29.VIII.1658; CPP XII p.134

45. De Lumbres to Mazarin, Warsaw, 7.IX.1658; CPP XII p.138

46. ib.

47. Des Noyers, Warsaw, 11.VIII.1658; Lettres no.164, pp.429-30

48. Des Noyers, Warsaw, 18.VIII.1658; Lettres no.165, p.431; de Lumbres to Brienne, Warsaw, 29.VIII.1658; CPP XII p.136
49. "Approbatio pactorum staneło z Szwedami i Inflant wiecznie ustapiłismy." Chrapowicki: 13.VIII.1658; Diariusz p.169. Louise Marie did not consider the terms to be so attractive, however: "La Reyne attend l'ambassadeur de Lumbres pour luy faire des reproches d'avoir escouté et resçut des propositions aussi désraisonables que celles qui luy ont esté faites a Wismar. Dieu nous ayant délivrez de tous nos autres ennemis et nous restant 70,000 hommes, qui n'auront plus affaire que contre les Sueois, il y a apparence, qu'ils n'en seront pas quittes pour nous [rendre] ce qu'ils nous ont usurpez." Louise Marie to Frederick William, 23.VIII.1658; Urkunden und Aktenstücke VIII pp.288-9

50. Louise Marie to Frederick William, 1.IX.1658; Urkunden und Aktenstücke VIII p.291. Only when news arrived in Berlin of the Swedish attack on Denmark, on the night of 24/25.VIII.1658, did Frederick William rediscover his enthusiasm for the attack on Holstein; Opitz: op. cit. pp.117-8. On 13.VIII.1658, the Elector wrote to Louise Marie talking still of peace with Sweden, urging the Poles not to treat separately: Urkunden und Aktenstücke VIII pp.286-7. He was willing to move troops into Prussia due to the continuing uncertainty over Swedish intentions. Frederick William to Louise Marie, 16.VIII.1658; ib. p.287

51. Lisola, Ujazdowa, 25.VIII.1658; Berichte no.110, pp.440-2


53. Kubala: Wojny duńskie p.55

54. Vidoni, cipher, Sieraków, 11.VI.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.26

55. Lisola, Poznań, 19.VI.1658; Berichte no.105, p.433

56. Medeksza: Księga pamiętnicza pp.158-9

57. ib.

58. Vidoni, cipher, 30.V.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.25

59. Pac to Brzostowski, Warsaw, 9.VIII.1658; Czart.387 no.32, p.176

60. Pac to Brzostowski: 20.VIII.1658; Czart.387 no.35, p.188

61. Medeksza: Księga pamiętnicza p.146

62. Medeksza to Gosiewski, 12.III.1658; ib. p.147

63. Chrapowicki: Diariusz p.170

64. Jan Leszczyński to Bieniewski, Warsaw, 7.VIII.1658; Czart.388
65. John Casimir to Frederick William, 29.VIII.1658; Urkunden und Aktenstücke VI, p.68


67. K.Pac to Bogusław Radziwiłł, Szamotuły, 12.V.1658; AGAD ARadz.dz.V, teka 251, 11208 p.61

68. Lisola, Ujazdowa, 11.IX.1658; Berichte no.112, p.449

69. Such was the view put forward by Pinocci in 1658: "Progetto circa il successore"; WAPCr. AP.358 pp.163-70; Targosz: Hieronim Pinocci; studium z dziejów kultury naukowej w Polsce w XVII wieku pp.45-6


71. ib.

72. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 18.III.1659; T.Rz.8422 p.18

73. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 4.III.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.13

74. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 26.IV.1659; T.Rz.8422 p.39

75. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 5.VII.1659; T.Rz.8422 p.67

76. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 18.III.1659; T.Rz.8422 p.18

77. Mazarin to Louise Marie, Aix, 26.II.1659; Waliszewski: op. cit. Document XCVI, p.236

78. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 18.III.1659; T.Rz.8422 pp.19-20

79. ib. p.18; cipher, Warsaw, 8.II.1659; ib. p.7

80. Ochmann: Sejmy lat 1661-2. Przegrana batalia o reformę ustroju Rzeczypospolitej p.15

81. Cf. Vidoni, cipher, 5.I.1659; T.Rz.8422 p.3; cipher, Warsaw, 8.II.1659; ib. p.7

82. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 1.III.1659; T.Rz.8422 p.14; cipher, Warsaw, 8.III.1659; ib. p.17

83. Waliszewski: op. cit. pp.79-82. Brevet pour M-r. le Prince et M-r. le Duc d'Anguien... au sujet de la succession à la couronne de Pologne... 30.XI.1660; ib. Document XIII, p.239; Mémoire pour servir d'instruction secrète au sieur de Lumbres... 20.XII.1660; ib. Document CVI p.240


4. Ochmann: "Plans for parliamentary reform in the Commonwealth in the middle of the seventeenth century" in Czapliński [ed.]: The Polish parliament at the summit of its development [16th-17th centuries] [Wrocław, 1985] pp.177-8

5. Ochmann: Sejmy lat 1661-1662 pp.17-8, p.20

6. ib. p.74

7. ib. p.36, pp.108-110


10. Klaczewski: op. cit. p.21

11. For the battle of Mątwy see Majewski: "Bitwa pod Mątwami" SMHW 7 [1961] pp.41-90

12. Ochmann: Sejmy lat 1661-1662 p.244

13. Klaczewski: op. cit. p.6

14. ib. p.5

15. ib. pp.47-8, p.106

16. Ochmann: Sejmy lat 1661-1662 pp.67-76

17. ib. p.68. For the extent of support for the principle of an election, see de Lumbres to Mazarin, Cracow, 11.XII.1660; Harl.4532 p.505

18. Ochmann: Sejmy lat 1661-1662 p.91

19. ib. p.38

20. ib. pp.39-49
21. ib. p.111
22. ib. p.114
23. ib. p.125

24. Lubomirski published an extensive defense of his actions after his impeachment: *Jawnej niewinności manifest...* [1666]

25. Cefali to Vidoni, Lublin, 26.VIII.1656; ib. p.256

26. Vidoni, cipher, Częstochowa, 16.II.1657; T.Rz.8420 p.9

27. Vidoni, cipher, Warsaw, 15.VI.1658; T.Rz.8421 p.21

28. For an account of Wiśniowiecki's brief and unhappy reign see Przyboś: Michal Korybut Wiśniowiecki, 1640-1673 [Cracow, Wrocław, 1984]; In 1677, Pac attacked Sobieski, by now himself king, for attempting to strengthen the power of the Senate, something which Pac had supported so strongly in the 1650's and 1660's. Wójcik: *Jan Sobieski 1629-1696* p.267
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