**DOMESTIC POLICY ANALYSIS**

“Domestic policy” means:

1. Securing the throne & succession through domestic measures (as opposed to foreign policy) like the spy network, marrying Elizabeth of York, executions etc (see notes on this).
2. Financial policy.
3. Control of the nobility.

You might be asked a separate question on any of these or possibly a question on domestic policy more generally.

You could be asked a question on **which of the 3 was most crucial to H’s success**, which is difficult to answer b/c they overlapped. H himself always regarded securing his throne as the most important priority, e.g. his willingness to sacrifice trade to stop support for pretenders, & unless he kept the throne he obviously couldn’t have achieved anything else. He would have regarded financial success & control of the nobility as means to the end of securing his throne rather than as ends in themselves. On the other hand, if he couldn’t control the nobility or couldn’t afford to raise an army to fight pretenders, he would lose the throne anyway.

H himself said “the kings my predecessors, weakening their treasure, have made themselves servants to their subjects”. Foreign ambassadors (to whom H gave expensive gifts to show his wealth) noticed that H liked to be thought wealthier than he truly was b/c it would discourage people from supporting pretenders. H has often been accused of being greedy but this was b/c, as Alexander Grant has argued, he equated money with power.

Edmund Dudley noted “the King’s grace was much set to have many persons in his danger at his pleasure”; by “danger” he meant financial ruin b/c this (through the system of bonds & recogs. which Dudley enforced) was H’s favourite means of controlling the nobility. These are often seen as a money raising device but in fact their main purpose was to secure good behaviour, especially of former Yorkist nobles like Surrey & Dorset. In that sense control of the nobility was more important than finance.

**H VII’S FINANCIAL POLICY**

**Successes**

* The use of the **Chamber system** helped H to bring finance under his personal control; he took a keen interest in accounts, payments & income. This was quicker & more efficient than the Exchequer.
* He employed effective officials like **Bray, Empson & Dudley** to ensure that any money due to the Crown (e.g. fines & feudal dues) was thoroughly collected, e.g. a knighthood fee for his son Arthur & a dowry for his daughter Margaret.
* Bonds & recognisances were used to increase revenue, although their primary purpose was to ensure good behaviour.
* Compared with Edward IV (a financially successful king) H increased all revenues, especially crown lands (X4), benevolences (X2) parliamentary taxation (by 55%). Overall income was increased by 67%.
* He increased income from crown lands by seizing the estates of those who opposed him like Lincoln, Suffolk & Sir W Stanley. This plus H’s meanness with patronage & Act of Resumption (taking back all lands given away by the Crown since the Wars of the Roses started in 1455) enabled him to quadruple revenue from **crown lands**.
* He retained his **French pension** for 17 years compared with Edward IV’s 7.
* He secured profitable trade agreements with Burgundy, France & Spain which boosted **customs** revenue, as did the new Book of Rates uprating them in 1507.
* He left a substantial **surplus** (estimated at around £100,000) for his son.
* H’s successes in raising other revenues (especially crown lands) enabled him to minimise parliamentary taxation after 1497, preventing any more tax rebellions.

**Failures**

* Raising **taxes** provoked rebellions in Yorkshire in 1489 & Cornwall in 1497, forcing H to limit them thereafter; Parliament met only once in the 2nd half of his reign.
* His success in raising income compared with Edward IV was least marked with customs revenue (hampered by **trade embargoes** against Burgundy 1493-6 & 1506), clerical taxation & his French pension.
* H’s desperation to cut off support for pretenders forced him to give huge sums to Maximilian (some estimates say around £300,000) to stop support for Warbeck & Suffolk.
* H’s greed, especially in the last years of his reign when Empson & Dudley extorted so much money by unfair methods, caused so much resentment that it might have provoked a **rebellion**. The execution of Empson & Dudley after H’s death showed this.

**ANALYSIS ON H VII & THE NOBILITY**

**Successes**

* By dating his reign to the day before the Battle of Bosworth, H could threaten nobles who fought against him with acts of attainder (convicting them of treason) to keep them under control.
* By executing Sir William **Stanley** in 1495 he sent a clear signal to the nobility that nothing less than 100% loyalty would be tolerated.
* He prevented the emergence of over-mighty subjects (like Warwick in Edward IV’s reign).
* He used **bonds & recognisances** to limit the power of the nobility (e.g. Dorset was forced to show his loyalty by helping to crush the Cornish tax rebellion to get them lifted & in total 60% of the nobility were subjected to them at some stage during his reign) while at the same time winning their loyalty through the Order of the Garter.
* H was much more effective than previous kings at penalising **retaining**, e.g. Burgavenny was fined £70,000 in 1507.
* The Royal Council was used more effectively to exert control over the nobility, as were institutions like the Council Learned in the Law, Court of Requests, Star Chamber & the Councils of the North and Wales. H limited the power of the nobility by employing legally trained bishops (e.g. Morton, Lord Chancellor & Archbishop of Canterbury) & gentry (e.g. Sir Reginald Bray) in these institutions.
* He increased income from crown lands by seizing the estates of those who opposed him like Lincoln & Suffolk.
* H relied on loyal nobles to control parts of the country, like Bedford in Wales & Oxford in East Anglia. He also consulted them on issues like policy towards France in 1491-2. Oxford & Bedford fought with him at Bosworth & Stoke.
* He gained the support of some former **Yorkists**, e.g. Thomas Howard was restored to the earldom of Surrey for suppressing the Yorkshire tax rebellion in 1489.
* Hardly any nobles supported rival claimants after the Simnel rebellion; Warbeck had to rely on support from abroad.
* H’s meanness with **patronage** & Act of Resumption (taking back all lands given away by the Crown since the Wars of the Roses started in 1455) enabled him to quadruple revenue from crown lands.
* The nobles might not have liked H but they **feared** him; he was in no danger of losing the throne as John & Richard II did b/c he was much more competent than them.

**Failures**

* The combination of Lincoln, Lovell & Kildare posed a serious threat to H in 1487, forcing him to fight a battle at **Stoke** which was bigger & bloodier than at Stoke (3,000 of his soldiers were killed).
* The failure of the nobility to prevent Simnel marching across the North in 1487 & the Cornish rebels marching across the South in 1497 shows their lack of loyalty to H.
* Some historians, notably Thomas Penn, have argued that the policies enforced by **Empson & Dudley** in his last years were so oppressive that they could have provoked a rebellion.
* H became harsher & more greedy in the 2nd half of his reign (he passed 51 acts of attainder 1504-9) despite being more secure; this inevitably provoked resentment.
* His excessive severity against the nobility (subjecting nearly 60% of them to **bonds & recogs.)** made him v unpopular. As Christine Carpenter has pointed out, he did not discriminate between those who were dangerous & those who were not.
* H abused his feudal rights, e.g. fining the Duke of Buckingham £7,000 in 1498 for entering his inheritance without licence before he was 21.
* The frequency of H’s acts against **retaining** (1485, 1487 & 1504) suggests they were ineffective.
* The limitations H placed on the nobility (there were only 35 nobles in England in 1509 compared with 50 in 1509) & his harshness even towards loyal supporters (he fined Oxford for retaining) made him so unpopular that there might have been a revolt if he had reigned much longer. Both John & Richard II were deposed b/c they treated the nobility so badly.