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I. INTRODUCTION

1. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST FRANCE

The war had started against Revolutionary France in 1793 as a result of the French gaining control of the River Scheldt. Success, however, wasn't exactly forthcoming – two coalitions had been forged, but each of them had failed. Through the Treaty of Amiens in 1802, peace was made with Napoleon, by then First Consul. The peace left the Netherlands in the hands of the French, though, and therefore did nothing to reduce the risk of invasion. This was to become a real menace after Britain reopened hostilities in the following year and did not relent until 1805, when Bonaparte, due to his defeat at Trafalgar, as well as the renewed outbreak of war on the continent, appears to have discarded the scheme of an invasion. In the meantime, a new coalition had been formed. Yet the Prussians were too halting, the Austrians too feeble, and the Russians too eagerly aspiring to their own interests. As for the British, their efforts were confined to the sea, neglecting the battle on the land. True, they had been ready to subsidise the coalition, but they were still holding back major contributions. The British victory at Trafalgar, which resulted in making Britain's supremacy at sea nearly impeachable, was followed by the disaster of Austerlitz, which shattered the Austrian army and effectuated the Austrians to seek peace. Having been hesitant to take part in the hostilities against France, Prussia was soon persuaded not to wage war, for Napoleon promised her Hanover in return. Therefore, of the great powers, only Britain and Russia continued their struggle, the staunchness of the latter being rather doubtful. At any rate, Pitt, the British Prime Minister at that time, realised something of the utmost importance: as long as there was no concurrence with respect to war aims, any coalition was bound to break up as a consequence of conflicting ambitions of the powers. Through an exchange with Tsar Alexander, Pitt developed the basic lines for a European reconstruction, which had little effect at that time, but significance that would be seen in later years.¹

¹ CLARKE, John: British Diplomacy and Foreign Policy, 1782-1865, The National Interest (London/Boston/Sydney/Wellington 1989), p. 107, 111-113; HARLING, Philip: A Tale of Two Conflicts: Critiques of the British War Effort, 1793-1815, (19-40) in: PHILP, Mark (Ed.): Resisting Napoleon, The British

In 1806 Napoleon detracted Prussia of Hanover and founded the Confederation of the Rhine. The ensuing war against Prussia ended with her defeat at Jena-Auerstedt. It was then, in Prussia's occupied capital, that the Emperor of the French dictated the Berlin Decrees. Trade with Britain was prohibited and British possessions were seized. This so-called Continental System was to prevent Britain from constantly seeking allies and subsidising them. Even more, Napoleon hoped that the trade-war would bring Britain to her knees. In the following year the Continental System was further expanded; even Russia agreed to join when the Emperors met at Tilsit. A couple of months later, Russia, a former ally, declared war on Britain. Yet, Great Britain was coping, primarily because trade could not be stopped completely. True, the continent was well sealed-off; nevertheless, it was not sealed off entirely. On the other hand, and even more crucially, Britain was seeking trade elsewhere. Even before, the United States had been the most important trade partner, with Britain's exports amounting to about the same as they did to all of Europe collectively. However, in 1808 Great Britain was to lose this vital connection. Britain's answer to the Continental System, the Orders in Council, stopped neutral vessels to prevent them from trading with France and provoked the United States to place an embargo on British goods, which lasted until 1809. Thus, Britain's trade was cut off from Europe as well as the United States of America. Later, in 1812, Britain's former colonies were to declare war on their mother country. At any rate, even at this critical stage, Britain was able to manage because it found new markets, e.g., in Latin America. Still, though the Continental System failed in its main purpose – Britain's downfall – it did do damage to Britain's economy. Britain wasn't the only one suffering; in the end the Continental System did more harm to Northern Germany and Holland, which made the population discontent with French rule.²

In 1807 the French and Spanish had concertedly made an assault on Portugal - a measure that was partly intended to further enhance and extend the Continental System. Britain, however, was able to counterbalance the trading losses inflicted by the closure of the Portuguese market, because she got the permit to trade directly with Brazil, where the royal family had fled. This circumstance, together with illegal commerce between Great Britain and Spanish America in fact outweighed her losses by far. Before long, however, Napoleon also attacked Spain – the country aligned with him since 1796. He distrusted his ally, as Spain, in 1806, had secretly,

Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797-1815 (Aldershot/Burlington 2006), p. 20f; PHILP: Resisting Napoleon, The British Response to the Threat of Invasion, p. 1f.

² BLACK, Jeremy: Trade, Empire and British Foreign Policy, 1689-1815 (London/New York 2007), p. 186f; CLARKE: British Diplomacy and Foreign Policy, p. 115-118, 121.

but not unnoticeably prepared to fight France, merely shirking to do so when the news of the Prussian defeat had reached Spain. A dispute between the Spanish King Charles IV and his son, who had declared himself King Ferdinand VII, afforded a brilliant opportunity for Napoleon to intervene. Under the pretext of mediation, he ordered both of them to France and when in France, he coerced them into abdicating, making his brother Joseph King of Spain. Napoleon, however, had not expected the fierce opposition of the Spanish. Commencing in May 1808, national upheavals occurred throughout Spain, and before long appeals were made to Britain for support.³

The news of the upheavals in Spain produced a sensation in Great Britain, and the calls for help were zealously answered. An army was dispatched to the Peninsula, of which Sir Arthur Wellesley, who, in the course of the war was to become Duke of Wellington, was appointed as commander in 1809. Born in Ireland in 1769, the same year as his antagonist Napoleon, he had fought half a decade in India. In a Great Britain that was entirely absorbed by the war with France, his achievements had hardly attracted attention. Arthur's eldest brother Richard, the Marquess of Wellesley, had been Governor-General of India until 1805, and from 1809 to 1812 he was Foreign Secretary, and therefore in the right positions to promote Wellington. Next to his brother's influence and his own capability, Arthur's appointment was due to Viscount Castlereagh, a good friend of his, who also held a ministerial post.⁴ Wellington was popular with his army, and as one soldier confessed, "We would rather see his long nose in a fight than a reinforcement of ten thousand men any day."⁵ He was nicknamed "the Beau," "the Peer," or, referring to his distinctive nose, "the Eagle" or simply "Nosey."⁶

Napoleon's victory over Austria in 1809 enabled him to send more troops to Iberia, and the following years witnessed a series of victories and setbacks for the British army. Every winter Wellington retreated to Portugal, even after his triumphal entry in Madrid in 1812. This retreat to Portugal was, however, the last one, and in 1813 the liberation of Spain was to truly

³ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, 1807-1815* (New Haven/London 1996), p. 29f, 32-34; PETRIE, Charles: *Lord Liverpool and his Times* (London 1954), p. 127; SCHROEDER, Paul W.: *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848* (Oxford 1994), p. 340-342.

⁴ HAY, William Anthony: *The Whig Revival, 1808-1830* (Basingstoke 2005), p. 23; LONGFORD, Elizabeth: *Wellington, A new Biography* (Stroud 2005), p. 18f, 24f; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 38, 43; SEVERN, John K.: *The Wellesleys and Iberian diplomacy, 1808-12*, (34-65) in: GASH, Norman (Ed.): *Wellington, Studies in the military and political career of the first Duke of Wellington* (Manchester/New York 1990), p. 34-36; WEBSTER, C. K.: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, 1812-1815, Britain and the Reconstruction of Europe* (London 1931), p. 3.

⁵ Quoted in LONGFORD: *Wellington*, p. 34.

⁶ Quoted in LONGFORD: *Wellington*, p. 37, 43f.

commence.⁷ Yet, Britain not only fought against Napoleon – in 1812 she also became ensnarled in hostilities against the United States of America.

2. THE WAR OF 1812

The relationship between Great Britain and the United States had for quite a few years been strained, which was to a large extent a concomitant phenomenon of the war against France. As we have seen, the British government responded to the Continental System by issuing the Orders in Council, and therewith prohibiting trade (also by neutral countries) with Napoleonic Europe. This meant that America had to refrain from conducting her own commerce, lest her vessels be seized by the British. This naturally caused considerable damage and was seen as national provocation. Offence was also taken by the British “right of search,” according to which the Royal Navy was entitled to sift through vessels and compelled British seamen to serve in the navy. Thus, many British looked for work on American vessels and pretended to be American. Therefore, the Royal Navy also searched American ships, and as there was no effective method of how to differentiate between British and American citizens, it was inevitable that a lot of Americans also fell prey to impressment. While impressment, as well as the Orders in Council, was regarded in Britain as imperative devices in fighting the French and any debate on the maritime rights was adamantly rejected, these drove the United States to finally declare war on 18 June 1812.⁸

The British government had abrogated the Orders in Council in the same month, thus they did not think that the United States of America would abide by their intention to fight Britain. True, the suspension was actually not made to soothe the Americans - it was due to home affairs, as the Orders in Council had also damaged British trade, while only the fact that the Continental System was now in disarray rendered this step possible. Still, as it eliminated one of the United States’ key complaints, the British Cabinet thought that when intelligence of the rescindment arrived in America, it would almost immediately bring about a cessation of hostilities. But they apparently underestimated the obstinacy of their erstwhile colonies. The Americans, for their part, expected that Britain would try to avoid hostilities at this time as

⁷ PETRIE, Charles: Lord Liverpool and his Times, p. 164.

⁸ MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 232, 234; WEBSTER, C. K.: The American War and the Treaty of Ghent, 1812-1814, (522-542) in WARD, A.W., and GOOCH, G.P. (Ed.): The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, vol. I (Cambridge 1922), p. 523-526.

they were fully engaged in the war against Napoleon. At any rate, even though American public opinion was mostly against hostilities, the Congress stayed with their decision to make war with Britain and endeavoured to find another reason to vindicate the hostilities. The vexed question of impressment still remained, and also the feeling of national humiliation caused by Britain's treatment and the prospect of the acquisition of Canada played some part in the American government's determination to wage war. As it was, the bulk of the American troops were apparently unsure why their country was engaged in hostilities with Britain, as well as unsure of what they were actually fighting for.⁹

However, the resolution to declare war was simply foolish, as the American government had made no prearrangements, neither where money was concerned, nor for the training of the troops or logistics. This failure of the American government is even more remarkable in view of the fact that for years the relations of the two countries had deteriorated, and it was evident that this might eventually culminate in the outbreak of a war. There were only a few British troops stationed in overseas, but they did not degrade America's endeavour as much as the lack of prearrangements did. As it was, the Americans did not manage to harm Britain seriously, whereas Britain, by making the whole coast of the United States subject to blockade, succeeded in demolishing American commerce. Indeed, if the British had not allowed exports of flour to the Peninsula intended for the British forces, American commerce would have suffered even more severely. Americans were aware that they were, in fact, nourishing the foe, but it did not stop them.¹⁰ Erstwhile, President Jefferson opined: "If we could by starving the British armies, oblige [t]hem to withdraw from the peninsular [sic!], it would be to send them here; and I think we had better feed them there for pay, than feed and fight them here for nothing."¹¹

The British, for their part, strongly supported the war against the United States and called for revenge on the perfidious Americans, who had assailed Britain exactly at the time when she was deeply engaged in the war with Napoleon.¹² One Briton remarked, "We [the British] seem to be leading the Yankees a sad life upon their coasts. I am glad of it with all my heart.

⁹ BELLESILES, Michael A.: *Experiencing the War of 1812*, (205-240) in: FLAVELL, Julie and CONWAY, Stephen (Ed.): *Britain and America Go to War. The Impact of War and Warfare in Anglo-America, 1754-1815* (Gainesville/Tallahassee/Tampa/Boca Raton/Pensacola/ Orlando/Miami/Jacksonville/Ft. Myers 2004), p. 205f; CLARKE: *British Diplomacy and Foreign Policy*, p. 118; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 234f; WEBSTER: *The American War and the Treaty of Ghent*, p. 525-529.

¹⁰ BELLESILES: *Experiencing the War of 1812*, p. 208, 216; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 234, 237f.

¹¹ Quoted in MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 237.

¹² WEBSTER: *The American War and the Treaty of Ghent*, p. 528.

When they declared war they thought it was pretty near over with us, and that their weight cast into the scale would decide our ruin. Luckily they were mistaken, and are likely to pay dear for their error.”¹³ The Opposition unsurprisingly tried to hold the Tory Cabinet responsible for the war, but they could not disavow the fact that the inevitable application of the British maritime rights had effectuated the hostilities. The War of 1812 was for Britain naturally aggravating, especially as it occurred at such an inconvenient time. Yet, thanks to the American government’s neglect of any preparations, it was not much more than an unpleasant diversion from the war against France and the subsequent settlement of Europe to which her main efforts were directed.¹⁴

3. THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Not only abroad, but also at home, times were turbulent. In late 1810 King George III had taken ill – he actually suffered from porphyria, but unknown then, his illness was mistaken for madness. He had experienced attacks before and had recovered from them, but this time he was not to convalesce. Consequently, a Regency of the Prince of Wales was implemented. Although Prince Regent had been attached to the Whigs all his life and it was in his authority to change the government, he did not do so. This was partly due to the King’s condition, which at times seemed to improve, but also owing to the discordance that had emerged between George and the Whigs on most important political issues. Where the Regent stood out for a vigorous prosecution of the war against Bonaparte, the Whig-leaders Lords Grenville and Grey were inclined to seek peace. Where the Whigs were frantic about Catholic relief, George thought it the wrong time for this matter to be addressed. Still, that didn’t mean that he had to take a liking to his father’s Cabinet. And although attempts were made to form alternative ministries, they all turned out unsuccessful. In the end, after a long period of political uncertainty, the Tories in 1812 were confirmed in office. Still, it was thought that the Ministry would not last long, as cabinets had changed so frequently during the Napoleonic wars. From 1803 to 1815 there were six different ones with the same number of prime ministers. The War Office and the Foreign Office were subject to even higher turnover - there were seven ministers for War and Colonies and nine different foreign ministers. These high

¹³ Quoted in MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 239.

¹⁴ MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 240; WEBSTER: The American War and the Treaty of Ghent, p. 528f.

fluctuations and converse expectations notwithstanding, the Cabinet was to remain in power for fifteen years.¹⁵

The most significant ministers in view to foreign affairs were the Earl of Liverpool in his capacity as Prime Minister, the Earl of Bathurst, who became Minister for War and Colonies, and Viscount Castlereagh (later Marquess of Londonderry), who was appointed Foreign Minister as well as Leader of the House of Commons. All of them had held various different posts before; Castlereagh, for instance, had been Secretary for War, Bathurst briefly Foreign Secretary, and Liverpool both, as well as Home Secretary. Bathurst was a reliable man and an able Secretary for War, and Liverpool was a huge support in Parliament. Castlereagh entertained cordial relations with both of them and was genuinely trusted by all ministers. He was born in Ireland in 1769, just like his fellow countryman Wellington, his most important associate in fighting Napoleon and reconstructing Europe. He had played a prominent role in uniting Ireland with Britain - the so-called Act of Union - for which he was strongly condemned. At the same time, however, he sympathised with the Catholics and was one of few members of the Cabinet who favoured Catholic Emancipation. In his capacity of Minister for War, he had been entangled in some defeats Britain had faced in her struggle with Napoleon¹⁶, and it was probably this that caused *The Times* to refer to him as “the very darling of misfortune.”¹⁷ After his death - he committed suicide in 1822 - Lord Byron, who had passionately hated him,¹⁸ stated that he “looked upon him as the most despotic in intention and the weakest in intellect, that ever tyrannized over a country. [...] England has been insulted by a *minister* [...] who could not speak English [...]”¹⁹ The last comment alluded to the fact that Castlereagh never entirely got rid of his Irish accent and that he had the “habit of using the first word that came to hand without much regard to its signification,” as a contemporary observed.²⁰ Notwithstanding Byron’s negative opinion on Castlereagh, the latter was a real asset to the Ministry because of his reliability, courage, endurance, and hard-working attitude. He was a composed and modest man, but also aloof to such an extent that he

¹⁵ BARTLETT, C. J.: Castlereagh (London/Melbourne/Toronto 1966), p. 102f; HALL, Christopher D.: British strategy in the Napoleonic War, 1803-1815 (Manchester 1999), p. 53, 55; MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 137, 141-143, 160-162, 193-197; PALMER, Alan: The Life and Times of George IV. (London 1972), p. 94-97, 99, 102.

¹⁶ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 3, 101; HALL: British strategy in the Napoleonic War, p. 210f; MARRIOTT, J. A. R.: Castlereagh, The Political Life of Robert, Second Marquess of Londonderry (London 1936), p. 14; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 3, 35f.

¹⁷ Quoted in BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 3.

¹⁸ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 263; MARRIOTT: Castlereagh, p. 5f.

¹⁹ Quoted in MARRIOTT: Castlereagh, p. 7.

²⁰ Quoted in BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 163.

seemed cold, perhaps even arrogant, which probably arose from his engrained coyness.²¹ Bartlett describes him as “a warm and gentle personality beneath the frigid exterior,” and Bryant speaks of him as “a man of scrupulous integrity, incapable of deceit, simple, home-loving, [...] almost bourgeois in the propriety of his domestic life.”²²

The Cabinet’s position in the House of Commons was anything but strong. However, after his breach with the Whigs in 1812, the ministers could count on the Prince Regent’s support and the Opposition was enfeebled by the fact that it often was at odds. There were the conservative Whigs led by Lord Grenville, the more progressive Whigs led by Lord Grey, and the Radicals. Frequently they could not agree on a common policy, and even together they did not possess any majority. A large fraction in the Commons, indeed about half of its members, was actually not affiliated to any party, and thus provided uncertain majorities. The independents generally had an aversion to the possibility of a government formed of Whigs and Radicals, but that did not stop them from voting against the Government on some cases as they saw fit. In late 1812 the position of the Cabinet improved while that of the Opposition weakened as the progress of the war was becoming increasingly favourable. Therefore, in 1813 and early 1814, Parliament witnessed quite calm years.²³

At first the bulk of the Opposition had viewed Britain’s engagement in Iberia favourably;²⁴ Grey, for example, called it “morally and politically one of the highest duties a nation ever had to perform.”²⁵ The enthusiasm was mainly down to the fact that it was the Spanish people who had taken up arms against Napoleon, which stood in sharp contrast to any of the efforts of autocratically ruled Russia, Prussia, and Austria. The enthusiasm, however, quickly faded and by early 1809 there were many who opposed the British war effort in Iberia and considered it doomed to failure.²⁶

Relations with Spain were not always harmonious and were further strained when, in the spring of 1810, an upheaval took place in Venezuela. Before long the calls for independence took hold of other Spanish colonies, and the rebels asked for British aid. Although not

²¹ BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 101; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 10, 314; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 36, 486.

²² BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 1f; BRYANT, Arthur: *The Age of Elegance, 1812-1822* (Edinburgh 1958), p. 214.

²³ BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 103, 165-167, 173; HAY: *The Whig Revival*, p. 34; PALMER: *The Life and Times of George IV*, p. 82.

²⁴ HALL: *British strategy in the Napoleonic War*, p. 62.

²⁵ Quoted in HAY: *The Whig Revival*, p. 22.

²⁶ HALL: *British strategy in the Napoleonic War*, p. 62; HAY: *The Whig Revival*, p. 22f; SEVERN: *The Wellesleys and Iberian diplomacy*, p. 36f.

unexpected, this obviously created an exceedingly delicate situation. After all, Britain was aligned with Spain. However, in the event Britain would ignore the pleas for help it was likely that the revolting colonies would side either with the United States or with France. Besides, there was also the economic aspect – the Government had to be careful not to disrupt the admittedly unlawful trade. Therefore, reconciliation between the Spanish kingdom and her colonies was viewed most desirable, and the Marquess of Wellesley as well as Castlereagh, when succeeding the former as Foreign Secretary, tried to mediate. The Spanish, however, preferred an aggressive approach and demanded British support, pointing to their alliance. Yet Britain was adamantly against such measures, remonstrating that a dispatch of troops to Latin America would naturally impair Spain's position in the war against France.²⁷

²⁷ SEVERN: *The Wellesleys and Iberian diplomacy*, p. 50f, 54, 58, 60; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 71.

II. BRITAIN AND THE CONTINENTAL POWERS

4. THE FORMING OF THE COALITION

Meanwhile, the war on the Continent was taking an auspicious turn. Napoleon, whose relations with Russia had started to degrade in early 1811, invaded the eastern power in June 1812, but, not even four months later, he had to withdraw. At the end of the year the harsh winter and the constant Cossack attacks had taken their toll: his enormous army was shattered – estimations number his losses (including prisoners) at more than half a million soldiers. Napoleon's defeat in Russia provided a golden opportunity to take up arms and restrain France's power. Yet, it was unclear if the Russians would pursue the *Grande Armée*, or if Austria and Prussia - who at this time were in fact aligned to France - would pit their forces against the Corsican.²⁸

However, Alexander, the capricious, vain, and self-indulgent Tsar of Russia, engaged his country in a crusade against the Emperor of the French. Although he changed his mind on many instances, he did not falter in this case. After all, Russia would never be truly safe unless the French were driven out of Central Europe. Thus, the invasion of Russia was followed by a French retreat with the Russians hard on their heels. With her energies mainly directed at Iberia, Britain could not do much to aid Russia, but she did try. Her efforts were mainly directed at Sweden, because the British ministers were of the opinion that if Sweden, too, would take up arms against France, the central European powers might follow. With a considerable amount of money and the promise of Norway and Guadeloupe to Sweden, Bernadotte, the French marshal who had become Swedish Crown Prince, was won over and in early March pitted his country against France. Unfortunately, this did not result in the quick and efficient blow to the French that the British government had hoped for.²⁹

²⁸ CLARKE: *British Diplomacy and Foreign Policy*, p. 118; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 224, 229, 243; PETRIE, Charles: *Lord Liverpool and his Times*, p. 170.

²⁹ KISSINGER, Henry A.: *A World Restored* (London 1973), p. 90; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 243-245; NICOLSON, Harold: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity: 1812-1822* (London 1970), p.

Months beforehand, at the end of 1812, the Prussian General Yorck had proclaimed his forces neutral, only to side with the Russians later. Frederick William III, the King of Prussia, and Hardenberg, the Prussian Chancellor, were aghast at this open display of disobedience. Neither of them was anything like Francophile; they were merely petrified. Due to the lost war in 1806, Prussia had to surrender two-thirds of her territory and consequently descended to a second-rate power. As there was still the possibility that the Tsar would enter into an agreement with Napoleon, Frederick William III and Hardenberg regarded a Prussian engagement in the war against France at this stage as simply too perilous. Eventually, however, in late February Prussia formally aligned with Russia in the Treaty of Kalish. According to the treaty, Russia promised to fight against France with a force of 150,000 men, and Prussia with one of 80,000. Prussia would regain the territorial extent she had held in 1806, though not the same borders. Nearly two decades had passed since Poland had been entirely divided between Russia, Austria and Prussia. After the latter's defeat, Napoleon had taken her Polish lands and founded the Duchy of Warsaw, which he had further augmented in 1809 by some of Austria's Polish territories. Now, under tacit assumption it was agreed that Russia would receive the major part of Prussia's Polish lands, while Prussia would instead regain her relative size of 1806 at the expense of Saxony. This was the source of the Polish-Saxon question, which was to put a grave strain on the relations of the Continental Powers during the following two years. Great Britain had not particularly influenced these recent events, but she did aid Prussia and Russia with ordnance as well as subsidies. Castlereagh also sent a representative to the Prussian court – his half-brother Sir Charles Stewart. It must have been brotherly affection that blinded Castlereagh, for this was a peculiar appointment. Stewart was a military man and Muir describes him as being “brave to a fault, wildly indiscreet, hot-tempered and also fond of intrigue.” He was not much of a diplomat and was definitely out of his league with Hardenberg, Humboldt, Metternich, and Alexander.³⁰ Nor was he to get on well with Cathcart, the British ambassador to Russia - after a couple of months on the Continent he complained: “Lord C[athcart] takes two days to consider a despatch, and two to write one, and he never begins to think till other people have done.”³¹

102, 285; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 448; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 119f.

³⁰ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 47, 89; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 247-249; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 452-454; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 126.

³¹ Stewart to Castlereagh, 19 June 1813, C.C. IX (London 1852), p. 28.

The news from Prussia was for the British Cabinet even more reason to rejoice, as Austria still did not show any signs that she would follow suit. Francis, the Emperor of Austria, was a benign man who was popular among his people. Political matters, however, he mainly left to Prince Metternich. The latter had become Foreign Secretary in 1809, a position he was to occupy for nearly forty years, and was an embodiment of the aristocratic stereotype of the century that had just elapsed. He was a conservative to the bone, an artful diplomat, and an adept manipulator.³² Comparing Metternich to Castlereagh, and describing both of them, Kissinger says: “Metternich was elegant, facile, rationalist; Castlereagh, solid, ponderous, pragmatic; the former was witty and eloquent, if somewhat pedantic; the latter cumbersome in expression, although effective in debate; Metternich was doctrinaire and devious; Castlereagh, matter-of-fact and direct.”³³ While Kissinger also asserts that Metternich “for three years was in effect Prime Minister of Europe,”³⁴ Schroeder points out that Metternich’s influence was limited to responding to events and therefore states: “Perhaps Metternich was, as he believed, the coachman of Europe; if so, his efforts went mainly to keeping the horses under control, the coach upright, the passengers reasonably peaceable, and himself at the reins rather than bringing the coach to his choice of destination.”³⁵

With the Peace of Schönbrunn in 1809, Austria had to surrender a considerable part of her territory and was so broke that Napoleon did not even bother to constrain the size of her forces, as he knew Austria could not afford a significant army anyway. Only one year later Napoleon married a daughter of the Austrian Emperor in his incessant quest for legitimacy, and thus the two countries were bonded together by family relations. Indeed, every one of the great Continental Powers had fought Napoleon, but also every one of them had at other times been aligned with him. At the same time they were often in discord with each other, a fact that was viewed as perilous in Britain, because it weakened the Continental Powers while strengthening France. And for Great Britain it was all quite simple: France was *the* foe; therefore France had to be defeated. Britain, however, had a sea between them and the point of peril, and an island to retreat to if things went wrong. The European Powers did not. In a way, Castlereagh was right when doubting Metternich’s resolve. The Austrian Minister was not looking for a glorious campaign, but for the restoration of the equilibrium. In other words he did not aim at the downfall of France, only at restraining her. Nevertheless, Castlereagh

³² BRYANT: *The Age of Elegance*, p. 216; KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 9, 11, 19; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 249.

³³ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 30.

³⁴ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 11.

³⁵ SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 542.

misinterpreted Metternich's hesitancy. The Austrian knew full well what a danger France posed, but he also feared Alexander's aspiration – something that had hitherto gone completely unnoticed in London. Metternich, on the other hand, had always mistrusted Alexander, and although Russia was now at war with France, the memory of Tilsit impeded Austria and Prussia to count on Russia's steadiness. Prussia, geographically situated in the middle of events, had hardly any other choice than to declare for one side, but Austria was set on keeping her freedom of action as long as she could. On one hand, Metternich was thrilled with the prospect of diminishing France's hegemony; on the other hand he had no intention to see it replaced by a Russian one. Prussia's recovery of her Polish lands had not been mentioned in the Treaty of Kalish; instead, it had indicated that Frederick William III should look for indemnification elsewhere, perhaps in Saxony. Despite Alexander's persistent silence, Metternich had a premonition of the former's aspiration. If the treaty itself was more than sufficient to arouse his suspicion, an intercepted letter, indicating the creation of a Polish kingdom under the Tsar's sovereignty, substantiated his suspicion. Such growth of Russian influence into Central Europe would make the Prussian King a hireling of the Tsar. Yet the thought of Prussia making up for her territorial losses by annexing lands in Germany was equally unpleasant, as this would inevitably lead to rivalry between the two German Powers for preponderance. Therefore, even though Metternich aimed at a reasonable reduction of French power, he was not overly keen on seeing the Russian plans succeed. What he wanted was not only the reduction of French, but also of Russian power. This, however, also meant that France should not be too enfeebled, because it was needed as counterbalance to Russia. Experience had taught Metternich not to get Austria involved in hostilities unless all danger had been eliminated or at least considerably reduced. He had to be quite careful, as Austria might not survive a mistake. In his quest to preserve Austria, Metternich thus was constantly trying to maintain as much room for manoeuvre as possible. Aligning Austria with the Allies would have meant forsaking the alliance with France, and would therefore have been nothing else but an open breach of faith. But in suggesting peace talks in which Austria would be the mediator, Metternich was able to get Austria out of the alliance with France and into a state of neutrality – and this subtly and with Napoleon's assent. At first, however, his offer of mediation fell on deaf ears because none of the belligerents were interested in peace.³⁶

³⁶ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 19-23, 25, 28, 34, 48, 51, 88f, 91; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 249-251; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 466; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 135-137.

The first quarter of 1813 had hardly witnessed any clashes of arms, and the soldiers fell prey to the harsh climate and sickness rather than to the foe. Napoleon's field army in the spring of 1813 amounted to 200,000 men, but the bulk of them were new recruits who lacked experience and were prone to illness. Another problem was that Napoleon was unable to countervail the loss of horses sustained in Russia. This not only caused the cavalry to be feeble (leading to ineffective pursuits of the enemy and consequently to fruitless victories throughout the campaign) but also took its toll with regard to the artillery as well as the logistics. In May, the Battles of Lützen and Bautzen took place and both were won by Napoleon. While the Allies were crestfallen, Napoleon's position was none too good either, for he was unable to actually use the victories to his advantage. It was now that Metternich's proposal was heard, as the belligerents expected to utilise the truce to tend to their armies and win over Austria. Thus, on 4 June, an armistice was agreed upon. Only Great Britain still rejected Austrian mediation, with the result that her representatives were hardly provided with any information, let alone called in on the negotiations. Although Alexander vindicated accepting Austrian mediation as necessary to persuade Austria to join the Allies³⁷, Stewart was distressed and told Castlereagh: "I fear political treachery and the machinations that are in the wind more than any evils from Bonaparte's myrmidons. We must keep a sharp look-out, especially since our refusal of Austrian mediation. We are not considered (from all I see going on) in the Cabinet."³⁸ Although Britain did not make any payments during the truce, the subsidy treaties were finally concluded in the middle of June at Reichenbach. According to the treaties, Britain pledged to pay two million pounds as subsidies, of which two-thirds were given to Russia and the rest went to Prussia. In return the former pledged to provide 160,000 men and the latter 80,000 men. Subsidies, so it was hoped in London, might discourage the Allies from making peace. The treaties, as it was a custom feature, included an official pledge of all the Allies not to make separate peace. In truth, if Russia and Prussia wanted to make peace, Britain could do nothing to avert it.³⁹

While the Cabinet was entirely against peace, opinions were different within the Opposition. Whitbread had already agitated for a negotiated peace in late 1812, but even among the Opposition he hardly found any like-minded people. However, when it became clear how hard the Russian campaign had hit Napoleon, and as things were looking up for the Allies in

³⁷ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 252, 255-257, 287; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 137.

³⁸ Stewart to Castlereagh, 6 June 1813, C.C. IX, p. 22.

³⁹ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 253, 257f; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 457.

the first quarter of 1813, voices calling for peace became louder. The pessimistic Grey expected the Coalition to be short-lived and pressed for a speedy conclusion of peace, even on lenient conditions. In sharp contrast to Grey, Grenville thought that they were witnessing a golden opportunity to shake France's power and did not want to pass it up. The Cabinet was in a rather strong position in 1813. Although the Whigs increasingly favoured peace, Grenville successfully prevented them, Whitbread aside, from urging it. Grenville did so because he was well aware that public opinion was against a speedy, lenient peace – and demanding it would only enkindle antipathy. Curiously, it was the other way around where the Peninsular War was concerned: Grey at this stage – as actually most of the Whigs now – endorsed Britain's efforts in Iberia, while Grenville still believed them to be a lost cause. That the theatres of war were inevitably linked to each other was either not comprehended, or simply ignored.⁴⁰

As Britain did not participate in the armistice, she did not have to suspend hostilities in the Peninsula. As a result of his heavy losses sustained in Russia, Napoleon was in dire need of veterans, and thus summoned a force of 20,000 men from Iberia. This naturally strengthened Wellington's position. On 21 June 1813, Wellington won the Battle of Vitoria, which meant that most of northern Spain was now freed of the French. After Vitoria, Wellington could have crossed over to France, but instead, he decided to lay siege to San Sebastian and Pamplona. Further opportunities to invade France were to follow, but Wellington refrained from doing so throughout 1813. His reluctance derived from various reasons: he was worried that his army, most of all the Spanish part of it, would badly misbehave in France and unleash a revolt. In addition, he doubted the resolution of the Allies and dreaded they would conclude peace with Napoleon. This would enable the French to turn against him with a much larger force and he would be left with no other option than to withdraw.⁴¹

Meanwhile at Reichenbach, Russia and Prussia had not only concluded their subsidy treaties with Britain, but had at the same time also come to an agreement with Austria. The latter power promised to engage in the war on the allied side in case Napoleon rejected the following conditions: the Duchy of Warsaw should be dismembered, Prussia's territory should be increased, Illyria should be returned to Austria, and Hamburg and Lübeck should be free. Thus Napoleon's acceptance or refusal of these terms would determine whether Austria

⁴⁰ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 257f, 260f.

⁴¹ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 262, 264-266, 268-270; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 137.

would join the Allies. Metternich also promised to champion the dissolution of the Confederation of the Rhine and to restore Prussia to her size of 1805. In case Napoleon refused those terms, Austria was not bound to get herself involved in the war. However, even in the event of Napoleon's acceptance, neither Russia nor Prussia was committed to make peace. The terms of the agreement are remarkable insofar as they clearly display the disregard of British interests. The Austrian Foreign Minister wanted the peace terms to be as moderate as possible, fearing Napoleon would otherwise not accept them. Also, he was concerned that France should remain a considerable power because she should be able to counterbalance Russia. And as Britain's goals hardly appealed to Metternich, he merely viewed the insular power as a hindrance to peace. On 26 June 1813, Metternich had a stormy, yet unfruitful meeting with Napoleon. The latter did not see why he should relinquish land – after all it had been he who had won the last two battles. Thus, he did not accept the peace conditions, but he agreed with Metternich on a prolongation of the truce. He did so because he wished for more time to tend to his army, and Metternich, too, knew that also the Austrian forces would require a bit more time to get ready. Consequently, the truce was extended until 10 August and negotiations were planned at Prague, which, too, were to prove unproductive. Neither Prussia nor Russia was impressed by the prolongation of the armistice, but they wanted to mollify Austria, hence they could do naught but lament and acquiesce. However, all Metternich's efforts for peace had been in vain. Accordingly, after the expiration of the armistice, Austria declared war. Napoleon was taken aback – he had never thought that Emperor Francis would engage his country in hostilities against his son-in-law. But as it was, he now had to face all of Europe's great powers and their allies: Spain, Portugal and Sweden. For the British Cabinet, the news that the war continued was cause for great rejoicing and so was the fact that Austria was now part of the Allies, which had not really been expected in London.⁴² Mere weeks beforehand, Castlereagh had actually agreed to Metternich's arbitration, as he believed that "the risk of treating with France is great, but the risk of losing our Continental Allies and the confidence of our own nation is greater."⁴³ Until the instructions had reached the British representatives, however, it was too late to have any influence on Austrian mediation. At the end of July, Castlereagh had also selected a British ambassador to Austria: the young Earl of Aberdeen. This was another peculiar appointment; even more than Cathcart, indeed even more than Stewart, Aberdeen was utterly unsuitable for his position. He could not speak French properly and was definitely out of his league with

⁴² KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 45, 82; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 282-284; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 41; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 159.

⁴³ Castlereagh to Cathcart, 6 July 1813, C.C. IX, p. 32.

Metternich. Dispatched in August, he only reached headquarters a month later, and before long Metternich had completely fooled him.⁴⁴ On 23 September he told Castlereagh:

“Metternich continues to be as cordial and as confidential as possible, I think this man must be honest; yet it may be after all that he is only a most consummate actor. I will be sufficiently cautious, but I will also retain the favourable opinion I have of him until I see some good ground to change it.”⁴⁵

In November he even saw fit to inform Castlereagh:

“Do not think Metternich such a formidable personage, depend upon it, I have the most substantial reasons for knowing that he is heart and soul with us: but, my dear Castlereagh, with all your wisdom, judgment, and experience, which are as great as possible and which I respect sincerely, I think you have so much of the Englishman as not quite to be aware of the real value of foreign modes of acting. [...] Living with him at all times, and in all situations, is it possible I should not know him? If indeed he were the most subtle of mankind, he might certainly impose on one little used to deceive, but this is not his character. He is, I repeat it to you, not a very clever man.⁴⁶ He is vain; but he is a good Austrian. He may, perhaps, like the appearance of negotiation a little too much, but he is to be trusted.”⁴⁷

On 9 September at Teplitz, the three continental powers formally concluded their alliance. While it provided for the strengthening of Prussia and Austria in a degree that would make them as powerful as they had been in 1805 and the dismemberment of the Duchy of Warsaw, the agreement, however, disregarded nearly all matters of British interest. Only the restoration of Hanover⁴⁸ was stipulated, whereas nothing was said about Holland, Norway, Sicily, Portugal, or Spain. This demonstrates the deficiency of Britain’s sway on the Continent. Partly out of mistrust of Napoleon, but partly also because he hoped to enhance Britain’s influence on the Continent, Castlereagh suggested a prolongation of the alliance, even in case of peace with France. The project, however, when it finally arrived in mid-October, was not to find the favour of the Allies, and this was simply another proof to the Cabinet that Britain was in dire need for a more qualified representative. At any rate, in spite of the evident disregard, Great Britain remained the paymaster of the Coalition. On 3 October, Britain

⁴⁴ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 99f; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 281, 285; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 151, 155f.

⁴⁵ Quoted in WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 157.

⁴⁶ It was most certainly on purpose that Metternich gave this impression, because he thought of “the diplomat’s task as the art of seeming a dupe without being one.” See: KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 99f.

⁴⁷ Quoted in WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 174.

⁴⁸ Hanover was linked to Great Britain through the Prince Regent, as he was also sovereign of Hanover. See: WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 29.

concluded a treaty of alliance with Austria. The latter pledged herself to furnish a force of 150,000 men, while the former promised support valued at one million pounds.⁴⁹

5. THE AUTUMN CAMPAIGN AND THE FRANKFURT PROPOSALS

The belligerents had utilised the truce to enforce their troops. Estimations number Napoleon's army in Germany at 450,000 soldiers, plus an additional 250,000 in development, while the forces of the Allies amounted up to some 500,000 men as well as 350,000 soon to come. It was the first time Europe witnessed such masses of soldiers. The Allies had agreed, though not without a dispute, to appoint the Austrian Prince Schwarzenberg generalissimo of the allied armies. His command, however, was in name only, and Blücher and Bernadotte, the other generals, were not at all inclined to obediently take his orders. Alexander and Frederick William III also continued their meddling in military affairs, which did not make Schwarzenberg's task any easier.⁵⁰ It was not for naught that Blücher, after Leipzig, toasted to "the Commander-in-Chief who had three monarchs at his headquarters and still managed to beat the enemy!"⁵¹ At Trachenberg in mid-July, the Allies agreed on how to proceed in the following campaign. There were to be three armies – the Army of the North (consisting of roughly 100,000 soldiers) led by Bernadotte, the Army of Silesia (consisting of roughly 90,000 soldiers) led by Blücher, and the Army of Bohemia (consisting of roughly 230,000, mostly Austrian, soldiers) led by Schwarzenberg. All of them were to avoid a clash of arms with Napoleon, while striking the smaller French contingents. Only when the French were worn out would the armies merge and attack Napoleon. This finally was the case on 16 October, when Schwarzenberg gave battle at Leipzig (Napoleon's base of operations). Not only Blücher's and Bernadotte's armies joined him, but also the Bavarian forces (who changed sides in early October) as well as the Saxon forces (who only defected Napoleon in the course of the battle). The battle lasted until 19 October and based on the sheer size of the armies it was the biggest of the entire Napoleonic Wars. The Emperor of the French was

⁴⁹ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 96; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 291-294; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 478; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 160.

⁵⁰ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 286f.

⁵¹ Quoted in MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 287.

defeated and had to flee across the Rhine with the remainder of his army – merely some 110,000 men.⁵²

In the aftermath of Leipzig, the Austrian Foreign Minister expected to find Napoleon more pliable and again wished for peace negotiations. Probably with the expectation that the French Emperor would decline (which in turn would facilitate the vindication of allied troops marching in France), Alexander agreed. Having the latter's assent, Metternich seems not to have bothered asking the Prussians and probably would have acted similarly regarding Britain, but as Aberdeen was won over easily there was no need. Metternich, therefore, did not have to worry about the other British representatives, who would most likely not have agreed to the Frankfurt Proposals, as Aberdeen himself was set on keeping them in the dark. As to the terms, the Allies were prepared to conclude peace on the natural frontiers, viz. the Pyrenees in the west and the Alps as well as the Rhine in the east. The proposal also provided for an independent Holland; there was, however, no mention of where its border would be. True, Napoleon would have to surrender Holland, Hamburg, and the northern Italian lands, but after Leipzig these conditions were still exceedingly moderate. The conditions were far more generous than justified, in view to the auspicious campaign, for Metternich wanted to make sure France stayed an important factor in the balance of power.⁵³ He did so, as Kissinger aptly put it, "not indeed because Metternich wanted to save Napoleon, but because he wanted to save Saxony and Poland."⁵⁴ The peace proposal thus might be used to constrain Alexander's ambitions, as well as create difficulties for Napoleon at home in view of the war-weariness inside France. The British Cabinet did not apprehend Metternich's motive; they were not even aware that a conflict regarding Poland was in the offing. They just wanted to restrict France to the frontiers she had controlled before the revolution⁵⁵, as Castlereagh pointed out to Aberdeen: "You will not be surprised to learn, after such a tide of success, that this nation is likely to view with disfavour any peace which does not confine France strictly within her ancient limits."⁵⁶

In truth, even if Napoleon had at once agreed to the proposal, it is not clear if Metternich would have been able to convince his allies. Napoleon, however, did not. Only in early

⁵² MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 285f, 288f; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 479.

⁵³ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 100f; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 294f; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 169-171.

⁵⁴ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 101.

⁵⁵ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 99, 101.

⁵⁶ Castlereagh to Aberdeen, 13 November 1813, C.C. IX, p. 74.

December was the proposal positively answered by Caulaincourt, the new and pacific French Foreign Secretary. It remains, however, unknown if Napoleon seriously wished for peace or if he simply regarded the proposals as a means to make mischief and then exploit allied dissensions. Yet, things for the Allies had meanwhile undergone another auspicious shift as a Dutch upheaval in mid-November had freed Holland of the French. As it was, the Allies now started to waver and claimed that peace negotiations would have to wait until a British representative in possession of the necessary authority would join them, and accordingly a request was sent to London.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, the military operations continued, and Bernadotte had turned his attention towards Denmark. This had been arranged, but it did not make him popular among the British, who had wished for the marshal's aid in freeing the Low Countries. When the Allies drew nearer to France, Bernadotte showed himself unsettled – partly attempting to spare France, partly envisioning himself as new Emperor of the French. At any rate, Schwarzenberg entered Switzerland in late 1813, and Blücher crossed the Rhine on 1 January, 1814. The invasion of France had begun.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 103; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 295; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 176f, 180f.

⁵⁸ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 309f, 312.

III. INSIDE FRANCE

6. CASTLEREAGH'S MISSION TO THE CONTINENT

With Caulaincourt's acceptance of the Frankfurt proposals as the basis for peace negotiations in early December, it was assumed that concordance was underway. The British government was scared that a peace would be made in a way that would neglect British interests. For, as we have seen, Britain's sway on the continent was marginal. Reasons for this lack of influence can be found in Britain's up-to-then displayed attitude of persistence towards the war: the Allies were aware that Britain would not conclude a separate peace with France; hence, her bargaining position was diminished. Also the fact that she was represented by ineligible plenipotentiaries, who did not get on with each other, did nothing to improve her standing on the Continent: Cathcart, Stewart and Aberdeen were constantly in dispute with each other and therefore, in no position to represent Great Britain efficiently. And even if they had been, they were short of the necessary authority. Therefore, a request on part of the Allies had been made to assign a person equipped with the necessary capacity. With decisions needing to be made on the spot, directing from London was no option since the distance did not allow communication in reasonable time, and decisions had to be made then and there. In addition, reports about allied dissension were alarming. For all these reasons the indispensability of a sole, authoritative representative became evident. Somebody had to be at the heart of events to mollify the Allies, to make sure Britain had her say, and to make the gravest decisions as to war or peace. At a cabinet meeting on the 20 December the person who would take on this difficult mission was chosen; no one else but the Foreign Minister himself had to go.⁵⁹

The importance of Castlereagh's task was not only displayed in the decision that he was singled out, for it was a most unusual thing for a Foreign Secretary to leave the country, but also in the fact that the ministers were meeting every day from 24 to 26 December, in the

⁵⁹ Instructions to Castlereagh, C.C. IX, p. 114-116; BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 122; MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 295f, 298, 310; KISSINGER: A World Restored, p. 104; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 187f, 193; WEBSTER, C. K.: The Pacification of Europe, 1813-1815, (392-521) in WARD, A.W., and GOOCH, G.P. (Ed.): The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, Vol. I (Cambridge 1922), p. 428.

midst of the Christmas holidays, to discuss the issues as well as to review and approve the instructions Castlereagh himself had mapped out.⁶⁰

The Allies had already consented on expelling French rule of Italy as well as the Peninsula and had also agreed not to debate the maritime rights. Britain's principal aims were, therefore, reduced to first, a more permanent alliance, and second, the independence and enlargement of Holland. It was a matter of utmost importance to extract as large a piece of Belgium from France as anyhow doable. Presumably this territory would not be able to bear up against French influence, thus one option, namely that of a free Belgium, was no option at all. It was a desirable possibility to give it to Holland, but the Cabinet would also be content if Emperor Francis, who had not revoked his ancient rights as yet, decided to retain the former Austrian Netherlands. Belgium's fate was thus quite unclear, nonetheless were the Cabinet irrevocably set on the policy that Holland should get a barrier, which at least had to include Antwerp. What dimension exactly the barrier was to have was left to Castlereagh. To secure these objects Castlereagh was allowed to barter Britain's colonial conquests, except for Guadeloupe, Les Saintes, Bourbon, Malta, and the Cape, which were to be retained for their strategic importance, respectively, as Guadeloupe had been promised to Sweden. In favour of Holland, two million pounds would be paid for the Cape, on condition that the money was utilised in order to fortify the new barrier. Regarding the colonial conquests that were to be given back, the slave trade had been abolished under British rule. Nonetheless, the instructions did not say anything about this matter – a neglect which was soon to attract critics, ahead of all Wilberforce. However, for the return of the colonies it was stipulated that a more permanent alliance should be concluded, which should transcend the war and shelter Europe in case of further French aggression.⁶¹

It was believed that peace was to be concluded with Napoleon, who was more loathed in Great Britain than in any other country. In spite of the fact that the whole Cabinet regarded peace with Bonaparte hazardous, whereas the restoration of the Bourbons was thought of as being very desirable, nothing of this was mentioned in the instructions. Webster explains this exclusion as probably due to the ministers preferring to omit this tricky question in an official

⁶⁰ MARRIOTT: Castlereagh, p. 209; PETRIE: Lord Liverpool, p. 178f; WEBSTER: The Pacification of Europe, p. 429.

⁶¹ Memorandum of the Cabinet, 26 December 1813, B.D. (London 1921). Retrieved 30 April 2008 from <<http://www.archive.org/details/britishdiplomacy00websuoft>>, p. 123-128; MARRIOTT: Castlereagh, p. 239; MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 310f; KISSINGER: A World Restored, p. 104; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 194-196.

document, as this might be subject to the Parliament's examination. As it was, the press was already disputing a possible overthrow of Napoleon. However, the Cabinet regarded any interference in French domestic matters as being foolish. There was no trace of a strong movement on the part of the French against Napoleon and, apart from Austria, who had declared herself against any step to overthrow Napoleon, the stance of the Allies on this issue was unclear. Besides, even though the prevailing mood in the country was such that opposed negotiations with Bonaparte, the Government also had to take the Liberals into account, who were most certain to criticise the Cabinet if it made the re-establishment of the Bourbons a precondition for peace with France. For all these reasons Castlereagh disregarded the hatred the public bore towards Napoleon and, though he was convinced of the necessity of keeping the acts of war going even during peace negotiations, he sought to obviate any doubt as to the sincerity with which Great Britain was handling the negotiations.⁶² Upon reports of Wellington about probable favourable sentiments of the French towards the Bourbons,⁶³ Castlereagh remarked that no steps should be taken to encourage these, since "[...] it will be considered as a trick on our part to get rid of the negociation [sic!] [...]" and he concluded that, "should France reject the Allied terms, we are then all free to do what we like; but, having gone the length with our Allies to accept a basis on which we have declared that we are ready to negociate [sic!], I think our line ought to be an unembarrassed one till the question of negociation [sic!] is disposed of."⁶⁴ As matters stood, peace was negotiated with Napoleon, which implied that it was him who would continue to rule France, which hence made it impracticable to favour the Bourbons in public. Thus, even though the ministers were at one in their desire to see the Bourbons back on the throne of France, they also agreed that unless the French would revolt in favour of the 'legitimate' dynasty, no open support could be given.⁶⁵ Castlereagh said that his "[...] impressions are against any step, which should, even in appearance, mix our system with that of the Bourbons, whilst we are embarked in discussions for peace, and ignorant how our Allies would relish such a step at the present moment [...]"⁶⁶ This again underpins the importance that was addressed to harmonious relations with the Allies and Britain's desire of maintaining the alliance, Kissinger speaking of: "[...] a cardinal principle of Castlereagh's policy: the unity of the alliance superseded all

⁶² BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 123; MARRIOTT: Castlereagh, p. 234f; MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 310-312; KISSINGER: A World Restored, p. 107; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 194-197.

⁶³ Wellington to Grammont, 20 December 1813, Wellington to Bathurst, 21 December 1813, Wellington to Bathurst, 22 December 1813, W.D. XI (London 1838) Retrieved 30 April 2008 from <http://www.archive.org/details/dispatchesoffiel11welluoft>, p. 381f, 386, 390.

⁶⁴ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 30 December 1813, C.C. IX, p. 123.

⁶⁵ MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 311f.

⁶⁶ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 30 December 1813, C.C. IX, p. 124.

but the most basic British interests; or better, the Coalition of Europe was a basic British interest.”⁶⁷

So, as we have seen, the instructions placed emphasis on the alliance as well as the Netherlands, respectively Antwerp, while others in Great Britain quite frequently discussed matters like the abolition of the slave trade and the question of Napoleon’s rule, were left out altogether. What else was mentioned in the instructions? Concerning European objectives they were quite vague - Hanover was even left out altogether. For other issues, even the major ones that the Allies were so fiercely in controversy about, the ministry did not care too much, thus Castlereagh was free to handle them as he pleased. This demonstrates on the one hand just how much the Cabinet trusted their Foreign Minister. On the other hand, it also exposes the lack of interest in continental matters; there was hardly any minister who was interested in the disputes of the continental powers and the issue of the European settlement.⁶⁸ This demonstrates quite well the point of view of an insular power, who over and above had been isolated for the past years. As Kissinger rightly points out: “[...] Britain spoke of common interests, but it meant the military defeat of France; it advocated a European equilibrium, but was really thinking about Antwerp.”⁶⁹ Experiences, particularly the one made in the face of continued serious threats of invasion from 1803-1805, had taught the British that Antwerp was a point of peril, which just could not be left in French hands.⁷⁰

Bad weather conditions caused the sea voyage to be quite slow; thus Castlereagh, together with his wife, Robinson, Planta, and two more office clerks reached The Hague only on 7 January, 1814. Here the British Foreign Minister consulted with the Prince of Orange about the wedding of the Prince Regent’s only child, Princess Charlotte, and the Hereditary Prince of Orange. Moreover they arranged for The Cape being incorporated permanently into the British Empire according to the instructions and also talked about Belgium. The next day, leaving his wife in The Hague, Castlereagh carried on his journey through a terribly bad winter – the Thames as well as the Rhine was frozen - moving as fast as possible on the

⁶⁷ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 108.

⁶⁸ BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 122; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 65f; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 197; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 432.

⁶⁹ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 105.

⁷⁰ PHILP: *The British Response to the Threat of Invasion*, p. 1f; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 430.

dreadful roads. Still, it gave him time for consideration of the European issues, which had been only vaguely mentioned or had been left out altogether in his instructions.⁷¹

Castlereagh sought to bring the allied statesmen into formal and forthright discussions to improve their relations and since Great Britain had no territorial interest as such for herself on the Continent, he hoped to be able to act as a mediator. This was not going to be an easy task, given that the Allies were on the brink of dissolution. Kissinger explains that a coalition, which only holds together by the threat of a common enemy, will run the risk of disintegrating itself as soon as the enemy is weakened to an extent that it is no longer any more powerful than a single member of the alliance. As matters stood it seemed likely that Bonaparte would be overpowered – the real question was: what would happen then? Could the Allies reach an agreement or would a victorious war end in chaos?⁷² Aberdeen, describing the tense situation in a letter to Castlereagh, opined: “Although there is much to say, and much that is most important, in a word, with relation to the enemy, our situation is as good as possible-among ourselves it is quite the reverse. Everything which has been so long smothered is now bursting forth.”⁷³ The controversy that so endangered the continued existence of the Coalition regarded the question of proceeding further. Should there be peace negotiations with Bonaparte or should the Allies march on to Paris? Napoleon had waited too long to accept the exceedingly moderate terms of the Frankfurt Proposals. Ever since the allied armies had entered France, Alexander’s confidence and ambition had been growing excessively. Strong sentiments against the Frankfurt proposals and in favour of the prosecution of war were now prevailing amongst Russians and Prussians; Metternich, who suspected their claims to be rising, was anxious to make peace with Napoleon, lest France be too weakened to be a weight in the equilibrium, which would render it possible for Alexander to achieve his goals by himself and could result in a Russian instead of a French supremacy on the Continent. Alexander had now even adumbrated that he planned to overthrow Napoleon and thought of Marshal Bernadotte as his successor. Seeing as Bernadotte was the Tsar’s fosterling, the Tsar would gain a good deal of influence over France if the marshal really was to be Napoleon’s successor.⁷⁴

⁷¹ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 312; KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 108; WEBSTER: *Castlereagh’s Foreign Policy*, p. 198f.

⁷² KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 106, 109; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 199.

⁷³ Aberdeen to Castlereagh, 6 January 1814, C.C. IX, p. 142.

⁷⁴ BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 124; CRAIG, Gordon A.: *Krieg, Politik und Diplomatie*, (Ulm 2001), p. 49-51; KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 112, 114; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 202.

To make Castlereagh's task even more difficult, the conditions at headquarters were anything but inviting. The allied headquarters were situated amidst hostile domain; consequently, during the whole campaign the military operations distressed everyone, including the monarchs as well as the diplomats, leading to abrupt breakups of the meetings, not to speak of the lack of comfort and the acerbity of the weather.⁷⁵

However, the British government could hardly have chosen anyone more suitable for this mission than Castlereagh. Robinson claimed that "the suavity and dignity of his manners, his habitual patience and self-command, his considerate tolerance of difference of opinion in others, all fitted him for such a task; whilst his firmness, when he knew he was right, in no degree detracted from the influence of his conciliatory demeanour."⁷⁶ If this dithyramb was a bit overstated, Robinson was still far from wrong. For Castlereagh was indeed extremely well suited for his task and was to become "perhaps the most European of British statesmen."⁷⁷ Moreover, he as well was to be the "arbiter of Europe" because, as will be seen, he was to steady the contradicting impulses of Alexander on the one side, and Metternich on the other.⁷⁸

As already mentioned, the enemy's weakness had further enhanced Alexander's craving for pressing onwards. This wish was evidently even greater as the one to meet Castlereagh at the soonest time possible, despite the fact, that it was quite obvious that Castlereagh would play an important role in forging the Ally's destiny. Thus, when Castlereagh reached Basle on 18 January, the Tsar had already left following the army. Still, the British Foreign Minister was finally able to meet the majority of the monarchs and statesmen personally. Despite longstanding mutual suspiciousness and even animosity, Metternich and Castlereagh tried to create a harmonious connection – the former in the hope of winning an ally in restraining the Tsar's aspirations, the latter to sustain good relations within the alliance. Unexpectedly both thought one another quite pleasant - an understanding was reached in a few interviews only⁷⁹, Muir referring to them as the "by far [...] most important of Castlereagh's meetings - indeed one of the turning-points of his life [...]."⁸⁰

⁷⁵ WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 200.

⁷⁶ Quoted in WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 200.

⁷⁷ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 106.

⁷⁸ MARRIOTT: *Castlereagh*, p. 235f.

⁷⁹ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 113; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 313.

⁸⁰ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 313.

Metternich put an astonished Castlereagh in the picture about Alexander's desire to see Bernadotte on the French throne. Castlereagh, contrary to popular British opinion, had been prepared to come to terms with Napoleon as the ruler of France for he had thought this necessary to maintain allied unity. He still favoured the old dynasty to rule France, yet, deciding from a European perspective, he was ready to leave the door open for negotiations with Bonaparte, though he precluded a regency under Marie Louise. Of any additional options, he had been completely unaware, hence his astonishment at the possibility of the installation of marshal Bernadotte as France's future ruler. The Austrian Foreign Secretary was indignant at the Tsar's scheme, for he dreaded an alliance between France and Russia, the latter in this scenario being in the leading position. At the same time, again to Castlereagh's surprise, he didn't show himself too keen on the prospect of a Habsburg regency. Metternich, scared of another social uprising, would rather have preserved Napoleon as the leader of France; however, to please Britain, he also embraced the idea of the Bourbon's return to power. Consequently, it was agreed that France could only be ruled by either Napoleon or Louis. In truth, these were the only real possibilities, for any other ruler might provoke political destabilisation in France, which could result in additional wars, or connect the country too closely to another power – in case of a regency under Marie Louise this would be Austria, in case of an installation of Bernadotte this would be Russia – and thereby play havoc with the equilibrium. Castlereagh and Metternich also agreed that whether the future French ruler was to be Louis or Napoleon should be decided by the French. For the time being negotiations should be made with Napoleon.⁸¹

Thus, Metternich was happy to have found support against Alexander's ambitions and not only showed himself disinterested in regaining the Austrian Netherlands, but also made concessions to suit British views about this corner of the Continent. This pleased Castlereagh, as well as the fact that the Austrians did not wish for a Regency and would not stand against the deposing of Napoleon, should it prove necessary. Therefore, at the end of their discussions at Basle, both ministers had cause for happiness.⁸² In his memoirs, Metternich recalled his first meeting with Castlereagh:

“Our stay in Basle had nothing remarkable in it but the arrival of Lord Castlereagh. It was here that a few hours' conversation sufficed to lay the foundation of a good feeling between this upright and enlightened statesman and myself, which the following eventful years cemented and enlarged. I found Lord Castlereagh not quite thoroughly informed of the real state of affairs on the Continent. His straightforward

⁸¹ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 125; KISSINGER: A World Restored, p. 112 – 115.

⁸² KISSINGER: A World Restored, p. 115f; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 201f.

feeling, free from all prejudice and prepossession, and his justice and benevolence gave him a quick insight into the truth of things.”⁸³

Castlereagh, was not quite so full of praise for Metternich; he thought him to be timorous and delaying matters. All in all, however, Castlereagh thought him to be quite pleasant. This feeling of mutual amity was a valuable asset, because, as will be seen, Basle had only been the calm before the storm, which was soon to erupt at Langres. In the upcoming discussions it was to become evident that Great Britain had assumed a virtual part and its representative, Castlereagh, was to make a big step on his way to evolve into a European statesman.⁸⁴

7. THE CLASH WITH ALEXANDER

Castlereagh and everyone else at Basle moved forward, following Schwarzenberg’s army and the Tsar to Langres, where they arrived on 25 January. The outlook of the military situation was now such an auspicious one that a march on Paris was deemed possible. The enemy basically seemed to be powerless, thus pressing the army onwards would only lead to an additional enfeeblement of France, while rigidifying Russia’s position. As the British were completely riveted on the fight against Bonaparte, they could not as yet grasp that peace might be endangered by anyone else. Castlereagh was not aware of the incredible extent of Alexander’s scheme concerning Poland, because he had been ill-briefed by Cathcart. The Foreign Minister, therefore, had no reason not to favour the further proceeding of the campaign; not so the Austrian Foreign Minister though. Distrusting Russia and dreading the obliteration of the equilibrium, Metternich sought to avert the struggle from turning into a total war. Since the growing feebleness of France was sapping his chances to achieve this by diplomatic means, he tried to hobble the military operations and instructed Schwarzenberg to that effect by ordering him not to press forward any further. For Langres was, as Schwarzenberg pointed out to the Austrian Emperor, the last breakpoint before France’s capital city and, therefore, represented the last opportunity to make peace with Bonaparte.⁸⁵

⁸³ METTERNICH, Prince: *Memoirs of Prince Metternich, 1773-1815*, edited by Prince Richard Metternich, Vol. I (New York 1881), p. 140.

⁸⁴ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 118f; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 436f.

⁸⁵ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 314; KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 105, 110, 112f, 116, 118; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 203.

Realising the hampering effect on military operations, Castlereagh addressed the Tsar, inquiring about his war aims. And thus “his first real diplomatic battle,” how Webster called it, came about at Langres.⁸⁶

Sure, the Tsar also tried to establish good relations with Castlereagh, showing his amity by sending his sister Catherine to visit Great Britain and planning on doing the same himself later on. However, as being the head of an “acquisitive power,” he evaded stating his war objectives since, as Kissinger explains, by predicating the peace terms on the achievements on the battlefield, its potential gains would increase parallel to military success. Thus, when Castlereagh frankly asked Alexander about the latter’s rumoured wish for a France ruled by Bernadotte, the Tsar avoided a straight answer, though he expressed his aversion of both Napoleon as well as the Bourbons and stated that the matter of a future French government should be decided by the French. Opposing any peace negotiations, he wanted to advance further and postpone debates about this issue as well as Europe’s future boundaries, until Paris was reached, constantly pointing out his good faith as well as the hopelessness of concluding peace with the existent French ruler.⁸⁷

Castlereagh’s response was partly an advocacy of the Bourbons, claiming they would facilitate a peaceful Europe, and partly a warning, stating his fear that a march on France’s capital city might provoke a Jacobin insurrection. Additionally, he was not blind to the dangers an overhasty advance would pose to the long lines of communication, writing to Liverpool:

“I am confident our advantages are solid with management; but we must not undervalue our difficulties, with a line of wagons rolling day and night in our rear, from Berlin, Bohemia, and Hungary, which a small corps of cavalry thrown round our flanks might at once arrest, if strength is thrown too rapidly in advance.”⁸⁸

The cautious Schwarzenberg, in a letter to his wife, complained about Blücher’s course of action, claiming that the Prussian general was driven by childish wrath and completely disregarded all rules of the art of warfare.⁸⁹ Castlereagh was not so hard on Blücher, calling him “a true hero,” who, however, “may sometimes err.”⁹⁰ So, although supporting the prosecution of armed hostilities, Castlereagh firmly stood up for simultaneously opening

⁸⁶ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 114; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 203.

⁸⁷ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 314; KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p.112, 117f; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 203f.

⁸⁸ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 30 January 1814, C.C. IX, p. 213.

⁸⁹ CRAIG: *Krieg, Politik und Diplomatie*, p. 55.

⁹⁰ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 30 January 1814, C.C. IX, p. 213.

peace negotiations. He was aware that Alexander sought to retaliate upon the French for the capture of Moscow, which is probably the main reason why the Tsar was unflinchingly bent on capturing Paris. He could then demonstrate his magnanimity, for he did not intend to expose Paris to the same fate that Moscow had encountered.⁹¹ His words to Liverpool exposed his deep concern about Alexander's rashness:

“I think our greatest danger at present is from the *chevalresque* tone in which the Emperor Alexander is disposed to push the war. He has a *personal* feeling about Paris, distinct from all political or military combinations. He seems to seek for the occasion of entering with his magnificent guards the enemy's capital, probably to display, in his clemency and forbearance, a contrast to that desolation to which his own was devoted. [...] I hope [...] that we may not suffer from his precipitancy.”⁹²

Also, others at headquarters believed the Tsar's attitude to be dangerous. Though Blücher wanted to bring about a result solely based on the success on the battlefield and King Frederick William simply did not dare to oppose Alexander, Hardenberg and Humboldt were in favour of peace negotiations. Metternich at this stage was so alarmed that he threatened to conclude a separate peace. Even Alexander's own generals and diplomats opposed him. Considering that the Austrian troops played a decisive part in the campaign and that the Allies were all reliant on Britain's money, in a combined effort Castlereagh and Metternich were able to deter the Tsar and the Prussian generals. So, in the end, His Imperial Majesty was overcome and it was decided that negotiations should take place while at the same time military operations should continue. This was a compromise, and both Alexander and Metternich had to make sacrifices – while the former now agreed to peace negotiations with Napoleon, the latter agreed to alter the terms on which basis peace could be made to less generous ones than the Frankfurt proposals. It was decided that the basis for the peace negotiations with France should be her borders of 1792, called the ‘ancient limits’, though with the chance of small concessions. Therewith, the Frankfurt proposals were discarded. Both the Austrian Minister and the Tsar were not too happy; the former would have liked to see better terms presented to France and the latter none whatsoever. Castlereagh, however, was quite content.⁹³

Furthermore, Alexander's suggestion that the territorial arrangements outside of France should not even be transmitted to Bonaparte was refused by Castlereagh; they were to be

⁹¹ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 314f; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 74; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 203.

⁹² Castlereagh to Liverpool, 30 January 1814, C.C. IX, p. 212.

⁹³ BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 127; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 315; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 74; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 497.

presented, though only for acceptance, for they were not to be challenged, which meant a diplomatic exclusion of the enemy from the balance of power. The reason why Castlereagh was adamant on this point is found in his realisation of the peril arising out of the Allies' disagreements, especially regarding Poland and Saxony. On the matter of Poland, he had meanwhile learned from Metternich a great deal about Alexander's ambitions and started to grasp how far-reaching they were and what incredibly strong dissension prevailed between the Tsar and Metternich. The whole point of his insistence on submitting intelligence about the future territorial shape of Europe to France was that for this purpose, the Allies had to reach an agreement amongst themselves first, hoping this would consequently diminish the extent of potential upcoming differences. Yet it proved to be impossible for now to achieve a settlement outside of France, and as will be seen it would take over one year - and a lot of pain - to finally fulfil this formidable task.⁹⁴

The Tsar, as we have seen, had his reasons for avoiding stating his war aims. Additionally, since the Austrian army was still needed, he naturally wanted to avert a clash with Austria, which, needless to say, would most probably have been the result if he particularised his intentions about Poland, which were anyway already subject to the greatest suspicions on the part of the Austrians and had already caused much distrust. However, the Tsar's actions also effectuated that Castlereagh's suspicions of Russia increased, which in turn resulted in Castlereagh drawing closer to Austria – Muir even calling her “Britain's most favoured ally.” This represents an amazingly fast alteration, seen as Marie-Louise's wedding to Bonaparte and Austria's conduct in the first months of 1813 had provoked profound resentment in Great Britain, whereas the Tsar had been extolled for his crusade against Napoleon and his heroism was subjected to great admiration.⁹⁵ Indeed, Metternich had every reason to be pleased. Already in Basle he had perceived the reconcilability between his and Castlereagh's policy, recalling in his memoirs: “I soon saw that his ideas about the reconstruction of France in a manner compatible with the general interests of Europe did not materially differ from mine.”⁹⁶ Even more so, he eulogised the British Foreign Minister, exposing: “I cannot praise Castlereagh enough. His attitude is excellent and his work as direct as it is correct. I cannot find a single point of difference with him and [...] his mood is peaceful, peaceful in *our*

⁹⁴ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 315; KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 112, 118; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 204f.

⁹⁵ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 315; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 204.

⁹⁶ METTERNICH: *Memoires*, p. 140.

sense.”⁹⁷ And also in Langres, Metternich was anything but sparing with praise, announcing to Schwarzenberg rife with contentment: “Castlereagh behaves like an angel.”⁹⁸

Anyway, Castlereagh was out of luck in bringing the Allies to reach an agreement concerning the outline of a reconstructed Europe. The result was exceedingly sketchy - only the independence of both Switzerland and Holland, which would also be enlarged, was agreed upon, and some provisions were made as to the freedom of states in Germany and Italy. Castlereagh was not impressed by this scanty result and rejected particularising the colonial conquests Great Britain would restore. Instead, he even appended another condition for their restoration. Besides the extension of Holland and peace on the basis of 1792⁹⁹, he now also demanded an “amicable agreement of limits between the three Great Powers, that, having reduced France by their union, they were not likely to re-establish her authority by differences amongst themselves.”¹⁰⁰ For unity of the Great Powers, regarding the settlement was crucial in order to diminish future conflicts, and Castlereagh conceived peace on the Continent as decisive for Great Britain. This shows that, as Kissinger aptly puts it, “he intended to seek British security in Continental stability, even if he still tended to identify stability with the restraint of France.” No wonder he therefore tried to bargain the colonial conquests to enforce this object. Still, the Allies were unable to achieve an agreement. Nevertheless, Castlereagh at least had already succeeded in achieving a few of his objects. The Allies had accepted the independence and an extension of Holland; again, the maritime rights would not be subject to debates, and France was to be given her ancient borders as a basis for the subsequent peace negotiations.¹⁰¹

On 1 February, just a few days after the Allies had finally come to terms, Blücher, facing Napoleon’s army at La Rothière, bore the palm. The victory was not crucial, but Bonaparte had to retreat and gather his troops and it was expected that it would not take another fortnight until the allied armies would arrive at Paris. Therefore, the Battle of La Rothière naturally had an effect on the now ensuing peace negotiations at Châtillon.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Quoted in KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 114f.

⁹⁸ Quoted in WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 204.

⁹⁹ WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 206f.

¹⁰⁰ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 6 February 1814, B.D., p. 147.

¹⁰¹ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 119; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 206, 208.

¹⁰² MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 315; KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 120.

8. PEACE TALKS

The negotiations at Châtillon were the last attempt to make peace with Napoleon. Other reasons put aside, these were doomed to failure simply because of the abyss between the legitimizing principles. The Allies could not feel secure without reducing Napoleon's rule to France's ancient limits, whereas Napoleon felt he could not agree to these terms lest it would cost him his position as ruler.¹⁰³ The question was: Could he surrender his conquests and still reign as a King of France? A son of an ancient, 'legitimate' dynasty could maybe weather this opprobrium; Napoleon, "the son of the Revolution," could not – or at least so he claimed. For Schroeder points out that none of the 'legitimate' sovereigns were entirely safe on their throne and argues that it was Napoleon's unwillingness to make peace rather than any military defeats that eventually led to his deposition.¹⁰⁴ Thus, Schroeder concludes,

"Napoleon's claim that he had to fight to the bitter end because his throne and Empire could not survive without glory, together with his twin claim that treason and defection among his followers brought him down, were simply self-serving, stab-in-the-back legends [...] the fact that they have retained some credibility even among historians merely proves that Napoleon was one of the most remarkable, persuasive, and imprudent liars in history."¹⁰⁵

Only when his fortune was completely at the mercy of the Allies, at the start and at the closing stages of the negotiations, Napoleon was prepared to conclude peace. Other than that, namely when his achievements on the battlefield gave him back a proportion of power, he was unwilling to come to terms with the Allies. Actually, whichever side temporarily got the upper hand on the battlefield was discontent with the terms upon which peace was to be made. And after La Rothière, the allied side was the fortunate one. This was the situation when the Congress commenced on 5 February at Châtillon. Each of the Great Powers sent a plenipotentiary to the peace conference – the Russians had appointed Razumovsky, the Austrians, Stadion and the Prussians, Humboldt. Only Britain, probably because Castlereagh felt that Aberdeen was too easily influenced by Austria, was represented by all three ambassadors, though Cathcart and Stewart were moaning because they would rather have stayed with the armed forces. Castlereagh, to supervise them, also travelled to Châtillon.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 119f.

¹⁰⁴ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 131; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 467f.

¹⁰⁵ SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 469.

¹⁰⁶ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 120; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 315f; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 208.

Caulaincourt, who represented France, hardly could have had any doubt that the peace offer had been altered to the disadvantage of France. After all, since the Frankfurt proposals the allied armies had invaded France, the French had been forced to leave Holland, and Murat had deserted Napoleon by concluding a peace treaty with Austria on 11 January in return for the assurance of his sovereignty over Naples. Still, Caulaincourt was somewhat taken aback when he learned the nature of the new proposal. The Allies announced their offer of the ancient limits and the return of some colonial conquests to Caulaincourt, who obviously requested additional information, because, the French Foreign Minister would consider reducing France to its ancient borders only if the colonial conquests would be returned. However, the plenipotentiaries were unable to provide any information, simply because they did not know themselves. Castlereagh had rejected particularising what conquests were to be returned unless the Allies would come to an agreement concerning the settlement of Europe; in turn, Alexander was adamant about postponing until peace had been concluded with France, but to conclude peace, Caulaincourt needed to know what terms he could expect regarding the colonial conquests. Thus, the plenipotentiaries were trapped in a vicious circle they could not escape.¹⁰⁷ Induced by the bizarre state of affairs, Stadion reported to Metternich: “We are playing a comedy [...]”¹⁰⁸

Caulaincourt was really hoping to achieve peace, for he did not share the illusions that infested his master. Distressed, he sent word to Metternich on 9 February, proposing to acquiesce to the peace offer provided that the Allies would grant a truce. Napoleon, when he learned of this, was furious. However, at the same time the Tsar ordered Razumovsky to return to headquarters, which had meanwhile moved to Troyes. Ever since, La Rothière Alexander was absolutely sure that the Allies would be victorious, and had therefore no intentions to see the peace negotiations be successful. For this purpose, his plenipotentiary had done everything in his power to slow the discussions down. Now, with Razumovsky's recall, the conference was suspended. This once more produced an angry Metternich, who now in despair sent for Castlereagh. The Coalition was on the brink of disintegration.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 120f; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 305; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 76; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 212.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 121.

¹⁰⁹ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 316; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 73, 77; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 438.

9. THE CRISIS OF THE COALITION

The controversy at Troyes was one quite similar to that fought out at Langres. Even though the French Foreign Minister had by now agreed to the allied terms of the ancient borders, the Tsar was unwilling to treat with Bonaparte. Induced by the auspicious military situation, the Tsar insisted again on pressing forward towards Paris and ousting Napoleon. In Paris, Alexander then planned to call in the notables and let them decide on the question of who was to rule France, again alluding to his dislike of Louis XVIII and the, in his mind, desirable possibility of Bernadotte's accession to the throne. Metternich, using his preferred method of procedure, devised a questionnaire, posing questions like what to answer the French Foreign Minister, how to handle Paris if conquered, how to ascertain whom the French desired to be their ruler, and what to do with the Bourbons. Castlereagh, who had earlier supported the negotiation with Napoleon for the sake of the allied harmony, was still in favour of negotiations, though on different grounds. Now he favoured negotiations because he regarded an effort to oust the existent French ruler as being dishonourable and foolish, since in his mind the war had not been fought to change France's domestic structure, and his concern was now directed at establishing a balance of power. In this war aim he had adapted Metternich's point of view, which, as will be seen, was quite different from the British one.¹¹⁰

Prussia's answer to the questionnaire was similar, but Russia's was not. The Tsar's objectives - even now in hindsight of the events - provoked the presumption that Alexander aimed at the establishment of Russian predominance over Europe – back then at least a lot of Austrians and also some Britons and Prussians most certainly deemed this to be the case. However, much of the Tsar's aspirations actually stood in contrast to Russia's national interests. This is the reason why Nesselrode was in disagreement with his sovereign on quite a few issues. For instance, he argued that peace with Napoleon on the basis of the natural borders would not threaten Russia, but Austria, Prussia, and the German states, which would all then have to look up to Russia as their protector. Additionally an early peace would give Russia the advantage of time, rendering a speedy settlement of the Polish issue possible, whereas a prolonged campaign would draw Russia into European affairs and therefore inevitably complicate the question of Poland. Alexander, however, made his decisions from a European, rather than a Russian point of view. Besides, Alexander was driven by contradicting impulses

¹¹⁰ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 121f; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 316; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 213f.

- his personality compounding mysticism, autocracy, and liberalism - making his *modus operandi* one marked by discrepancy and unpredictability. And this, not the desire to gain power and territory, was exactly what Castlereagh conceived as the most threatening aspect of Alexander's policy. At any rate, Alexander claimed Paris to be the objective of the war and suggested a Russian to oversee the elections and for the interim also govern France's capital city. Metternich contradicted the Tsar's war aim, averring that it was the re-establishment of the balance of power instead, what the Allies had fought for. The equilibrium, however, would be damaged by any further enfeeblement of France. And if it should really come to the overthrow of Napoleon, the only option was a Bourbon France with Louis XVIII as her king. Again, Metternich threatened to take Austria out of the war, but Alexander now considered it possible to vanquish Bonaparte and enter Paris without the Austrian army. After all, he had the option to detach the 61,000 Russians fighting in Schwarzenberg's Bohemian army and unite them with Blücher's Silesian army, of which two thirds consisted of Russians anyway. Prompted by the escalating tension, Castlereagh stopped acting as arbitrator. In the face of the evident threat of the Coalition's dissolution, he suggested agreeing with Caulaincourt's proposal and recommencing the Congress at Châtillon. Over and above, he endeavoured to persuade the Tsar to give his consent.¹¹¹ Kissinger points out this incredible change in Castlereagh's policy: "Six weeks after he had set out for the Continent with the vision of a Europe united by the self-evident threat of French supremacy and stabilized by British-Russian co-operation, Castlereagh emerged as a contestant for the equilibrium against the Tsar."¹¹²

On 13 and 14 February, Castlereagh had two tempestuous meetings with Alexander. Again Alexander repeated his unwillingness to treat with Bonaparte as well as his insistence on marching on to Paris and assembling the Notables to decide on a new ruler. Besides posing questions of where to get and how to choose notables, Castlereagh pointed out that there was no movement against Bonaparte and that a refusal to negotiate with him even though the French Foreign Minister had come to terms with their conditions might lead to chaos. Moreover, faced with dethronement, Napoleon was likely to carry on military operations even after the capital city was captured. And what if a new ruler was chosen – how would he be backed against the existent one? Would Russia be prepared to keep her troops in France? The Tsar, at a loss of arguments, accused Castlereagh of not representing the wishes of his country.

¹¹¹ CRAIG: *Krieg, Politik und Diplomatie*, p. 55; KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 122-124; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 316; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 502f.

¹¹² KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 124.

This allegation Alexander backed up with a letter he had received from his ambassador in London stating that both the Prince Regent as well as Lord Liverpool declared themselves against peace with Napoleon and instead supported the Bourbons. Castlereagh, as you would expect, was outraged at the Tsar's allusion that he was acting without his Government's trust, which implicitly put his authority into question.¹¹³

The Tsar was not wrong with respect to the animosity prevailing in Great Britain against Napoleon, nor the widespread desire to see the Bourbons return to power. This was nothing new to Castlereagh – he himself had written as early as 13 November, 1813 to Aberdeen: “[...] peace with Buonaparte [sic!] on any terms will be far from popular, distrusting, as the people naturally do, his submitting to his destiny for any length of time [...]”¹¹⁴ Indeed, aversion to Napoleon had in the meantime only intensified, Cooke speaking of “[...] the general, I may say universal, principle is – no peace with Bonaparte!”¹¹⁵ and Liverpool exposing that: “the disposition in this country for any peace with Bounaparte becomes more unfavourable every day. I hear it from all quarters and from all classes of people.”¹¹⁶ Liverpool also dwelled on this subject in another letter in February:

“You can scarcely have an idea how *insane* people in this country are on the subject of any peace with Buonaparte [sic!], and I should really not be surprised at any public manifestation of indignation upon the first intelligence of a peace with him being received. This ought not to make any substantial difference in the course of our policy-but it renders it necessary that we should not *lower* our terms.”

These sentiments were so dominant that the Prime Minister even felt the Government threatened, claiming: “Indeed, I should not doubt that, if the Opposition could take up the Bourbon cause against Buonaparte [sic!], they would, upon a peace with the latter, overturn the Government.”¹¹⁷ The Whigs were, however, unable to utilise the public opinion to their advantage, for they were noted for their aversion to the Bourbons as well as their advocacy of peace. Still, it did affect the Government insofar as the Prince Regent seemed to grow apart.¹¹⁸ Liverpool in his letter went on defining the Government's position regarding Napoleon:

“The only material point on which we differ with you is as to the *overthrowing* of Buonaparte [sic!]. We incline to the opinion that this even is desirable whatever might be the *immediate result* of it. No individual in France is capable of succeeding him,

¹¹³ MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 316; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 213f.

¹¹⁴ Castlereagh to Aberdeen, 13 November 1813, C.C. IX, p. 74.

¹¹⁵ Cooke to Castlereagh, 5 January 1814, C.C. IX, p. 137.

¹¹⁶ Liverpool to Castlereagh, 12 January 1814, printed in WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 514.

¹¹⁷ Liverpool to Castlereagh, 12 February 1814, printed in WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 521.

¹¹⁸ MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 318.

and if the ancient dynasty was not restored in the first instance, it would be the ultimate consequence.

No Government, but it was it may, could be so bad for Europe as Buonaparte [sic!]; the very hatred which is borne to him by the people of other countries, and which he knows to exist, is for the same reason an obstacle to the continuance of peace, which would not be applicable to any other Government, however implacable in other respects. I admit, however, that if France continues to support Buonaparte [sic!], we must make peace with him, and that we ought not to look to his destruction by any means which, in progress, will tend to separate the allies.”¹¹⁹

Still, the Government supported their Foreign Minister and adhered to the policy they had agreed upon in Castlereagh's instructions. This last mentioned dispatch was delivered to Castlereagh only after the confrontation with the Tsar, yet Castlereagh could have had no doubt about the issue. Still, Castlereagh stood firm and informed Alexander that he would not let himself be influenced by British public opinion, which hardly possessed the knowledge about the real state of affairs, and instead would rely on his own discernment. This demonstrates on the one hand Castlereagh's ability to not give in to public pressure, but on the other hand it also displays his probably greatest weakness, namely that he was unable to communicate his point of view to the public, let alone persuade them of his opinion. Castlereagh was well aware, though, that any doubt of his authority weakened his position in headquarters. Thus, he sent word to Liverpool inquiring on what grounds Lieven, the Russian ambassador, had come to make such an assumption and asked the Prime Minister to disprove the outrageous letter. Liverpool admitted to have expressed his aversion to peace with Napoleon, while the Prince Regent was known to support the Bourbons, not leaving any doubt in an interview with the Comte d'Artois, Louis XVIII's brother, which was printed in British papers. However, these were statements of their private opinions and had nothing to do with the official line of the Government. Liverpool was afflicted in that he and the Prince Regent had caused Castlereagh embarrassments and reaffirmed to him again that he had the Government's full confidence. At any rate, Castlereagh was as well out of luck in persuading Alexander. Both of them remained firm; consequently, no agreement could be achieved.¹²⁰

The incident had other consequences though. Alexander's accusation affected the relations to the British Foreign Secretary, whose mistrust had now only further increased. Moreover, Alexander's intransigence caused Russia to now stand alone. Indeed, Britain, Austria, and Prussia stood united in opposing the Tsar's plans. For the protection of the equilibrium they

¹¹⁹ Liverpool to Castlereagh, 12 February 1814, printed in WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 522.

¹²⁰ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 124; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 311, 317-319; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 214.

decided that, even in case of a decisive victory, the peace terms should correspond exactly to the Châtillon proposals, which meant, no matter what, the claims would not be increased. Furthermore, peace should be made with Bonaparte, save the French would turn against him. In this event Louis XVIII was the only alternative. Thus, no matter who would be ruling France, he was surely not on kind terms with the Tsar. These conditions were proposed to Alexander, urging him to agree if he wanted to see the campaign carrying on, for, in case of his refusal, Austria would conclude a separate peace.¹²¹

In this manner Alexander's eagerness to reach Paris was successfully utilised to get his acquiescence to the domestic and territorial matters and on 15 February he agreed. He finally backed down and gave his consent to the continuance of the Congress of Châtillon. A decisive factor for the Tsar's decision was the news that reached headquarters from the front - and which kept coming. For Napoleon again demonstrated his military genius, winning three battles against Blücher and another one against Schwarzenberg between 10 and 18 of February. This made it evident that Napoleon would not be easily overpowered and that the aid of the Austrian army was essential. Napoleon's victories over a force, which by far outnumbered his, had revived his prestige and put the allied forces into a state of panic.¹²² In his diary, Hardenberg exposed that "the Tsar has gone to pieces and the King talks all the time like Cassandra."¹²³ Schwarzenberg now urged that Caulaincourt's proposal of a truce should be accepted. Alexander, who was now as terrified as he had been bellicose before, completely changed his course - devastated as he was that his overwhelming desire to march in Paris seemed to be shattered, he also desired to conclude an armistice, which was now proposed to France.¹²⁴

When the negotiations continued at Châtillon, the Allies put forward a draft of a peace treaty and bid an armistice; the latter Caulaincourt previously had asked for as prerequisite for an acceptance of the ancient limits. Castlereagh now particularised the colonial conquests Great Britain was to return, but also demanded the abolition of the slave trade in these colonies. An agreement regarding the future settlement of Europe, which Castlereagh had primarily insisted upon for the specification of the colonies to be returned, could, however, not be

¹²¹ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 124f; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 214.

¹²² KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 123, 125; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 316; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 215, 217-219.

¹²³ Quoted in NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 78.

¹²⁴ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 125; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 316; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 216.

accomplished, for the quarrels between Austria and Russia had gotten even worse.¹²⁵ Even the ever so aloof and cool Castlereagh now had to admit being annoyed, telling Liverpool: “The criminations and recriminations between the Austrians and Russians are at their height, and my patience is worn out combatting [sic!] both.”¹²⁶ The Tsar suspected Schwarzenberg’s army to have been instructed to suspend further warfare, which actually was a false accusation. Still, as Webster quite aptly put it “[...] the idea bred suspicions that each was now reserving his own forces to win Poland rather than Paris.” With respect to the Prussian army, the story was a different one. Already in the last campaign, but even more so in the current one, Frederick William actually secretly informed his generals that he thought it wise to, if possible, spare the Prussian forces, for any losses might weaken Prussia’s position in peace negotiations.¹²⁷

From Chaumont, whereto the Allies had retreated, Castlereagh sent a letter, which quite clearly displays that he was far from impressed. “Two propositions of armistice, proceeding from us, which I cannot too much condemn, and a retreat, perhaps not unwise, if boldly and candidly avowed, have materially injured our authority [...]”, and the outcome was not pleasant either, only “haughty and insulting letters” from the French. The British Foreign Minister roasted his Allies, claiming they were “at one time too proud to listen to anything; at another, so impatient to be delivered from the presence of our enemy, as to make our prolongation at Chatillon almost ludicrous.”¹²⁸

However, the peace negotiations were star-crossed anyway. On 17 February the peace proposal had been presented to Caulaincourt, but because of his victories on the battlefield Napoleon was far from inclined to agree to the peace conditions the Allies demanded.¹²⁹ In a letter to Caulaincourt, Napoleon claimed that “providence has blessed our armies; sign nothing without my orders since I alone know the situation.” To no avail the French Foreign Minister tried to caution his master, stating, “I see the dangers which threaten France and your Majesty’s throne and I entreat you to prevent them. We must make sacrifices, and we must make them in time.” His warnings unsuccessfully trailed off though, with Napoleon only

¹²⁵ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 317; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 218f; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 440.

¹²⁶ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 26 February 1814, B.D., p. 160.

¹²⁷ CRAIG: *Krieg, Politik und Diplomatie*, p. 45; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 218f.

¹²⁸ Castlereagh to Aberdeen, 25 February 1814, C.C. IX, p. 290.

¹²⁹ WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 441.

commenting: “I do not read Caulaincourt’s letters; [...] they tire and bore me beyond limit.”¹³⁰

Indeed, the question was if peace was at all possible with Napoleon. The Allies were prepared to make peace on the basis of the ancient borders, but Napoleon, feeling confident because of his successes on the battlefield, was far from impressed, telling his brother Joseph: “Had I, before the last operations, concluded a peace with the old frontiers, I would have taken up arms in two years’ time [...]”¹³¹ The Allies were not unaware of the potential threat peace with Napoleon would pose, Liverpool writing: “we ought at the same time not conceal from ourselves or our Allies that any peace with Buonaparte [sic!] will only be a state of preparation for renewed hostilities.”¹³²

On the other hand, any effort to depose the existent French ruler also bore dangers, for instance a Jacobin upheaval or a civil war.¹³³ Besides, even though Castlereagh had the impression that the French were somewhat discontent with Napoleon, there was hardly any sign of a movement against their ruler and even less of one in favour of the Bourbons. As Castlereagh reported to Liverpool at the end of January: “The people quiet everywhere, and good-humoured. They look to the invasion as favourable to peace. They spoke freely against Buonaparte [sic!] to me on the journey; but I traced little disposition to an effort, and no apparent interest about the old family.”¹³⁴

Meanwhile there was not only still no sign of any movement in favour of the Bourbons, but also the attitude of the French towards their invaders had changed. Unlike Wellington’s army, which remunerated everything it took and oppressed pillage, the allied armies were short of the necessary money and discipline. Additionally, a lot of the troops were seeking revenge for past misdeeds, resulting in violence and habitual plundering.¹³⁵ Castlereagh observed that

“The temper of the people is getting very sour. In the towns, the Allied troops are now fired at in their retreat; and, in the villages, small parties are attacked and driven out.

¹³⁰ Quoted in NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 79.

¹³¹ Quoted in MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 319.

¹³² Liverpool to Castlereagh, 20 January 1814, printed in WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 516.

¹³³ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 319.

¹³⁴ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 30 January 1814, C.C. IX, p. 213.

¹³⁵ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 319; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 447. Obviously, depending on the kind of troops, the extent can vary intensely. For instance, the discipline of the Austrian army came near that of Wellington’s, only that it did not pay for anything it took, whereas the Russian Cossacks were extremely dreaded – there even existed the expression that a house had been *cossaqué*. For more, see BRYANT: *The Age of Elegance*, p. 187-190.

Want of magazines leads to pillage, and pillage to hostility. I see no spirit, except in favour of peace, and the getting rid of the troops.”¹³⁶

Indeed, the brutality of the allied forces only caused the allied generals harassment and induced the peasants, so at least Castlereagh believed, again to seek guard in the person of Napoleon, while all along the allied invasion a movement in favour of the Bourbons failed to appear.¹³⁷

Stewart recollected the Allies’ *modus operandi*, stressing its foolishness: “Anything, my dear friend, more madly inconsistent and childish than our proceeding has been I cannot figure to myself, first accepting or rather giving the Frankfort basis, then changing it to immense sacrifices for France, then finding we could have this we are not pleased, we must have a *Bow* at Paris.”¹³⁸ “Whatever of bad happens to us we rightly deserve it; whatever of good we must thank Providence and Castlereagh.”¹³⁹

Castlereagh, in spite of Napoleon’s military success, stood firm and played a decisive role in the Allies’ regaining their self-assurance. Already at Troyes, he made sure that a committee wrote down all resources available to the Allies, and therewith mitigated the alarmism that had befallen headquarters. At the end of February he arranged for the detachment of 50,000 men from Bernadotte’s army to reinforce Blücher. Gradually the Allies again gained confidence, and by 1 March the allied armies once more felt up to advance. Also, an ultimatum was issued to Napoleon, with 10 March being the deadline. But it had become apparent that peace with Napoleon was not possible, for in reality it would not be more than a temporary truce. Therefore, it seemed even more important to Castlereagh to prolong the alliance. For not even Napoleon could menace a concerted continent, whereas, no matter what sort of peace could be accomplished, a discordant Europe would soon provoke new clashes. As this important aim was as yet unachieved and the House of Commons was only to get seriously busy in April, Castlereagh, whose leave had originally been until 1 March, was now given more time.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 28 February 1814, C.C. IX, p. 299.

¹³⁷ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 319; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 447.

¹³⁸ Quoted in WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 219.

¹³⁹ Stewart to Cooke, 28 February 1814, C.C. IX, p. 555. According to Webster much edited by the writer when published – see WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 219.

¹⁴⁰ BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 129; KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 130f; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 317; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 79f; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 501; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 217, 224f.

10. SEEKING UNITY

In Chaumont, Castlereagh at last was able to implement what he had so long been striving for – a prolongation of the alliance. Induced by Napoleon's military success in February and in need of financial aid from Great Britain - Castlereagh made it clear that a subsidy treaty must also include the issue of the alliance, or he would not sign it - the Allies on 9 March (though pre-dated 1 March) signed the Treaty of Chaumont,¹⁴¹ which, in Schroeder's words "laid the foundations for victory, peace, and post-war security."¹⁴² It also demonstrated that the Allies had finally reached a compromise, each of them setting their own aims aside. Alexander was prepared to forgo his desire to capture Paris, the Prussian generals theirs for a military victory and vengeance, the Prussian statesmen and the Austrians theirs of a quick conclusion of peace and Castlereagh his country's not to make peace with Napoleon.¹⁴³

In the Treaty of Chaumont, Castlereagh engaged Britain to pay five million pounds in subsidies to her Allies. In undertaking the payment of such a vast lump of money, Castlereagh jumped over his instructions. However, the British government was in such high spirits that the alliance had finally been concluded and was willing to make every endeavour to defeat France that they did not complain about Castlereagh's financial pledges. The Allies committed themselves not to make separate peace and to maintain a force of 150,000 men on the field each whilst at war with France. The ground-breaking aspect of the treaty was, however, the prolongation of the alliance after the war – for twenty years, the Allies pledged that they would each keep an army of 60,000 and protect Europe from any future assault on the part of France. This reflects just how much the Allies dreaded France, especially since it was still thought that Napoleon would continue to rule.¹⁴⁴

The treaty was drawn up by Austria, Prussia, Russia, and Great Britain, whereas the other, less powerful Allies were only asked for their accedence. This is to show that the Great Powers - this expression was actually quite frequent then - laid claim to represent the whole of Europe.¹⁴⁵ In a letter, Castlereagh wrote: "We four Ministers, when signing, happened to be sitting at a whist-table. It was agreed that never were the stakes so high at any former party."

¹⁴¹ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 130; WEBSTER: The Pacification of Europe, p. 443.

¹⁴² SCHROEDER: The Transformation of European Politics, p. 501.

¹⁴³ SCHROEDER: The Transformation of European Politics, p. 504.

¹⁴⁴ KISSINGER: A World Restored, p. 132; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 227f.

¹⁴⁵ WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 229.

According to his estimates, Great Britain's effort was equal to that of Austria, Russia, and Prussia combined, calculating: "We give 150,000 men and five millions, equal to as many more-total, 300,000. They give 450,000, of which we, however, supply 150,000, leaving their own number 300,000."¹⁴⁶ He did admit though that the allied troops did exceed the 150,000 each they had engaged themselves to furnish, owing to illness, etc., because the subsidies were only paid for active forces.¹⁴⁷ Still, Britain's engagement was an enormous one and Castlereagh could not dissemble his pride: "What an extraordinary display of power," he declared. "This, I trust, will put an end to any doubts as to the claim we have to an opinion on continental matters."¹⁴⁸

As to the reconstruction of Europe, an article enacted Spain, Switzerland, Italy, and Germany as well as Holland to be free, and the latter was to be enlarged by Antwerp at least and also have an appropriate barrier, which was an allusion to Belgium. Regarding the German states, they were to be grouped into a confederacy. Poland and Saxony were left unmentioned. Castlereagh had tried to use the subsidies to reach an agreement about the settlement of Europe, but he was out of luck. The delicate questions proved to be intractable at the time. Thus, Castlereagh had spent both of his weapons, the colonial conquests as well as the subsidies, without achieving an agreement about the reconstruction of Europe. Still, he had achieved Britain's most vital interests, namely the prolongation of the alliance as well as Holland's independence and extension including Antwerp.¹⁴⁹ Webster refers to the completion of the treaty of alliance as the "greatest diplomatic act of his career,"¹⁵⁰ which "will always be a monument to his patience and diplomatic skill."¹⁵¹ Admittedly, the Russian consent to Holland's enlargement had only been obtained because Castlereagh had pledged to try to get Britain to incur the debt the Russians owed to Holland. Still, Alexander's accordance to this vital British objective had resulted in improved relations between him and Castlereagh.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁶ Castlereagh to Hamilton, 10 March 1814, C.C. IX, p. 336.

¹⁴⁷ WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 443f.

¹⁴⁸ Castlereagh to Hamilton, 10 March 1814, C.C. IX, p. 336.

¹⁴⁹ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 132; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 225; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 443.

¹⁵⁰ WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 225.

¹⁵¹ WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 228f.

¹⁵² WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 231.

11. THE REVIVAL OF FORTUNE

At the same time on the battlefield, Blücher's newly reinforced army won the battles of Craonne and Laon against the French Emperor and news arrived from Wellington's victory against Soult at Orthez. Wellington had recommenced his advance in mid-February, which actually was later than he had promised and had caused complaints on the part of the Allies because it had enabled Napoleon to summon a force of 25,000 men from south-western France and put them in the field against the Allies. With his capital endangered it was only natural though that he ordered reinforcements from the peripheries; in fact, it is astonishing that he did not order more. To continue, after taking Bayonne, Wellington's army faced Soult at Orthez on 27 February, where Wellington himself was wounded, though not seriously. Soult lost the battle and had to withdraw. Wellington then divided his army and tracked Soult with the bigger part of it, whilst sending Beresford with 12,000 men to capture Bordeaux. With 90,000 inhabitants, Bordeaux was France's fourth largest city and therefore was of political importance. Wellington had hoped for quite some time that a strong movement in favour of the Bourbons would occur, and it finally became reality when Beresford captured Bordeaux on 12 March and the city declared herself for the Bourbons. Wellington actually thought that, with a little bit of encouragement on the part of the Allies, the French nation in general would declare herself against Napoleon. Whilst embarked in negotiations with the latter, the British government, however, was adamant not to give any encouragement for they could not offer any protection to the royalists in case peace would be concluded with Bonaparte.¹⁵³ Wellington did not share this point of view, writing to Liverpool:

“Any declaration from us would, I am convinced, raise such a flame in the country as would soon spread from one end of it to the other, and would infallibly overturn him [Napoleon]. I cannot discover the policy of not hitting one's enemy as hard as one can, and in the most vulnerable place. I am certain that he would not so act by us, if he had the opportunity. He would certainly overturn the British authority in Ireland if it was in his power.”¹⁵⁴

Still, Wellington followed his orders and made sure that no open support was given, which might be the reason why the enthusiasm in Bordeaux faded quite swiftly. However, as will be seen, the declaration of Bordeaux was to produce an immense sensation at headquarters, in Paris and London. Obviously, this was only yet to happen, but for the news of Orthez, as well

¹⁵³ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 300, 302-304; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 445.

¹⁵⁴ Wellington to Liverpool, 4 March 1814, W.D. XI, p. 547.

as Blücher's victories at the battles of Craonne and Laon it was quite evident that luck was again on the allied side. Indeed, Blücher's victories once more opened the road to Paris.¹⁵⁵

In the meantime, the negotiations with regard to an armistice had been abandoned on 4 March, whereas the peace negotiations at Châtillon had continued, although there was hardly any hope of a pleasant outcome. At Châtillon, Caulaincourt still had not received instructions from Napoleon by 10 March, the day the Allies had designated for an ultimatum. Hence, word was sent to the plenipotentiaries at Châtillon ordering them to end the negotiations, unless the French Foreign Minister accepted the ancient limits. Castlereagh, as most of the Allies, wished now to end the discussions, whilst Metternich asked to give Caulaincourt some more time.¹⁵⁶ On 17 March, Metternich made a last endeavour to conclude peace with Napoleon, exposing to Caulaincourt: "Austria's wishes are still for the preservation of a dynasty with which it is closely connected. The peace still depends on your master. In a little while this will no longer be true. I will do my best to keep Lord Castlereagh here for a few days. Once he is gone, peace will be impossible."¹⁵⁷ Later, at Elba, Napoleon blamed Castlereagh – and only Castlereagh – on having thwarted peace on the lines of the natural borders, but this is not completely true, in view of the fact that the Tsar's aspirations had risen excessively ever since the invasion of France and he was set on advancing onto Paris. Besides, Caulaincourt as well as Metternich praised Castlereagh's endeavour to conclude peace. Only in March, the British Foreign Secretary was beginning to lose patience and was growing slightly more belligerent.¹⁵⁸ And in spite of the long and unfruitful negotiations, Castlereagh was pleased, for they must have removed any "reasonable doubt in the view even of the French nation, that Napoleon is the true and only obstacle to an early, honourable, and solid peace."¹⁵⁹ Thus, on 20 March the negotiations were finally broken off, Castlereagh opining that:

"It was clear that Buonaparte [sic!] was using these discussions as an instrument of war, and not of peace. The impression that he could at any moment command peace, and that he only fought for advantageous terms, was too palpable an advantage to confer upon an opponent. It became indispensably necessary, under these circumstances, to bring his intentions to a distinct issue, which terminated in the rupture of the Conferences."¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 129; MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 304.

¹⁵⁶ WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 226f, 230, 232.

¹⁵⁷ Quoted in KISSINGER: A World Restored, p. 133f.

¹⁵⁸ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 131f; CRAIG: Krieg, Politik und Diplomatie, p. 49; NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, p. 71f.

¹⁵⁹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 22 March 1814, B.D., p. 168.

¹⁶⁰ Castlereagh to George Rose, 23 March 1814, C.C. IX, p. 388.

Not even a fortnight after Laon Napoleon had to take another blow, this time dealt by Schwarzenberg at Arcis-sur-Aube on 20-21 March, another allied victory followed at Fère-Champenoise on 25 March over Marmont and Mortier.¹⁶¹ Nonetheless, although Napoleon now attempted in vain to make peace, he still could not bring himself to surrender Antwerp,¹⁶² stating, "I am ready to give up all the colonies if by this sacrifice I can keep the mouth of the Scheldt for France."¹⁶³ By now Napoleon's situation was despairing, but he refused to give up, claiming: "I am still the man that I was at Wagram and Austerlitz."¹⁶⁴ His swift movements, intended to strike the allied lines of communication, caused disorder at headquarters, which affected Castlereagh, Francis, Metternich, Hardenberg and others to be parted from Schwarzenberg's army and having to flee to Dijon, which they reached on 24 March, while Alexander and Frederick William stayed with the army.¹⁶⁵

Now, as the peace negotiations at Châtillon had been broken off, the Allies received communications from Paris of utmost importance. A scheme was being plotted in the capital, aiming at Napoleon's overthrow and replacement with the Bourbons. Soon afterwards, on 26 March, words also arrived of Bordeaux's overt declaration for the Bourbons, which caused a stir at Dijon and eliminated any last doubts. Thus, on 28 March, the ministers at Dijon, Castlereagh, Metternich, Stadion, Hardenberg, and Razumovsky as well as representatives from Spain, Holland Bavaria and Hanover, drank a toast to Louis XVIII and the restoration.¹⁶⁶

Also in London, the news of Bordeaux's declaration had a great impact and even affected governmental policy. Having spent their exile in Britain, the old dynasty had established close relations with its host country and the Cabinet had always considered their return to power as being the best security for a peaceful Continent. However, as has been seen, the Government were prepared to relinquish their desire of a Bourbon France for the Allies' sake. Public sentiments in Great Britain had steadily grown more intense where peace with Napoleon was concerned, yet the Cabinet had supported Castlereagh's policy. Napoleon's military success in February had produced silence and uncertainty, leaving only a few crying out for his overthrow and the re-establishment of a Bourbon France. When the tide turned once more and luck seemed to be on the allied side, the British ministers, in the middle of March, finally

¹⁶¹ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 321.

¹⁶² WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 244f.

¹⁶³ Quoted in WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 245.

¹⁶⁴ Quoted in NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 82.

¹⁶⁵ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 321; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 242f.

¹⁶⁶ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 321; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 89; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 241, 243.

gave in to the all-over-again ferocious urging of the public and ordered Castlereagh to finalise the negotiations at Châtillon or retract the offer of the colonies to be returned. Still, the Foreign Minister was not restrained from concluding peace with Napoleon, thanks to Liverpool, who held on to the policy resolved upon before Castlereagh's departure, though this was becoming excessively difficult given the ever growing acrimony of the press and the Prince Regent's fondness of the Bourbons. Though the British Prime Minister, as has been seen, personally was strongly in favour of a Bourbon France, he had at first even impeded the departure of the Comte d'Artois (the later Charles X) as well as the Duc de Berri and the Duc de Angoulême, his sons, by refusing them passports as well as the crossing aboard of vessels. Then, in early February, the Duc de Angoulême was allowed to affiliate with the British army, with the pre-condition that he was doing so anonymously, which he did until the events at Bordeaux. Also, the Duc de Berri and the Comte d'Artois had departed from Britain, the former going to Jersey, the latter to Switzerland. Yet as we have seen, all along the allied invasion a movement in favour of the Bourbons failed to appear in north-western France. However, the news of Bordeaux's declaration for the Bourbons made even Liverpool abandon the policy with respect to Napoleon – word was sent to Castlereagh on 22 March that Great Britain now would not, even if the Allies desired it, make peace with Napoleon.¹⁶⁷

However, by the time Castlereagh received this letter, the dice had already been tossed. The Congress of Châtillon had been called off and Castlereagh had already taken on the Bourbon cause. Thus, for Castlereagh the whole issue had panned out well. For the sake of the Allies and the absence of any sign of an anti-Napoleonic movement, he had entered peace negotiations with the French Emperor. Those, however, had not only shown to the French that it was Napoleon who frustrated all efforts regarding the peace negotiations, but also to everyone in Parliament, including the critics of the Cabinet.¹⁶⁸

Meanwhile, by harassing the lines of communication of the Allies, Napoleon had sought to lure the Allies away from Paris and enable himself to gather his troops, which were stuck in the fortresses alongside the Rhine.¹⁶⁹ Later on, Wellington was to observe the Emperor's strategy in these last weeks and called them "Excellent-quite excellent."¹⁷⁰ Still, his strategy featured an Achilles' heel, namely that he, as Schroeder puts it, "demanded in typical

¹⁶⁷ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 311; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 233f, 239f; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 446f.

¹⁶⁸ BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 131f; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 240.

¹⁶⁹ NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 83.

¹⁷⁰ Quoted in NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 82.

Napoleonic fashion that his marshals sacrifice themselves and their armies to aid his coup.” Indeed, everyone should “go down with him if his desperate military gamble failed.”¹⁷¹ The odds were against him. The Allies were able to intercept a letter from the French Minister of Police, which quite clearly displayed Napoleon’s hopeless position:

“The treasury, arsenals, and powder stores are empty. We have no resources left. The population is discouraged and discontented. It wants peace at any price. Enemies of the imperial government are sustaining and fomenting popular agitation. Still latent, it will become impossible to suppress unless the Emperor succeeds in keeping the Allies away from Paris.”¹⁷²

But Napoleon failed in this respect – he could not hold the now congregated allied armies off from Paris. Thanks to the Tsar, who was adamant to march on to Paris, the generals, who actually intended to track Bonaparte and push him away from their lines of communication, gave way and advanced to the capital. On 29 March the allied armies were in front of Paris. The following day saw an intense skirmish against Marmont’s and Mortier’s seriously outnumbered forces, which did not stand a remote chance and retreated, heading for Fontainebleau, though not before signing the capitulation of Paris in the morning hours of 31 March. The Emperor, who had hurried back to reach his capital before the Allies, had come too late and also withdrew his troops towards Fontainebleau.¹⁷³

12. RESTORATION AND ABDICATION

The time had come - Alexander’s dream of a glorious entry finally came true on 31 March 1814. Flanked by King Frederick William III on one side and Schwarzenberg on the other, the Tsar entered Paris. Amongst the now-pouring in allied troops were Cathcart and Stewart. Emperor Francis and the ministers though were still in Dijon. They had stayed there under the pretext of the hazards of travelling. The truth was that they were all but keen on being in Paris. The Austrian Emperor’s attendance of any discussions, where he would have to disregard his daughter’s and grandson’s claims would surely be quite uncomfortable, whereas Castlereagh tried not to be too openly involved in the restoration. He was keen on the re-establishment of the Bourbons, but at the same time he sought to avoid any moves that would give the

¹⁷¹ SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 505.

¹⁷² Quoted in MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 321.

¹⁷³ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 321f; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 506.

Opposition the opportunity to condemn the Cabinet on grounds of keeping the French from deciding upon their ruler. Any appearance on the part of the Allies to force the Bourbons upon the French would not only produce discontented French, but also attract critics at home. Thus, on the one hand Castlereagh was quite content not to be present at Paris; on the other hand, however, he was worried what actions Alexander would take - after all, it was still unclear if Alexander would actually support the ancient dynasty.¹⁷⁴

At any rate, the Tsar was thrilled to be able to act without being confined by either Castlereagh or Metternich. Neither King William Frederick, nor Schwarzenberg had a voice in the subsequent discussions. All the vital decisions, like Marmont's capitulation, the rejection to negotiate with Napoleon and the character of the new government were made by Alexander and Talleyrand. Talleyrand, a former bishop who had forsaken the Church in the period of the Revolution and had served some time as Napoleon's Foreign Minister, now made an effort to bring back the old dynasty. His inclination to change his course according to circumstances brought upon him people's mistrust.¹⁷⁵ Kissinger, comparing Talleyrand to Metternich, characterised him as a man who "possessed same nonchalance, same subtlety and an even more trenchant wit."¹⁷⁶ Napoleon had once called him "a piece of dung in silk stocking,"¹⁷⁷ and now the time was ripe for revenge. On 1 April the Senate was assembled and, headed by Talleyrand, it produced a constitution. The scope of the constitution exceeded what both Castlereagh and Metternich had envisaged; however, since they were not present at Paris they lacked the possibility to alter the terms. At any rate, even more, the Senate also resolved the issue of the reappointment of Louis XVIII as the King of France. In retrospection of these events, which ended with the restoration of the Bourbons, there is often an inclination to be found to think that the overthrow of Napoleon and the re-establishment of the ancient dynasty had been planned from the outset and that this object had been vigorously pursued. However, this, as has been seen, is untrue. This result was simply born out of events. As we have seen, Metternich had endeavoured to conclude peace with Napoleon, whereas the Tsar had not had the slightest motivation to aid the restoration of the dynasty he so much disliked. Fortunately for the Bourbons, though, Alexander let himself be guided by Talleyrand, who convinced him that Bernadotte was not the most suitable candidate for the throne while

¹⁷⁴ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 132f; MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 322; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 246f; WEBSTER: The Pacification of Europe, p. 448.

¹⁷⁵ KISSINGER: A World Restored, p. 135f; MARRIOTT: Castlereagh, p. 245; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 247.

¹⁷⁶ KISSINGER: A World Restored, p. 136.

¹⁷⁷ Quoted in NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, p. 85.

enlightening him that the French nation desired the Bourbon's resumption of power. Only interference on part of the Allies would have rendered any other regime possible; but none of the Allies wished to interfere in French domestic affairs. Thus, in the end, a sovereignty of Louis was the only real option. Besides, as things were, the Bourbons were so keen on their re-establishment, that they were prepared to make concessions. Thus, ironically, even though the Tsar had the most objections to the Bourbon's return to power and severely disliked the whole family, especially Louis, it was Alexander who now placed Louis on the throne of France for Louis. Finally, on 3 May Louis XVIII returned to Paris after twenty-three years of absence and was cheerfully received in the city in which his brother had been guillotined.¹⁷⁸

Meanwhile, in Fontainebleau, Napoleon had originally still not intended to back down. However, Marmont on 3 April decided to detach his army from Napoleon's and therewith any moves Napoleon could make would be entirely hopeless. On the following day his marshals insisted on his resignation. Also, news from Paris about his dethronement had arrived. Napoleon's might had been shattered at last. He had borne up against an immensely bigger force, but now the time had come that he had to realise that he had lost his gamble. Deprived of any hope, he could do naught but sign his abdication. Initially, he attempted to relinquish the throne to his son, but on 6 April he had to abdicate unconditionally.¹⁷⁹

Together with the French Foreign Minister, the Tsar now arranged the treaty of Fontainebleau, according to which Napoleon had to abdicate. He was, however, allowed to keep his title as Emperor, was to be paid two million francs *per annum* by the French exchequer, and was given Elba to be his principedom, whereas the Duchy of Parma was to be yielded to Marie Louise. These terms were quite generous, partly because Alexander wanted to demonstrate his graciousness and grandeur, but partly also out of anxiety of the French troops, who were still to be found all over Europe and were all but impressed with Napoleon's successor. Since the conclusion of a truce was still outstanding, it would obviously have been imprudent to take any steps, including a penalisation of Napoleon, which might affront the army. Also, the treaty rendered it possible to get rid of Napoleon and furthermore prepared the ground for the armistice, which was concluded on 23 April.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 132; KISSINGER: A World Restored, p. 137; MARRIOTT: Castlereagh, p. 246; MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 323; NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, p. 83-85; PETRIE: Lord Liverpool, p. 189; SCHROEDER: The Transformation of European Politics, p. 507; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 248; WEBSTER: The Pacification of Europe, p. 447f.

¹⁷⁹ MARRIOTT: Castlereagh, p. 245; SCHROEDER: The Transformation of European Politics, p. 506.

¹⁸⁰ KISSINGER: A World Restored, p. 140; SCHROEDER: The Transformation of European Politics, p. 507f.

When Castlereagh and Metternich reached Paris on 10 March the treaty was a *fate accompli*. Castlereagh, as well as Metternich, were discontented with the choice of Elba, the former because he deemed the island to be of great strategic importance as the preeminent naval port in the Mediterranean sea, the latter because he believed it to be too dangerous for its close proximity to France and Italy, even foretelling a further conflict in the next two years to follow. The other option Napoleon was reported to have frequently talked about, namely a refuge in Great Britain, Castlereagh believed to be hardly viable.¹⁸¹ The press was malicious on this subject, *The Times* writing: “We should be really sorry, if any British possession were polluted by such a wretch. He would be a disgrace to Botany Bay.”¹⁸² The only thing Castlereagh was actually able to accomplish was that Bonaparte’s title would cease to exist with his death and would thus not be inherited by his son¹⁸³; Great Britain never recognised it anyway and referred to Napoleon as “General Bonaparte” until the day he died¹⁸⁴ – which could have been far earlier than it was in the end, for Napoleon made a suicide attempt on 12 April, did, however, not succeed.¹⁸⁵

All in all, these eventful months, marked by defeats and victories, by feelings of desperation and transcendence, by dissensions and unity, had ended with a very pleasant outcome from a British point of view. Not only had Britain gotten rid of her arch nemesis, but Louis had also ascended the throne of France.

Britain’s contribution to this successful campaign had been quite significant. Even though it might seem that the war was decided in the northern part of the country, one cannot overlook the fact that a French force of at least 80,000 men was caught up fighting Wellington’s army in the south. Had Napoleon had these troops at his disposal, the relative strength of the armies in the north would have been quite an altered one, and one can only speculate if the final outcome would have proved to be the same or not.¹⁸⁶ Additionally, we have seen what great impact the declaration of Bordeaux brought with it and what advantageous effects it had on the whole Bourbon cause. Again, it remains subject to speculation what it would have meant for the Bourbons had Wellington not ordered the city’s capture.

¹⁸¹ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 140; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 249f.

¹⁸² Quoted in NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 93.

¹⁸³ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 140.

¹⁸⁴ WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 450.

¹⁸⁵ NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 95f.

¹⁸⁶ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 305.

As to the relations in the allied camp - if it was not for Castlereagh, who consistently exerted a conciliatory influence on the Allies, their alliance might well have been short-lived. Even though Robinson might exaggerate when opining that Castlereagh “decided the fate of the campaign,”¹⁸⁷ it is beyond doubt that his presence at headquarters was a huge benefit for allied unity as well as for the prosecution of the campaign.

The Allies had managed to momentarily overlook their differences for harmony’s sake, but still Castlereagh had failed time after time to bring the Great Powers to an agreement about the settlement of Europe. This demonstrates that the conflicts had not been dissolved, only repressed, and were thus still smouldering underneath the surface. Now, as the war had come to an end the time had come to restructure Europe - and diplomatic battles were about to commence for the pacification of the continent.

¹⁸⁷ Quoted in BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 129.

IV. PACIFICATION AND CELEBRATION

13. THE PACIFICATION OF ITALY

Napoleon's abdication naturally also completely changed the state of affairs in Italy. Here an Austrian army of 50,000 men had been fighting a French force of about the same size under Eugène, but had hardly made any progress. While Austria was engaged on the mainland of the Italian Peninsula, Britain was in Sicily, her major base in the area, with her chief aim not being offensive operations, but protecting the island from the French. Since 1811 the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Anglo-Sicilian troops and Minister to Sicily was occupied by Bentinck, who, with great headiness, endeavoured to turn Sicily into his own project and designed schemes for Italy, which were in disaccord with what the British Cabinet wanted. He seized the opportunity, given by inner conflicts on the island, to bring the Sicilian King to implement the English constitution. This was also influenced by the fact that Bentinck, acting on his own authority, made the King's acceptance of the constitution a prerequisite for attempting the retrieval of Naples. However, at the earliest time practicable, the King was to try to get rid of the constitution.¹⁸⁸

Naples was under the sovereignty of Napoleon's brother-in-law Murat, who after the Battle of Leipzig had again defected from the French Emperor (he had previously already done so after the disaster in Russia) and made overtures to the Allies. The outcome was the peace treaty between Murat and the Austrians, concluded on 11 January. While Austria warranted his sovereignty over Naples and tried to acquire Great Britain's acceptance, Murat agreed to allocate 30,000 troops to the Allies – a pledge he was not to fulfil. Bentinck only reluctantly gave his consent to a truce, which caused the appearance of unsteady relations with Great Britain and most probably played some role in Murat's conduct of not settling for either side. Thus, in spite of the treaty with Austria, he clandestinely tried to conclude an armistice with Eugène and sent letters to Napoleon affirming his allegiance¹⁸⁹; on 1 March, for instance, he

¹⁸⁸ GATES, David: *The Napoleonic Wars, 1803-1815* (London/New York/Sydney/Auckland 1997), p. 254; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 166f; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 189; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 509f; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 74-77, 79, 314.

¹⁸⁹ NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 190f; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 510.

insisted “Love me always. Never was I more worthy of your affection. Your friend till death.”¹⁹⁰ As a result of his conduct, the Austrians grew suspicious and admonished him to adhere to the treaty lest he might be deposed. Murat’s reaction was to command an assault on Eugène’s forces, but as Bentinck - against Castlereagh’s wishes - in March, besides appealing to the Italians to upheaval for their freedom, also announced that Britain supported the claims of the Sicilian King to Naples, Murat once more changed his course and again sought an armistice with Eugène. This uncertain state of affairs continued until intelligence arrived from Napoleon’s abdication. Murat then went back to Naples, while Eugène concluded a truce with Austria on 16 April and withdrew his troops from Italy.¹⁹¹

Castlereagh had also ordered Bentinck early in 1814 to capture Genoa on behalf of the King of Sardinia-Piedmont. Nevertheless, Bentinck did not shy away from pledging the independence of Genoa on 26 April, 1814. At the Congress of Vienna - in disregard of Bentinck’s promises of the instauration of the old Republic - Piedmont’s absorption of Genoa was formally arranged, and Castlereagh had, as a consequence, to face up to severe criticism in Parliament. As to Bentinck’s actions that aimed at an uprising of the Italians - in this he had actually competed with Murat as well as the Austrians - Castlereagh informed him such might be helpful when fighting against Napoleon, but as the latter had now been deposed, Italy ought to find repose, hence liberalism and nationalism should not be further encouraged. Therefore, Castlereagh urged Bentinck to stop his agitating actions and instead let the upcoming Congress deal with the Italian settlement. In truth, the matter had been already decided. Sardinia-Piedmont would be resurrected and enlarged and Lombardy and Venetia would fall to Austria. However, as Schroeder points out, it is not entirely true to think that Austria and Great Britain just forced their wishes on the Italians. Surely, Great Britain as well as Austria was adamant about freeing Italy from any French influence, and Austria also aspired to enlarge her dominions. However, apart from these goals they simply sought to create a stable and peaceful Italy. And this - not any of the schemes Bentinck, Murat, and the others were promoting - was exactly what most Italians strived for.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Quoted in NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 191.

¹⁹¹ NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 185, 191f; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 510f.

¹⁹² NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 185f; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 510-512.

14. A MODERATE PEACE

As the war had ended, Liverpool was keen on seeing Castlereagh return as soon as possible, for parliamentary sessions were about to recommence. Castlereagh, however, saw more importance in his presence at Paris and refused to return until peace was reached. Though Castlereagh was as laboriously as possible, delay was caused by the time consuming jollifications and social obligations, which allowed only slow progress in the negotiations.¹⁹³ No wonder Castlereagh found Paris to be “a bad place for business.”¹⁹⁴ Besides, most of the work Castlereagh had to carry out without much help. Stewart, Cathcart and Aberdeen were again of little use; and Wellington, who was to be ambassador to Paris, came to the city in early May, but could not stay long. Proposing this position to Wellington had been one of the first things Castlereagh had done after entering Paris. Wellington had embraced his new task with cheerfulness, though he had shown himself astonished that he had been selected and had claimed in an uncharacteristically moderate manner, “I am very much obliged and flattered by your thinking of me for a situation for which I should never have thought myself qualified.”¹⁹⁵ Indeed, it was a peculiar choice. Castlereagh expected that the glory and fame Wellington had gained on the battlefield would prove advantageous in this position, but did not take into account that by putting a triumphant field-marshal in the position of ambassador at the defeated nation’s capital, he upset the feelings of the French. Starting from August, when Wellington commenced his new post, he turned out to be a capable ambassador. However, the manner in which he handled his private sphere proved to be far from impeccable. Indiscretions about affairs with a number of women, not even refraining from erstwhile lovers of the fallen Emperor, created a furore. In addition, his being present at Paris alone irritated former soldiers and every remaining loyal follower of Napoleon. All this made the Cabinet question the appropriateness of his appointment - more so as conspiracies for assassinating Wellington became known - and urged him to return to Great Britain. Wellington, however, postponed his departure until being assigned to take Castlereagh’s place at the Congress of Vienna in January 1815.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 141; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 283.

¹⁹⁴ Quoted in WEBSTER, C. K.: *The Congress of Vienna, 1814-1815* (London 1934), p. 40.

¹⁹⁵ Wellington to Castlereagh, 21 April 1814, W.D. XI, p. 668.

¹⁹⁶ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, 331f; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 264; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 450.

At any rate, now peace had to be concluded with France. In spite of the presence of other powers' representatives, the Great Powers were set on deciding the issues themselves. It was hoped that a settlement with France could be obtained quickly. However, not only the social events caused delay. The task of the peacemakers was also made more difficult because the new king had not arrived as yet, and because Prussia tried to comprise the European settlement into the peace treaty, for it was becoming perceptible that France would again have to be taken into consideration regarding any negotiations as to the European reconstruction as soon as the peace treaty had been concluded.¹⁹⁷

Thus, the thorny questions about Poland, Saxony, and Mainz were raised again. As all three ministers were suspicious of Alexander's Polish scheme, Hardenberg drew up a plan for the reconstruction of Europe according to which Prussia would obtain the whole of Saxony together with the left bank of the Rhine, Austria, the Tyrol, and territory in Italy, while most, but not all of Poland was to be left to Russia. Alexander, however, rejected the suggested settlement. Since Alexander's aspirations in Poland posed a danger to Austrians and Prussians alike, Castlereagh sought to consolidate the two powers to build a united front against the Tsar - a strategy he was to pursue in the conferences to come. However, their disputes about Saxony and Mainz posed an immense obstacle. Metternich had shown himself prepared to acquiesce in a Prussian sovereignty over Saxony, but not over Mainz. The Prussians had occupied Mainz and were set on keeping this key fortress. The Austrians, on the other hand, persisted on giving Mainz to Bavaria, first, because Bavaria was not prepared to surrender the Tyrol to Austria unless she could obtain Mainz, and second, because Austria was anxious to keep Prussia's influence out of South Germany as much as possible.¹⁹⁸

In all these intricate matters no agreements could be reached, so their settlement had to be adjourned to London. The Prince Regent had invited Alexander, and at Castlereagh's instigation, the other sovereigns and statesmen to the British capital city. It was also agreed that all belligerents were to send representatives to Vienna, where a Congress would take

¹⁹⁷ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 141f; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 97; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 263, 266, 279.

¹⁹⁸ GRIEWANK, Karl: *Der Wiener Kongress und die Neuordnung Europas, 1814/15* (Leipzig 1942), p. 63; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 97f; WEBSTER: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 44; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 281f; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 453.

place in August. This Congress was, however, only meant for the ratification of a settlement, which was thought to be devised at London.¹⁹⁹

Anyway, a solution to a few questions as to the reconstruction of Europe, such as the Austrian frontiers in Italy and Holland's extension, could be achieved at Paris. In secret articles it was stipulated that Genoa should be incorporated into Sardinia as a compensation for Savoy, which should go to France, while Austria was to acquire Milan and Venice. Castlereagh, for his part, favoured Austrian extension in Italy for it would keep French influence out and would not menace British supremacy in the Mediterranean Sea as France might. Also, the enlargement of Holland - including Antwerp - was included in the treaty, though not the exact frontiers which were still up for discussion. Anyway, Antwerp was thus placed under the sovereignty of the Prince of Orange, and by the marriage that had been arranged between the Hereditary Prince of Orange and the Prince Regent's daughter the countries would be linked to each other.²⁰⁰

The peace with France was concluded on the ancient limits, though some concessions were made. France had to relinquish all territorial claims as to Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Germany, and Malta, but, exceeding the borders of 1792, she was given part of Savoy and was also allowed to incorporate enclaves such as Avignon, which meant a territorial expansion of about 150 square miles, with approximately half a million inhabitants. France was not confined in the number of her forces and even more, she was permitted to keep two-thirds of her fleet at Antwerp, for the ever so dreaded fleet was exposed as being not so threatening after all, due to the poor quality of the ships. No demands were being made as to reparations and with regard to the treasures of art Napoleon had taken from all over Europe; it was decided that France did not have to hand them back. As for the colonies, Castlereagh pleaded with his Government for generosity, with the result that France got back nearly all of her overseas possessions; only Tobago, St. Lucia (instead of Les Saintes) and Mauritius were kept in British hands - mainly for strategic reasons. Together with the Cape, which was bought from Holland, Great Britain thus saw her waterways to India and the West Indies

¹⁹⁹ GRIEWANK: *Der Wiener Kongress und die Neuordnung Europas*, p. 65; WEBSTER: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 45; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 281, 284f; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 453.

²⁰⁰ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 142; WEBSTER: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 49f; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 286f, 302f; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 452, 465.

safeguarded, while Malta, which France had acknowledged as a British possession, was the key to supremacy in the Mediterranean Sea.²⁰¹

As we have just seen, France got back nearly all of her overseas possessions. However, there was a catch: Castlereagh demanded from France the abolition of the slave trade. The trade, one of the sources of British wealth during the previous century, had been abolished in Great Britain in 1807. This was due to the fact that the British public adopted a humanitarian view, demanding the abolition, and as the British colonies were well stocked with slaves there was no economic necessity to keep up the trade. Now Britain aspired to achieve a worldwide abolition of the slave trade. Given the frenzied sentiments of the English public and that all parties in Great Britain supported the abolition, Castlereagh and the Government were well aware that a pleasing outcome on this matter had to be achieved. Therefore, Castlereagh had, as we have seen, demanded the abolition of the trade already in the Châtillon proposals made to Caulaincourt. Both King Louis and Talleyrand were sympathetic of the project, but they could not support it, for the disposition in the country was such as to completely oppose it. The French suspected the British Cabinet of merely using the national sentiments to avert the French Colonies from becoming as wealthy as the British ones, and thus keeping competition in check. A prohibition of the slave trade would, in the eyes of the French, make the return of the colonies worthless. Such peace conditions seemed humiliating.²⁰² Castlereagh informed Liverpool that he felt “that on grounds of general policy we ought not to attempt to tie France too tight on this question. If we do it will make the abolition odious in France and we shall be considered as influenced by a secret wish to prevent the removal [sic!, probably meant revival]²⁰³ of her colonial interests.” Regarding a universal abolition, he pointed out the importance of gaining French support, opining, “If we get France on our side we shall have a preponderance of authority; without her aid I shall despair of bringing Spain and Portugal into our views.”²⁰⁴ Thus, Castlereagh and Talleyrand agreed upon a compromise – namely that the slave trade would be abolished in five years time, therewith rendering it possible to equip the

²⁰¹ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 142; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 99f; WEBSTER: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 42; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 269, 272f; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 450-452.

²⁰² GRIEWANK: *Der Wiener Kongress und die Neuordnung Europas*, p. 58; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 271; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 451.

²⁰³ WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 451.

²⁰⁴ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 19 May 1814, B.D., p. 184f.

colonies with the necessary number of slaves in the meantime. This compromise, however, as will be seen, was to attract critics in Great Britain.²⁰⁵

All in all the peace was quite a generous one. Only the Prussians attempted to press for more severe terms, but were overcome.²⁰⁶ Yet the generous peace had less to do with the character of the statesmen, to which Bryant ascribed it, stating they were “just and moderate men,”²⁰⁷ but was more due to political considerations. Aspiring for peace and safety, it was hoped that by moderation, a friendly bond with the Bourbons could be knitted, while also solidifying this dynasty. The statesmen were aware that, for the French, peace on the basis of the ancient limits was not exactly easy to come to terms with. Any additional demands might only enfeeble the restored monarchy, while strengthening supporters of the fallen Emperor. So instead of aiming for revenge, the ministers sought to create such a peace as would fit the balance of power.²⁰⁸

The moderation is remarkable, especially when Napoleon’s exploitation of Europe in all these years of war is considered. Not less astounding is that Castlereagh, the representative of the country in which public furore hit hardest, was one of the principal promoters of a moderate peace. His efforts to arbitrate between the powers were eased with the completion of the first Peace of Paris on 30 May because, as France had been stripped off Belgium as well as the left bank of the Rhine, Britain had achieved her essential objectives and was thus free of having to endeavour placating any of the other powers to accomplish her own interests.²⁰⁹

However, that no reparation was demanded, leaving France debt-free, while Britain’s debt had amounted up to seven hundred million pounds was not easy to stomach and demonstrates that whatever fine qualities Castlereagh possessed, handling money was not one of them.²¹⁰ Cooke brought it to the point, when writing to Castlereagh, “It will be hard if France is to pay nothing for the destruction of Europe, and we are to pay all for saving it.”²¹¹

²⁰⁵ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 134; GRIEWANK: Der Wiener Kongress und die Neuordnung Europas, p. 58; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 271.

²⁰⁶ KISSINGER: A World Restored, p. 139.

²⁰⁷ BRYANT: The Age of Elegance, p. 189.

²⁰⁸ KISSINGER, Henry A.: A World Restored, p. 139; NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, p. 100.

²⁰⁹ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 133; KISSINGER: A World Restored, p. 139; NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity, p. 103; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 268f; WEBSTER: The Pacification of Europe, p. 452.

²¹⁰ NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, p. 100; WEBSTER: The Pacification of Europe, p. 452.

²¹¹ Cooke to Castlereagh, 9 April 1814, C.C. IX, 454.

Indeed, the generosity of the treaty created some dissatisfaction in Great Britain, but so great was the rejoicing of finally, after over twenty years of warfare against France, having defeated the arch nemesis that the minutiae of the treaty meant little to the ordinary people. Only the inefficiency of Castlereagh's endeavour to bring the French to abolish the slave trade right away caused uproar of discontentment. Especially that the slave trade had already been abandoned in the colonies that were now returned to France, under whose sovereignty the trade would be reintroduced, made the compromise to allow France five years time to abolish the trade seem even shoddier.²¹² In the House of Commons, Wilberforce, himself actually a Tory, condemned Castlereagh when the latter returned in June, accusing him of being responsible for "the death warrant of a multitude of innocent victims [...]."²¹³ The whole country was bent upon achieving the abolition of the slave trade, thus Wilberforce and his followers were able to launch a campaign that produced hundreds of petitions with nearly a million signatures, demanding the Cabinet should make additional allowances to bring France to abolish the trade straight away.²¹⁴ Castlereagh remarked, "I believe there is hardly a village that has not met and petitioned upon it [the issue of the slave trade]; both Houses of Parliament are pledged to press it; and the Ministers must make it the basis of their policy."²¹⁵ The public frenzy did nothing to help the cause, for it not only amplified suspicions regarding British motives, but also provoked countries to increase their demands, as Castlereagh was pointing out:

"The more I have occasion to observe the temper of foreign Powers on the question of the abolition, the more strongly impressed I am with a sense of the prejudice that results not only to the interests of the question itself, but of our foreign relations generally from the display of popular impatience which has been excited and is kept up in England upon this subject. It is impossible to persuade foreign nations that this sentiment is unmixt with the views of colonial policy, and their Cabinets, who can better estimate the real and virtuous motives which guide us on this question, see in the very impatience of the nation a powerful instrument which they expect to force, at a convenient moment, the British Government upon some favourite object of policy. "[...] I am [...] firmly persuaded, that we should be at this moment in fact nearer our object if the Government had been permitted to pursue this object with its ordinary means of influence and persuasion instead of being placed in the predicament of being expected to purchase concessions on this point almost at any sacrifice."²¹⁶

At any rate, the following months the Government again endeavoured to bring the universal abolition of the slave trade into being. While it proved not too hard to come to terms with

²¹² BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 134; MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 329; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 271f; WEBSTER: The Pacification of Europe, p. 454, 495.

²¹³ Quoted in MARRIOTT: Castlereagh, p. 249.

²¹⁴ MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 329.

²¹⁵ Castlereagh to H. Wellesley, 1 August 1814, C.C. X (London 1852), 73.

²¹⁶ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 25 October 1814, B.D., p. 215.

Holland, Denmark, and Sweden, an agreement with France, Spain, and Portugal was very difficult to reach. France declined a lump sum of money as well as the return of Trinidad, and not being prepared to abolish the trade at once, did however ban it on the northern part of the globe. Portugal agreed to similar terms as France for a payment of 300,000 pounds, whereas Spain turned down 800,000 pounds out of fear of strengthening the voices which called for the independence of her colonies. At Vienna, Castlereagh saw that all powers signed an agreement disapproving the slave trade; however, the question of execution remained unsolved. It was not to be until 1815 and by Napoleon that the trade was completely abolished in the territories ruled by France, while Portugal and Spain were to abandon the trade not earlier than 1820.²¹⁷ Still, even Wilberforce was by 1815 convinced that Castlereagh “really takes much pains for the cause”²¹⁸ and thought “all done that could be done.”²¹⁹

Anyway, apart from where the issue regarding the slave trade was concerned, Britons were generally very pleased – and had every reason to be. France and Holland had gotten back the majority of their colonies, but Britain held strategic key-necessities and her sea supremacy was unchallengeable. The response of the Opposition varied, ranging from Grey’s displeasure of the Bourbon’s restoration and even sorrow for Napoleon’s fate at Holland House, to Grenville’s as well as Whitbread’s satisfaction with the peace treaty,²²⁰ the latter even admitting: “[...] ‘Tis more than I dared to hope!’”²²¹

15. INTERLUDE AT LONDON

The allied sovereigns, generals and statesmen had all received an invitation to London, which was, with over one million inhabitants, not only Europe’s biggest city, but also said to be the richest in the world. In June, the Tsar and the King of Prussia, together with Blücher and Hardenberg as well as Metternich, thus set out for England. The latter had been dispatched by

²¹⁷ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 256; MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 329; NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity, p. 213.

²¹⁸ Quoted in BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 257f.

²¹⁹ Quoted in NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity, p. 212.

²²⁰ MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 328; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 272f.

²²¹ Quoted in MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 328.

Francis, who had declined his invitations, probably because he was aware that the Britons disliked him for marrying off his daughter to the French Emperor.²²²

The state visit rekindled the marital conflict between the Prince Regent and his wife Caroline. The cousins had married in 1795, only to split up one year later just after their daughter Charlotte's birth. Ever since, the British public felt compassion towards Caroline, while the Prince of Wales was subject to ridicule. As George did not want to see his wife, he insisted that she was not to attend any of the social gatherings. Yet Caroline still turned up at the Opera one night the Prince Regent and his guests were there too - and was cheered by the crowd. George, on the other hand was, whenever he showed his face, scoffed at²²³ and often met with the words: "Prinny, where's your wife?"²²⁴ Needless to say, this evidence of public disdain before the eyes of his guests left George deeply humiliated. Also, politically, the marital conflict was a continuous source of hassle. Ever since the Prince Regent had turned against the Whigs, some of them, but even more the Radicals had taken up Caroline's cause in order to embarrass George and his Ministry.²²⁵ Caroline, however, was aware of why she was being supported, as she exposed to an acquaintance: "You see, my dear, how I am plagued; it is not the loss of the amusement which I regret, but being treated like a child, and made the puppet of a party: what signify if I am applauded in his hearing or not-that is all for the gratification of *the party*, not for *my* gratification [...]."²²⁶

On the planned wedding of her daughter to the Hereditary Prince of Orange, Caroline's opinion had not been obtained, but as her husband was clearly supporting it, Caroline naturally objected. She was not the only one: in mid-June Princess Charlotte wrote to her fiancé to cancel their engagement. The Prince Regent was anything but impressed and endeavoured to persuade Charlotte to marry William. But his attempts were without success: Charlotte ran away to her mother's and eventually George discarded his plan. Though the Princess' decision not to marry William of Orange was probably due to her being smitten

²²² GATES: *The Napoleonic Wars*, p. 8f; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 330f; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 111, 115; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 278f.

²²³ PALMER: *The Life and Times of George IV*, p. 54, 57, 59, 68; PETRIE, Charles: *Lord Liverpool and his Times*, p. 190; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 289.

²²⁴ Quoted in PETRIE, Charles: *Lord Liverpool and his Times*, p. 190.

²²⁵ BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 176; PETRIE, Charles: *Lord Liverpool and his Times*, p. 191; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 289.

²²⁶ Quoted in PETRIE, Charles: *Lord Liverpool and his Times*, p. 191.

with the Prussian King's nephew, it was thought that it was due to the influence of Grand Duchess Catharine.²²⁷

Grand Duchess Catharine, the Tsar's beloved sister, had preceded her brother and had been in England for some time now. Almost instantly she and the Prince Regent had developed mutual resentment.²²⁸ "Handsome as he is," she described George in a letter to Alexander, "he is a man visibly used up by dissipation and disgusting rather. His much boasted affability is the most licentious, I may even say obscene, strain I have ever listened to [...]"²²⁹ Barely hiding her feelings of disgust and aversion, she closely associated with Princess Charlotte and would even have visited the Princess of Wales, if not dissuaded by Lieven, the Russian ambassador to London. Lieven, however, could neither stop her from making most unwelcome remarks upon George's obligations as a husband and father, nor from seeking the company of Whig leaders. When Alexander arrived in London he turned out to conduct himself in the same way as his sister. For, while being discourteous to the Ministry and invidious to the Prince Regent, he was openly consorting with the opponents of the Cabinet, including Grey and Holland, who George was known to specifically dislike. Whether this conduct was more due to the personal antipathy he felt for the Prince Regent, or more due to political considerations - perceiving the unpopularity of George as well as several members of his Cabinet he might have made the presumption that a Whig-government was soon to replace the Tory one, which was possibly his motivation for seeking good relations with the Opposition - the result was that, within the few weeks Alexander stayed in London, he managed to earn the hatred of the Prince Regent and the aversion of the Ministry. The Tories, however, were to remain in power, directing, together with the Prince Regent, Britain's policy throughout the Tsar's life.²³⁰ Besides, Alexander was not even successful in impressing the Opposition, Grey calling him a "vain silly fellow."²³¹ For, by affronting George, he had also alienated the Whigs, because it was seen as being a prerogative of Englishmen to criticise the Regent - the Tsar doing so was an offence to the Nation.²³² George's indignation about his guest obviously did not remain unconcealed, Creevey stating that "all agree that Prinny will

²²⁷ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 330; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 110; PALMER: *The Life and Times of George IV*, p. 129; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 298.

²²⁸ WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 288f.

²²⁹ NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 110f.

²³⁰ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 330; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 110; WEBSTER: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 47f; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 289f.

²³¹ Quoted in NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 116.

²³² NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 106, 116.

die or go mad; he is worn out with fuss, fatigue and *rage*.”²³³ Alexander’s behaviour appears also to have had an impact on the mass of people. Being welcomed as *the* hero at his arrival, the applause and hoorays lessened more and more as the days went by – the biggest enthusiasm now being directed at Blücher.²³⁴

That Alexander, in this careless manner, trifled his popularity away, was, however, a huge asset to Metternich, who displayed an impeccable demeanour, avoiding the Opposition, while treating the Ministry with every kindness and flattering the Prince Regent²³⁵ – inducing the latter to even call Metternich “the wisest of Ministers.”²³⁶ Formally, the Cabinet had been inclined to eye Austria, and particularly Metternich, with suspicion, while the attitude towards Alexander was one of friendliness. For, although Castlereagh had drawn closer to Austria, the same could not be said for his Ministry. Had Alexander not aroused everyone’s disfavour, it might have rendered it impossible for Castlereagh to fight the former’s aspirations the way he was to do. However, as it was, the interlude at London altered the appreciation with respect to the Guests of State. While the Ministry was still not entirely confiding in Austria, relations definitely improved, whereas Alexander had lost all sympathies. These changes well excelled the political talks in their significance. For, due to the social whirl, hardly any conferences could be held.²³⁷

It was decided that the Congress at Vienna should be postponed until autumn, allowing Alexander to visit his country before the Congress commenced and giving Castlereagh some more time for parliamentary business. In Parliament, Castlereagh had to deal with queries as to Princess Caroline and the abolition of the slave trade, as previously mentioned. Furthermore, expenses were subject to discussion as well as the Government’s conduct in the matter of Sweden’s incorporation of Norway. This had caused considerable trouble, as the Norwegians were unwilling to be incorporated into Sweden and instead proclaimed their independence and chose the Hereditary Prince of Denmark to be their King. Only after a blockade against Norway, in which Britain had taken part, and Bernadotte’s agreement to the Norwegian constitution, the resistance of the Norwegians was overcome. As the Norwegians had been wartime enemies while Sweden had been fighting on the allied side, the

²³³ Quoted in NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 115; also in: Palmer: *The Life and Times of George IV.*, p. 121.

²³⁴ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 330; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 116.

²³⁵ BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 135; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 330f.

²³⁶ Quoted in BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 135.

²³⁷ BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 135; GRIEWANK: *Der Wiener Kongress und die Neuordnung Europas*, p. 68; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 330f; WEBSTER: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 46-48.

Government really had no choice other than to support Sweden – and this was also accredited in Parliament. All in all, Parliament at this stage was rather sedate. The Opposition was in a dispirited state, while the Cabinet had reason to feel safe, because their forceful warfare and successes had boosted the standing of the ministers.²³⁸

16. PEACE WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Shortly before the Congress commenced at Vienna, discussions were also opened at Ghent. In 1812 Russia had proposed acting as mediator between Great Britain and America, and the latter had actually accepted, but Great Britain had declined. The British did not wish any other power to interfere in her dispute with her erstwhile colonies, and definitely not Russia, who had in the past displayed a similar view on the issue as America and might only endeavour to talk Britain out of her maritime rights, while the latter was adamantly set on keeping these, under all circumstances, out of negotiations. It was mainly due to the desire to keep the American question out of any Continental discussions lest British maritime rights might become subject to negotiations that prompted Castlereagh on 4 November 1813 to propose to President Madison peace talks, to which the latter agreed. It was to take several months, however, until all American commissioners reached Ghent, where the negotiations were to take place.²³⁹

Meanwhile, peace had been concluded on the Continent, which naturally made the Americans fear that Britain would now turn with all her resources against the United States. Indeed, Britain reinforced their navy as well as the number of their troops, the latter mostly by soldiers who had fought in the Peninsula. Given this augmentation of their forces, the Government were confident that the military situation would sooner or later be ameliorated, which would consequently produce an advantageous standing in the negotiations. Thus, although the question as to the fate of Europe had not yet been settled and voices were raised against the war as inflicting damage upon the economic interest, the Cabinet at this stage felt no hurry for the commencement of the peace talks. While the American representatives were at Ghent by July 1814, the British ones still took another month to turn up. True, the Cabinet

²³⁸ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 137, 166f; MARRIOTT: Castlereagh, p. 249; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 295, 297, 306-308, 319.

²³⁹ WEBSTER: The American War and the Treaty of Ghent, p. 530-534.

had, as we have seen, obviously been busy with attending to the guests of state, but one has to question whether the late arrival was not at least partly on purpose. When the peace negotiations, which were held while the military operations were proceeding, finally commenced, both British and American commissioners did not believe that a pleasant outcome could be achieved, because apparently neither side was ready to make compromises. On the contrary, Britain was now under the impression of the victorious war on the Continent and of the belief of being exceedingly more powerful than the United States. Thus, the British claims were of such demanding character, including the surrender of territory, that they did not leave any doubt that Britain simply tried to enhance her standing overseas. After intelligence of a British setback was received in October, it was considered to send even more soldiers across the Atlantic and to place Wellington at the head of them. The Duke, dutiful as always, did not decline but made no secret of the fact that he was anything but keen on this post. What he did, however, was to make an assessment of the military situation. Wellington opined that actual preponderance could only be achieved through a lot of money and time,²⁴⁰ and quite frankly expressed, "I confess that I think you have no right, from the state of the war, to demand any concession of territory from America."²⁴¹

Wellington's assessment, the war expenses when Parliament was calling for a reduction of costs, jealousies among the Great Powers, and the by now climactic situation at the Congress all contributed to the Ministry becoming more reconcilable and ceasing to demand territorial concessions. Castlereagh, for his part was all busy with the, as he believed, substantially graver issues at the Congress and considered the conflict with America to be an annoying and distracting abashment. Certainly influenced by the quarrelling at Vienna, he strove to get on good terms with the United States. After a few more weeks of negotiations, peace was finally concluded on 24 December. The Treaty of Ghent was made on the *status quo ante bellum* and oddly enough, omits exactly those points of dispute that were responsible for the declaration of war. Therefore, some people, particularly in America, considered the agreement to be merely a truce. As there was no reason for Britain to exercise impressment etc. during peace times, the harassments had stopped and consequently there was, so the U.S.-representatives could argue, no cause to sustain hostilities. Upon Napoleon's return, Castlereagh anyway was quite attentive not to anger the United States again. Some voices in Great Britain, particularly from the Tories, decried the treaty as it did not punish the United States for their perfidious

²⁴⁰ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 332, 334; WEBSTER: *The American War and the Treaty of Ghent*, p. 533-535, 539f.

²⁴¹ Wellington to Liverpool, 9 November 1814, C.C. X, p. 188.

assault on Britain at a time when it was so deeply engaged in the struggle with Napoleon, and for decades Britons were anxious that America might again try to capitalise on any problems Great Britain might face on the Continent. Nevertheless, since the maritime rights were retained, overall satisfaction prevailed at the conclusion of peace, especially within the commercial classes.²⁴²

However, the discussions at Ghent were eclipsed by those at Vienna. Though not in theory, they were somehow interlinked, because the growing tensions among the Allies prompted Britain to be more placable at Ghent and, in turn, the peace agreement with America was to produce considerable impact at the Austrian capital.²⁴³

²⁴² BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 237; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 334; WEBSTER: *The American War and the Treaty of Ghent*, p. 539-542.

²⁴³ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 334.

V. THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA

17. FESTIVITIES, ESPIONAGE AND STRATEGIES

The Congress of Vienna produced a social whirl – splendid balls, dinners and concerts were a daily occurrence as well as tittle-tattle, intrigues, and love affairs. As the Great Four were again set on keeping the negotiations to themselves, the numerous noble guests did not really have anything else to do other than plunge in and enjoy the festivities. These were also frequently attended by some of the principal negotiators in spite of the workload.²⁴⁴ Castlereagh exposed that “we are [...] impeded by the succession of fêtes and private Balls – they waste a great deal of valuable time, and prevent P[rince] Metternich from giving his mind to subjects that ought to engross him.”²⁴⁵ In sharp contrast to Metternich and Alexander who thoroughly enjoyed the company of women, Castlereagh was wary enough not to provide any food for the scandalmongers at Vienna and besides, was deeply devoted to his wife, who had come to Vienna with him. However, Metternich appears to have regarded the never-ending festivities not only as entertainment, but also as a means to gain diplomatic benefit for he tried to disrupt the bond between Russia and Prussia.²⁴⁶ His strategy was, as he put it, to “barricade myself behind time, and make patience my weapon.”²⁴⁷ Talleyrand observed that “Metternich’s greatest art is to make us waste our time, for he believes he gains by it.” For weeks Metternich in this manner delayed business – earning him the nickname “Prince Scamperlin.”²⁴⁸

Another aspect the Congress of Vienna is renowned for is the espionage of the Austrian Police. There were various different agents, from coachmen to housemaids – the latter, for example, being responsible for sifting through wastepaper bins. This resulted, however, more

²⁴⁴ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 334f; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 467.

²⁴⁵ Quoted in MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 335.

²⁴⁶ BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 138; KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 160; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 335; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 463.

²⁴⁷ Quoted in KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 156.

²⁴⁸ Quoted in KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 160.

in general mistrust than in valuable information. Reports were mostly quite dull²⁴⁹, for instance it was observed that “the Emperor of Russia went out at 7 p.m. with one of his aides-de-camp. It is believed he went to visit the Princess Thurn and Taxis. Every morning a large block of ice is brought to the Emperor with which he washes his face and hands.”²⁵⁰ Couriers were also employed, copying all diplomatic correspondence. This again did not produce too much useful information, but only made it more complicated for the representatives, who were aware of the espionage, to exchange forthright words with their respective courts. Therefore, the cautious British delegation employed its own housemaids as well as couriers.²⁵¹

Liverpool informed Castlereagh more or less frequently on public sentiments and the opinions of the ministers on the matters discussed in Vienna. However, as the principal British interests had already been achieved, the Government was not too interested in the reconstruction of Europe. The progress of the abolition of the slave trade was heedfully watched and also questions as to the future of Poland, Saxony, Genoa, and Naples, as well as, as we have seen, Norway, attracted interest, but apart from these issues discussions on domestic affairs prevailed in Parliament. And even though especially the Prime Minister and Bathurst as Secretary for War kept track of the negotiations, they could hardly hope to control the quickly altering state of affairs at the Congress from far-away London – with correspondence from London to Vienna taking two weeks. Actually only once, in November, the Cabinet was to send an official instruction to Castlereagh – which he, as will be seen, was to completely disregard.²⁵²

Castlereagh’s aims for the settlement were largely those of Pitt, an erstwhile British Prime Minister who had greatly influenced him. Pitt had been prompted by the forming of the third coalition against France to work on a scheme for the reconstruction of Europe, which Castlereagh had helped to develop. According to Pitt’s plan, both Austria and Prussia should be strengthened, Austria by extending her territories in southern Europe, Prussia by doing the same in the North. Also, Sardinia and Holland should be enlarged, therewith rendering it possible for them to act as barriers against France in southern and northern Europe, with Austria backing Sardinia up and Prussia guarding Holland, while Central Europe should be

²⁴⁹ NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 204f.

²⁵⁰ Quoted in NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 204.

²⁵¹ NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 204f.

²⁵² BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 137f; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 185; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 463.

jointly defended by the two German Powers – not only against French, but also against potential Russian aggression. Therefore, it was obviously of the utmost importance that Austria and Prussia should reconcile their differences, which had been one of the causes that enabled French supremacy on the Continent in the first place. However, as the Coalition of Russia, Great Britain and Austria (Prussia could not be persuaded to join in) was defeated by Napoleon in the battles at Ulm and later at Austerlitz, Pitt's efforts for a future settlement of Europe seemed to have been in vain. Meanwhile, Pitt had died and nearly ten years had passed by – Castlereagh, however, had not forgotten the scheme. Recalling Pitt's plan of 1805, he aspired for the creation of an equilibrium, as would render it impossible for one country to menace the others. The Napoleonic wars had diminished the Austrian State and, even more severely, the Prussian one, whereas both France and Russia had gained land excessively. While France, through the Treaty of Paris, had been confined to its prerevolutionary boundaries, Russia had acquired Finland, Bessarabia and a huge part of Poland – and now it wanted to add even more of Poland to its territories. To guard the Continent not only against French, but also against Russian ascendancy, Castlereagh sought to create a strong Central Europe. Such a strong Centre could not, however, be achieved through a mere territorial extension on the part of Austria and Prussia, but required a friendly bond between these two powers, which, needless to say, in turn preconditioned first of all that the German Powers reconciled their differences – a task Castlereagh was to be working on all October.²⁵³

18. THE POLISH-SAXON QUESTION

Of all the issues discussed at the Congress, the Polish-Saxon question was the most crucial one. For almost two years, Alexander had kept silent about the exact nature of his Polish scheme – now he finally broke his silence. In an interview with Castlereagh he announced that he meant to re-establish the Polish Kingdom, including the fortresses Thorn and Cracow, and by bestowing a constitution on his new kingdom, it would be solely connected through his person to Russia. A long time before, the Tsar had befriended the Polish patriot Czartoryski, who had aroused the desire in Alexander to aid the Poles. This desire had only grown stronger as time had passed and, meanwhile, Alexander was convinced that it was his

²⁵³ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 156; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 12f, 53, 56-59, 62f; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 464f.

moral obligation²⁵⁴, claiming “that if it was merely a question of territory, he would yield it without a struggle, but that it involved the happiness of the Poles, and the people would never forgive his ceding them.”²⁵⁵ Allowing that Alexander meant well – he was definitely sincere when he stated that he felt that it was his moral obligation to help the Poles – good faith could hardly be a sufficient safeguard given that an implementation of his scheme would mean Russia’s expansion deep into Central Europe. Not only the territorial aggrandizement, but also Alexander’s ambition to bestow a constitution on his Polish lands would thus severely threaten the German powers, as this would produce disgruntled Poles on Austria’s and Prussia’s remaining Polish territories with potentially exceedingly dangerous consequences.²⁵⁶ These potential consequences were given attention in a memorandum that Liverpool sent to Castlereagh in mid-October:

“[...] if the Duchy of Warsaw is to be an independent State under the Emperor of Russia, the independent principle will not only be preserved, but it will be preserved under a monarch whose power will be sufficient to give encouragement to the disaffected in the Austrian and Prussian Polish provinces, to seize the first opportunity of resisting their acknowledged Sovereigns, and of reuniting themselves under a head whom they will consider as strong enough to protect them, and who will be the Sovereign of a country which will be regarded as the parent stock of Polish independence.”²⁵⁷

Napoleon, who was at Elba informed of Alexander’s aspirations, painted an exaggerated horror vision:

“If the Russians succeed in uniting the Poles heartily in a common interest, the whole of Europe ought to dread them. It will be impossible to foresee or to limit the consequences. Hordes of Cossacks and barbarians having seen the riches of more civilised countries, will be eager to return. They will overrun Europe, and some great change will probably result from it, as has been the case in former times from the incursions of barbarians.”²⁵⁸

How dangerous the implementation of Alexander’s scheme might be, the British Ministry still had to pay attention to public opinion, which favoured an independent Poland. The Duchy of Warsaw becoming an independent State under Alexander’s sovereignty would, therefore, the Memorandum went on,

“be less unpopular in this country than the measure of complete partition, and consequently of Polish annihilation. If we are to come to either of these alternatives, I

²⁵⁴ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 152f; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 336f; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 468.

²⁵⁵ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 14 October 1814, B.D., p. 207.

²⁵⁶ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 153f; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 337; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 343; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 468.

²⁵⁷ Memorandum respecting Poland, 14 October 1814, B.D., p. 211.

²⁵⁸ Quoted in NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 81.

think it would be very desirable that there should, if possible, be some record of our having expressed our opinion how desirable it would be to restore Poland on the principle of 1792, and of our having made some effort for that which we are more entitled to ask, the independence of the Duchy of Warsaw under a neutral Sovereign.²⁵⁹

Castlereagh, therefore, in his interview with the Tsar, argued that Britain looked upon an independent Poland favourably – therewith making the Tsar’s assertions of moral obligation seem like mere pretence, for Alexander was not prepared to allow Poland to become entirely autonomous. Castlereagh had been well aware that Alexander would hardly surrender territory that had belonged to Russia for a considerable period of time just for winning the war and had made this suggestion merely for the satisfaction of British public opinion. In this manner he was to repeatedly propose an independent Polish state simply as a means to forestall criticism in Parliament. Castlereagh as well addressed the Russian point of view, pointing out that most Russians also objected to Alexander’s scheme. That the Tsar apparently did not demand indemnities for the struggle and suffering that Russia had to endure during wartime obviously outraged the Russians. And to establish an independent country, whose inhabitants would be granted privileges, which Alexander refused his own peoples, was seen to be simply ludicrous. This, by the way, might be the reason why, although Nesselrode was still minister and also present in Vienna, the discussions mostly took place with Alexander himself²⁶⁰, as Castlereagh explained:

“It is unfortunately his habit to be his own minister, and to select as the instrument of his immediate purpose the person who may happen to fall in most with his views. This has been particularly the case on the present question, all the Russians, I believe without an exception, being adverse to his projects, considering them both as dangerous to himself and injurious to his Allies.”²⁶¹

Anyway, Castlereagh’s estimation of the situation, as he told Liverpool, was that

“[...] from my experience of His Imperial Majesty’s character, I expect nothing from his friendship to his Allies, and as little from his generosity or his sense of justice, yet I still hope for something from his fears. The general sentiment of dissatisfaction and alarm occasioned by his conduct is becoming too strong and too universal to be any longer a secret from him. It exists extensively amongst his own subjects, and I have reason to believe that this fact has not been concealed from him.”²⁶²

²⁵⁹ Memorandum respecting Poland, 14 October 1814, B.D., p. 211.

²⁶⁰ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 159; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 105; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 466-469.

²⁶¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 5 November 1814, B.D., p. 222.

²⁶² Castlereagh to Liverpool, 25 November 1814, B.D., p. 243.

Still, Castlereagh's endeavours to bring Alexander to his senses were to no avail. The latter emphasised that he held Poland and intended it to stay that way, even alluding to his, in the area of question, stationed troops.²⁶³

Talleyrand observed that Castlereagh "thought that he was in a position to bend the Emperor of Russia, but only succeeded in irritating him."²⁶⁴ As his private interviews with Alexander had been unfruitful, Castlereagh put his efforts again into bringing Austria and Prussia closer together for the purpose of forming a united front against Alexander's aspirations. Though the Austrian as well as the Prussian Minister was determined to reach an understanding, it was a formidable task, for both of them lacked support in their respective countries. Hardenberg's position was hampered by Frederick William III, who showed himself too subservient to Alexander to impede the latter's ambitions, as well as by the Prussian generals, who were set on not only acquiring the whole of Saxony, but also Mainz. Regarding Metternich, he was, although reluctantly, prepared to let Prussia incorporate Saxony, but most Austrians, including Stadion and Schwarzenberg, opposed this, and even considered it to be a graver menace than surrendering Galicia to the Tsar. However, as Alexander had at Kalish arranged with Prussia for her incorporation of Saxony, it necessitated that Austria would also give her consent lest Prussia would hang on to the Tsar's side. Therefore, Metternich had, in spite of the prevalent sentiment in Austria as well as in the smaller German states against such a settlement, agreed to Prussia's claims already at the beginning of 1814 - though only verbally and quite grudgingly. Only through a painful endeavour could an agreement in form of a written warranty be reached: Hardenberg, for the time being, relinquished his demand of Mainz, while Metternich assented to a Prussian possession of Saxony, but stipulated that his approval depended on the success in restraining Alexander.²⁶⁵ He also included another condition, namely that the incorporation of the Saxon Kingdom ought not to produce a "disproportionate aggrandizement." Hardenberg, greedy for Austria's acquiescence, probably overlooked the true meaning and consequences of these stipulations. For Metternich truly lived up to his reputation of being a minister of finesse and trickery – if the Tsar could be restrained, Prussia would get her Polish lands back and make thus a Prussian incorporation of Saxony a "disproportionate aggrandizement." But if the Tsar could not be restrained, Prussia

²⁶³ NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 170; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 464.

²⁶⁴ Quoted in NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 170.

²⁶⁵ BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 139f; GRIEWANK: *Der Wiener Kongress und die Neuordnung Europas*, p. 176; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 170; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 344; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 466, 469f.

would also lose her right to Saxony, as the success of their undertaking was the precondition of Metternich's assent.²⁶⁶

At any rate, for the moment, the two German Powers were reconciled and now it was Metternich's turn to address the Tsar, among other things again suggesting the complete independence of Poland.²⁶⁷ Alexander's reaction was cursing at Metternich "with a pride and violence of language which would have been thought extraordinary even towards one of his own servants" as Talleyrand wrote in a letter to Paris.²⁶⁸ Though the Austrian Minister had grown used to fits of temper when dealing with Napoleon, Alexander's behaviour was apparently even too much for Metternich, who haggardly retreated. A couple of days later the relations between Metternich and Alexander reached another low, with the latter even menacing the Austrian Minister with a duel and refusing to talk to him for several weeks. Alexander also complained to his brother monarchs about their ministers. Though he failed to affect Francis, he succeeded with Frederick William, who now instructed Hardenberg to end the outrageous policy of ganging up on the Tsar. Though the issue wore on for a bit longer, with Hardenberg still trying to find a common understanding, it was to no avail. As Metternich had acquiesced in the incorporation of Saxony into Prussia only in the event that the Tsar could be restrained in his ambitions, the controversy was now to shift to the Saxon Kingdom. Given that Castlereagh had misjudged the state of affairs and his policy had turned out to be unsuccessful, it was naturally a trying time for the British Foreign Secretary. By 11 November he conceded that his strategy had not worked and that nothing more could be done to prevent Alexander from annexing most of Poland.²⁶⁹

Talleyrand described his British colleague as someone "who had lost his way" and thought it likely that Castlereagh would return to London.²⁷⁰ Indeed, the British government had assessed the situation better than Castlereagh had done.²⁷¹ Already in October Liverpool had warned Castlereagh that the matter of Poland "becomes a question of serious embarrassment, and it is very material that we should lose no character by the part we take in it. I am inclined

²⁶⁶ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 158, 160f.

²⁶⁷ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 159.

²⁶⁸ Quoted in NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 171.

²⁶⁹ BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 140; KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 159-162; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 337; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 172; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 361; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 471.

²⁷⁰ Quoted in WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 363.

²⁷¹ WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 361.

to think that the less we have to do with it, except as far as regards giving our opinion, the better.”²⁷² Castlereagh explained himself, stating that

“I should have wished that this species of discussion had fallen into more able hands, and especially that it could have been conducted by the minister of one of the Powers more immediately interested in the Polish question; but when I saw the service suffering from inaction, I found it difficult to be passive, and Your Lordship may be assured that England is still the only Power that either can, or dares, raise her voice against the powerful and the oppressor.”²⁷³

The Cabinet were, however, far from impressed by Castlereagh’s conduct for once because they naturally had to take British public opinion into account. True, the British public did not care much about any of the issues discussed at the Congress. Still, there was a widespread sympathy for the Poles, and a Polish Kingdom under the sovereignty of Alexander was believed preferable to the alternative of another partition, whereas a Prussian acquisition of Saxony was looked upon to be highly iniquitous. This attitude of worrying for a ‘legitimate’ sovereign was by the way regarded by Prussians as pure hypocrisy in view of Britain’s conduct in India, where one by one the ‘legitimate’ sovereigns had been deposed so Britain could establish her realm. At any rate, Castlereagh’s support for Prussia’s claims, which violated the rights of the poor Saxon King, as well as his objection to the Tsar’s most noble plans to establish an independent Polish State, were conceived by the British public as well as by the Opposition to be nothing but ignominious conduct. While the Opposition had been rather reticent in the first months of the year until the completion of the peace treaty, it viewed the inability of the statesmen at Vienna to reach an agreement as a superb opportunity to attack the Cabinet in Parliament. When intelligence was received in Britain about Castlereagh’s attitude towards the Saxon question, Whitbread instantly seized the moment to endorse the preservation of the King of Saxony and his lands²⁷⁴, claiming that “it was impossible to contend for an instant that this act of robbery had not been perpetrated in the very spirit of Buonaparté [sic!]” while Lambton called it “the acts of rapine and aggression of the club of confederated monarchs at Vienna, who appear to have met, not to watch over the interests of Europe, but as contemners [sic!] of public faith and justice, as the spoliators of Saxony and the oppressors of Norway.”²⁷⁵ On the Polish question, the Whigs strongly

²⁷² Liverpool to Castlereagh, 14 October 1814, B.D., p. 210.

²⁷³ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 5 November 1814, B.D., p. 223f.

²⁷⁴ GRIEWANK: *Der Wiener Kongress und die Neuordnung Europas*, p. 208; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 337; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 173, 175; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 464, 473.

²⁷⁵ Quoted in NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 183.

advocated Alexander's aspirations as a reinstatement of independence²⁷⁶, Whitbread stating that "the rumours are that the Emperor Alexander has strenuously contended for the independence of Poland and that he has been opposed in his benevolent views by the British Ministers." He further opined that "if the Emperor Alexander, beside the splendid triumphs he had gained, has added this fresh glory to his character, in what disadvantageous contrast must the Noble Lord appear who is resisting this plan of liberty and happiness."²⁷⁷

It was difficult for the ministers to defend the policy carried out at Vienna, especially because they did not share Castlereagh's view and were none too happy about his performance themselves. They hardly took an interest in continental matters and did not regard Alexander's Polish ambitions to be upsetting the balance of power, nor did they see any threat to their special interests. Thus, all the ministers could do in Parliament was to simply refuse to talk about the ongoing discussions at Vienna, while the Prime Minister repeatedly pointed out to Castlereagh the trouble the Cabinet was facing in the House of Commons and pleaded for a cautious *modus operandi*. The Government simply wished to avoid hassle and were therefore, naturally upset when they learned that their Foreign Minister did not hold back a bit, but instead had strongly intervened in the most intricate matters of Poland and Saxony.²⁷⁸ As Liverpool admitted to Wellington, "Lord Castlereagh has been substantially right in all his points; but I wish we had not been made so much *principals* in the Polish question."²⁷⁹ Repeatedly, the Prime Minister urged Castlereagh to change his conduct to a more reticent one, for he as well as most other ministers believed that

"we have done enough on this question of Poland, and that if our efforts should not have been successful, the time is now come when [...] it would be far better that we should withdraw ourselves from the question altogether, and reserve ourselves for points on which we have a more immediate and direct interest. I am the more strongly inclined to this opinion because I am fully persuaded, as I have already said, that no arrangement respecting Poland can now be either creditable or satisfactory. I think it very material that we should likewise consider that our war with America will probably now be of some duration. We owe it, therefore, to ourselves not to make enemies in other quarters if we can avoid it [...]."²⁸⁰

In this letter Liverpool had also enclosed a memorandum which Vansittart, the Minister of the Exchequer, had drawn up and which represented the opinion of most of the ministers. Vansittart opined that Poland would cause Alexander more trouble than good, also, as Minister

²⁷⁶ WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 473.

²⁷⁷ Quoted in NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 184.

²⁷⁸ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 338; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 464, 473.

²⁷⁹ Liverpool to Wellington, 26 November 1814, B.D., p. 246.

²⁸⁰ Liverpool to Castlereagh, 28 October 1814, B.D., p. 219f.

of the Exchequer, considered the economical advantage of an independent Poland, and concluded that Britain's representatives should stop antagonising the Tsar:

"I begin to apprehend that we are making ourselves too much principals in the disputes respecting Poland. The pretensions of Russia evidently endanger the security and independence of Austria and Prussia; but those Powers are at least wavering in their resistance, if not disposed to acquiesce, for the sake of securing objects still more interesting to them. We run the risk, therefore, of being disavowed, and represented abroad as actuated by a jealousy of the greatness of Russia, and at home as the advocates and instigators of a system of partition. [...] The Emperor, in accepting the crown of Poland, becomes bound to give the kingdom a constitution; and [...] he will infallibly cripple the powers of his government, and render the Poles much less manageable than when directly subjects of Russia. There is, besides, the greatest probability that in the course of one or two generations, at the utmost, the nominal independence of Poland would become real. A minority, or a weak reign, in Russia would bring about a separation which all the other Powers of Europe would be inclined to countenance. In the meantime, as far as British interests are concerned, I think the decision of the question of no great political importance to us either way; and that in a commercial point of view we should reap considerable advantage even from a nominal independence of Poland. Russia, from whatever cause, shows the strongest spirit or hostility against our trade; and nothing could so effectually defeat her restrictive regulations as the opening the ports of an adjoining kingdom, in which, even if similar prohibitions were nominally imposed, they would be constantly evaded. It is, indeed, well known that [...] large quantities of British goods, prohibited in Russia, always found their way there through the Polish ports [...]. These ideas [...] lead me to this practical conclusion, that though we were bound to support to a certain extent the endeavours of Austria and Prussia to prevent the extension of a dominion dangerous to their independence, yet that we have now fully performed all that could be expected from us, and that we ought to avoid irritating Russia by a pertinacious opposition which is so unlikely to be successful."²⁸¹

Castlereagh was, therefore, well aware that his policy on the Polish-Saxon question had been all but popular in Britain, but he had already expected that a conflict of the German Powers would ensue in the event of Alexander's plan not being averted and he vindicated his conduct by opining that Poland, no matter how distant it might be, would still influence British interest, for all security would derive from a general peaceful reconstruction.²⁸²

"I deemed it of great importance to contribute as far as depended upon me, to this concert: considering the establishment of Russia in the heart of Germany not only as constituting a great danger in itself, but as calculated to establish a most pernicious influence both in the Austrian and Prussian Cabinets; and I also foresaw, that if these two Powers, from distrust of each other, gave up the Polish point as desperate, the contest in negotiation would then turn upon Saxony, Mayence and other German points, and through the contentions of Austria and Prussia, the supremacy of Russia would be established in all directions, and upon every question; whereas an

²⁸¹ Memorandum, B.D., p. 220f.

²⁸² WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 471.

understanding previously established on German affairs, gave some chance of ameliorating the Polish arrangement, and, in case of its failure, afforded the best, if not the only means of counteracting the Russian influence in the other European arrangements, [...] Your Lordship may rest assured that no effort on my part shall be omitted to prevent disunion, and still more, war; but I am confident I speak the universal sentiment, when I declare my perfect conviction, that unless the Emperor of Russia can be brought to a more moderate and sound course of public conduct, the peace, which we have so dearly purchased, will be but of short duration.”²⁸³

The war threats left the Government gravely distressed; Liverpool pointed out that Britain was still engaged in a war with the United States and had to bear the burden of having an immense debt. And intelligence from France was received according to which the Bourbons as well as Wellington were subjected to endangerment.²⁸⁴ What scared Liverpool the most was the thought that a new war now might be of revolutionary nature:

“It may be quite true that if the Emperor of Russia does not relax in his present demands, the peace of Europe may not be of long continuance; but for however short a time that peace may last, I should consider it of great advantage. In the course of two or three years it may reasonably be expected that the power of Louis XVIII. in France will be consolidated, and that the revolutionary spirit which still exists to such an alarming degree in that country will in a great measure have evaporated. The people will have returned to peaceful habits, and the landed and moneyed interests will feel their fate connected with that of the restored government. In two, or three years likewise the Prince of Orange will, I trust, have been enabled firmly to establish his authority in the Low Countries, will have raised an army for the defence of his dominions, and have made some progress in erecting a barrier against his neighbours. But if war should be renewed at present, I fear that we should lose all we have gained, that the revolutionary spirit would break forth again in full force, and that the Continent would be plunged in all the evils under which it has groaned for the last twenty years. A war now, therefore, may be a revolutionary war. A war some time hence, though an evil, need not be different in its character and its effects from any of those wars which occurred in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, before the commencement of the French Revolution.”²⁸⁵

Castlereagh actually entertained similar anxieties, but his strategy of how to obviate a war and therewith the potential resurrection of revolutionary forces was different.²⁸⁶ In a letter he warned Liverpool that

“[...] you must make up your mind to watch him, and to resist him if necessary as another Buonaparte [sic!] [...] acquiescence will not keep him back, nor will opposition accelerate his march. His Imperial Majesty is never more condescending than to those who speak plainly but respectfully to him; and if I were to speculate on the course most likely to save your money, and to give you the longest interval of peace with such a character, I should say that it would lie in never suffering him for a

²⁸³ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 11 November 1814, B.D., p. 231, 233.

²⁸⁴ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 338; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 358.

²⁸⁵ Liverpool to Castlereagh, 25 November 1814, B.D., 244f.

²⁸⁶ BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 137f.

moment to doubt your readiness to support the continental Powers against his ambitious encroachments. [...] With such a personage at the head of between forty and fifty millions of people prone to, and adapted to war, you cannot afford to dissolve your continental relations, unless you are prepared to acquiesce in a domination that would very soon assume the character of that from which we have escaped, and would certainly not degenerate from it in a disposition to circumscribe the power of Great Britain.”²⁸⁷

As the reports from Vienna grew more and more alarming, Bathurst, the Minister of War and Colonies, explicitly ordered Castlereagh on 27 November that under no circumstances should Britain be implicated in a new war “for any of the objects which have been hitherto under discussion at Vienna.”²⁸⁸ These instructions, the only significant ones that Castlereagh received during his stay in Vienna, however, did not yield the sought after result, as the addressee turned out to disregard the letter. Instead, Castlereagh set the warnings at nought and perpetuated his interference, believing only by taking a holding he could try to prevent disruption. Still, as it was learned at the Congress that the British Cabinet did not really sanction Castlereagh’s policy, his position was considerably weakened at this critical time. For, as Castlereagh received these instructions, the statesmen were fiercely disputing the Saxon question.²⁸⁹

Since November 1814, Prussia was already in possession, because the Russians, seeing in it a possibility to further increase the dissensions dividing Austria and Prussia, consigned to the latter the administration of the Saxon Kingdom. However, as Metternich had only agreed to Prussia’s annexation provided that Alexander could be restrained, he now retracted his assent. In December he announced to the Prussians that he would only give his consent to an annexation of a territory, which was home to merely one-fifth out of Saxony’s 2.2 million inhabitants, leaving Hardenberg fuming. Completely distressed, the Prussian Chancellor turned to Alexander and showed him some of Metternich’s correspondence, composed right in the middle of the Polish crisis, which led to brutal disputes, but in the end did more damage to Hardenberg than to Metternich, for it prompted the latter to do the same.²⁹⁰

At any rate, in answer to Metternich’s proposal Hardenberg suggested on 20 December to compensate the Saxon King with territory on the left bank of the Rhine, while Prussia would

²⁸⁷ Quoted in MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 336.

²⁸⁸ Bathurst to Castlereagh, 27 November 1814, B.D., p. 248.

²⁸⁹ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 338; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p.176; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 473f, 477.

²⁹⁰ GRIEWANK: *Der Wiener Kongress und die Neuordnung Europas*, p. 181; KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 162, 166; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 338f; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 474.

annex his old kingdom. This suggestion was, however, flatly refused by both Metternich and Castlereagh, by the latter out of fear of the predictable influence France would have on this new kingdom, and by the former because he did not want Leipzig and Dresden to fall to Prussia. The positions had become so entrenched that negotiations led nowhere and thus disembogued into a standstill. Meanwhile, however, the relations of the Powers had undergone an immense change. Prussia had moved towards Russia, whereas Austria's stance was endorsed by nearly all smaller states in Germany - as well as France. The state of affairs exacerbated until the disputants were not only speaking of war, but also made arrangements for the impending hostilities.²⁹¹ Castlereagh pointed out to Liverpool that, if a war would ensue, it would be sooner rather than later in view of the large armies all across Europe:

“[...]if we cannot agree upon some general system, the most likely case to occur is that of hostilities; and where all are armed, and none can long support the burthen of their existing establishments, the chances are that the warfare will be early and general. Take the case of Russia and Prussia: if they are determined to make common cause on their respective objects, and cannot succeed in prevailing upon the other Powers to acquiesce in their demands, it will not suit the exhausted finances of Prussia to remain long armed and inactive; nor can Russia expose herself indefinitely to the incumbrance of large armies remaining unemployed beyond or on the verge of her own frontier. I think the probability therefore is, that one or both of these Powers, if they do not relax in their pretensions, will provoke rather than procrastinate the war.”²⁹²

Truly, there was hardly anyone who questioned the possibility of an immediate outbreak of war in this climate bursting with tension. Talleyrand, on 23 December, seized this critical moment to suggest an alliance between France, Great Britain, and Austria.²⁹³

19. THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE

All along, Talleyrand had tried to interfere in the negotiations, to disrupt the alliance of the Four Powers and had laughed up his sleeve in view of their quarrel, on which he naturally had attempted to capitalise. Still, he had up to now been mostly unsuccessful, but as the Four Powers now turned out to be unable to reach an agreement, Talleyrand's chance had come: for France was needed again.²⁹⁴

²⁹¹ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 141; KISSINGER: A World Restored, p. 162f; MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 339; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 356f.

²⁹² Castlereagh to Liverpool, 5 December 1814, B.D., p. 252.

²⁹³ NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity, p. 177; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 368.

²⁹⁴ KISSINGER: A World Restored, p. 148, 156, 166; MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 339.

Talleyrand advocated the case of the King of Saxony on grounds of legitimacy, and by promoting legitimate sovereigns he also aimed at revitalising and strengthening the restored French dynasty. Additionally, he intended to utilise this reasoning to pave the way for deposing Murat from the Neapolitan throne. Therefore, his argument was obviously a mere means to achieve his own objects. Still, the diplomats at the Congress could not disregard the principle of legitimacy – after all, Europe had been at war more or less for the past two decades to fight a usurper who had reigned by employing anguish and power. Talleyrand also aspired to reintegrate France into the ranks of the Great Powers, and, by making use of the discord between the two German powers, to regain sway over the German and Italian states. By aligning France with Great Britain and Austria, Talleyrand had found an ideal way to further fuel the conflict of the Central Powers, which, in all likelihood, would restore France's influence in Italy as well as Germany, and which, moreover, as one possible consequence, could effectuate that Britain had to stay engaged in the Continent and, therefore, be unable to properly attend to her colonies. The different attitude towards the question of Saxony had, up till now, prevented a closer connection between Castlereagh and Talleyrand. For a while the French Foreign Minister had been completely against Prussia's claim to Saxony, and Castlereagh had supported it. As the latter's strategy on the Polish question had proved unfruitful, and his Austrian colleague had retracted his assent to the incorporation of the Saxon Kingdom into Prussia, Castlereagh had, however, to take up a stance on the new situation. In the beginning of December he told Hardenberg that he was on Austria's side and that his position was supported by his Cabinet, for, as we have seen, public opinion in Great Britain was such as to oppose the entire erasure of the Saxon kingdom. Though Castlereagh still tried to refrain from officially allying with France, the shift in his policy rendered it possible for Great Britain and France to draw closer.²⁹⁵ Another reason for the Powers to draw closer might be found in Liverpool's less than flattering perception of the other Great Powers, which he exposed in a letter to Wellington:

“The more I hear and see of the different Courts of Europe, the more convinced I am that the King of France is (amongst the great Powers) the only Sovereign in whom we can have any real confidence. The Emperor of Russia is profligate from vanity and self-sufficiency, if not from principle. The King of Prussia may be a well-meaning man, but he is the dupe of the Emperor of Russia. The Emperor of Austria I believe to be an honest man, but he has a Minister in whom no one can trust; who considers all policy as consisting in finesse and trick; and who has got his government and himself

²⁹⁵ GRIEWANK: *Der Wiener Kongress und die Neuordnung Europas*, p. 190; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 529-531; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 364f, 368; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 474f.

into more difficulties by his devices than could have occurred from a plain course of dealing.”²⁹⁶

Indeed, ever since the reinstatement of the Bourbons and the Treaty of Paris France had appeared as a possible ally, but only as the threat from the East was becoming more menacing than that of France, Talleyrand was to get his chance to partake in the discussions. Metternich in fact had already drawn nearer to Talleyrand ever since the relations between Austria and Prussia had begun to deteriorate and had meanwhile established quite intimate relations; Castlereagh also now moved closer to his French colleague. Through their support Talleyrand was finally to be admitted to the inner council.²⁹⁷

As the protest against Alexander's aspirations had ebbed away, he desired to acquire a formal agreement about Poland. In the ensuing conference end of December the interlinked issue of Saxony's fate naturally also had to be subject to the negotiations. The Russians had to sustain Prussia's claims, but Alexander's succour was quite unsteady - his own objects in Poland seemed to be achieved, hence he was naturally disinclined to be drawn into hostilities because of the Saxon Kingdom. At the meeting Castlereagh and Metternich now rejected discussions unless the French delegate would also be admitted access to the inner council. Given Talleyrand's stance on the Saxon question, Hardenberg refused and inconsiderately dared to announce that Prussia would view a rejection of her claim to Saxony as a declaration of war, which gave Castlereagh the necessary excuse to act – he drew up a secret treaty of alliance between Britain, France and Austria, which was signed on 3 January, 1815.²⁹⁸

The character of the Triple Alliance was defensive, the conditions being quite similar to those of the Treaty of Chaumont. Each of the three Powers engaged herself to furnish 150,000 troops. An article committed France to accept the Treaty of Paris and another one provided that an assault upon the Netherlands or Hanover should be treated as tantamount to an assault upon Britain. Furthermore, these two northern powers as well as Bavaria also joined the alliance. Talleyrand was obviously keen on concluding the treaty. Only months ago an alliance with France would have produced an outburst; now, however, it was welcomed as a means to protect the balance of power. The conclusion of the Treaty meant nothing less than

²⁹⁶ Quoted in MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 338.

²⁹⁷ GRIEWANK: *Der Wiener Kongress und die Neuordnung Europas*, p. 191f; KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 143, 148; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 479.

²⁹⁸ BARTLETT: *Castlereagh*, p. 141; GRIEWANK: *Der Wiener Kongress und die Neuordnung Europas*, p. 196; KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 167; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 369f; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 479.

that France had managed to break open her chains of isolation.²⁹⁹ Exultingly, Talleyrand reported to his King that “the Coalition is dissolved, France is no longer isolated in Europe.”³⁰⁰

Seeing as the Cabinet had instructed Castlereagh not to engage Britain in hostilities and instead put all efforts into the maintenance of peace, Castlereagh’s decision to align Great Britain with Austria and France was a daring deed. For, in case Prussia insisted on acquiring all of Saxony and war ensued, Britain would inevitably have to participate. The Foreign Secretary was convinced that, in the event of hostilities, Great Britain would anyway be drawn in sooner or later. By concluding the Treaty, he was at least able to make sure that France accepted her borders, and therewith guarded the damageable western frontier of the Netherlands. One factor that probably eased his decision to conclude the Triple Alliance was the intelligence he had providentially received on 1 January: The war between Great Britain and the United States of America had come to an end, which meant that Great Britain could again draw on all her resources and rendered it possible³⁰¹, as Castlereagh put it, that “[...] by the Spring we can have a very nice army on the Continent.”³⁰² No wonder, therefore, that the news made a great impression at the Congress and obviously also at London. This good news as well as that, according to the treaty, France had to adhere to the conditions enacted at Paris helped to gain the Cabinet’s acceptance for Castlereagh’s rash action. By reason of Castlereagh having confronted the Government with a *fait accompli* there was not much the ministers could do anyway. Disavowing the alliance would not only harm the reputation of the Foreign Minister but also leave a blot on Great Britain’s trustworthiness. As it turned out, the completion of the Triple Alliance did not cause too much reluctance, only that, after Talleyrand and Metternich had done most preliminary planning, Castlereagh had in the end taken the lead in forging the alliance was a matter of lament. Liverpool, however, acknowledged that Britain would eventually be drawn into hostilities if such broke out on the Continent and was, indeed, satisfied to be aligned with France, still considering her to pose a more severe danger than Russia.³⁰³

²⁹⁹ GRIEWANK: Der Wiener Kongress und die Neuordnung Europas, p. 199; KISSINGER: A World Restored, p.168; NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity, p. 178; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 370; WEBSTER: The Pacification of Europe, p. 479.

³⁰⁰ Quoted in NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity, p. 178.

³⁰¹ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 141f; MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 341; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 371; WEBSTER: The Pacification of Europe, p. 480.

³⁰² Quoted in WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 371.

³⁰³ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 141f; MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 341; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 372; WEBSTER: The Pacification of Europe, p. 477.

However pleased Liverpool might have been about the connection with France, one point of the treaty of alliance, namely that it engaged every one of the three Powers – including France - to furnish an army of 150,000 men is more than astonishing. Were the French troops seriously prepared to align themselves with the Austrians and the British in a common battle? Even given that they were, would they not have posed a danger to the re-established monarch? And would Austria and Great Britain have truly been bold enough to allow the presence of French forces all over Europe yet again? Besides, how would France have raised the necessary financial means? They could hardly have counted on Great Britain – the Prime Minister was not even prepared to fund Austria – it is hardly imaginable that Parliament would have voted in favour of financial support of the former enemy. France, however, was not the only one to meet difficulties in the event of renewed warfare. While Britain was longing for peace, Austria was engaged in Italian questions and could have hardly wished for a war, which would have left her, at least initially, pretty much on her own struggling against both Russia and Prussia, whose armies were stationed quite close. Thus, the conclusion of the Triple Alliance can indeed be seen as being a mere bluff - but a well targeted one, which rendered it possible to expose the war threats as being not much more than a deception. The Tsar knew full well that his army was eager to go back to Russia and was far from inclined to start a war for the purpose of Saxony, and Prussia, as the most infirm of the Great Powers, could not have taken up arms on her own.³⁰⁴

Although the treaty was secret, it became known that Britain, Austria and France had forged an alliance and before long the threat of renewed hostilities ebbed away³⁰⁵, which rendered it possible for Castlereagh to set his Cabinet at ease, stating on 5 January that “the alarm of war is over.”³⁰⁶ Hardenberg gave in and agreed to Prussia only acquiring a part of Saxony, and Talleyrand was now being admitted to the negotiations. It was in the Committee of Five that in the next few weeks the fate of Europe was decided. Even when Napoleon returned, Talleyrand stayed a member of the Committee, though his authority was naturally diminished.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁴ GRIEWANK: *Der Wiener Kongress und die Neuordnung Europas*, p. 199f; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 178f; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 530f, 535.

³⁰⁵ NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 179; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 372.

³⁰⁶ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 5 January 1815, B.D., p. 282.

³⁰⁷ GRIEWANK: *Der Wiener Kongress und die Neuordnung Europas*, p. 200f; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 373f.

Although the threat of war had passed, the undertaking of producing a settlement, which both Hardenberg as well as Metternich could agree to, still remained and was to take five more weeks. Since the latter as well as Talleyrand aimed to capitalise their success and leave Prussia only a fiddling part of Saxony, Castlereagh was again needed as an intermediary. What the British Foreign Minister strived for was not to conserve all of Saxony, but to reach an understanding between Austria and Prussia, which would render it possible to get the latter out of Russian control and allow the two German powers to draw near again. Castlereagh was under considerable strain, since the Prime Minister urged him to return to London as soon as possible, where he was supposed to defend the Government's policy in the House of Commons. After all, he was the Leader of the House of Commons, and as the condition in the House grew ever more alarming, the Cabinet could not do without Castlereagh anymore. Parliament apparently addressed more importance to the question of decreasing the amount of spending than to the discussions at Vienna,³⁰⁸ as Liverpool told Castlereagh:

“I can assure you that I feel, in common with my colleagues, the greatest reluctance in proposing to you to withdraw at this moment from Vienna. Last year we could spare you: every thing was quiet in Parliament-every body waiting for the result-and no symptom of party-spirit appeared. Now, very few persons give themselves any anxiety about what is passing at Vienna, except in as far as it is connected with expense [...].”³⁰⁹

As Wellington had agreed to take over at Vienna, Liverpool, underestimating the significance of Castlereagh's presence at the Congress, did not see any reason why the latter should not return immediately. Castlereagh, however, preferred to apply himself to the European settlement and rejected coming back.³¹⁰ Already in the beginning of January he had written to Liverpool:

“In the present state of the negotiation, I feel myself bound to urge that I should not be withdrawn from hence at least till the important discussions now pending are closed. With every deference to the Duke of Wellington's ability and great personal authority, he cannot at once replace me in the habits of confidential intercourse which a long residence with the principal actors has established, and which gives facilities to my intervention to bring them together, which could not attach to another for a length of time, whereas the fate of Europe may depend on the conclusions of the ensuing month.”³¹¹

End of January Castlereagh also appealed to Bathurst:

³⁰⁸ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 143; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 359, 374f; WEBSTER: The Pacification of Europe, p. 475, 481.

³⁰⁹ Liverpool to Castlereagh, 16 January 1815, C.C. X, p. 241.

³¹⁰ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 143; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 365, 374f.

³¹¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 4 January 1815, B.D., p. 281.

“You may rely upon my joining you as soon as I can, without essentially endangering the point immediately at issue; but you might as well expect me to have run away from Leipsick [sic!] (if I had been there) last year [...] and I think you do both injustice to your own supporters, and too much honour to me, in supposing my presence so necessary.”³¹²

There were still some diplomatic battles - one point of dispute was, for instance, the number of souls living in the areas in question. Upon Castlereagh's suggestion, a Commission dealing with these statistical issues was established. The fortresses of Torgau and Erfurt and even more, Leipzig were still subject to quarrels. While Castlereagh, who after all aspired to create a strong Prussia, supported Hardenberg's claim to Torgau and Erfurt, Alexander also endeavoured to render an agreement possible. As his aspirations did not meet any objections anymore, the Tsar now behaved increasingly placatory. He had already, in an interview with Emperor Francis, agreed to cede the Tarnopol district – an Austrian possession until 1809 – to Austria, and now he ceded Thorn to Prussia, therewith rendering it possible for Hardenberg to abandon Prussia's claims to Leipzig. Castlereagh, who might have been anxious that the Netherlands would be too extended and consequently would not depend so much on Great Britain anymore, also arranged for the Low Countries and Hanover to cede areas with a population of 50,000 each to Prussia, so as to make it a bit easier for the latter to come to terms with not acquiring all of Saxony.³¹³

Finally, on 11 February the Polish-Saxon question was settled. The Tsar had won the diplomatic battle and acquired the bulk of the Duchy of Warsaw, but at least Cracow was made an autonomous town, while the district of Galicia was left to Austria and the district of Posen to Prussia. The remainder was proclaimed Kingdom of Poland under Alexander's sovereignty – Alexander therewith acquired the title of 'King of Poland' in addition to his Imperial one. Furthermore, it was agreed that Prussia would acquire half of Saxony (including Torgau and Erfurt) with two-fifths of its total population as well as land on the left bank of the Rhine with over one million souls. The Prince of Orange, who had just been made King William of the Netherlands, also acquired Luxemburg (as indemnity for his hereditary lands, which he had ceded to Prussia). More significant than the concrete particulars of the settlement was, however, that it enabled the German powers to draw near again. Castlereagh

³¹² Castlereagh to Bathurst, 30 January 1815, C.C. X, p. 247f.

³¹³ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 144; GRIEWANK: Der Wiener Kongress und die Neuordnung Europas, p. 201, 205-207; WEBSTER: The Congress of Vienna, p. 117; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 355, 362f, 368; WEBSTER: The Pacification of Europe, p. 482.

had every reason to be quite content, for, as Pitt already had wished, Prussia had now become a Power that bordered France and was able to guard the Low Countries.³¹⁴

20. CASTLEREAGH'S RETURN AND EVALUATION

As the powers had finally come to an agreement regarding the tricky questions, and Wellington had reached Vienna to take his place, Castlereagh in mid-February was ready to go back to London. As we have seen, he was badly needed to resume his position in the House of Commons for the Opposition, though on many occasions discordant themselves, endeavoured to decry the Cabinet's accomplishments and to criticise the current course of actions.³¹⁵ As Liverpool expressed in a letter to Wellington in January:

“I can assure you that I have not known for some years such party spirit and rancour as exist at present. The restoration of general peace, though it may relieve the country of great difficulties, does not make the government more easy to be conducted in the House of Commons. During a war so eventful as the last, all minor questions, however subordinate, will create a conflict, and if the Government in the House of Commons should lose credit, and be considered as beat in debate before Castlereagh returns, it will be no easy matter for him or for any man to recover the ground which has been lost.”³¹⁶

Castlereagh's accomplishments at the Congress were subject to little appreciation, even among the Ministry. True, Castlereagh had completely misjudged the Polish issue,³¹⁷ and Muir opines that “Liverpool's judgement on the great questions of policy may have been equal or superior to Castlereagh's, and he certainly appreciated the domestic constraints on British action far better; but neither he, nor any of the other ministers, nor even Wellington, could have represented Britain as forcefully and skilfully in the negotiations.”³¹⁸ Indeed, credit must be given to Castlereagh's audacity for being willing to operate devoid of first awaiting instructions from home and the fact that, while Britain two years previously was hardly admitted a voice in the negotiations, she now was a part and parcel of conferences. That Castlereagh had managed to bring into being so many of the points Pitt had drawn up

³¹⁴ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 144; GRIEWANK: Der Wiener Kongress und die Neuordnung Europas, p. 185, 202f, 207, 212; NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity, p. 179; WEBSTER: The Congress of Vienna, p. 121; WEBSTER: The Pacification of Europe, p. 482.

³¹⁵ MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 340f; NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity, p. 181, 183.

³¹⁶ Quoted in NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity, p. 181.

³¹⁷ MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 341f.

³¹⁸ MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 342.

rendered it possible for him to table Pitt's paper in Parliament as vindication of his conduct of the past three years. The actual outcome of the Congress concerning the Polish-Saxon question was advantageous for Castlereagh's standing, but he was criticised for Genoa and, as will be seen later, for Naples.³¹⁹ Buckingham called the arrangement of incorporating Genoa into Sardinia-Piedmont "foul and disgraceful," Grey condemned it as a matter of "treachery and fraud,"³²⁰ but Castlereagh pointed out that Bentinck had acted without the slightest authorisation when he, in April 1814, had pledged the Genoese their independence³²¹ and he further opined that "the Congress of Vienna was not assembled for the discussion of moral principles, but for great practical purposes, to establish effectual provisions for the general security" and for this great purpose the incorporation of the old Republic into Sardinia-Piedmont had simply been inevitable.³²² This is just another aspect that shows that Castlereagh's policy had always been to "make the establishment of a just equilibrium in Europe the first object of my attention, and to consider the assertion of minor points of interest as subordinate to this great end."³²³

When Wellington took over at Vienna, the most crucial matters had already been decided, but there were still other tasks, like the settlement of Italy or the establishment of the German Federation. However, Britain's representative did not play a decisive part in any of these discussions, for his attention was soon centred on one thing and one thing only: Napoleon had escaped from Elba.³²⁴

³¹⁹ BARTLETT: Castlereagh, p. 142; MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 342; NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity, p. 185; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 57; WEBSTER: The Pacification of Europe, p. 477.

³²⁰ Quoted in NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity, p. 187f.

³²¹ NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity, p. 186f.

³²² Quoted in NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity, p. 187.

³²³ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 11 November 1814, B.D., p. 232.

³²⁴ MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 344; WEBSTER: The Pacification of Europe, p. 492.

VI. THE HUNDRED DAYS

21. NAPOLEON'S RENEWED SEIZURE OF POWER

It was in the morning hours of 7 March that intelligence of Napoleon's escape found its way to Vienna. Metternich, who was the first to learn of the dreadful incident, recalled in his memoirs:

"A conference between the Plenipotentiaries of the five Powers took place in my house on the night of March 6, and lasted till three o'clock in the morning. Since the Cabinets had met in Vienna, I had given my servant orders that if a courier arrived at night he was not to awake me. In spite of this order, the servant brought me at six o'clock in the morning a despatch, sent by courier, and marked *urgent*. When I saw on the envelope the words "from the Consul general in Genoa," having been only two hours in bed, I laid the despatch unopened on the nearest table, and turned round again to sleep. Once disturbed, however, sleep would not come again. About half past seven I resolved to open the despatch. It contained the information in six lines: "The English Commissary, Campbell, has just appeared in the harbour, to inquire whether Napoleon had been seen in Genoa, as he has disappeared from the island of Elba; this question being answered in the negative, the English ship has again put out to sea." I was dressed in a few minutes, and before eight o'clock I was with the Emperor. He read the despatch, and said to me quietly and calmly, as he always did on great occasions: "Napoleon seems to wish to play adventurer: that is his concern; ours is to secure to the world that peace which he has disturbed for years. Go without delay to the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, and tell them that I am ready to order my army to march back to France. I do not doubt but that both monarchs will agree with me." At quarter-past eight I was with the Emperor Alexander, who dismissed me with the same words as the Emperor Francis had used. At half-past eight I received a similar declaration from the mouth of King Frederic William III. At nine o'clock I was at my house again, where I had directed Field-Marshal Prince Schwarzenberg to meet me. At ten o'clock the ministers of the four Powers came at my request. At the same time adjutants were already on their way, in all directions, to order the armies to halt who were returning home. Thus war was decided on in less than an hour."³²⁵

Yet it was still subject to speculation where Napoleon was going. Only four days later it became known that the fallen Emperor was back in France.³²⁶

³²⁵ METTERNICH: *Memoires*, p. 159f.

³²⁶ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 344.

Napoleon, in spite of allied remonstrations addressed to Talleyrand, had never received the pension from France he was entitled to according to the Treaty of Fontainebleau. Moreover, he had also heard rumours that he might be deported to a more distant location than Elba. True, relocating Napoleon had been mentioned at Vienna, but not earnestly, as the Tsar unlikely would have allowed a breach of the Treaty of Fontainebleau, which he had arranged. More than these rumours or the fact that he did not receive his pension, the major cause for Napoleon's comeback was his unquenched ambition. The whole Continent had trembled before him, and he could simply not resign himself to the fact that his sovereignty was now confined to a small island of merely 12,000 inhabitants and a force of 1,200. Being informed of the conflicts of the Allies at the Congress as well as of the state of dissatisfaction that prevailed in France - Louis XVIII showed himself incompetent, was therefore not exactly popular, and especially the French forces were strongly restive - Napoleon intended to seize the opportunity to ruthlessly capitalise France's unhappiness to get his position back and departed from Elba on 26 February, 1815. He anticipated to soon gain followers, and in this he was not to be disappointed: when he disembarked on 1 March near Cannes he was received warmly.³²⁷

The threat of rupture at Vienna had, however, by now blown over and there was never the slightest hesitancy over the question of whether to fight Napoleon or not. United in their wish to oust Napoleon, the Allies again moved closer to each other and on 13 March the Eight (Great Britain, Russia, Prussia, Austria, France, Spain, Portugal, and Sweden) announced that Napoleon was considered a subversive. At the same time they assured the Bourbons of their aid in dealing with Napoleon.³²⁸ Wellington showed himself quite pleased, telling Castlereagh:

"I do not entertain the smallest doubt that, even if Buonaparte [sic!] should be able to form a party for himself in France, capable of making head against the legitimate Government of that country, such a force will be assembled by the Powers of Europe, directed by such a spirit in their councils, as must get the better of him. [...] Upon the whole, I assure your Lordship that I am perfectly satisfied with the spirit which prevails here upon this occasion; and I do not entertain the smallest doubt that, if unfortunately it should be possible for Buonaparte [sic!] to hold at all against the King

³²⁷ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 343f; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 225f; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 549f; WEBSTER: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 136; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 437-439; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 501.

³²⁸ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 176; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 345; WEBSTER: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 136; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 440f.

of France, he must fall under the cordially united efforts of the Sovereigns of Europe.”³²⁹ Louis, coping on his own, was nevertheless much more desirable.³³⁰ Wellington thought this actually quite likely, stating that, “it is my opinion that Buonaparte [sic!] has acted upon false or no information, and that the King will destroy him without difficulty, and in a short time.” More guardedly, however, the Duke went on that, “if he does not, the affair will be a serious one, and a great and immediate effort must be made, which will doubtless be successful.”³³¹ By mid-March, however, it was perceivable that Louis XVIII would not be able to manage. Upon the receipt of the despatch carrying the report of Napoleon’s return, Louis XIII, despite being aware that the reliability of the French army was quite dubious, could do naught but send out a force and hope for the best. But these hopes were shattered as Ney, who had been sent out against Napoleon, instead of fulfilling his mission, went over to the latter’s side.³³² This prompted Napoleon to mischievously inform Louis XVIII: “My good brother, there is no need to send any more troops – I have enough.”³³³ Indeed, within the French forces, there were many who vigorously supported Bonaparte. Nonetheless, this could not be said about all of the French. The problem was, however, that the French were not that keen on King Louis XVIII either, to be induced to take any actions against Napoleon.³³⁴ This was also observed by Castlereagh, who in a letter to Wellington opined:

The great question is, can the Bourbons get Frenchmen to fight for them against Frenchmen? If they can, Europe may soon turn the tide in their favour; and, the process of fermentation once begun, they may create real partisans, instead of criers of *Vive le Roi!* and doers of nothing.”³³⁵

Anyway, as it was, Louis felt impelled to leave Paris, while Napoleon, only hours later, arrived at the city on 20 March. There was hardly any resistance in France towards Bonaparte’s resumption of power; his sovereignty was, however, even in France anything but stable. Over and above, his sovereignty could only last if the Continent tolerated his rule. Therefore, Napoleon endeavoured to be on his best behaviour and purported, in letters despatched to Vienna as well as London, to desire peace, even assuring the Allies that he acknowledged the Treaty of Paris. Moreover, he attempted to disunite the Allies by every means. He appealed to the Austrian Emperor, his father-in-law, and was infuriated when

³²⁹ Wellington to Castlereagh, 12 March 1815, W.D. XII (London 1838) Retrieved 30 April 2008 from <<http://www.archive.org/details/dukedispatches12welluoft>>, p. 266f.

³³⁰ MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 345.

³³¹ Wellington to Castlereagh, 12 March 1815, W.D. XII, p. 268; same also: B.D., p. 312f.

³³² MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 344-346.

³³³ Quoted in GATES: The Napoleonic Wars, p. 267.

³³⁴ MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 346.

³³⁵ Castlereagh to Wellington, 26 March 1815, C.C. X, p. 285.

Murat's conduct, as will be seen, rendered this futile. By immediately abandoning the slave trade he meant to appease British public opinion. And being aware that he could not hope to impress the Prussians, he sent an assuaging despatch to Alexander – together with proof of the secret Triple Alliance, which he had detected in an archive.³³⁶ Castlereagh had foreseen this and, although he had been quite optimistic that it would not produce poor effects, he had warned Wellington:

“It is to be presumed, in the hurry of their departure, the Foreign Office at Paris has not been stripped by the King's Ministers of any of its contents, and consequently that our Secret Treaty with France and Austria, as well as all Prince Talleyrand's correspondence will fall into Buonaparte's [sic!] hands. He will of course try to turn this to account [...]. I flatter myself, after all he [Alexander] knew long since, it cannot produce any unfavourable impression upon the Emperor of Russia's mind. He must feel assured that the whole grew out of differences now settled, and a most indiscreet declaration of Prince Hardenberg's. The treaty is, upon the face of it, purely defensive; and all our proceedings since have proved this beyond a doubt.”³³⁷

Castlereagh's assessment turned out to be right, for, although Alexander was for a moment quite angry, he did not change his course. He even wanted to be commander-in-chief of the revived alliance. Wellington was anything but impressed at this idea and had to dissuade him from doing so.³³⁸

Despite Napoleon's assertions of only having peace in mind, he made arrangements for renewed hostilities, rallying his troops by announcing revenge on the countries, which had invaded France the previous year. From the outset, he made an effort to persuade Murat to connive and endeavoured to win over some countries, such as the smaller German and Italian states or Switzerland, and additionally tried to induce other countries' servicemen to fight in the French army. All this proved that it was more than likely that Napoleon would fall back into his old pattern as soon as he had managed to cement his power. Therefore, it was clearly evident that his sovereignty would eventually lead to war. Yet his chances to again overturn Europe were as good as nil unless the Coalition would be dissolved or Britain would not pay subsidies to her Allies, who would consequently hardly be able to fight. Neither, however, occurred. On 25 March, the Treaty of Chaumont was revived and Wellington engaged Great Britain to again subsidise her Allies. Not believing that peace with Napoleon was possible and

³³⁶ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 176; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 346f; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 231; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 549; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 502.

³³⁷ Castlereagh to Wellington, 27 March 1815, C.C. X, p. 286f.

³³⁸ NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 232; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 502.

regarding the latter's protestations of peaceful intentions as a mere means to gain him time to strengthen his position, the Allies were firm in their determination to fight him. Already on 12 March the Allies had decided, if only for preventive purposes, on some military measures. As Murat was already eyed with mistrust, a force of 150,000 Austrians should be present in Italy, while on the Upper Rhine Austrians and Germans should form an army of 200,000 men. Nearly the same number of troops should assemble on the Lower Rhine, which was to be composed of a Prussian force under Blücher, and Wellington's army, consisting mostly of British, Hanoverian, Dutch, and Belgians. Furthermore, 200,000 Russians should congregate at Würzburg as reserves. Together with the other leading military personalities present at Vienna, Wellington established a scheme of action before he, in early April, put himself at the head of the troops in the Netherlands. Advantageous for Napoleon was, however, the fact that most of the soldiers who had fought on the Peninsular had not yet returned from America. Yet German and British troops were the only ones obtainable to enforce the small army in the Netherlands, as the Russians were still in Poland and the Austrians engaged in Italy. As it was, Europe had not even been completely reconstructed when it was thrown in hostilities yet again.³³⁹ Wellington, in a letter to Castlereagh, opined:

“It is the desire for war, particularly in the army, which has brought Buonaparte [sic!] back, and has formed for him any party, and has given him any success; and all my observations when at Paris convinced me that it was the King alone who kept Europe at peace, and that the danger which most immediately threatened His Majesty was to be attributed to his desire to maintain the peace, contrary to the wishes, not only of the army, but of the majority of his subjects, of some of his Ministers, and even of some of his family. Your Lordship will then judge what chance there is of maintaining the peace if Buonaparte [sic!] should be entirely successful, considering his disposition for war, adverting to the opinions he has delivered and entertains upon the peace, and to the necessity under which he labours to cultivate his popularity with the army, and to endeavour, at least, to flatter the vanity of the nation by military success. Depend upon it, my Lord, that if he succeeds in establishing himself we have no chance of peace, excepting by resigning all our conquests to the Rhine at least; and our chance then depends upon his moderation.”³⁴⁰

The Allies, at one with each other in their resolution to fight Napoleon, were, however, not so united where Louis XVIII was concerned. The Tsar again pointed to his aversion towards the Bourbons, yet he would not oppose the King's restoration if this was what the French desired. While he did not mind a regency under the Duc d'Orléans, no marshal - whether Soult, Eugène, or anyone else - should be able to succeed Napoleon. Alexander was also quite

³³⁹ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 176f; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 345, 347f; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 230; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 549-551; WEBSTER: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 136; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 502.

³⁴⁰ Wellington to Castlereagh, 26 March 1815, W.D. XII, p. 280.

anxious that the Austrians would demand a regency of Marie Louise, but Metternich was not keen on this option anyway. Despite the fact that Louis' sovereignty was clearly weak, he was still regarded by the British Ministry, as well as by Wellington, as being the best option. Indeed, in comparison with her Allies, Great Britain was doubtless most avid for the restoration of Louis XVIII. Yet, due to the commonly acknowledged attitude of not intervening in other countries' inner matters, the British government could not dare to declare the *casus belli* being a restoration of the Bourbons.³⁴¹ Thus, Castlereagh in Parliament even had to purport that his attitude was entirely neutral regarding France's inner affairs. As Castlereagh pointed out to Wellington:

“In inviting the King of France, more especially when out of France, to accede to the treaty, we deem it material to mark that the object of the alliance and concert is to destroy Buonaparte's [sic!] authority, and not to impose on France any particular Sovereign or form of government. We deem this declaration not less advantageous to the King's interests in France than to the maintenance of the contest in Parliament against Buonaparte [sic!].”³⁴²

Nevertheless, the Cabinet hurried to promise Louis that every endeavour would be made to support him. In a letter to Clancarty, Wellington's successor in Vienna, Castlereagh defined the Government's position regarding Louis XVIII:³⁴³

“His Majesty cannot wish us to feel more decisively the importance of his restoration than we do; and most assuredly every effort will be made so to conduct the war so as to lead to this result, but we cannot make it a *sine quá non*. Foreign Powers may justly covenant for the destruction of Buonaparte's [sic!] authority as inconsistent with their own safety, but it is another question avowedly to stipulate as to his successor. This is a Parliamentary delicacy.”³⁴⁴

Indeed, the ministers shared the conviction that Napoleon had to be overthrown and that Louis XVIII would be the best option as to the question of who was to rule France. Within the Opposition, however, opinions varied extremely. Grenville, who thought that a sovereignty of Napoleon would inevitably lead to hostilities, sided with the Cabinet, whereas Grey was of the opinion that, while Napoleon was displaying an irenic attitude, the Allies had no right to oust him; astonishingly this opinion was also shared by one of Wellington's brothers. At any rate, Grey endeavoured to not get too involved, for he did not want to cause a rupture with Grenville.³⁴⁵ Not so Whitbread, who was said to be “all for Boney,” because he insisted that

³⁴¹ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 178; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 348-350.

³⁴² Castlereagh to Wellington, 8 April 1815, C.C. X, p. 302.

³⁴³ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 345; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 448.

³⁴⁴ Castlereagh to Clancarty, 8 April 1815, C.C. X, p. 301.

³⁴⁵ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 350; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 232f.

the French were entitled to choose their own ruler. While some Whigs took up Whitbread's stance on that matter, most of them actually sided with the Cabinet. Wilberforce showed himself to be quite torn, recording subsequent to a parliamentary session in his diary: "I spoke ill, because indecisively, as indeed I felt in one sense; for my own judgement would be for treating with Buonaparte [sic!] if we were free: but we are so committed with the Allies, that we could not honestly separate from them, as agreeing to Whitbread's motion would substantially have been."³⁴⁶ At any rate, the Cabinet's decision to fight Napoleon was supported by most members of Parliament. Castlereagh, however, refrained from making the castigation of France, clamoured for by public opinion, an aim of the war. Instead, he proclaimed that Britain engaged herself in hostilities to fight the menace evoked by Napoleon's rule and aspired not to penalise France, but to reintroduce her into Europe. In other words, war was not made against France, but against Bonaparte. This corresponded with British public opinion insofar as the average Briton was not entirely disposed to make an effort for the re-establishment of Louis XVIII; he was, however, ready to incur a renewed struggle induced by the very odium that tainted Napoleon. In a way, Napoleon's return even facilitated Castlereagh's position in Parliament, for it overshadowed the arrangements agreed upon at the Congress. Therefore, various arrangements were only half-heartedly discussed in the Houses. Especially where Murat was concerned, Napoleon's renewed seizure of power eased Castlereagh's position.³⁴⁷

22. MURAT'S FALL FROM GRACE

As the Congress of Vienna had commenced in the fall, Metternich had succeeded in deferring the negotiation of Italian issues, arguing that the Polish-Saxon question ought to be settled primarily. The British Cabinet as well as the Prince Regent disfavoured Murat, but averred that it was not up to Britain to take any steps. Considering that it was Metternich who would have to deal with the question of Murat, Castlereagh did not want to tie himself down. From the outset, Castlereagh had tended to view Italy as an area of Austrian influence and therefore had adjusted his stance on Italian questions to that of Metternich. The treaty with Austria was Murat's only guarantee for his sovereignty over Naples, other than that he could not count on

³⁴⁶ Quoted in MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 350.

³⁴⁷ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 178; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 350; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 232f; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 437, 443f.

one single power to support him. Still, as Metternich supported Murat – whether this, as Nicolson seems to believe, had something to do with Metternich's brief affair with Queen Caroline (Murat's wife and Napoleon's sister) in 1806 or not – Castlereagh was far from inclined to take any steps to depose him. When Metternich changed his policy regarding Murat, so did Castlereagh.³⁴⁸

As the months passed by, Metternich had altered his stance on Murat's sovereignty over Naples, first on grounds of fearing that Murat would add fuel to national movements and thus make it more difficult for Austria to govern her northern Italian lands, and secondly because he had been eager for French support on the Polish-Saxon question, which he sought to achieve by a change of policy on the Neapolitan question, for Louis XVIII was known to aspire the reinstitution of the Sicilian Bourbons on the throne of Naples. In January 1815, it was secretly agreed that Murat should be deposed, while Louis promised Austria concessions in Italy. It was Castlereagh, who, stopping over at Paris in late February on his journey back to London, deputed for Metternich and attested the minutiae of the agreement. Therewith Murat's dethronement was arranged. The delicate issue, however, was of how to proceed without causing an open abuse of confidence. After all, though Murat's conduct in 1814 had not exactly enhanced his trustworthiness, it was not enough to justify a breach of the treaty. Moreover, Castlereagh had to pay attention to Parliament, where the Opposition endeavoured to utilise the question of Murat to decry the Cabinet. As the Opposition got hold of some letters between the British Foreign Minister and Bentinck, they accused Castlereagh of betrayal of confidence. But not all was known, and Castlereagh was naturally wary of revealing the collusion between France, Austria, and Great Britain. Instead, he circumspectly selected the evidence he laid before Parliament. While Murat could not be proved guilty of an abuse of confidence, it was at least attested that he had not fulfilled the terms stipulated in the peace treaty with Austria and under which Great Britain had been prompted to conclude a truce.³⁴⁹

It was Murat himself who, by his treachery upon Napoleon's return, not only supplied the long sought-after pretext and the sufficient excuse for his own dethronement, but also enabled Castlereagh and Metternich to veil their insidious deceit. Although Murat's representatives at

³⁴⁸ NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 188f, 192; SEWARD, Desmond: *Metternich, der Erste Europäer. Eine Biographie* (Zürich 1993), p. 60; WEBSTER: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 124; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 316f.

³⁴⁹ NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 192f; WEBSTER: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 125; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 398f; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 484, 489f.

Vienna and London proffered to engage Naples in the pending struggle with Napoleon on the side of the Allies, Murat, who was all too conscious that his position was in severe danger, decided to seize the opportunity to launch an offensive while the Allies were distracted by Bonaparte. Despite the fact that Napoleon had told him to wait, Murat, on 15 March, made a declaration of war, expecting to be able to attack flatfooted Austrians.³⁵⁰ Wellington was sure that “if we do not destroy Murat, and that immediately, he will save Buonaparte [sic!].”³⁵¹ However, Murat’s force of 40,000 men was of poor quality and his appeals to feelings of nationalism, telling Italians to rise, were unfruitful because, although they found some approval, they did not lead to reinforcements. The battle of Tolentino in early May ended in an overwhelming Austrian victory and Murat had to flee. Although Austria had proffered Murat habitation he declined, and instead, in early October, made a despairing and admittedly foolish effort to resume power in Naples. The Neapolitans welcomed him by throwing objects at him, and before long he was imprisoned and sentenced to death. After Murat’s defeat, the sovereignty of the Bourbons was re-established in Naples by Austrian troops, thus the Sicilian branch of the dynasty again ruled over the Two Sicilies. By a secret agreement with Austria, the restored monarch pledged that he would not grant the Constitution, which he had been pushed by the British to bestow on Sicily, to Naples.³⁵²

23. THE COMPLETION OF THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA

As for the Italian settlement decided upon at the Congress, Metternich without difficulty carried his point as Talleyrand’s authority was diminished due to Napoleon’s return. As we have seen, a secret article in the Treaty of Paris provided for the incorporation of Venetia and Lombardy into Austria. However, Metternich aspired to stretch Austria’s sway out over all of Italy. And he was successful - in the end only Sardinia-Piedmont, which, as already mentioned, gained Genoa, was not completely dominated by Austria. The Pope was restored to most of his territories, but did not regain enclaves such as Avignon. Parma had, according to the Treaty of Fontainebleau, been promised to Marie-Louise and her son, but Labrador, the

³⁵⁰ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 347; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 193; WEBSTER: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 126f; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 404f; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 488f.

³⁵¹ Wellington to Castlereagh, 5 April 1815, W.D. XII, p. 288.

³⁵² MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 347; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 193; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 405, 407; WEBSTER: *The Pacification of Europe*, p. 488f.

Spanish representative, backed up by Talleyrand, demanded the Duchy to devolve to the Infante Don Louis or his mother, the Queen of Etruria. An understanding was reached, according to which Marie Louise would rule over Parma, but her son would not inherit the Duchy. Tuscany went to an Austrian Arch-Duke and the rest was given to a loyal Austrian ally. Thus, Metternich had every reason to be pleased with these arrangements that provided for Austria to dominate Italy.³⁵³

In contrast to her strong position in the south, Austria, however, lost ground in the north as Prussia was now the dominating power in the northern part of the erstwhile Holy Roman Empire. Naturally the relinquishing of Austria's leading position within Germany caused disapproval. The strengthening of Prussia naturally provoked some solicitude on the part of Metternich, but unlike Talleyrand, he did not believe that it would eventually lead to Prussian control over all of Germany. The acquisitions Prussia made, indeed, largely exceeded the significance of the Polish lands she relinquished. This settlement mostly arose out of Castlereagh's persistency; if not for him, Metternich and Talleyrand surely would not have allowed Prussia such a large extension. Various proposals aiming at the instauration of Francis as Emperor of Germany existed; this, however, would not have been much more than a courtesy title, for it would not have brought back control over Germany to the House of Habsburg. Nor would an acquisition of south-western German territories, such as Schwarzenberg and Stadion aspired to, have changed much. Apart from the inner-German obstacle that the individual states had become too powerful and that it most probably would have caused another conflict with Prussia, a revival of the *Reich* would have hardly been compatible with Austria's other points of interest, particularly in Italy and Hungary. That Austria and Prussia had finally come to an agreement about the fate of Saxony rendered it possible to work on German issues, but progress was made only very slowly, mostly because the two leading German Powers apparently found it still difficult to negotiate harmoniously with each other. In March, circumstances were altered by Napoleon's escape from Elba, which rendered it essential to solve all remaining issues as soon as possible, lest the Congress would be called off and some of the negotiators would leave Vienna. Austrians and Prussians reached an understanding in May, but it still took some time to come to an agreement with Bavaria. Austria resumed the Tyrol and also acquired part of Salzburg from Bavaria; several barter transactions were, however, only entirely completed after 1815. It took quite a while to overcome Bavarian objections to the project – at one time it even looked like Bavaria would

³⁵³ NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 194f; WEBSTER: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 123, 127; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 407.

not become part of the Confederation, but then quite a few states made it a condition of their joining the Federation that all German territories would be part of it. As a result of this pressure, last minute alterations were made to the project, and finally Bavaria was won over. According to the Final Act of the Congress, Germany was combined into a federation, autonomous dominions and towns bound together in a defensive alliance. Every member was also at liberty to conclude an alliance, unless it was directed against other members of the Confederation. What remained an issue of controversy was the nature of relations between the Confederation and the non-Confederation territories such as Austria's or Prussia's, and the role the Confederation would play in the event that the two great German powers would get involved in European wars. In the end, this point was simply omitted. Thus, though a lot of its structure was shaped afterwards; the basic character had therewith been brought into being. The territorially most disputed point, Mainz, demanded by Prussia as well as Bavaria, was in the end given to Hesse-Darmstadt while the Prussians were entitled to be in charge of a composite garrison within the stronghold. All in all, the agreement settled upon was almost certainly the most viable one with a view to repose and safety. The idea of a unified Germany did of course exist, but it would not have been applicable for various reasons. There were too few proponents of nationalism, the individual sovereigns were too powerful, and since Austria and Prussia were still competing for the domination of Germany, nothing but a loose confederation was feasible. Even more, a unified Germany would have posed a threat to European peace, as it would have endangered smaller states and unsettled bigger ones. Nevertheless, some bond between Austria, Prussia, and the smaller German States was essential to render amicable relations possible. Given these circumstances, the result was the best possible. The details of the Federation were hardly relevant to Great Britain, except insofar as Hanover (which was naturally part of the Confederacy) was concerned, and thus only Münster, the Hanoverian minister, but none of the British representatives contributed to the creation of the Federation.³⁵⁴

Also, in other issues, such as Jewish rights and river navigation, Britain's representatives played a secondary role. Another issue was that of diplomatic ranking and was regarded by Castlereagh as being rather insignificant. Derived from a long list drawn up by the Pope in

³⁵⁴ KRAEHE, Enno E.: Metternich's German Policy, Vol. II: The Congress of Vienna, 1814-1815, (Princeton 1983), p. 377f, 387-390, 398; NICOLSON: The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity, p. 180, 197, 199; SCHROEDER: The Transformation of European Politics, p. 541, 544-547; WEBSTER: The Congress of Vienna, p. 122, 129; WEBSTER: The Pacification of Europe, p. 493.

1504, the hierarchy of the European sovereigns had been defined³⁵⁵, and therewith the ranking of the ambassadors. Throughout all these years the distribution of power had obviously undergone constant shifts, and as a result seemingly simple questions such as seating arrangements or the order of coaches in the event of corteges had provoked duels and even hostilities. Therefore, the cessation of the old hierarchical order was enacted. Instead, the length of any ambassador's service at the place he was appointed was decisive for the ranking, and three years later it was resolved upon the sequence of signatures on contracts to be carried out according to alphabetic sequence.³⁵⁶

As for Spain and Portugal Castlereagh opined:

“It is somewhat singular in itself that the only two Courts with which we find it difficult to do business are those of the Peninsula. There is a temper in both which makes it more arduous to settle a trifling matter with them than to arrange a great measure of European policy with other Powers. It seems as if the recollection of our services made it impossible for them to do anything without endeavouring most unnecessarily and ungratefully to display their own independence.”³⁵⁷

In comparison to Spain, Portugal had shown herself more compliant, but her rejection to furnish any forces to fight Napoleon during the Hundred Days did not gain her any sympathy³⁵⁸, as a letter of Castlereagh demonstrates:

“The Portuguese Regency ought to feel humiliated by the situation in which they are placed, or have chosen, from a timid policy, to place themselves. By the decision they have come to, they have, in fact, turned their back upon the cause of Great Britain and the Allies, for the entire of one campaign. In this, as in other instances, they make but an ungracious return for the assistance afforded to them in their late difficulties.”³⁵⁹

Spain still averred to be a great power and was strongly dismayed as Labrador, her representative, was not admitted to the inner council. The latter contested for ridiculously high and unrealisable demands, such as the return of Louisiana³⁶⁰ in return for Spain making advances to the British with regard to the slave trade. Labrador also made rather far-fetched demands concerning Italian territories, but again did not succeed. Another problem was King Ferdinand's haphazard behaviour and his dislike for the newly granted constitution, which

³⁵⁵ According to this list the utmost primacy appertained to the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, while the English King was ranked seventh, for more see: NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 218.

³⁵⁶ NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 216, 218f; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 424.

³⁵⁷ Quoted in NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 210.

³⁵⁸ WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 411.

³⁵⁹ Castlereagh to G. Canning, 22 June 1815, C.C. X, 383f.

³⁶⁰ Spain had lost Louisiana to Napoleon, who sold it to the United States of America; see: WEBSTER: *The American War and the Treaty of Ghent*, p. 526f.

continually was subject to disputes between Great Britain and Spain. Displeased with the settlement, Labrador in the end did not affix his signature to the Final Act.³⁶¹

The Final Act, signed on 10 June, 1815 (although backdated 8 June), was the ratification of all decisions agreed upon at the Congress of Vienna. The arrangements had their flaws and imperfections: Russia still bore a danger to the centre of the Continent, and Prussia's aspirations in Germany did not end with the Congress, but were merely protracted. Yet all powers were content enough, rendering it possible to avert crucial hostilities for about a century.³⁶²

24. THE FINAL CLASH OF ARMS

Meanwhile, at the same time as the negotiations at Vienna were taking place, prearrangements were being taken for the renewed hostilities. The troops in the Netherlands were greatly reinforced so Wellington in June had an army of approximately 90,000 for the field and 20,000 for garrisons, thus about 110,000 men altogether, consisting of Britons, Dutch, Belgians, Hanoverians, and other Germans. Wellington, however, lamented their rather inferior quality as well as the insufficient supply of artillery. While the British fraction was still the best in his army, the Belgian parts of his forces were especially eyed with suspicion, as rumours accused some of them of welcoming Napoleon's return. After all, Belgium had been a part of France for over two decades and their integration with Holland was much loathed.³⁶³ In a letter to Stewart, Wellington expressed his displeasure: "I have got an infamous army, very weak and ill equipped, and a very inexperienced Staff. In my opinion they are doing nothing in England."³⁶⁴ Similarly, he bluntly told Bathurst: "[...] I really believe that, with the exception of my old Spanish infantry, I have got not only the worst troops, but the worst equipped army, with the worst staff, that was ever brought together."³⁶⁵ Blücher's army also had its weaknesses. Composed of Prussians and other German contingents it was not so diverse, but enfeebled because so many of its troops were

³⁶¹ NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 210; WEBSTER: *The Congress of Vienna*, p. 124, 127f; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 310-313.

³⁶² KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 171-173; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 181; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 536.

³⁶³ GATES: *The Napoleonic Wars*, p. 267; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 351, 354.

³⁶⁴ Wellington to Stewart, 8 May 1815, W.D. XII, p. 358.

³⁶⁵ Wellington to Bathurst, 25 June 1815, W.D. XII, p. 509.

inexperienced recruits and many Germans disliked having to fight under a Prussian general. Bonaparte's force in June amounted to 300,000 men. However, a lot of them were poorly armed and some were required for garrisons and to guard France. With these deductions, Napoleon's actual force constituted of 124,000 soldiers only – merely sixty percent of the allied troops in the Low Countries. Still, compared to the coalesced forces, the French in all likelihood were of superior quality, a fact that relativised the numerical advantage of the Allies. Nevertheless, Napoleon undeniably was in the weaker position. His only option was to assault the allied armies individually, thus he had to gain an early victory over the Prussian and British forces in the Netherlands, lest the Russian and Austrian ones would rush to their aid. By an early attack, Napoleon also hoped to prevent the Coalition from mobilising all their resources, and not having to face another invasion of France, which would naturally badly affect French public opinion and might lead to conspiracies. Given Napoleon's rather vulnerable position, he knew he could not afford anything like that to happen. Thus, he sought to disperse the British and the Prussians and strike at them prior to their amalgamation. In the event of success, he would therewith have bought some time to build a huge army. Surely, his prospects were none too good, but this nevertheless provided his biggest opportunity.³⁶⁶

On 16 June, the very day Ney fought against Wellington at Quatre Bras, Napoleon made an assault upon the Prussians at Ligny. While Ney was defeated, Napoleon bore the palm over Blücher's army. The 72-year-old Prussian general was wounded as his charger was fired and he consequently found himself being overrun by both the French as well as the Prussian cavalry. Neither battle had been decisive, but Napoleon had at least enhanced his position. On the following day no major combating occurred. The Prussians withdrew, but in a direction that still allowed them to unite their troops with the British. And as Blücher promised Wellington to join him, the British field marshal decided to fight on the next day, 18 June, what was to be the ultimate clash of arms – the ever so famous Battle of Waterloo. Napoleon was astonished, but nevertheless delighted about his opponent's decision, as he believed he would only fight the British and that the Prussians would not come to their support. After all, he had detached part of his troops to deter Blücher from uniting his forces with Wellington's. As it was, Blücher's undertaking was a daring deed. In the event of a French victory the Prussians would have been locked by the French and lacked a safe route for withdrawing. However, the Prussians made it in time to participate in the battle and in the end the allied forces bore the palm. The losses on both sides were incredible. About 50,000 men, of which

³⁶⁶ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 356f; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 232.

30,000 were French, were dead or injured.³⁶⁷ Notifying Aberdeen of the death of his brother, Wellington wrote: “I cannot express to you the regret and sorrow with which I look round me, and contemplate the loss which I have sustained [...]. The glory resulting from such actions, so dearly bought, is no consolation to me, and I cannot suggest it as any to you and his friends [...].”³⁶⁸ In another letter he exposed: “Indeed, the losses I have sustained, have quite broken me down; and I have no feeling for the advantages we have acquired.”³⁶⁹

Even in case the French had been victorious in Belgium, Napoleon still would have had hardly any chance of success. After all, he had only fought a fraction of the allied troops, and the Allies would have made every effort to secure his overthrow in the end. Napoleon was clearly just too big a threat to peace to be allowed to retain his position. This threat, however, was not only confined to his military undertaking. Indeed, the European settlement, so recently concluded, was in jeopardy of being overturned. The issue of Napoleon’s successor was very likely to become once more the subject of disputes and moreover there was the problem of the nature of peace – a punitive peace would topple all arrangements the Allies had worked and agreed upon. The speedy and successful campaign rendered it at least partly possible for Wellington to prevent such issues to become too much subjects of disputes as he not only acquired an outstanding reputation and consequently authority, but also gained the benefit of time, as his army, together with the Prussian one, was the first to invade France. Throughout the invasion, little fighting occurred, as Napoleon had evidently been defeated. His army was broken and he had returned to Paris where he, lacking any other realistic options, on 22 June again signed his abdication and relinquished his throne to the King of Rome.³⁷⁰

A temporarily formed government, of which both Fouché (the erstwhile regicide Napoleon had made Minister of Police, who had behind Napoleon’s back been in touch with the Austrian Foreign Minister as well as with Wellington) and Caulaincourt were part of, requested a truce with the allied armies, but Wellington, as well as Blücher, rejected.³⁷¹ In a letter to Bathurst, Wellington explained the decision:

“I could not consider his [Napoleon’s] abdication of an usurped power in favor of his son, and his handing over the government provisionally to five persons named by

³⁶⁷ GATES: *The Napoleonic Wars*, p. 267; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 359-361, 363.

³⁶⁸ Wellington to Aberdeen, 19 June 1815, W.D. XII, p. 488.

³⁶⁹ Wellington to Beaufort, 19 June 1815, W.D. XII, p. 489.

³⁷⁰ GATES: *The Napoleonic Wars*, p. 268f; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 365f; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 550-553.

³⁷¹ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 347, 366; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 449.

himself, to be that description of security which the Allies had in view, which should induce them to lay down their arms, and therefore I continue my operations.”³⁷²

The British field-marshal also informed Bathurst that he had bluntly pointed out to the French that, “before I could stop my operations, I must see some steps taken to re-establish a government in France which should afford the Allies some chance of peace.”³⁷³ As to the question of what kind of government would please the Allies, Wellington explained that he lacked the authority to determine that; however, he stated his private view on that matter:

“[...] I conceived the best security for Europe was the restoration of the King, and that the establishment of any other government than the King's in France must inevitably lead to new and endless wars; that Buonaparte [sic!] and the army having overturned the King's Government, the natural and simple measure, after Buonaparte [sic!] was prisoner or out of the way, and the army defeated, was to recall the King to his authority, and that it was a much more dignified proceeding to recall him without conditions, and to trust to the energy of their constitution for any reforms they wished to make either in the government or the constitution, than now to make conditions with their sovereign; and that, above all, it was important that they should recall the King without loss of time, as it would not then appear that the measure had been forced upon them by the Allies.”³⁷⁴

With his forthrightness Wellington was able to avert a contest regarding the question of Napoleon's successor. In this manner the British field-marshal's overwhelming victory had enabled him to take the decisive steps for the restoration of the Bourbons. If all allied armies had been on the spot and invaded France at the same time as Wellington's army did, the question of Napoleon's successor would in all likelihood at least have been more uncertain and controversial. However, on 3 July Paris officially surrendered, and on 7 July Wellington and Blücher reached the capital. On the following day, Louis XVIII thus returned to a France that was momentarily occupied by British and Prussian forces. Sure, the Prussian field-marshal would also have been able to have his say on the matter of Louis' restoration, but did not care too much about it and was busy taking revenge on France anyway. Emperor Francis, Tsar Alexander, and King Frederick William III reached Paris soon afterwards, but it was already too late. Louis XVIII had been restored and they were presented with this *fait accompli*.³⁷⁵

³⁷² Wellington to Bathurst, 25 June 1815, W.D. XII, p. 508.

³⁷³ Wellington to Bathurst, 2 July 1815, W.D. XII, p. 533f.

³⁷⁴ Wellington to Bathurst, 2 July 1815, W.D. XII, p. 534.

³⁷⁵ KISSINGER: A World Restored, p. 179; MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 366; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 447, 455f, 459.

Right after Napoleon's second abdication, he had absconded. If the Prussians had detected him, he would have been shot. Blücher undoubtedly wished to put Napoleon to death.³⁷⁶

Wellington was adamantly against such a measure:

“[...] I have told him [Blücher] that I shall remonstrate, and shall insist upon his [Napoleon's] being disposed of by common accord. I have likewise said that, as a private friend, I advised him to have nothing to do with so foul a transaction; that he and I had acted too distinguished parts in these transactions to become executioners; and that I was determined that if the Sovereigns wished to put him to death they should appoint an executioner, which should not be me.”³⁷⁷

Nevertheless, Wellington was far from inclined to let Napoleon escape. As the fallen Emperor was not granted a passport with which he could head off to the United States, he realised that there was no way out and on 16 July capitulated to the British.³⁷⁸ Responsively, Castlereagh claimed that “[...] after fighting him for twenty years, as a trophy, he seems to belong to us.”³⁷⁹ At any rate, Napoleon was then taken to Great Britain, but was not permitted to stay there or even to disembark³⁸⁰, because, as Liverpool explained, “[...] he would become an object of curiosity immediately, and possibly of compassion, in the course of a few months; and the circumstance of his being here, or indeed anywhere in Europe, would contribute to keep up a certain degree of ferment in France.”³⁸¹ Liverpool was right; Napoleon did attract the attention of countless curious onlookers, who sailed out so as to sneak a peek of Britain's arch nemesis. To avoid renewed threats to Europe it was essential to take him to a remote location, and thus the Cabinet opted for St. Helena to be the place of his exile. On this island in the Atlantic, Napoleon was to pass away in 1821.³⁸²

25. THE SECOND PEACE OF PARIS

British public opinion was ferociously clamouring for the punishment of France. The Ministry, which was naturally affected by these violent urgings, also worried whether Louis XVIII could really consolidate his power.³⁸³ Liverpool reckoned that “It will be an [sic!] Herculean

³⁷⁶ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 367; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 233.

³⁷⁷ Wellington to Stewart, 28 June 1815, W.D. XII, p. 516; same also: C.C. X, p. 368f.

³⁷⁸ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 367.

³⁷⁹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 17 July 1815, B.D., p. 350.

³⁸⁰ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 368.

³⁸¹ Liverpool to Castlereagh, 21 July 1815, C.C. X, p. 434.

³⁸² GATES: *The Napoleonic Wars*, p. 269; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 368.

³⁸³ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 369f.

task, I think, to give any real strength to this Government. For, what is a King, unsupported by opinion, by an army, or by a strong national party?"³⁸⁴ Therefore, the Cabinet badly wanted the restored French King to take rigorous steps regarding Napoleon's adherents. Liverpool thought it "a curious circumstance, that after the sanguinary scenes which we recollect at the beginning of the French Revolution, all parties appear now to have an insuperable repugnance to executions."³⁸⁵ Only owing to royalist and allied demands, fifty-seven persons were subjected to prosecution. Fouché, however, in his capacity as Minister of Police, informed them and made certain that they had plenty of chances to flee. Merely three of them, including Ney, were caught and condemned to death, which caused heavy protests on the part of the Whigs. However, according to the prevailing British public opinion not only particular persons had to be penalised, but France as a whole. Castlereagh, who meanwhile was back in Paris, was informed by the Prime Minister³⁸⁶:

"The more I consider the internal state of France, and the little chance there is for the security of Europe from the character and strength there is of the French Government, the more I am satisfied that we must look for security in frontier, and in really weakening the power of France. This opinion is rapidly gaining ground in this country; and I think, even if Buonaparte [sic!] was dead, there would now be considerable disappointment at any peace which left France as she was by the Treaty of Paris, or even as she was before the Revolution."³⁸⁷

Only a few days later, Liverpool again made clear that:

"In this state of things we must look to other measures for our security, and we shall never be forgiven if we leave France without securing a sufficient frontier for the protection of the adjoining countries. The prevailing idea in this country is, that we are fairly entitled to avail ourselves of the present moment to take back from France the principal conquests of Louis XIV. It is argued with much force that France will never forgive the humiliation which she has already received-that she will take the first convenient opportunity of endeavouring to redeem her military glory-and that it is our duty, therefore, to take advantage of the present moment to prevent the evil consequences which may even flow from the greatness of our own success. It might have been not unwise last year to try the effect of a more magnanimous policy; but in the result of that we have been completely disappointed; and we owe it to ourselves now to provide, in the best manner we can, for our own security."³⁸⁸

Yet, despite the overwhelming cries for revenge in Great Britain, both Castlereagh and Wellington were adamantly against any such measures.³⁸⁹ Wellington complained that "our own Government also are taking up a little too much the tone of their rascally newspapers.

³⁸⁴ Liverpool to Castlereagh, 10 July 1815, C.C. X, 422.

³⁸⁵ Quoted in MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 367.

³⁸⁶ MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 367; WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 457.

³⁸⁷ Liverpool to Castlereagh, 10 July 1815, C.C. X, p. 422f.

³⁸⁸ Liverpool to Castlereagh, 15 July 1815, C.C. X, p. 431f; same also: B.D., p. 346.

³⁸⁹ MUIR: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, p. 370.

They are shifting their objects; and, having got their cake, they want both to eat it and keep it.”³⁹⁰ And Castlereagh, having almost made a habit out of it, also once more refrained from obliging public pressure; for he believed that a territorial reduction would only humiliate France and thus might cause renewed aggression. By three measures – first by stationing troops for a limited period of time in France, second by razing strongholds along the borders, and third by perpetuating the alliance - he thought to avoid a punitive peace. However, being aware that this proposal would be unpopular with his Cabinet, he persuaded the Tsar to draft such a scheme and table it as being his.³⁹¹

Alexander, who apparently had at first been of the opinion that “having shown the French what it was to be merciful, we must now make them feel what it is to be just”³⁹² had altered his stance on the question before he arrived at Paris. More intensely than ever, he was idealistically upholding principles of religion and moral values, which caused his attitude to be placated. Indeed, he did not oppose Louis’ instauration to the throne of France and supported Castlereagh in his struggle to get an affirmation of the abandoning of the slave trade, which as we have seen Napoleon had decreed.³⁹³ Castlereagh was really pleased, claiming that “I have never observed the Emperor of Russia to be in a more cordial, contented, and at the same time reasonable disposition.”³⁹⁴ The Austrian Minister, whether on purpose or due to fatigue resulting from the gruelling conferences at Vienna, did not get involved much in the discussions, but in general rather concurred with Castlereagh’s attitude. In sharp contrast, the Prussians were completely against any leniency. The feeling in Prussia was one of great odium, especially within the armed forces. This, perhaps useful in the battles, caused unnecessary brutality during the invasion and the occupation of France. Although none of the allied forces was entirely free of guilt, the Prussians were undoubtedly the worst.³⁹⁵ Castlereagh informed Liverpool that “the immediate difficulty is now to keep Blücher and the Prussians within any bounds towards this town. [...] they are at this moment mining the bridge of Jena, with a view of blowing it up.”³⁹⁶ Fortunately, Wellington managed to avert this annihilation. He was, however, worried that such behaviour might lead to an upheaval of the French, and at one stage the British field-marshal even considered that the occupation

³⁹⁰ Wellington to Beresford, 7 August 1815, W.D. XII, 589.

³⁹¹ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 181-183; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 238f; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 466.

³⁹² Quoted in MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 370.

³⁹³ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 181; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 370f.

³⁹⁴ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 12 July 1815, B.D., p. 341.

³⁹⁵ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 371.

³⁹⁶ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 8 July 1815, C.C. X, p. 419f.

army, which he was to be in charge of, should not consist of any Prussians.³⁹⁷ Confiding in one of his brothers, Wellington wrote, “I confess that I am a little afraid of them [the Allies]. They are all behaving exceedingly ill.”³⁹⁸ Hardenberg himself disapproved of the conduct of the Prussian army and their notion to interfere in political matters. Still, he shared their thirst for stripping France of some of her territory, which would be acquired by her smaller bordering states that would then be supposed to relinquish land to Prussia. The Prussians had already objected to the terms of the first peace treaty with France and reasoned that the French had not resisted Napoleon, and Europe had a right to be indemnified for her renewed struggle. And if France was not punished and was allowed to retain all her territory – would the Continent be really safe or simply fall victim to French aggression all over again? Many of the smaller powers agreed to Prussia’s reasoning and her proposition to reduce the French territory partly out of loathing and anguish of France, partly simply out of avidity. Also, Münster, who had significant sway over the Prince Regent and therewith also on the British government, joined in the clamouring. Eventually, however, being fully aware of the abyss that divided him from Castlereagh on this issue, he departed from Paris.³⁹⁹ Castlereagh was incensed by the conduct of the Allies, especially that the German powers were apparently all keen on letting their forces march into French territory, therewith saving their money and letting France pay for them while receiving British subsidies. Not surprisingly, he, therefore, ascribed the slow progress of the negotiations to this fact:

“[...] neither Austria nor Prussia may, and certainly none of the smaller Powers have any sincere desire to bring the present state of things to a speedy termination, so long as they can feed, clothe, and pay their armies at the expense of France, and put their English subsidies into their pockets [...].”⁴⁰⁰

The demeanour and pretensions of the smaller states also infuriated Castlereagh, given that they would not even be capable of guarding such new annexations without the support of the Allies if France chose to take military action in order to recapture these territories:

“The prevailing sentiment in Germany is favourable to the territorial reduction of France. After what the people have suffered, this is not wonderful [sic!]; but it is one thing to wish a thing done, and another to maintain it when done. None of these Powers can for any time keep up war establishments, or, having laid them down, easily resume them. If, then, this course increases the chance of early war, the acquisitions may be of short duration; and whilst the chances of peace diminished, we may be obliged, in order to keep France within due bounds, to take the weight of the war on ourselves.”⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁷ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 371; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 463.

³⁹⁸ Wellington to H. Wellesley, 19 July 1815, W.D. XII, p. 566

³⁹⁹ MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 371; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 466, 468.

⁴⁰⁰ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 17 August 1815, C.C. X, p. 485, same also: B.D., p. 363.

⁴⁰¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 17 August 1815, C.C. X, p. 488, same also: B.D., p. 365.

The clamour for territories, however, could not be stopped that quickly, and in September Castlereagh complained again:

“The fact is that we have now before us demands from every State, however feeble, that either borders or approaches, France desiring to have some portion either directly or indirectly of permanent accession at her expense, and for the conservation of which it is taken for granted that we are to be guarantees: the more I reflect upon it, the more I deprecate this system of scratching such a Power. We may hold her down and pare her nails, so that many years shall pass away before they can again wound us. [...] this system of being pledged to a continental war for objects that France may any day reclaim from the particular States that hold them, without pushing her demands beyond what she would contend was due to her own honour, is I am sure a bad British policy, and that if the States who ambition [sic!] these objects choose to fly at such small game, it ought to be at their own risk, and with their own means and not with ours, but unfortunately if they once get into a scrape with such an enemy, Great Britain may, and probably will, sooner or later be involved, and hence it becomes necessary for us not only to refuse them our guarantee for such purposes, but to dissuade them from pursuing them.”⁴⁰²

In the end, the claims of the smaller states were defeated without too much difficulty, but things were different where Prussia was concerned, whose troops on French territory amounted up to 280,000 men.⁴⁰³ The British delegates, however, strongly promoted moderation. Although Wellington admitted that France had retained a powerful position in comparison to the other continental powers, he still stood out for moderation. He reasoned that, as Louis XVIII had acceded to the treaty of 25 March, the Allies were not entitled to claim any considerable concessions from France. More to the point, he highlighted that the French, although they had not resisted Napoleon, had neither made a stand against the Allies – a fact that doubtless facilitated the invasion of France. Arguing that the Coalition’s aim was to attain peace, he considered too extensive demands as simply being counterproductive as they would only enfeeble King Louis XIII and the French government. And in this event he thought it likely that a similar situation, as the one Europe had just witnessed, might occur: another upheaval in France, another struggle to get back territories taken from her. Thus, for the security of Europe, he regarded any extensive cessions to be nonsensical and instead pointed to the possibility of a temporary occupation, which he thought much more effective. This measure would give strength to the King and his Government and would ensure at least some repose to the Allies. All these points he explained in a long letter:

“My opinion is, that the French Revolution and the treaty of Paris have left France in too great strength for the rest of Europe, weakened as all the powers of Europe have been by the wars in which they have been engaged with France, by the destruction of all the fortresses and strongholds in the Low Countries and Germany, principally by

⁴⁰² Castlereagh to Liverpool, 4 September 1815, B.D., p. 376.

⁴⁰³ WEBSTER: The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, p. 471.

the French, and by the ruin of the finances of all the Continental Powers. [...] First; I conceive that our declarations, and our treaties, and the accession, although irregular in form, which we allowed Louis XVIII. to make to that of the 25th of March, must prevent us from making any very material inroad upon the state of possession of the treaty of Paris. [...] The French people submitted to Buonaparte [sic!]; but it would be ridiculous to suppose that the Allies would have been in possession of Paris in a fortnight after one battle fought if the French people in general had not been favourably disposed to the cause which the Allies were supposed to favour. [...] The assistance which the King and his party in France gave to the cause was undoubtedly of a passive description; but the result of the operations of the Allies has been very different from what it would have been if the disposition of the inhabitants of the country had led them to oppose the Allies. [...] But my objection to the demand of a great cession from France upon this occasion is, that it will defeat the object which the Allies have held out to themselves in the present and the preceding wars. That which has been their object has been to put an end to the French Revolution, to obtain peace for themselves and their people, to have the power of reducing their overgrown military establishments, and the leisure to attend to the internal concerns of their several nations, and to improve the situation of their people. [...] If the King were to refuse to agree to the cession, and were to throw himself upon his people, there can be no doubt that those divisions would cease which have hitherto occasioned the weakness of France. The Allies might take the fortresses and provinces which might suit them, but there would be no genuine peace for the world, no nation could disarm, no Sovereign could turn his attention from the affairs of this country. If the King were to agree to make the cession, which, from all that one hears, is an event by no means probable, the Allies must be satisfied, and must retire; but I would appeal to the experience of the transactions of last year for a statement of the situation in which we should find ourselves. Last year, after France had been reduced to her limits of 1792 [...] the unpopularity of the Government in the army was to be attributed to their supposed disinclination to war to recover these possessions. [...] We must, on the contrary, if we take this large cession, consider the operations of the war as deferred till France shall find a suitable opportunity of endeavouring to regain what she has lost; and, after having wasted our resources in the maintenance of overgrown military establishments in time of peace, we shall find how little useful the cessions we shall have acquired will be against a national effort to regain them. In my opinion, then, we ought to continue to keep our great object, the genuine peace and tranquillity of the world, in our view, and shape our arrangement so as to provide for it. Revolutionary France is more likely to distress the world than France, however strong in her frontier, under a regular Government; and that is the situation in which we ought to endeavour to place her. With this view I prefer the temporary occupation of some of the strong places, and to maintain for a time a strong force in France, both at the expense of the French Government, and under strict regulation, to the permanent cession of even all the places which in my opinion ought to be occupied for a time. [...] There is no doubt that the troops of the Allies stationed in France will give strength and security to the Government of the King, and that their presence will give the King leisure to form his army in such manner as he may think proper. The expectation also of the arrival of the period at which the several points occupied should be evacuated would tend to the preservation of peace, while the engagement to restore them to the King, or his legitimate heirs or successors, would have the effect of giving additional stability to his throne. [...] This term of years, besides the advantage of introducing into France a system and habits of peace, after twenty five years of war, will enable the powers of Europe to restore their finances; it will give them time and means to reconstruct the

great artificial bulwarks of their several countries, to settle their Governments, and to consolidate their means of defence. France, it is true, will still be powerful, probably more powerful than she ought to be in relation to her neighbours; but, if the Allies do not waste their time and their means, the state of security of each and of the whole, in relation to France, will, at the end of the period, be materially improved, and will probably leave but little to desire.⁴⁰⁴

Castlereagh argued similarly as his fellow countryman. Faced with extensive demands, Louis XIII would have to make his choice. He could either give in to allied demands, but this would enfeeble his position in France, or he could consolidate his power, but then he would have to oppose the Allies. Therefore, Castlereagh believed that an imposition of any significant cessions would not lead to security, but on the contrary, to another war. Besides, France might someday be needed to counterbalance other continental powers. In a letter he explained his reasoning to Liverpool:

“If [...] we push things now to an extremity, we leave the King no resource in the eyes of his own people but to disavow us; and, once committed against us in sentiment, he will be obliged soon either to lead the nation into war himself, or possibly be set aside to make way for some more bold and enterprising competitor. [...] if you should deem it necessary to demand securities against which all Frenchmen must protest, which I do not consider to be by any means the case, with respect to those recommended by the Duke of Wellington, my advice then will be to you and to the Allies to have no reserve towards France. You cannot you must not. In that case, calculate upon the submission of France but for the shortest interval; and the only objection I should then to have to state against General Knesebeck's⁴⁰⁵ plan is that it does not go far enough. It leaves France nearly entire, both in population and resources, whilst it deprives her precisely of those objects which will revive in every Frenchman, whatever may be his principles, a desire of war at the first favourable moment. [...] But it is not our business to collect trophies, but to try if we can bring back the world to peaceful habits. I do not believe this to be compatible with any attempt now materially and permanently to affect the territorial character of France, as settled by the Peace of Paris; neither do I think it a clear case (if we can, by imposing a strait waistcoat upon that Power for a number of years, restore her to ordinary habits, and weighing the extraordinary growth of other States in latter times, and especially of Russia) that France, even with her existing dimensions, may not be found a useful rather than a dangerous member of the European system; but these are the problems you are to weigh.”⁴⁰⁶

Yet Liverpool was not easily convinced that wisdom lay in moderation and exposed:

“[...] I think that while we attend so much to what is due to the feelings of the French Government, we ought not to be insensible to what we owe to Austria, Prussia, and our other Allies, and likewise to the public feeling in this country, which I cannot conceal from you will be grievously disappointed by the acknowledgment.”⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁴ Wellington to Castlereagh, 11 August 1815, W.D. XII, p. 596-600.

⁴⁰⁵ Knesebeck was a Prussian general and put forward the Prussian scheme.

⁴⁰⁶ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 17 August 1815, C.C. X, p. 489-491; same also: B.D., p. 365-367.

⁴⁰⁷ Liverpool to Castlereagh, 18 August, B.D., p. 368.

While the British Ministry dismissed the exorbitant claims Prussia made, it also thought Alexander's suggestion to be far too lenient. They preferred a compromise solution, like the Austrian proposal, which was not as moderate as the Russian, but not as harsh as the Prussian one either. It was thus evident that France would lose at least some territory. As we have seen, the First Peace of Paris had been concluded on the basis of France's borders of 1792 plus some concession in addition to this. Now Castlereagh suggested confining France to the position she had held in 1790, which meant that she had to yield some land in Belgium and in Savoy with a populace of not even one million. Furthermore, Castlereagh acknowledged that France would have to pay compensation; not, however, twelve hundred million francs as demanded by Prussia, but merely half of this amount. Alexander approved of this scheme and Metternich, too, showed himself compliant. Wellington, with his prestige and power, had helped to gain the agreement of the allied statesmen and also endeavoured to persuade the British government to give their consent to Castlereagh's proposal.⁴⁰⁸ Reluctantly, the Ministry gave in and told Castlereagh: "Whatever may be the first popular impression on the result of the negotiation according to the principles which have been agreed upon, [...] you will be most cordially and zealously supported and upheld by all your colleagues in this country."⁴⁰⁹ Pitted against this united front, it was also evident that Prussia would not be able to implement her exorbitant claims. Pointing out that the French kingdom had not been the foe of the Coalition, Talleyrand, however, was not prepared to surrender anything at all. Yet, given that nearly one million allied soldiers were present in France, his reasoning was scarcely convincing. Being aware that the proposed peace conditions would be obnoxious to the French, he gave up his ministerial position. A new government was established with Richelieu, a very able man, as Prime Minister. Regardless, it was clear that the peace could not be as moderate as the one concluded in 1814.⁴¹⁰

An agreement was finally reached on 20 November, 1815 according to which France was cut down to the position she had held in 1790. She was compelled to pay reparations amounting to seven hundred million francs, which was more than Castlereagh had had in mind, but still much less than Prussia had demanded. Moreover, she had to part with the art treasures that Napoleon had stolen from all over Europe and hand them back to their former owners. Liverpool regarded this measure needful, as "whilst in that country, they must necessarily

⁴⁰⁸ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 184; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 239; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 467-469, 471.

⁴⁰⁹ Liverpool to Castlereagh, 28 August 1815, C.C. X, p. 509, same also: B.D., p. 373.

⁴¹⁰ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 184; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 372; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 556; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 460, 474.

have the effect of keeping up the remembrance of their former conquests, and of cherishing the military spirit and the vanity of the nation.”⁴¹¹ Needful or not, this step caused immense animosity and albeit both Castlereagh as well as Wellington were not really in favour of it, the French vented their wrath on the British representatives. France, furthermore, was to be occupied by 150,000 soldiers, of whom Wellington was to be in charge. And every fortress in the northern and eastern parts of the country was to be controlled by the British field-marshal for three to five years. The number of soldiers was considerably decreased in 1817, and in the following year the occupation was entirely terminated. Still, it was largely this measure that set the British Cabinet at ease and prepared them to acquiesce to the moderate peace conditions. Indeed, although the terms were not as magnanimous as the ones of the previous year, the statesmen had again displayed leniency, and it was Castlereagh and Wellington who largely accounted for this outcome.⁴¹² “Napoleon could absolutely not comprehend why Castlereagh had advocated a moderate peace and wondered whether the British Foreign Minister was venally, fatuitous or simply harebrained, probably because, as Nicolson explained, “Napoleon was temperamentally incapable of understanding any politics other than power politics.”⁴¹³ Snidely, he expressed:

“One cannot understand how a sensible nation can allow herself to be governed by such a lunatic. After twenty years of war, after all the wealth which she has expended; after all the assistance which she gave to the common cause; after a triumph beyond all expectation;-what sort of peace is it that England has signed? Castlereagh had the continent at his disposal. What great advantage, what just compensations, has he acquired for his country? The peace he has made is the sort of peace he would have made if he had been beaten. I could scarcely have treated him worse, the poor wretch, if it had been I who had proved victorious!”⁴¹⁴

However, Castlereagh, as we have seen, had his reasons for promoting a moderate peace. Besides, he believed that the best guard against renewed French aggression lay in the perpetuation of the alliance as he told Liverpool: “It is the fear of our union that will keep France down, and the knowledge that the Duke of Wellington commands only the advanced guard of the force against which they will have to contend, if they again involve themselves in war.”⁴¹⁵ Thus, on the same day the Second Peace of Paris was signed, the Big Four also concluded the Quadruple Alliance. It was more or less an agreement to continue the Treaty of

⁴¹¹ Liverpool to Castlereagh, 15 July 1815, C.C. X, p. 429.

⁴¹² MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 372; NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 241; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 557; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 474.

⁴¹³ NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 236.

⁴¹⁴ Quoted in NICOLSON: *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity*, p. 236f.

⁴¹⁵ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 15 October 1815, B.D., p. 388.

Chaumont, with Great Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia engaging themselves to protect the settlement from any hostilities on the part of France. If the Bourbons were again subjected to an ouster, the Allies would confer with each other. Moreover, it was decided that the powers should meet recurrently to consider any European questions – a stipulation that derived from Castlereagh's conviction that private and cordial connections were the key to the safety of the Continent.⁴¹⁶

The Quadruple Alliance, however, was not the only alliance that was concluded at Paris in 1815. A few weeks earlier, on 26 September, the Holy Alliance, which was developed by the Tsar, came into being. Alexander had already been moved by religious ideology in 1812 and, ever since his departure from Vienna, this personality trait had grown even stronger, and at this stage deeply influenced his thoughts and actions. He envisioned a Europe guided by Christian principles and was convinced that such a Europe would be a peaceful Europe. Accordingly, he produced a document that steeped in religious principles. Metternich conceived it to be a marvellous opportunity and by some changes to the wording he profoundly changed the whole meaning. It had turned into a declaration condemning the Revolution and its effects – and a pledge to fight them.⁴¹⁷ As Kissinger aptly put it: "The Tsar had conceived the Holy Alliance [...] as the proclamation of a new era [...]; Metternich used it to announce the end of a revolutionary period [...]." ⁴¹⁸ Emperor Francis believed Alexander to be a bit insane, but nevertheless acceded to the treaty. After all, an Alexander envisioning plans for a peaceful Continent was certainly more desirable than one pursuing other potentially perilous objects. Moved by similar thoughts, Frederick William III also agreed. As Castlereagh informed his colleagues at London:

"[...] the Emperor of Austria felt [...] great repugnance to be a party to such an act, and yet was more apprehensive of refusing himself to the Emperor's application; that it was quite clear his mind was affected; that peace and goodwill was at present the idea which engrossed his thoughts; that he had found him of late friendly and reasonable on all points; and that he was unwilling to thwart him in a conception which, however wild, might save him and the rest of the world much trouble so long as it should last. In short, seeing no retreat, after making some verbal alterations the Emperor of Austria agreed to sign it. The Emperor of Russia then carried it to the King of Prussia, who felt in the same manner, but came to the same conclusion. [...] The fact is, that the Emperor's mind is not completely sound. Last year there was but too much reason to fear that its impulse would be to conquest and dominion. The general belief now is, that he is disposed to found his own glory upon a principle of peace and benevolence.

⁴¹⁶ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 184-186; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 372; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 557.

⁴¹⁷ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 184f, 188f; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 481.

⁴¹⁸ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 189.

Since the point of Poland was disposed of, there has been nothing in his political conduct in the progress of arrangements which indicates another purpose, and he really appears to be in earnest. It is, at all events, wise to profit by this disposition as far as it will carry us; and this is peculiarly the feeling of Austria and Prussia, who hope to keep down, "now that they are compatriots," much of the spirit of frontier jealousy which has hitherto embarrassed them."⁴¹⁹

Although Castlereagh regarded the Holy Alliance as "a piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense,"⁴²⁰ he induced the Prince Regent to dispatch a letter to the Tsar. The Prince Regent had no authority to commit his country to such a treaty, but he wrote to Alexander, assuring him that he personally ardently shared his outlook. In this manner, Alexander forged an alliance, which sought harmony by the implementation of religious principles. Nonetheless, the greatest benefit of the treaty was that Alexander himself devoutly believed in it.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 28 September 1815, B.D., p. 382-384.

⁴²⁰ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 28 September 1815, B.D., p. 383.

⁴²¹ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 190; SCHROEDER: *The Transformation of European Politics*, p. 559; WEBSTER: *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, p. 482.

VII. CONCLUSION

In British history Great Britain, because of Waterloo, appears as the saviour of Europe⁴²², but we should keep in mind that Waterloo was not an isolated event, and was obviously influenced by Napoleon's defeats of the previous years. Credit must also be given to the Prussians, as Wellington himself wrote the day after the battle: "I should not do justice to my own feelings, or to Marshal Blücher and the Prussian army, if I did not attribute the successful result of this arduous day to the cordial and timely assistance I received from them."⁴²³ Additionally, an obviously vital factor in the final overthrow of Napoleon was the maintenance of the last Coalition, which, unlike the previous ones, survived the constant dissensions among the Allies. And this was not least thanks to Castlereagh, who took over the role as mediator between the Allies and protected the Coalition from dissolution. He had come to the Continent as a British statesman, but had quickly adapted to his surroundings and gradually changed his outlook from an insular one into a European one. Hence, there often was a discrepancy between the British Cabinet's policy and that of the Foreign Secretary's, which is clearly displayed, for example, in the Polish-Saxon question or the different attitudes towards the nature of peace. Nevertheless, he attained for his country an invaluable accomplishment: after years of being more or less ignored, he assured Britain her say on European matters, and he used it to contribute a good deal to the restoration of Europe. Although the Bourbons could not preserve their crown and the united Netherlands soon dissolved into Belgium and Holland, the majority of the agreements concluded at Vienna were to subside for over five decades. The negotiators, however, were to be subjected to condemnation for their neglect of popular feelings, even though the settlement turned out an outstanding achievement: after over two decades of warfare, the Continent was finally able to repose and live in peace.⁴²⁴

⁴²² MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 374f.

⁴²³ Wellington to Bathurst, 19 June 1815, W.D. XII, p. 484.

⁴²⁴ KISSINGER: *A World Restored*, p. 30, 132f, 184; MARRIOTT: *Castlereagh*, p. 235f; MUIR: *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 372f.

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ABSTRACT

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit befasst sich mit der britischen Außenpolitik der Jahre 1813 bis 1815 und ihrer Rolle im Krieg gegen Napoleon bzw. der anschließenden Neuordnung Europas. In der Einführung wird ein kurzer Überblick über die Revolutionskriege und die Napoleonischen Kriege bis 1812 gegeben. Darüber hinaus beschäftigt sich dieses Kapitel auch mit dem ‚Krieg von 1812‘, welcher zwar außereuropäisch, aber dennoch ein Nebenprodukt der Napoleonischen Kriege war und von den Ereignissen dieser beeinflusst wurde, aber auch selbst einen gewissen Einfluss in Europa hatte. Abschließend behandelt die Einführung die politischen Gegebenheiten in Großbritannien und stellt das 1812 gewählte Ministerium und vor allem diejenigen Personen, die die Außenpolitik der nächsten Jahre prägten, vor. Anschließend wird über die Bildung der letzten Koalition, über die militärischen Ereignisse von 1813 und über Friedensbemühungen berichtet. Das nächste Kapitel beschäftigt sich mit der alliierten Invasion Frankreichs und den vorläufig letzten Monaten der Herrschaft Napoleons. Zunächst werden die Ziele des britischen Kabinetts sowie das erste persönliche Zusammentreffen des britischen Außenministers Castlereagh, der im Jänner 1814 am Kontinent eintraf, mit seinem österreichischen Amtskollegen Metternich und dem Zaren Alexander beschrieben. Ebenso behandelt dieses Kapitel die, von Differenzen geprägten, Beziehungen der Verbündeten zueinander, die Friedensgespräche, und den Verlauf des Krieges bis hin zur Restauration der Bourbonen bzw. zur Abdankung Napoleons. Dabei wird auch die Einstellung der britischen Öffentlichkeit gegenüber den Bourbonen sowie gegenüber Napoleon und einem möglichen Frieden mit diesem beleuchtet. ‚Pacification and Celebration‘ behandelt zunächst einen anderen Kriegsschauplatz, nämlich Italien, und analysiert anschließend den ersten Frieden von Paris. Zudem wird in diesem Kapitel auch von den Siegesfeierlichkeiten in London und dem Friedensschluss mit den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika erzählt. Letzterer bedeutete ja, dass Großbritannien seine Soldaten aus Amerika abziehen und eventuell in Europa einsetzen konnte, und erregte deshalb natürlich Aufsehen in Europa. Das fünfte Kapitel ‚The Congress of Vienna‘, beginnt mit einer kurzen Erläuterung zu den Gegebenheiten in Wien und den Zielen und Strategien der Staatsmänner und geht dann zur eigentlichen, die Verhandlungen über Monate hinweg bestimmenden Frage über, nämlich der Zukunft Polens und Sachsens. Hierbei wird besonderes Augenmerk auf die Haltung Castlereaghs sowie des britischen Kabinetts gelegt und ihre Diskrepanz veranschaulicht. Durch die Uneinigkeit der Verbündeten in dieser Frage gewann Frankreich wieder an Einfluss und wurde sogar ein potentieller Verbündeter – und im Jänner 1815 kam es zur

Allianzbildung zwischen dem ehemaligen Kriegsgegner mit Großbritannien und Österreich. Die Krise gipfelte in Kriegsdrohungen, letzten Endes wurde aber eine Kompromisslösung gefunden. Kurz darauf kehrte Castlereagh nach London zurück, nicht viel später kam aber ein anderer auf den Kontinent zurück: Napoleon floh von Elba und seine Herrschaft der hundert Tage begann, was Gegenstand des letzten Kapitels ist. Napoleon fand schnell Anhänger, unter anderem seinen Schwager Murat, wodurch Italien wieder zum Kriegsschauplatz wurde. Inzwischen wurden die Verhandlungen in Wien weitergeführt und schließlich, im Juni 1815, wurden alle, auf dem Kongress getroffenen Abmachungen in der Kongressakte zusammengefasst. Nur wenige Tage später fand die berühmte Schlacht von Waterloo statt, der dann eine erneute Abdankung Napoleons und eine erneute Restauration der Bourbonen folgte. Nach massiven Auseinandersetzungen um die Beschaffenheit des Friedens, wurde mit dem Zweiten Frieden von Paris wiederum ein relativ gemäßigter Friede geschlossen. Auf die Rolle Großbritanniens im Krieg und in der Neuordnung Europas wird dann noch kurz in der Schlussbemerkung eingegangen.

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