A WORLD RESTORED: METTERNICH, CASTLEREAGH, AND THE PROBLEMS OF PEACE, 1812-22

by

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Synopsis

Originally published in 1957—years before he was Secretary of State and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize—, Henry Kissinger wrote A World Restored, to understand and explain one of history's most important and dramatic periods; a time when Europe went from political chaos to a balanced peace that lasted for almost a hundred years. After the fall of Napoleon, European diplomats gathered in a festive Vienna with the task of restoring stability following the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, and the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire. The central figures at the Congress of Vienna were the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, Viscount Castlereagh and the Foreign Minister of Austria Klemens Wenzel von Metternich. Castlereagh was primarily concerned with maintaining balanced powers, while Metternich based his diplomacy on the idea of legitimacy—that is, establishing and working with governments that citizens accept without force. The peace they brokered lasted until the outbreak of World War I. Through trenchant analysis of the history and forces that create stability, A World Restored gives insight into how to create long-lasting geopolitical peace-lessons that Kissinger saw as applicable to the period immediately following World War II, when he was writing this book. But the lessons don't stop there. Like all good insights, the book’s wisdom transcends any single political period. Kissinger's understanding of coalitions and balance of power can be applied to personal and professional situations, such as dealing with a tyrannical boss or co-worker or formulating business or organizational tactics. Regardless of his ideology, Henry Kissinger has had an important impact on modern politics and few would dispute his brilliance as a strategist. For anyone interested in Western history, the tactics of diplomacy, or political strategy, this volume will provide deep understanding of a pivotal time.
I—I—INTRODUCTION

It is not surprising that an age faced with the threat of thermonuclear extinction should look nostalgically to periods when diplomacy carried with it less drastic penalties, when wars were limited and catastrophe almost inconceivable. Nor is it strange in such circumstances that the attainment of peace should become the overriding concern or that the need for peace should be thought to provide the impetus for its attainment. But the attainment of peace is not as easy as the desire for it. Not for nothing is history associated with the figure of Nemesis, which defeats man by fulfilling his wishes in a different form or by answering his prayers too completely. Those ages which in retrospect seem most peaceful were least in search of peace. Those whose quest for it seems unending appear least able to achieve tranquillity. Whenever peace—conceived as the avoidance of war—has been the primary objective of a power or a group of powers, the international system has been at the mercy of the most ruthless member of the international community. Whenever the international order has acknowledged that certain principles could not be compromised even for the sake of peace, stability based on an equilibrium of forces was at least conceivable. Stability, then, has commonly resulted not from a quest for peace but from a generally accepted legitimacy. “Legitimacy” as here used should not be confused with justice. It means no more than an international agreement about the nature of workable arrangements and about the permissible aims and methods of foreign policy. It implies the acceptance of the framework of the international order by all major powers, at least to the extent that no state is so dissatisfied that, like Germany after the Treaty of Versailles, it expresses its dissatisfaction in a revolutionary foreign policy. A legitimate order does not make conflicts impossible, but it limits their scope. Wars may occur, but they will be fought in the name of the existing structure and the peace which follows will be justified as a better expression of the “legitimate”, general consensus. Diplomacy in the classic sense, the adjustment of differences through negotiation, is possible only in “legitimate” international orders. Whenever there exists a power which considers the international order or the manner of legitimizing it oppressive, relations between it and other powers will be revolutionary. In such cases, it is not the adjustment of differences within a given system which will be at issue, but the system itself. Adjustments are possible, but they will be conceived as tactical manœuvres to consolidate positions for the inevitable showdown, or as tools to undermine the morale of the antagonist. To be sure, the motivation of the revolutionary power may well be defensive; it may well be sincere in its protestations of feeling threatened. But the distinguishing feature of a revolutionary power is not that it feels threatened—such feeling is
inherent in the nature of international relations based on sovereign states—but that nothing can reassure it. Only absolute security—the neutralization of the opponent—is considered a sufficient guarantee, and thus the desire of one power for absolute security means absolute insecurity for all the others. Diplomacy, the art of restraining the exercise of power, cannot function in such an environment. It is a mistake to assume that diplomacy can always settle international disputes if there is "good faith" and "willingness to come to an agreement". For in a revolutionary international order, each power will seem to its opponent to lack precisely these qualities. Diplomats can still meet but they cannot persuade, for they have ceased to speak the same language. In the absence of an agreement on what constitutes a reasonable demand, diplomatic conferences are occupied with sterile repetitions of basic positions and accusations of bad faith, or allegations of "unreasonableness" and "subversion". They become elaborate stage plays which attempt to attach as yet uncommitted powers to one of the opposing systems.

For powers long accustomed to tranquillity and without experience with disaster, this is a hard lesson to come by. Lulled by a period of stability which had seemed permanent, they find it nearly impossible to take at face value the assertion of the revolutionary power that it means to smash the existing framework. The defenders of the status quo therefore tend to begin by treating the revolutionary power as if its protestations were merely tactical; as if it really accepted the existing legitimacy but overstated its case for bargaining purposes; as if it were motivated by specific grievances to be assuaged by limited concessions. Those who warn against the danger in time are considered alarmists; those who counsel adaptation to circumstance are considered balanced and sane, for they have all the good "reasons" on their side: the arguments accepted as valid in the existing framework. "Appeasement", where it is not a device to gain time, is the result of an inability to come to grips with a policy of unlimited objectives. But it is the essence of a revolutionary power that it possesses the courage of its convictions, that it is willing, indeed eager, to push its principles to their ultimate conclusion. Whatever else a revolutionary power may achieve therefore, it tends to erode, if not the legitimacy of the international order, at least the restraint with which such an order operates. The characteristic of a stable order is its spontaneity; the essence of a revolutionary situation is its self-consciousness. Principles of obligation in a period of legitimacy are taken so much for granted that they are never talked about, and such periods therefore appear to posterity as shallow and self-righteous. Principles in a revolutionary situation are so central that they are constantly talked about. The very sterility of the effort soon drains them of all meaning, and it is not unusual to find both sides invoking their version of the "true" nature of legitimacy in identical terms. And because in revolutionary situations the contending systems are less concerned with the adjustment of differences than with the subversion of loyalties, diplomacy is replaced either by war or by an armaments race.

This work will deal with a decade which throws these problems into sharp relief: the conclusion and the aftermath of the wars of the French Revolution. Few periods illustrate so well the dilemma posed by the appearance of a revolutionary power, the tendency of terms to change their meaning and of even the most familiar relationships to alter their significance. A
new philosophy boldly claimed that it would recast the existing structure of obligations, and Revolutionary France set about to give this claim effect. “What can make authority legitimate?” had been defined by Rousseau as the key question of politics and, however they might try, his opponents could not eliminate the question. Henceforth, disputes no longer concerned the adjustment of differences within an accepted framework, but the validity of the framework itself; the political contest had become doctrinal: the balance of power which had operated so intricately throughout the eighteenth century suddenly lost its flexibility and the European equilibrium came to seem an insufficient protection to powers faced by a France which proclaimed the incompatibility of its political maxims with those of the other states. But the half-hearted effort of Prussia and Austria to restore the legitimate ruler of France to his former position only accelerated the revolutionary élan. A French army based on conscription, inconceivable to even the most absolutist ruler by the grace of God, defeated the invading armies and overran the Low Countries. And then there appeared a conqueror who sought to translate the moral claims of the French Revolution into reality. Under the impact of Napoleon, there disintegrated not only the system of legitimacy of the eighteenth century, but with it the physical safeguards which, to contemporaries at least, seemed the prerequisite of stability. The Napoleonic Empire for all its extent demonstrated however the tenuousness of a conquest not accepted by the subjugated peoples. Although Napoleon had succeeded in overthrowing the existing concept of legitimacy, he could not replace it with an alternative. Europe was unified from the Niemen to the Bay of Biscay, but force had replaced obligation, the material achievements of the French Revolution had outrun their moral base. Europe was united, but only negatively, in its opposition to a power felt as foreign (which is the surest indication of the absence of legitimacy), in a consciousness of “otherness” which was soon endowed with moral claims and became the basis of nationalism. When Napoleon was defeated in Russia, the problem of constructing a legitimate order confronted Europe in its most concrete form. For opposition can create a wide consensus, perhaps even the widest attainable one, but its components, united by what they do not like, may be greatly at odds about what should replace it. It is for this reason that the year 1812 is the starting point of our discussion. However one conceives it—and it has been given a variety of interpretations ranging from the moral vindication of national self-determination to the tragic destiny of the Hero—this year marked the moment when it became evident that Europe was not to be organized by force. But the alternative was not nearly so apparent. It was clear that there were new forces loose in the world clamouring for popular participation in government. But it seemed equally evident that these forces had been responsible for a quarter-century of turmoil. The French Revolution had dealt a perhaps mortal blow to the divine right of kings; yet the representatives of this very doctrine were called upon to end the generation of bloodshed. In these circumstances what is surprising is not how imperfect was the settlement that emerged, but how sane; not how “reactionary” according to the self-righteous doctrines of nineteenth-century historiography, but how balanced. It may not have fulfilled all the hopes of an idealistic generation, but it gave this generation something
perhaps more precious: a period of stability which permitted their hopes to be realized without a major war or a permanent revolution. And our account will end in 1822, when the international order which emerged out of the revolutionary conflict assumed the form it was to retain for over a generation. The period of stability which ensued was the best proof that a "legitimate" order had been constructed, an order accepted by all the major powers, so that henceforth they sought adjustment within its framework rather than in its overthrow. That Europe rescued stability from seeming chaos was primarily the result of the work of two great men: of Castlereagh, the British Foreign Secretary, who negotiated the international settlement, and of Austria's minister, Metternich, who legitimized it. This is not to say that an international order emerged from personal intuition. Every statesman must attempt to reconcile what is considered just with what is considered possible. What is considered just depends on the domestic structure of his state; what is possible depends on its resources, geographic position and determination, and on the resources, determination and domestic structure of other states. Thus Castlereagh, secure in the knowledge of England's insular safety, tended to oppose only overt aggression. But Metternich, the statesman of a power situated in the centre of the Continent, sought above all to forestall upheavals. Convinced of the unassailability of its domestic institutions, the insular power developed a doctrine of "non-interference" in the domestic affairs of other states. Oppressed by the vulnerability of its domestic structure in an age of nationalism, the polyglot Austro-Hungarian empire insisted on a generalized right of interference to defeat social unrest wherever it occurred. Because Britain was threatened only if Europe fell under the domination of a single power, Castlereagh was primarily concerned with constructing a balance of forces. Because the balance of power only limits the scope of aggression but does not prevent it, Metternich sought to buttress the equilibrium by developing a doctrine of legitimacy and establishing himself as its custodian. Each failed as he succeeded: Castlereagh in making Britain a permanent part of the concert of Europe; Metternich in preserving the principle of legitimacy he had striven so hard to establish. But their achievements were not inconsiderable: a period of peace lasting almost a hundred years, a stability so pervasive that it may have contributed to disaster. For in the long interval of peace the sense of the tragic was lost; it was forgotten that states could die, that upheavals could be irretrievable, that fear could become the means of social cohesion. The hysteria of joy which swept over Europe at the outbreak of the First World War was the symptom of a fatuous age, but also of a secure one. It revealed a millennial faith; a hope for a world which had all the blessings of the Edwardian age made all the more agreeable by the absence of armament races and of the fear of war. What minister who declared war in August 1914, would not have recoiled with horror had he known the shape of the world in 1918, not to speak of the present? That such a world was inconceivable in 1914 is a testimony to the work of the statesmen with whom this book deals. 

II—THE CONTINENTAL STATESMAN

In the task of constructing a new international order which Napoleon's defeat in Russia so unexpectedly thrust on Europe, the problems of Austria took on an almost symbolic quality, both for geographic and historical reasons. Situated in the centre of Europe, amidst potentially hostile powers, with no
natural frontiers and a polyglot composition of Germans, Slavs, Magyars and Italians, Austria was the seismograph of Europe. It was certain to be the first victim of any major upheaval because war could only increase the centrifugal elements of a state whose sole bond of union was the common crown. And because Austria's need for stability was so great and because law is the expression of the status quo, Austria stood for the sense of limit and the importance of the equilibrium, for the necessity of law and the sanctity of treaties: "Austria," said Talleyrand, "is the Chamber of Peers of Europe."

But even more than its geographic location, its domestic structure symbolized the dilemmas of Europe. Until the end of the eighteenth century, the Austrian Empire had been among the most vigorous of the European states. As late as 1795 the Prussian patriot, Stein, could still favourably compare the cohesiveness and prosperity of the Austrian monarchy with that of Prussia. But now with Russian armies sweeping westward, came the first rumblings that were to transform the Austrian Empire into the "prison of nations". Not that its system of government grew more oppressive, only that its legitimacy came increasingly to be questioned. For a prison is not only a physical but also a psychological state. It would have occurred to no one in the eighteenth century that the Habsburg Emperor was a "foreigner" merely because he represented a German dynasty. Because in the nineteenth century this was emerging as a truism and because the defensive makes adaptation difficult, Austria's policy was destined to become increasingly inflexible. The Austrian Empire had not changed, but history was beginning to pass it by.

The tattered remnants of the Grande Armée which appeared in Central Europe in the winter of 1812 therefore represented to Austria an augury both of success and of danger: of success, for with the collapse of Napoleon's army, Austria for the first time in three years, would be able to conduct a truly independent policy, a policy not limited by the consciousness that survival depended on the will of one man; and of danger, for it was still not clear what would emerge out of the chaos of the disintegrating French power. The new doctrines of nationalism and rationalized administration could not but be dissolving for so intricate, indeed so subtle, a structure as this last survivor of the feudal period. Nor was it yet certain whether the pressure from the West was not about to be replaced by a similar threat from the East. How to avoid both impotence and dissolution? How to achieve both peace and proportion, both victory and legitimacy?

When the fate of empires is at stake, the convictions of their states-men are the medium for survival. And success depends on the correspondence of these convictions with the special requirements of the state. It was Austria's destiny that in its years of crisis it was guided by a man who epitomized its very essence; it was its destiny and not its good fortune, for as in Greek tragedy, the success of Clemens von Metternich made inevitable the ultimate collapse of the state he had fought so long to preserve.

Like the state he represented, Metternich was a product of an age in the process of being transcended. He was born in the eighteenth century of which Talleyrand was to say that nobody who lived after the French Revolution would ever know how sweet and gentle life could be. And the certitude of the time of his youth never left Metternich. Contemporaries might sneer at his invocation of the maxims of sound reason, at his facile philosophizing and polished epigrams. They did not understand that it was an accident of
history which projected Metternich into a revolutionary struggle so foreign to his temperament. For like the century that formed him, his style was adapted better to the manipulation of factors treated as given than to a contest of will, better to achievement through proportion than through scale. He was a Rococo figure, complex, finely carved, all surface, like an intricately cut prism. His face was delicate but without depth, his conversation brilliant but without ultimate seriousness. Equally at home in the salon and in the Cabinet, graceful and facile, he was the beau-ideal of the eighteenth-century aristocracy which justified itself not by its truth but by its existence. And if he never came to terms with the new age it was not because he failed to understand its seriousness but because he disdained it. Therein too his fate was the fate of Austria. It was this man who for over a generation ruled Austria, and often Europe, with the same methods of almost nonchalant manipulation he had learned in his youth. But no amount of deviousness could obscure the fact that he was engaged in a revolutionary contest and this imparted an unintended tenseness to Metternich's most subtle manœuvres. He might achieve victory but not comprehension and for this reason he came to use the proudest claim of the Enlightenment, the belief in the universality of the maxims of reason, with increasing self-consciousness as a weapon in the revolutionary struggle. Had Metternich been born fifty years earlier, he would still have been a conservative, but there would have been no need to write pedantic disquisitions about the nature of conservatism. He would have moved through the drawing-rooms of the fashionable world with his undeniable charm and grace, subtly and aloofly conducting his diplomacy with the circuitousness which is a symbol of certainty, of a world in which everybody understands intangibles in the same manner. He would still have played at philosophy, for this was the vogue of the eighteenth century, but he would not have considered it a tool of policy. But, in a century of seemingly permanent revolution, philosophy was the only means of rescuing universality from contingent claims. It was for this reason that Metternich fought so insistently against the identification of his name with his period, an attitude seemingly so inconsistent with his vanity. If there was a "Metternich system", his achievements would be personal, his battle meaningless. "To individualize an idea," he insisted, "leads to dangerous conclusions, as if an individual could be a cause; a wrong conception for when it does apply it indicates that a cause does not exist but is dissimulated."{2} It is the dilemma of conservatism that it must fight revolution anonymously, by what it is, not by what it says. So it came about that Metternich in his never-ending battle against revolution went back to the doctrines of the age in which he had been brought up, but interpreted them with an inflexibility which had been unnecessary when they were still taken for granted and which distorted their essence in application. He was still of the generation to whom the "great clockwork" or the "golden age" was more than an idle dream. There was a fitness in the universe which corresponded to man's noblest aspirations; a well-ordered mechanism the understanding of which insured success and whose laws could not be violated with impunity: "States, just as human beings, often transgress laws, the only difference is the severity of their penalty."{3} "Society has its laws just as nature and man. It is with old institutions as with old men, they can never be young again...This is the
way of the social order and it cannot be different because it is the law of nature...the moral world
has its storms just like the material one."{4} "One cannot cover the world with ruins without
crushing man beneath them."{5} Metternich used these truisms of eighteenth-century
philosophy to oppose revolution and liberalism, not because they were wicked, but because they
were unnatural, not only because he did not wish to live in the world his opponents attempted to
create, but because that world was doomed to failure. Revolution was an assertion of will and of
power, but the essence of existence was proportion, its expression was law, and its mechanism
an equilibrium. For these reasons the conservative statesman was the supreme realist and his
opponents the "visionaries". "I am a man of prose," Metternich insisted in his political testament,
"and not of poetry."{6} "My point of departure is the quiet contemplation of the affairs of this
world, not those of the other of which I know nothing and which are the object of faith which is in
strict opposition to knowledge...In the social world...one must act cold-bloodedly based on
observation and without hatred or prejudice...I was born to make history not to write novels and if
I guess correctly this is because I know. Invention is the enemy of history which knows only
discoveries, and only that which exists can be discovered."{7} This was the myth of the
philosopher-king, the ideal eighteenth-century ruler, who stood above the plane where personal
feelings reign, cool, composed, superior. Statesmanship was the science of the interests of
states,{8} and subject to laws entirely analogous to the laws of the physical world. The
statesman was a philosopher who understood these maxims, who performed his tasks but
reluctantly, for they deflected him from the source of the only real enjoyment, the contemplation
of truth;{9} he was responsible only to his conscience and to history—to the former because it
contained his vision of truth, to the latter because it provided the only test of its validity. The
reaction against Metternich's smug self-satisfaction and rigid conservatism has tended for over a
century now to take the form of denying the reality of his accomplishments. But a man who came
to dominate every coalition in which he participated, who was considered by two foreign
monarchs as more trustworthy than their own ministers, who for three years was in effect Prime
Minister of Europe, such a man could not be of mean consequence. To be sure, the successes
he liked to ascribe to the moral superiority of his maxims were more often due to the
extraordinary skill of his diplomacy. His genius was instrumental, not creative; he excelled at
manipulation, not construction. Trained in the school of eighteenth-century cabinet diplomacy,
he preferred the subtle manœuvre to the frontal attack, while his rationalism frequently made
him mistake a well-phrased manifesto for an accomplished action. Napoleon said of him that he
confused policy with intrigue, and Hardenberg, the envoy of Hanover at Vienna, wrote the
following analysis of Metternich's diplomatic methods at the height of the crisis of 1812:
"Endowed with a high opinion of the superiority of his ability...he loves finesse in politics and
considers it essential. Since he does not have sufficient energy to mobilize the resources of his
country...he attempts to substitute cunning for strength and character...It would suit him best if a
fortunate accident—the death of Napoleon or great successes of Russia—were to create a
situation where he could let Austria play an important role."{10} Friedrich von Gentz, for long
Metternich's closest associate, has left probably the best capsule description of Metternich's methods and personality: "Not a man of strong passions and of bold measures; not a genius but a great talent; cool, calm, imperturbable and calculator par excellence." This, then, was the statesman to whom Austria's fate was entrusted in 1812: doctrinaire, but in the universalist manner of the eighteenth century; devious, because the very certainty of his convictions made him extremely flexible in his choice of means; matter-of-fact and aloof; coldly pursuing the art of statecraft. His characteristic quality was tact, the sensibility to nuance. Such a man might have dominated the eighteenth century, but he was formidable in any age. A mediocre strategist but a great tactician, he was a master of the set battle in periods when the framework was given or the objectives imposed from the outside. Such a period was the year 1812, and the issue for Metternich was not so much the liberation of Europe as the restoration of the equilibrium both moral and physical.

Metternich, the most Austrian statesman, did not see Austria until his thirteenth year and did not live there until his seventeenth. Born in the Rhineland, educated in Strasbourg and Mainz, and raised in Brussels where his father was Governor-General of the Low Countries, Metternich had the typical upbringing of the eighteenth-century aristocrat. Cosmopolitan and rationalist, he was always more at home in the French language than in the German. But however typical Metternich was of the eighteenth-century aristocracy, he did not follow their wishful evaluation of the French Revolution. The wars of Napoleon did not seem to him like the wars of the eighteenth century, set battles with finite objectives which left the basic structure of obligations unaffected. Nor did he believe it possible to satisfy the conqueror by compromise, to moderate him by concession or to obligate him by alliance. "All nations have made the mistake," he wrote in 1807, "to attach to a treaty with France the value of a peace, without immediately preparing again for war. No peace is possible with a revolutionary system, whether with a Robespierre who declares war on chateaux or a Napoleon who declares war on Powers." And this belief was reinforced by his conviction that the principle of solidarity of states superseded that of revolution: "Isolated states exist only as the abstractions of so-called philosophers. In the society of states each state has interests...which connect it with the others. The great axioms of political science derive from the recognition of the true interests of all states; it is in the general interests that the guarantee of existence is to be found, while particular interests—the cultivation of which is considered political wisdom by restless and short-sighted men—have only a secondary importance...Modern history demonstrates the application of the principle of solidarity and equilibrium...and of the united efforts of states against the supremacy of one power in order to force a return to the common law...What then becomes of egotistical policy, of the policy of fantasy and of miserable gain?"

But in 1801, when Metternich began his diplomatic career, the solidarity of states seemed unattainable, for "nothing is more difficult to harmonize than eternal and incontestable principles and a system of conduct adopted in direct opposition to them". There remained only the task of creating a balance of power not, to be sure, in order to guarantee universal peace but to achieve a tolerable armistice. Metternich's first diplomatic reports, when, at the age of twenty-eight, he was appointed Austrian envoy in
Saxony, reveal the conception of this equilibrium which was to guide his policy throughout his life: the power of France must be reduced; Austria and Prussia must forget their recent past, the wars fought for the possession of Silesia. Not competition but co-operation was their natural policy. An equilibrium was possible only through a strong central Europe backed by England, for the interests of a power exclusively commercial and of a power entirely continental could never lead to rivalry. But an equilibrium based on considerations of power is the most difficult of all to establish, particularly in a revolutionary period following a long peace. Lulled by the memory of stability, states tend to seek security in inactivity and to mistake impotence for lack of provocation. The conqueror is to be tamed by reason and perhaps by collaboration; by policies, in short, which cannot conceive mortal threats or total destruction. Coalitions against revolutions have usually come about only at the end of a long series of betrayals and upheavals, for the powers which represent legitimacy and the status quo cannot "know" that their antagonist is not amenable to "reason" until he has demonstrated it. And he will not have demonstrated it until the international system is already overturned. Metternich was to experience this when he was sent in 1804 to negotiate an alliance with Prussia. He found a court which saw in the preparation for self-defence the most certain provocation for war and in concerted action the seed of universal doom. Almost alone among his contemporaries, Metternich understood the weakness of Prussia, still surrounded by the nimbus of Frederick the Great, but demoralized by a long period of peace. "There exists," he wrote in his whimsical fashion, "a conspiracy of mediocrities...united by the common terror of any decisive action...There is nobody to remind the king that his army might perhaps be utilized to greater advantage on the field of battle than on the plains of Berlin and Potsdam. The Prussian monarchy which has tripled in size since the death of Frederick II (The Great) has declined in real strength. Frederick William III will certainly not use a language from the centre of his vast dominions which was not foreign to Frederick II from the walls of a capital which never ceased being an armed camp." The construction of the equilibrium therefore depended not merely on strength but on the resolution to use it. If the fear of France prevented joint action, perhaps the fear of Russia could create it. "We shall conquer Prussia only in Russia," Metternich said, and began a diplomatic campaign which brought Russian troops to the Prussian borders with an ultimatum of alliance or war. But the King of Prussia refused to accept so patent an infraction of the "normal relations" of states and threatened to resist by force of arms. War was averted only by the precipitation of Napoleon, who marched troops through a section of Prussian territory and thereby brought on himself the wrath of Frederick William's outraged probity which he had never been able to earn as a conqueror bent on dominating Europe. Everything seemed won. A Prussian negotiator was sent to Vienna to make final arrangements for a treaty of alliance; the Prussian army moved towards the flanks of the French forces invading Bohemia, Russian troops were traversing Poland. A decisive defeat for Napoleon seemed in the making. But timid men are more likely to be moved to trepidation than to daring in the face of great opportunities. The traditions of a century of uninterrupted expansion, the "rules" of Cabinet diplomacy according to which the maximum bargain had to be struck in
the hour of greatest need, combined to cause Prussia to delay its final commitment. It is the essence of mediocrity that it prefers the tangible advantage to the intangible gain in position. Thus Prussia chose this precise moment to haggle over a military frontier along the Weser and to advance a proposal of armed mediation on “reasonable” terms to obtain one more proof of Napoleon’s perfidy.\(^{17}\) In vain did Metternich preach his lesson of the equilibrium, of security based on the relations of states and not on territorial extent; in vain did he inquire how a power could mediate on its own behalf.\(^{18}\) This was not a problem of logic. While Prussia hesitated, the French army wheeled south and defeated the Austrians and Russians at Austerlitz. Again a point was reached where the theory of limited wars counselled peace, while the reality of revolutionary conflict indicated perseverance. Metternich’s struggle was now with his own government. He insisted that Napoleon’s seeming omnipotence was but the reflection of the disunity of his opponents, that the combined Allied armies still far outnumbered Napoleon’s. He urged that the defeat be frankly avowed, but that it serve as the moral basis for a renewed effort.\(^{19}\) But if Prussia used the crisis to clinch her gains, Austria saw in it an opportunity to trim her losses and negotiated a separate peace. Meanwhile, Napoleon’s army deployed against Prussia, not yet to destroy her, but to intimidate her into becoming an accomplice by incorporating Hanover and thus isolating herself from Great Britain. And the Russian armies returned to Poland. “One hundred thousand men have defeated five times their number,” Metternich exclaimed. “Where is manna? When will God appear from the wings?” And he added that he was in a state of conditional despair, but that only death, which destroyed all hopes, could make his despair unconditional.\(^{20}\) Little wonder that henceforth Metternich sought to delay the Austrian commitment until after that of all of its potential allies; that he distrusted protestations of loyalty based on promises of future fulfilment; that he constructed alliances only after a period of a deliberation that seemed maddening to those eager for Austrian co-operation, but which was essential to test the moral strength of the coalition.

III

It is the nature of statesmen conducting a policy of petty advantage to seek in vacillation a substitute for action. A policy which lets itself be influenced by events—which in the formal phrase “awaits developments”—is likely to seek the remedy against a decision recognized as erroneous in adopting its extreme opposite, without considering the possibility of intermediary solutions. So Prussia, whose hesitations had largely caused the disaster of 1806, suddenly awakened to the realization that, despite the incorporation of Hanover, its relative position had been weakened and foolhardily plunged into the war with France it had so desperately attempted to avoid during the previous year. But Napoleon was not to be defeated in single combat. Prussia suffered at Jena and Auerstädt the fate of Austria at Austerlitz. Once more promised Russian support proved illusory. After a Russian defeat at Friedland, Napoleon and Alexander met on a raft in the river Niemen at Tilsit, there to complete the division of the world. But the final overthrow of the existing structure paradoxically seemed to restore Metternich’s confidence in eventual triumph. For now the incommensurability between Napoleon’s material and moral base was apparent, the intermediary powers had been eliminated, the time of unlimited victories gained by limited wars
was over. Victory henceforth would depend on domestic strength, and Napoleon, having failed to establish a principle of obligation to maintain his conquests, would find his power sapped by the constant need for the application of force. Metternich had in the meantime become ambassador to Paris, from where he sent a flood of advice, deferential and subtle, respectful but unremitting, for domestic reorganization, for continuing military reform, for evading Napoleon's suggestions of disarmament, for strengthening national cohesion. "Public opinion," wrote Metternich in 1808, "is one of the most powerful weapons, which like religion penetrates the most hidden corners where administrative measures lose their influence; to despise public opinion is like despising moral principles...[Public opinion] requires a cult all its own...Posterity will hardly believe that we regarded silence as an effective weapon in this, the century of words." And he summed up his goals in an eloquent dispatch written soon after the news of Tilsit in 1807: "A day will arrive through the wisdom of our government, when three hundred thousand men will play the first role in a Europe of universal anarchy; at one of those moments which always follow great usurpations. Nobody can predict the date save that nothing delays it except the life of a single individual who has not taken any steps to prevent the inevitable chaos." Force might conquer the world but it could not legitimize itself. It was Austria's task to preserve her integrity as the repository of all that remained of the old principles and the old forms, and this in the course of time was bound to bring Austria powerful allies. Napoleon's war in Spain seemed to confirm Metternich's expectations. For the first time, Napoleon was confronted by an enemy which did not surrender after a lost battle and the resources of which did not augment those of France. The early reverses of Napoleon's replacement army shattered the myth of his invincibility. "We have learned a great secret," Metternich wrote in 1808, "Napoleon has but one army, the Grande Armée and French recruits are no better than those of other nations." He took it for granted that Spain would be defeated militarily, but that it would not be pacified. Since Napoleon's character would not let him think of withdrawing, Spain would remain a drain on French resources of men and material. Even more important was the moral gain. Austerlitz had demonstrated that it was risky to be Napoleon's enemy; Jena, that it was disastrous to remain neutral; but Spain proved beyond doubt that it was fatal to be Napoleon's friend. What, then, were the alternatives? To be oneself, Metternich argued, and not to lose a moment in repairing past losses. There was no doubt that Napoleon aimed at Austria's destruction for, both by its extent and the principles it represented, its existence was incompatible with his universal domination. But there was a limit to usurpations as Spain had demonstrated. A resolute opponent, moreover, would now find allies even within France, in all the individuals satiated by glory and eager to enjoy its rewards undisturbed; above all, in Talleyrand and Fouché, whom Metternich described as being like sailors eager to mutiny against a daring pilot, but not until the ship has struck some rocks. Any war outside the natural limits of the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees was no longer the war of France but the war of Napoleon, Metternich quoted Talleyrand as saying. But Metternich did not look to allies merely within France. Once more he resurrected his plan of an Austro-Russian understanding. He
proposed that the T sar be approached directly with a frank explanation of Austria's determination and difficulties, coupled with a specific proposal of military co-operation. He explained to the Russian Foreign Minister, Roumazoff, then in Paris, how unnatural the alliance of Russia and France was and how impossible a durable peace in a Europe without a strong centre. The homilies on the nature of the equilibrium proved unavailing, however. In 1809, as in 1805 and 1806, Russia stood by passively while the conqueror advanced to its borders. So Austria found itself engaged in 1809 in a war for survival, a war fought, for the first and last time in Metternich's period, in the name of national identity and by an army based on conscription. Even Metternich was swept along by the national enthusiasm, so foreign to his cosmopolitan outlook. 

"[Napoleon] bases his hopes for success," he wrote to his chief, Stadion, "on the slowness of our movements, on the repose which we will take after our first success, or the discouragement...and the paralysis which will follow our first defeat...Let us therefore adopt his principles. Let us not consider ourselves victorious until the day after the battle, nor defeated until four days later...Let us always carry the sword in one hand and the olive branch in the other, always ready to negotiate but negotiating only while advancing...A man cannot run the same risks as an ancient Empire...We are, for the first time strong in ourselves, let us act it...let us never forget that the year 1809 is either the end of an old era or the beginning of a new one." 

But it was to be neither. There may be a fitness of things in the universe, but it does not operate in a finite time and certainly not in a brief one. The finest army ever created by Austria was defeated and the Emperor, unwilling to risk everything, sued for peace. Never again, under Metternich, was Austria to attempt solitary efforts or to stake its fate on the moral disposition of its people. The war of 1809 was thus neither the end nor the beginning of an era, but rather a turning-point and a continuation. It was a turning-point, for it confirmed the already powerful hesitation of the Emperor to build further on the support of the polyglot nationalities composing his Empire. Henceforth, he was to seek security in stability, in the least possible change of existing institutions. And it was the continuation of a mode of government which had lost its élan and its self-confidence, which knew its limits but hardly its goals, particularly in domestic matters, and which hedged its risks by the careful involvement of the largest possible number of allies. The foundations of the "Metternich system" were laid in 1809. This was the year, too, when Emperor Franz asked Metternich to become his Foreign Minister, a post he was not to relinquish for thirty-nine years. It was symbolic of the lessons Austria drew from the war, that the man who more than any other had urged it now became the architect of peace, who would repair by cunning, patience, and manipulation what had been lost by total commitment.

A state defeated in war and menaced by dissolution has two broad choices: open opposition or persuasion. If it treats the defeat as a reflection on its national resolution but not on its strength, it will attempt to make up for its deficiency on the battlefield by a greater mobilization of its resources, a higher development of its morale, until another and more favourable opportunity permits it to try again the contest in arms. This was the attitude of Austria after 1805. Or it may become convinced of its physical impotence and strive to save its national substance by adaptation to the victor.
is not necessarily a heroic policy, although in certain circumstances it may be the most heroic of all. To co-operate, without losing one's soul, to assist without sacrificing one's identity, to work for deliverance in the guise of bondage and under enforced silence, what harder test of moral toughness exists? This was, in any case, the policy of Austria after 1809, imposed, at least in part, by its physical impotence. For the peace deprived Austria of one-third of its territories, its defensive bastions and its outlet to the sea. Along the Adriatic coast the new French province of Illyria foreshadowed later designs on Hungary while the Duchy of Warsaw to the north represented a mortgage on Austria's good behaviour. And the Empire was financially so ruined that Napoleon did not even limit its army, well aware that Austria did not possess sufficient resources to maintain a substantial force. “If after 1805,” Metternich told the Emperor in his first statement of policy, “Austria was still strong enough to work for the general deliverance...it will now be forced to seek its security in adaptation to the French system. I need hardly repeat how little we fit into this system so contrary to all principles of a rightly conceived policy...But never again can we think of resistance without Russian help. That vacillating court may awaken more quickly when it can no longer earn an exclusive merit through its miserable policy...Only one escape is left to us: to conserve our strength for better days, to work for our preservation with gentler means—and not to look back.”{30} All the elements of Metternich's policy are united here: the conviction of the incompatibility of a system of conquest with an organized international community, the distrust of Russia, the failure of alliances, the flexibility of tactics for the achievement of a goal which, because it reflected universal laws, was none the less inevitable for seeming so remote. Metternich was proposing a policy which today we would call “collaboration”. It is a policy which can only be carried out by a state certain of its moral strength or overwhelmed by the consciousness of moral impotence. It is a policy which places a peculiar strain on the domestic principles of obligation for it can never be legitimized by its real motives. Its success depends on its appearance of sincerity, on the ability, as Metternich once said, of seeming the dupe without being it. To show one's purpose is to court disaster; to succeed too completely is to invite disintegration. In such periods the knave and the hero, the traitor and the statesman are distinguished, not by their acts, but by their motives. At what stage collaboration damages the national substance, at what point it becomes an excuse for the easy way out, these are questions that can be resolved only by people who have lived through the ordeal, not by abstract speculation. Collaboration can be carried out successfully only by a social organism of great cohesiveness and high morale, because it presupposes a degree of confidence in the leadership which makes treason seem inconceivable. The moral strength of Austria, on which Metternich counted to achieve victory in war, failed in this objective; but it saved Austria in a period of humiliating peace. This, then, was Metternich's policy: to keep all options open, to retain a maximum freedom of action, but to limit all commitments by the need to win French confidence. Austria joined the Continental System against England, but it never broke relations with it. Metternich remained in close touch with Hardenberg, the envoy of Hanover and thus indirectly of the Prince Regent of Great Britain. He went so far as to express the hope—through
Hardenberg—that relations between Austria and Britain would not only remain friendly but extend to mutual advice. Correct relations were maintained with Russia, but it was made clear that French forbearance, not Russian assistance, was considered the basis of Austrian policy. The condition of Austrian survival was a relaxation of French pressure. But pressure would not be relaxed and negotiations would be meaningless without a framework of confidence. And confidence presupposed a principle to which Napoleon found it possible to agree, which identified the interests of Austria and France, at least to a certain extent. How to reconcile the claims of universal domination with those of equilibrium, of the state to which every limit was a challenge, and of the Empire for which limitation was the condition of survival? 

There was one weak point in the Napoleonic structure, however, which Metternich had never tired of pointing out: that legitimacy depends on acceptance, not imposition; that for all its conquests the fate of the French Empire depended on the life of one man. Metternich, therefore, appealed to the sense of insecurity of the parvenu to create the only bond which Napoleon would recognize as a "claim". He bartered legitimacy for time, a hope for permanence against a promise of survival. He arranged for the marriage of the daughter of Emperor Franz, the Apostolic Majesty and the last Holy Roman Emperor, whose house had ruled for five hundred years, with Napoleon, the Corsican, who had ruled for ten. "Whenever Napoleon destroys something," Metternich wrote to the Emperor in 1810, "he speaks of guarantees. This expression in its usual sense is hardly compatible with his actions. A guarantee commonly rests on the state of political relationships...But Napoleon does not appreciate the political aspect of guarantees; he aims at reality, at a surety. Thus each usurpation becomes for him a guarantee of his strength and of his existence...In this sense he motivates each overthrow of a throne...by the semblance of self-defence...In the marriage with the daughter of Your Majesty Napoleon found a guarantee which he had sought in vain...in the overthrow of the Austrian throne." Thus, Metternich transcended the chasm between opposing legitimacies which characterizes revolutionary situations, by boldly using Napoleon's concept of legitimacy—the only one he recognized—against him. And just as Napoleon's conquests were due to the fact that his opponents could not conceive a policy of unlimited objectives, so Napoleon's final overthrow was caused by his own inability to comprehend the instability of dynastic relations. Metternich did not wait long to take advantage of his new position. He visited Paris in order to help the new Empress acclimatize herself—and to divine Napoleon's next move. He obtained very few concessions: a slight reduction in the Austrian indemnity, the permission to float a loan in Belgium and to mediate between the Pope and Napoleon. But he left with an invaluable conviction: that a French attack on Russia was inevitable, that it would probably occur in the summer of 1812, and that Austria would have a respite for this reason, if no other. Although Austria used the interval to restore its finances, the imminence of war posed a new dilemma, for now the Russian alliance so long and so desperately sought seemed available for the asking, the continental equilibrium was again within reach. Even Prussia, since Tilsit reduced to a power of the second rank, extended feelers for an alliance. But Metternich was well aware that the defeat of 1809 had left the Austrian
Empire without any margin for error. He knew that another lost war or even a protracted one would lead to its disintegration and he trusted neither the physical strength of Prussia nor the moral stamina of Russia. On the other hand, argued Metternich in a memorandum to the Emperor, an alliance with France was out of the question, for it would undermine the source of Austrian strength, its claim to moral superiority, while neutrality would incur the hostility of Russia without obtaining the friendship of France. It would exclude Austria from any voice in the future peace settlement and condemn her to the role of a second-class power. A series of paradoxes may be intriguing for the philosopher but they are a nightmare for the statesman, for the latter must not only contemplate but resolve them. An alliance with Russia might lead to the defeat of Napoleon, but it might also cause the brunt of the war to fall on Austria and end with another Russian betrayal. An alliance with France would undermine Austria's moral position, while armed neutrality would exhaust her material resources. Austria had thus reached precisely the point where collaboration begins to pay diminishing returns, the borderline between passive struggle and loss of will. Metternich attempted to escape this dilemma by limiting his commitment, while the other powers extended theirs. He hoped to restore to Austria a measure of freedom of action, while utilizing the crisis to develop her strength. The means he chose was a further step on the road of adaptation to France, but hedged in a manner which testified to Metternich's inward reserve. An alliance was negotiated with France providing for an Austrian auxiliary corps of thirty thousand men to operate under the direct command of Napoleon and to utilize French supplies. In return, Napoleon guaranteed the integrity of the Austrian Empire and promised Austria not only territorial compensations in proportion to her exertions, but a "memorial", an additional and presumably "disproportionate" territorial accretion to symbolize the lasting harmony of France and Austria. Whatever one may think of the morality of this step, there is no doubt that it achieved Metternich's objectives. Austria could arm, not only without the opposition, but with the encouragement of France. It had been assured of a voice in the peace settlement and obtained a symbolic expression of a preferential status in the French system. The territorial accretion was contingent on French victory—in which case it would serve as a counterweight to France—and meaningless in case of French defeat. Not without justice could Metternich describe the Austrian war effort as neither a war of conquest, nor a defensive war, but a war of conservation. It was an alliance infiniment limité. It now remained to make clear the limitation of the Austrian commitment. Metternich told Hardenberg that Austria had had no alternative, that she would never cease considering herself the core of resistance to Napoleon. But he added, that open resistance was fool-hardy until Austria was more powerful and he urged Britain to increase its diversion in Spain. At the same time he assured Russia that Austria had no aggressive intent and made the startling proposal that Austria and Russia agree on the conduct of the war to preserve the Austrian auxiliary corps and to keep it from serious participation in the main operation. He suggested that Russia concentrate troops in Galicia to justify Austrian inaction and to furnish a pretext for the creation of yet another army corps. But he evaded Russian requests that he reduce these offers to writing. Determined not to risk
Austria's existence in the first battle, Metternich strove by the dexterity of his manœuvres to achieve the isolation which an insular location furnished more favored powers, until he had gauged the constellation of forces and could let Austria play its real and traditional role: the organization of the coalition and the legitimization of the peace. This, then, was Metternich's position when the first news of the French disaster in Russia reached him. The war of 1805 had taught him the tenuousness of alliances and that of 1809 their necessity. The events of 1805 had convinced him that imminent danger might justify isolation as well as coalition, that continental policy could not be conducted ad hoc. The disaster of 1809 had led him to believe that national élan was no substitute for a material base. Throughout this period Russia's conduct had been ambiguous. She had helped destroy the powers which could act as a barrier against France and, until her own territories were threatened, had recoiled from combat after the first defeat. Now, as Russian troops swept westward, Metternich feared their success as much as their irresolution. He had not fought nearly a decade for the equilibrium in order to replace the supremacy of the West by a dominance from the East. And he had not nursed Austria back to a modicum of strength to risk it in a fit of enthusiasm. When Russia pointed out that the moment for a change of sides had arrived, Metternich replied that Austria's present position was not of its own choosing, that a power whose very existence depended on the recognition of the sanctity of treaty relations could not simply break an alliance, and that Austrian policy was based not on sentiment but on cold calculation. The moment had indeed arrived when, as Metternich had predicted, three hundred thousand men could play the first role in a Europe of universal anarchy. But Austria had barely one-fifth that number and half of them were in Russia with Napoleon. Even more important, Austria had to test, not only Russian resolution, but the kind of war it would wage. For Austria was interested not in the freedom of nations, but in the liberty of historical states. A people's war might involve the dissolution of the polyglot Empire, a national crusade might lead to the overthrow of the dynasties on which Austria's German position was based. "How hard is the fall of a great man," exclaimed Metternich. ("Que la chute d'un grand homme est lourde.""

"...All the plans of the poor central powers must be directed towards not being ground to powder (zermalmt).""

Everything depended, therefore, not only on the defeat of Napoleon but on the manner in which it was achieved, not only on the creation of a coalition but also on the principle in the name of which it was to fight. "If a great state is forced to act in a situation of great peril," Metternich said during the Crimean War, in a situation which he never ceased to consider analogous to that of 1813, "it must at least secure for itself the position of supreme leadership.""

This was all the more important for the great Central Empire situated in the middle of contending states whose rear was protected by the sea or by the steppes: "Before Austria enters a war it must secure not only its military but its moral position.""

But it was clear what Austria's moral position required: a war of states, not of nations, a coalition legitimized by a doctrine of conservatism and stability, and brought about, if possible, in the name of existing treaties rather than by their rupture. In addition, considerations of power inspired Metternich with caution. For Napoleon, although defeated in Russia, was still the master of the Low Countries, of
Italy, and of Illyria. The secondary German powers of the Confederation of the Rhine were still his satellites; Prussia his ally. And Metternich was confirmed in his deliberate policy by his conviction that the time had come to put his familiarity with Napoleon's character to good use.

"Napoleon and I spent years together," he wrote in 1820, "as if at a game of chess, carefully watching each other; I to checkmate him, he to crush me together with the chess figures."{43}

This was the symbolization of the issue of the period: the man of will and the man of reason, the principle of universality and the sense of limit, the assertion of power and the claim of legitimacy.

But whatever else the events of 1812 had proved, they had demonstrated that the game could no longer be won by pulverizing either the antagonist or the pieces; that it had to be played according to its own rules which placed a premium on subtlety and not on brute strength. The longer Napoleon hesitated in recognizing this truth, the more certain his ultimate defeat.

Universal claims, if backed by substantial force or opposed by insufficient resolution, can, through their very enormity, disintegrate the structure of international relations. But when the means are limited and the antagonist determined, the memory of great successes may cause the delusion which is a prelude to disaster.

The kind of game Metternich decided to play was, moreover, not one of the bold manœuvre, which risked everything on a quick checkmate. Rather it was deliberate and cunning, a game where the advantage lay in a gradual transformation of the position, in which the opponent's moves were utilized first to paralyse and then to destroy him, while the player marshalled his resources. It was a game whose daring resided in the loneliness in which it had to be played, in the face of non-comprehension and abuse by both friend and foe; whose courage lay in its imperturbability when one wrong move might mean disaster and loss of confidence might spell isolation; whose greatness derived from the skill of its moves and not from the inspiration of its conception. It was a game at the end of which Austria had attained the Supreme Command of the Alliance, had deflected the war from its territories, had based the Coalition on the Cabinets and not on the peoples and thereby had assured a peace, the legitimization of which was consistent with her continued existence. It was not heroic, but it saved an empire.

Metternich's opening gambit was a dispatch to the Austrian chargé d'affaires at the French Headquarters in Vilna, sent on 9 December, when it was known that Napoleon had failed, but not how seriously he had been defeated. Subtle and sarcastic, at the same time conciliatory and threatening, it set the tone of the subsequent efforts and determined the kind of game this was to be. Its significance resided less in its content, which was only the first step in an intricate manœuvre, the full implications of which were not to become apparent for seven months, than in its tone, in its assertion of the independence which Metternich considered the equivalent of health in the individual.{44} It began with an ironical summary of the existing situation: "Austria has too much respect to permit itself an opinion about the military dispositions of the greatest commander of the century. It was a novel problem, the Cabinet of St. Petersburg had given so many proofs of its inconstancy that even [my italics] the soberest calculation permitted the assumption that an enterprise so much against all probability as the conquest of Moscow...would induce Alexander to negotiate. But this hope had been
disappointed; Russia had found it easy to surrender the interests of its allies; it could not be
induced to surrender its own. 

This paragraph was preliminary to a long analysis of the military and psychological possibilities, which resolved itself into the proposition that all the victories of the Grande Armée had achieved nothing, that the conquest of Russia was impossible, the motive for a separate peace non-existent. What then was the solution? Austria's good offices, Metternich replied, for the negotiation of a general peace. Only Austria, he maintained, could approach the other nations without offending their dignity, while it was united to France by bonds of family. The state which kept fifty million people in the centre of Europe in check had the duty to speak of peace even towards France, if only to maintain appearances. This threatening affirmation of Austria's good faith was followed by another ambiguity: "The Emperor of the French seems to have foreseen what is happening today when he told me so frequently that the marriage [to Marie Louise] had transformed the face of Europe. The moment is near, it may have already arrived, when Napoleon will draw the real advantage from this fortunate alliance." And Metternich concluded with a phrase he not only underlined but stressed, of subtle obtuseness and devious daring: "When our exalted master learned of the evacuation of Moscow, he summed up the essence of his attitude in these few words: 'The moment has come when I can show the Emperor of the French who I am.' I will confine myself to repeating these words of His Majesty, so simple and at the same time so energetic, and I empower you to communicate them to the Duke of Bassano [French Foreign Minister]. Any commentary will only detract from their force."{45}Thus Metternich opened the campaign which was to lead to a Coalition against Napoleon by offering his antagonist peace. In this manner, he took the first step in obtaining French approval for transforming the alliance into neutrality, the neutrality into mediation, and the mediation into war, all accomplished in the name of existing treaties and initially motivated by concern for the great ally. It may be asked why Metternich had to choose a procedure so indirect, a method so intricate and so difficult to legitimize. Why not attempt to adapt the Austrian domestic structure to the national élan sweeping across Europe? But a statesman must work with the material at hand and the domestic structure of Austria was rigid, much more rigid, paradoxically, than the international one. But before we examine the impact of the Austrian domestic structure on Metternich's foreign policy, we must turn to another statesman, the Foreign Minister of the power which had fought Napoleon most persistently. He, too, attempted to animate a coalition and he, too, appeared on the scene by advancing a plan for peace.

III—

THE INSULAR STATESMAN

The memory of states is the test of truth of their policy. The more elementary the experience, the more profound its impact on a nation's interpretation of the present in the light of the past. It is even possible for a nation to undergo an experience so shattering that it becomes the prisoner of its past. Such was not the case with the Britain of 1812, however. It had had its shock and it had survived. But although its moral structure remained unimpaired, it emerged from the ordeal of nearly a decade of isolation with the resolve never to stand alone again. If one were free to draw a prescription for a man to give effect to this resolution, there are few one would be less likely to select than Lord Castlereagh, who became
British Foreign Secretary at the very moment that the Grande Armée was assembling at the Niemen. Born in Ireland, of an old, if undistinguished, family, he had undergone the typical education of the British landed aristocracy at a time when contacts with the Continent were tenuous and foreign affairs confined to makeshift coalitions against the revolutionary tide. His career had been solid but unspectacular. His first public acts were connected with putting down the Irish Rebellion and abolishing the Irish Parliament, acts which helped to establish his reputation as an ogre to liberalism. He had served as Secretary of War under Pitt, and this association was to lay the foundation of his later policy. For the greater part of this period he was overshadowed by the more brilliant Canning. In 1809, after an unfortunate duel, both men had to retire from public office. Castlereagh returned in 1812, as Foreign Secretary and leader of the House of Commons, in the Cabinet of Lord Liverpool which was not expected to last more than a few months. So well established was Canning's "expertise" in foreign affairs that Castlereagh offered to relinquish to him the Foreign Office provided he could retain his position as leader of the House of Commons. But so dismal seemed the prospects of the Liverpool Cabinet that Canning refused, not to attain his goal for another decade. Castlereagh's place in history thus came about almost as an afterthought, as unobtrusively as his personality. Yet it was this man, more than any other, who forged again a European connection for Britain, who maintained the Coalition, and negotiated the settlement which in its main outlines was to last for over fifty years. Psychologists may well ponder how it came about that this Irish peer, whose career had given no indication of profound conceptions, should become the most European of British statesmen. No man more different from his great protagonist, Metternich, could be imagined. 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. Few individuals have left behind them such a paucity of personal reminiscences. Icy and reserved, Castlereagh walked his solitary path, as humanly unapproachable as his policy came to be incomprehensible to the majority of his countrymen. It was said of him that he was like a splendid summit of polished frost, icy, beautiful, aloof, of a stature that nobody could reach and few would care to. It was not until his tragic death that the world was to learn the price of solitude. Yet as a symbol of the British experience Castlereagh could hardly have been more appropriate. For the war had not been fought by Britain against a revolutionary doctrine, much less in the name of an alternative one, but against a universal claim; not for freedom but for independence; not for a social order but for an equilibrium. This was to be a constant source of misunderstanding with the Continental nations, particularly Austria. To the Continental nations it was a war not only for independence, but for their independence in terms of their historical experience; for Great Britain it was for a Europe in which universal dominion would be impossible. For Austria it was a war for the survival of a social order; for Great Britain, a war for the creation of the "great masses" necessary to contain France.
danger of world revolution, Castlereagh reminded him that the Napoleonic wars had been fought by Great Britain on the basis of material considerations in which British interests were obviously involved, not because of vague enunciations of principle. British objectives are for this reason easier to state in negative than in positive terms. They reflected the policy of an island power to which the Continent, if unified under a single rule, represented a mortal threat; of a social structure conscious of such uniqueness—and the consciousness is more important than the fact of uniqueness—that it felt threatened by domestic transformations in foreign countries only if they involved a forcible extension abroad. It was a defensive conception of foreign policy which saw Britain in the role of balancer in a Europe of equilibrium. And, since the equilibrium was conceived in political rather than in social terms, it was thought to depend on a balance among states of approximately equal power, not on a principle of legitimacy. Britain, which had combated the outward projection of the French Revolution, fought for a Europe whose structure would prohibit conquest. Austria, and the other Continental states, which had been brought to the brink of dissolution by the fact of the French Revolution and the impossibility, both geographical and psychological, of isolation, fought for a Europe whose "legitimacy" made universal conquest inconceivable. Because a balancer cannot perform his function unless the differences among the other powers are greater than their collective differences with the balancer, the British nightmare was a continental peace which excluded Britain. Because a society cannot function if constantly on the defensive against forces attacking its myth, the European nightmare was permanent revolution. This is not to say that British statesmen did not prefer some domestic structures to others. But their preference was based on the greater likelihood that these governments would maintain the European equilibrium. The Liverpool Cabinet was an infinitely more uncompromising opponent of Napoleon's continued rule than even the Austrian government. But this opposition had nothing to do with the "legitimacy" of the Bourbons; it stemmed from a conviction that no peace with Napoleon could be permanent. "Who will say," Castlereagh said after Napoleon's escape from Elba, "if [Napoleon] again rules the destinies of France that Europe can be tranquil, secure or independent. I consider that in the question now at issue in France is involved the more vital question whether Europe can return to that moral system by which...the interests of mankind are to be upheld or whether we shall remain, as we have been during the last twenty years, under the necessity of maintaining a system of military policy; whether Europe shall in the future present the spectacle of an assemblage of free or of armed nations." Whenever he felt he could safely do so, he advocated moderate and conciliating measures, if never "liberal" ones. But the repose of Europe was paramount; doctrines of government had to be subordinated to international tranquillity. "It is not insurrection we want in Italy but disciplined force under sovereigns we can trust," he wrote in 1818 to Lord William Bentinck who was engaged on a scheme to confer the blessings of the British constitution on the reluctant Sicilians. And he...
added the following doctrine of the primacy of foreign over domestic policy; of the equilibrium of power over the equilibrium of social structure: "...I cannot bring myself to wish that the too extensive experiment in the science of government, already in operation throughout Europe, should be at once augmented by similar creations in Italy. It is impossible not to perceive a great moral change coming on in Europe, and the principles of freedom are in full operation. The danger is that the transition may be too sudden...to make the world better or happier. We have new constitutions launched in France, Spain, Holland and Sicily. Let us see the result before we encourage further attempts...In Italy it is all the more necessary to abstain if we wish to act in concert with Austria and Sardinia..." This expressed the British Tory's distrust of sudden or doctrinaire change and the British statesman's belief in the controlling nature of the Coalition. It was to the Coalition born of war that Castlereagh looked as a permanent expression of the equilibrium. Since he saw in the war a defence against hegemony, it was only natural that he should consider the alliance as a protection against future aggression. Since the Revolutionary wars had assumed such scope because the universality of Napoleon's claims had undermined all confidence, the restoration of good faith to international relations was the prerequisite of permanent peace. "If jealousies are not repressed," he wrote in 1814 to his problem child, Lord William Bentinck, "...it is not for military concert but for war amongst ourselves we should prepare; and unless the parties can place themselves not only in friendly but in confidential relations, they will create the evil they desire to avoid."{52} In short, Britain, as the power whose sole Continental interest was stability, should function as the mediator of rivalry. Relatively indifferent to the parochial claims of the Continental states, it could advocate the solutions that made for general tranquillity. But Britain could do this only if it were not suspected of selfish motives. For this reason, Castlereagh never ceased insisting on moderation, on a peace of equilibrium not of preponderance; on a goal of harmony, not of vengeance. While travelling to the headquarters of the Allied Sovereigns at Basle, he told his companion, Ripon, "that one of the difficulties he expected to encounter in the approaching negotiations would arise from the want of confidential intercourse between the great powers as a body; and that many pretensions might be modified by bringing the respective parties into unrestricted communications embracing in confidential discussions all the great outstanding issues."{53} And while he was engaged in one of his periodic disputes with a Cabinet always distrustful of Continental involvements, he wrote: "Our reputation on the Continent as a feature of our strength, power and confidence is of more real moment than any acquisition."{54}There was only one point on which an island nation could not yield, that of maritime rights. Because command of the seas had enabled Britain to survive ten years of isolation, maritime rights acquired a significance out of proportion to their real importance. But who is to quarrel with a people's interpretation of its past? It is its only means of facing the future, and what "really" happened is often less important than what is thought to have happened. Blockade and the right to search neutral vessels were considered the major factors in ending Napoleon's domination, and Castlereagh was only stating a truism of British policy when he wrote to Cathcart, the British envoy to the Tsar: "Great
Britain may be driven out of a Congress but not out of her maritime rights and if the Continental nations know their own interest they will not hazard this."{55}Up to this point Castlereagh's views on foreign relations were in harmony with those of the country or at least could be made palatable to it. But when Castlereagh began to transform the Alliance against Napoleon into an international organization to preserve the peace, he was to separate himself not only from the country and the Cabinet but also from his allies. For co-operation, based on a commitment in effect confined to French aggression, proved too little for the Continental nations and too much for the British domestic structure. The Continental nations could not be satisfied with an alliance so limited because their margin of safety was too narrow. It was very well for Castlereagh to warn Metternich against conducting foreign policy on precautionary grounds.{56} Metternich did not have an English Channel behind which to assess developing events and across which to interfere at the moment of maximum advantage. His security depended on the first battle, not on the last; precaution was his only policy. And European government, however limited in commitment, was too much for the British domestic structure. Canning, not Castlereagh, spoke for the nation when he warned that a commitment to attend European congresses regularly would involve Britain in a new and very questionable policy: "It will involve [Britain] deeply in all the politics of the Continent, whereas our true policy has always been not to interfere except in great emergencies and then with a commanding force."{57}This was the doctrine of non-interference, the reverse side of the belief in the uniqueness of British institutions. It expressed the conviction that transformations of foreign governments could not affect British institutions, that threats to British security were political, not social in nature. Who possessed the mouth of the Scheldt was important to Britain, because on it depended unchallenged control of the Narrows. It was not important who possessed the throne of Naples—at least after Murat's overthrow. The corollary of this was a translation into international terms of the political beliefs of British society. The right of each nation to its own form of government was an axiom acknowledged by both sides of the House of Commons. Foreign intervention in the domestic affairs of other states might be justified on the grounds of overriding necessity, although never approved; it might be tolerated, but never admitted as a universal right. And it was Parliament and public opinion which provided the limiting condition of Castlereagh's foreign policy: "We act from the necessity imposed upon us of always keeping our case in a shape which, if produced in Parliament would justify our vigilance."{58} Castlereagh spoke for Parliament, if not for himself, when he replied to a proposal by the Tzar for European intervention against the revolution in Spain: "When the territorial balance of Europe is disturbed, [Britain] can interfere with effect, but she is the last government in Europe which can be expected or can venture to commit herself on any question of an absolute character...We shall be found in our place when actual danger [my italics] menaces the system of Europe: but this country cannot and will not act upon abstract principles of precaution. The Alliance which exists had no such purpose in its original formation. It was never so explained to Parliament; if it had, most assuredly the sanction of Parliament would never have been given to it."{59}All the elements of Castlereagh's policy are united in this
dispatch: The equilibrium of Europe is political in nature and Britain will fight against any attempt to upset it. But the threat must be overt, not speculative; and the action must be defensive, not precautionary. Revolutions, although undesirable, are not an actual danger. “The Emperor’s policy,” Castlereagh told Lieven, the Russian ambassador, in reply to an attempt to use the Alliance to repress a revolution in Naples, “is a vain hope, a beautiful phantom which England above all cannot pursue...It is proposed now to overcome the revolution; but so long as this revolution does not appear in more distinct shape...England is not ready to combat it. Upon any other question purely political she would always deliberate and act in the same way as all the other Cabinets.”

“Upon any other question purely political”—this was the foreign policy doctrine of an insular power convinced of the unassailability of its domestic institutions. This distinction between the political and the social element was to remain inadmissible for Metternich, the Continental statesman. But the difference was not yet apparent in 1812. The threat to the equilibrium was clear; the need for a coalition obvious. The revolution in the guise of a military dictatorship had to be suppressed whether in the name of the social or the territorial equilibrium. It was therefore only natural that Metternich began his campaign by offering peace in order to create a moral framework, while Castlereagh advanced a territorial settlement in order to achieve a physical equilibrium.

Castlereagh was at his best when the objectives were determinate, when there was a Coalition to be maintained, a settlement to be negotiated, a dispute to be resolved. This was the situation in 1813, and his objective was the liberation of Europe and the restoration of the balance of power. But Europe was not to be liberated without the defeat of Napoleon. To Castlereagh this was so obvious that Metternich’s subtleties seemed like subterfuges and evasions. The statesman of “plain dealing”, contemplating Europe from the safety of the Channel and the relative isolation of a decade, could hardly be expected to be sympathetic to a policy that talked peace while it prepared for war, all the less so when the success of this policy depended on its seeming sincerity. He therefore returned a very sharp reply to Metternich’s overtures, which, in its legalistic phrasing, testified to a conception of foreign relations where appearances are the only reality. It exhibited abruptly the very ambiguity on the glossing over of which depended the success of Metternich’s policy: Austria, it argued, was an auxiliary of France. It could have entered the war against Russia only on the plea of necessity or of justice. If the former, Austria was bound, upon being relieved of the pressure of necessity, to put an end to its engagement and to consult its own good. If, however, Austria considered Napoleon’s war just, it was in effect asking Great Britain to concur with the Continental system. Britain could therefore not co-operate with Austrian peace efforts until Austria had shown a disposition for independence.

But Castlereagh feared a Continental peace which excluded Great Britain even more than Austria's efforts to force Britain to negotiate prematurely. Any settlement, however unsatisfactory, was preferable to the continued exclusion of the balancer from the balance of power. It was only appropriate, therefore, that Castlereagh should attempt to animate the Continental powers by giving British objectives their most inclusive formulation and that he should go back to his great mentor, Pitt, for inspiration.
1804, had confronted a situation not dissimilar to Castlereagh's in 1813. Then, as in 1813, Europe was striving to restore its equilibrium against attempted universal domination, although the nature of the threat was not yet generally understood and the illusion of the possibility of separate accommodation persisted. At the same time that Metternich was attempting to convince a wavering Prussia of the impossibility of peaceful coexistence with a Napoleonic France, the young Tzar of Russia, Alexander, had sent an agent to Britain to negotiate a coalition and to arrange for British subsidies. Still in his liberal phase, the Tzar was not content with an alliance to reduce or overthrow Napoleon's Empire. The coalition was to be a crusade, its goal universal peace. Well might the sober Pitt wonder at the scheme which the Russian envoy unfolded. The old Europe, argued Alexander, was gone forever and a new one had to be created; nothing less than the overthrow of the last vestiges of feudalism and the reform of nations by endowing them with liberal constitutions could restore stability. Not even the Ottoman Empire was considered beyond salvation. And lest any power disturb the harmony of constitutional states, Alexander added a number of safeguards: States were to be required to submit their disputes to mediation by third parties; any state that defied the new Europe should bring upon itself an immediate coalition of all the other powers; Great Britain and Russia, by virtue of their geographic position, were to guarantee the settlement. There were some references to territorial arrangements, particularly with respect to Sardinia and a vague plan for the organization of Germany, but they did not really interest Alexander. Peace was to be assured by social harmony; war avoided by making it inconceivable. But Pitt was not prepared to embark on a crusade for constitutional liberty. Nor was he willing to consider the surrender of British maritime rights, which the Tzar had suggested should be the British contribution to international good will. On the other hand, he did not wish the Coalition to founder over a dispute in political philosophy. In order to escape this dilemma, and to induce the Tzar to defer his proposals for social amelioration until the peace conference, Pitt attempted to give the primary British objective, the reduction of French power, concrete expression. Thus came about the Pitt peace plan, stillborn in 1805, but resurrected in 1813 to form the basis of the post-war settlement. Pitt's plan began by reducing the Russian suggestions to three basic objectives with which he concurred: (a) to rescue from the dominion of France those countries which it has subjugated since the beginning of the Revolution and to reduce France within its former limits as they stood before that time, (b) to make such arrangements with respect to the territories recovered from France as may provide for their serenity and happiness and may at the same time constitute a more effective barrier in the future against encroachments on the part of France, (c) to form, at the restoration of peace, a general agreement and guarantee for the mutual protection and security of different Powers and for re-establishing a general system of public law in Europe.
other powers. And since French hegemony had been brought about by reducing the secondary powers to satellites, the new balance of power should be based on the controlling influence of the Great Powers. To be sure, the restoration of national independence was to be the primary goal of the alliance, but there existed several states which had demonstrated, either by their rapid collapse or by their subservience to France, their unfitness for self-government. Their territories were to be used to induce the Great Powers to join the Coalition and to create the "great masses" to contain France. The states marked for extinction included Genoa, the Ecclesiastical possessions on the left bank of the Rhine and the Spanish possessions in Northern Italy. Austria and Prussia were to be the chief beneficiaries, Austria in Italy and Prussia in Germany. By inducing Austria to become a major Italian power, Pitt hoped to eliminate the rivalry between Austria and Prussia in Germany which had provided so many pretexts for French intervention. Europe was thus to be organized into a society of five major powers: Britain, France, Russia, Austria, and Prussia. France was to be surrounded by a ring of secondary powers, each with a barrier of fortresses to absorb the first French onslaught and a major power in reserve. Holland, supported by Prussia, was to guard the North; Sardinia, backed by Austria, the South; the Austro-Prussian alliance was to protect the Centre. The whole arrangement was to be safeguarded by a general treaty between all the major powers guaranteeing the territorial settlement and by a separate treaty between Russia and Great Britain in effect guaranteeing the guarantee.

There in a few sparse pages, in uninspired language, was symbolized the nature of the British commitment. It was to be a war for security not for doctrine, against universal conquest not against revolution. Its goal was a stable balance of power brought about by the reduction of France and the augmentation of the Central Powers. It was to be protected by a territorial guarantee as the expression of the equilibrium and by a special guarantee of the "unselfish" powers as a symbol of international good faith. Only on two points was Great Britain to prove adamant: maritime rights, about which Pitt's plan was significantly silent, and a Holland free from the control of a major power.

The pragmatism of this plan was its strength and its weakness. It led to a single-mindedness of purpose which enabled Britain to secure its major goals before any other power. But it also involved a mechanical conception of international relations which made no allowance for changing relationships among the powers. The equilibrium aimed at was based on a defensive conception: the threat of an aggressive France. As long as this threat was universally recognized, it sufficed to legitimize the balance of power. When new problems arose, however, and different threats appeared, the nature of the equilibrium had to be defined anew. In this new definition, the old unanimity could hardly be recaptured, for only in revolutionary periods do threats assume universal scope; only then are defensive coalitions to be generalized. The very stability of the peace will tend to disintegrate a wartime alliance if nothing holds it together save the memory of common danger. But this was still in the distance. With the Grande Armée defeated and British isolation seemingly at an end, Castlereagh resurrected the Pitt plan by sending it to Cathcart with the following letter: "The political arrangement of Europe is perhaps more difficult at this early moment to decide on..."
main features we are agreed upon that to keep France we need great masses, that Prussia, Russia and Austria are to be...as powerful as ever, and that the inferior states must be summoned to assist or pay the forfeit of resistance...As an outline to reason from I send you...a dispatch on which the confederacy in 1805 was founded; the Emperor of Russia probably does not have this interesting document at Headquarters (...I well remember having more than one conversation with Mr. Pitt on its details, before he wrote it [Castlereagh's italics]). Some of the suggestions may now be inapplicable, but it is so masterly an outline for the restoration of Europe that I should be glad if your lordship would reduce it to distinct propositions and learn the bearing of his Imperial Majesty's mind upon its contents."{64} In this manner, the Pitt plan became the blueprint of Castlereagh's policy. So successful was he to be in achieving its goals that in 1815 he could lay the Pitt Plan before the House of Commons as the justification of the Vienna settlement. But, in April, 1813, it was still premature. For it was not yet certain whether there was to be peace or war, and if war, what kind of war. The coalition was still to be formed; Napoleon's new army yet to be tested. Austria was still engaged on its intricate measures and spoke of mediation, while Castlereagh could hardly restrain his impatience. The great guardian of the Coalition could not operate until the Coalition had been constructed. In this task Metternich was engaged, and until he had finished all else had to wait.IV—METTERNICH AND THE DEFINITION OF THE POLITICAL EQUILIBRIUMI"[POLICY] is like a play in many acts," Metternich wrote once, "which unfolds inevitably once the curtain is raised. To declare then that the performance will not take place is an absurdity. The play will go on, either by means of the actors...or by means of the spectators who mount the stage...Intelligent people never consider this the essence of the problem, however. For them it lies in the decision whether the curtain is to be raised at all, whether the spectators are to be assembled and in the intrinsic quality of the play..."{65} By the end of 1812 the curtain had been raised, but it revealed a stage in disarray on which a careful designer was imperceptibly moving the pieces until he had created a pattern to his liking. And since the designer was not willing immediately to reveal the nature of the arrangement he was aiming at, he resisted, sometimes testily, all outside pressures to hasten his work. When Metternich had offered Napoleon his good offices for a general peace, he had embarked on a policy from which he knew there was no return. Had Metternich wished merely to be released from the burdensome French alliance, he could have offered his assistance for a separate peace with Russia and withdrawn into neutrality had he failed. But by aiming at a general peace he involved the interests of the Austrian Empire in the most direct fashion. Should Napoleon fail to accept the terms Metternich was in the process of developing, no option would remain but to appear in the ranks of his foes. For the conditions would be, by definition, the outline of the only Europe which Austria could find compatible with its safety. Metternich, who prided himself on his knowledge of Napoleon's character, could have had few expectations that Napoleon would accept, not because the conditions would be ungenerous, but because they were conditions. It was therefore with no doubt about the gravity of the step that Metternich launched a diplomatic campaign in the name of the French alliance, at the end of which Austria's
moral and military leadership of the anti-French coalition was a fact which required no further negotiation. Because the success of this campaign depended on the illusion of sincerity, any action which might put Austrian motives into doubt had to be avoided. Russian pleas for a declaration of policy were evaded or went unanswered, and when Lord Cathcart sent an emissary to hasten Austria's entry into the war, Metternich returned the reply that he knew no Lord Cathcart and that, when ready, he would deal with Britain in London. And because the Austrian bargaining position depended on the illusion of independence, freedom of action became Metternich's primary goal: "The first of all interests is independence," Metternich wrote early in January, 1813. "Great successes of either contender without the exhaustion of their military forces was a prospect which could only create new discomfitures for Austria...[But] at the beginning of 1813 Austria is strong through the exhaustion of the two other Imperial Courts...It is for this reason that we have impressed on all our steps towards France that feeling of independence whose sentiment will become increasingly positive with each passing day."{66}

But it was an independence of a paradoxical nature evidenced by the indirectness of its measures, the tone of its language, and the hesitancy of compliance with Napoleon's wishes; an independence which proved all the more effective for being accomplished in the name of bondage. Its first expression was in the form of instructions for the Austrian emissary Bubna, sent to Napoleon ostensibly to adapt the alliance to new circumstances but in reality to divine Napoleon's intentions and to anticipate any embarrassing French overtures.{67} The instructions, meant to be repeated to Napoleon, raised once more the issue of Austrian mediation and tied it to the disposition of the Austrian auxiliary corps which represented the nucleus of Austrian power. They began with the usual ambiguous reference to Napoleon's defeat: despite an endless series of mistakes, despite the absence of a single military talent, Russia had emerged victorious. It was a victory of incalculable consequence. "The people of Europe," Metternich argued ambiguously, "have learned during the past twenty years to judge military strength. They cannot be deceived regarding the probable consequences of recent events." The only solution was peace, mediated by Austria, which owed a great obligation to Napoleon, but an even greater one to its own people. But should the war continue, Metternich insisted, it was evident that the common cause [my italics] would be served best by a retreat of the Austrian auxiliary corps to Galicia, there to be joined by the corps of observation, for the creation of which Metternich had obtained permission in 1812 by arranging for a Russian "threat"{68}. Thus Metternich, while creating the moral climate for independence, was careful to assemble the resources to make it effective. Napoleon was to learn that a too ardent embrace can crush. There ensued a contest as stylized as a Japanese play and with rules as intricate. For both sides were eager to obscure the real nature of the issue, to preserve appearances and to keep their options open: Napoleon in order to recreate his army, to sweep Austria along and to cajole or intimidate her to step into the breach left by the collapse of the Grande Armée; Metternich in order to gain time to test the resolution of his would-be allies, to cover his retreat should they be found wanting and to build the power which could defy Napoleon without
exposing Austria to the first onslaught. It was a test of endurance in which blows had to be struck with high decorum and accepted as if there could be no discrepancy between appearance and reality. It was a test of patience in which pinpricks had to be noted with smiling grace and ambiguity ignored as if life could be no different. A man who has been used to command finds it almost impossible to learn to negotiate, because negotiation is an admission of finite power. But a nation situated in the centre of Europe cannot find security save in a world in which negotiation is the normal pattern of relation. For Napoleon, everything depended on exhibiting his continuing omnipotence; for Metternich, on demonstrating the limitations of French power.

What people say about this book

John D. Gleissner, “Great Treatise on Statesmanship. Dr. Kissinger wrote an informative book on the Napoleonic Wars and their resolution at the Congress of Vienna and subsequent conferences. The balance of power after 1814 and 1815 was achieved with great diplomatic skill and the wisdom not to punish France too heavily. The machinations of Austria through her cunning foreign minister are particularly well-analyzed. Some of the writing is a bit too abstract or else I am not smart enough to understand it after one or two readings. The book ends before we see the mistakes Austria made in 1914, but those mistakes are obvious now. I did not realize how Czar Alexander's views changed so much or vacillated, and how enthralled he was by Metternich. This book makes more sense when we consider the chaos of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. This book ought to be and likely is required reading for diplomats. This is good history, and like all history allows us to see the mistakes and triumphs of others clearly.”

Graeme P. Auton, “This is a classic, of course. Elegantly written .... This is a classic, of course. Elegantly written, insightful, philosophically sophisticated, with a lot of insight for those who want to understand international relations. Castlereagh simply wanted to maintain a balance of power in Europe following the Napoleonic Wars in order to facilitate Britain's security. Metternich, representing an Austria that was in the center of Europe and could not simply seek a discrete balance, wanted a conservative social contract at a time when the forces of nationalism were ultimately destined to sunder the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They wanted the same thing for different reasons. Castlereagh, dealing with resistance from his own Parliament, wanted a realpolitical solution. Metternich, the ultimate practitioner of "Machtpolitik," understood nonetheless the importance of ideas and ideology. I bought and read the paperback edition of A World Restored more than thirty years ago. I bought the hardback so that I could read it again without having to physically hold the book together. A necessary read for those truly interested in international relations.”

Bruce Buchanan, “For serious historians best, but good for any reader off the period. The knowledge, thought and hypotheses are remarkable. For any interested in the post Napoleonic period and the Congress of Vienna, a thesis not to be missed. Outstanding.”

Sue Ellen Ruetsch, “Henry Kissinger - before the Nixon years. My son-n-law is a great respecter of Henry Kissinger and a history buff. He was very pleased to receive this book.”

Bill Delphenich, “Five Stars. All good”

Jeff, “A valuable and insightful read. Provides insight and relevance in worldview and theory”
THatfield, “Great quality! Great quality for the price!”

Colin Carnall, “A ‘marker’ of the development of an international player in the ‘cold war’. Written with authority by a man who in turn became advisor to U S Presidents and then National Security Advisor and subsequently Secretary of State to Nixon. Based upon a clear view about statecraft and relations between states writing this book was clearly a staging post in the development of his views about diplomacy and statecraft as a combination of ideas and practice. Well worth reading as history but even more interesting as a marker to the development of the ideas of a remarkably influential thinker and practitioner.”

Sparks, “Five Stars. Very scholarly; written before he became associated with Nixon, and carried away by his desire to control the world!”

john murphy, “Five Stars. beautifully written a must to understanding the period”