

ENGLAND AND THE POLISH-SAXON PROBLEM AT THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA

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It is nearly one hundred years since the Congress of Vienna met, yet there has not been produced a standard work to which we can turn with confidence for a complete and detailed exposition of transactions which rearranged the whole map of Europe. Often as its errors have been exposed and its principles criticised, the exact methods by which it sought to achieve its purposes are to a certain extent still unknown. The mass of evidence has slowly but surely accumulated, but since Sorel attempted to do once more what Thiers had already done, to write the history of the Congress from the French point of view, no historian has given us any considerable description of its work. By Treitschke and Opcken we have valuable but by no means complete accounts, and meanwhile much work has been done on parts of the Congress which makes it probable that the time has arrived for a reconsideration of its whole scope to be attempted, and perhaps some commonly accepted judgments to be revised. The fascinating articles, which Professor Fournier has given us, as preliminaries to his great work on the Congress, show how much new evidence is at the disposal of the historian.

That the task is no light one will not be denied. At Vienna almost every statesman of importance in Europe found it necessary to be present, and almost all have left a record of some of their work in the form of letters, memoirs, or official despatches. The sources are thus very large, but

it is also true that the most important business was in the hands of a small group of men, and was transacted as much by conversation and interview as by written document. Thus, though the mass of material is enormous, the really significant part of it can be reduced within a reasonable compass; and if rumour and gossip be put in their proper place, it is often the paucity rather than the excess of the evidence which troubles the historian. This difficulty is largely due to the fact that only two of the inner ring of statesmen had any necessity to write down a formal or detailed account of their work. For Metternich, Hardenberg, and the Russian statesmen, a verbal communication with their sovereign was the most obvious and convenient method of transacting business. Talleyrand and Castlereagh were, however, not accompanied by the rulers of their respective countries, and they were representatives of constitutional governments. They were thus constantly forced to describe events, to seek instruction and to justify action. Talleyrand's brilliant letters to his sovereign have been long one of the main sources of the historian. But they are in two respects most misleading documents, as criticism has more than once demonstrated. Talleyrand's vanity made him exaggerate enormously the part he played in events, nor was he admitted to the inner councils of the Congress until the crisis of the struggle had arrived.

Talleyrand had a royal master to flatter and cajole, a reputation to vindicate and a policy of doubtful merit to defend. His despatches are written to meet his circumstances and to serve his ends. Castlereagh was in a very different position. The Prince Regent was indeed a capable critic of foreign policy with views and ideas of his own, but his position was not that of a French King, and Castlereagh was the only member of the British Cabinet who had a real interest in, and a real understanding of, the affairs of Europe. His task was thus simpler and called for a less ingenious interpretation of events. Much of his

information was sent in private letters to Liverpool, which have long been known. Still he had to convey to his Cabinet some idea of the course of events; and as the problems grew more and more difficult and war-clouds gathered on the horizon, he had to defend with vigour and insist with some asperity on a policy that commended itself but little to colleagues engaged in defending themselves, without his all-powerful aid, against an opposition to which the close of the Napoleonic war had again given life and vigour. Of instructions from home he seems to have received only one of any importance, and that he flatly disobeyed. But the opinions of the Cabinet were conveyed through the medium of Liverpool's private letters, and were not altogether without their influence. His own official despatches are seventy-six in number, and with their enclosures fill six large volumes of the Foreign Office records. They were used by Fyffe and Mr. Dorman, but neither of these has given more than a short summary of events. Their real importance was first shown long ago by Oncken, and his account of the Congress does more justice to the work of Castlereagh than that of any other historian.¹ On many essential points we lack authoritative evidence. In particular, Castlereagh's official instructions at the opening of the Congress are missing. It is however, I think, possible to reconstruct them from other papers.

In any case, to understand the Congress of Vienna we must understand the policy of Castlereagh. For, from the first, it was he that furnished it with a plan of action, and, despite a temporary eclipse, it was he that supplied it with a solution of its most difficult problem. Alone of the statesmen of the Four Powers, he had a theory to maintain which was really based on a desire to promote the best interests of Europe. By his diplomatic skill in the earlier part of the year the cardinal points of British policy were

¹ In *Das Zeitalter der Revolutionzeit*, etc., vol. ii.

secured before the Congress met. Castlereagh could afford to be impartial, and some impartial arbitrator, with skill and energy enough to devise a means of escape from the difficulties which the Powers had to face, was an absolute necessity, if an appeal to force was to be avoided.

Castlereagh described his principles of action in a despatch to his Cabinet as follows :—

‘ Since I have been on the Continent I have conceived it my duty to keep in view the following principles. . . . In the first place so to conduct the arrangements to be framed for Congress (*sic*), as to make the establishment of a just equilibrium in Europe the first object of my attention) and to consider the assertion of minor points of interest as subordinate to this great end—Secondly, to use my best endeavours to support the Powers who had contributed to save Europe by their exertions, in their first pretensions to be liberally re-established upon the scale to which their treaties entitled them to lay claim, and not to be deterred from doing so by the necessity of adopting, for this end, measures which, although not unjust, are nevertheless painful and unpopular in themselves. And thirdly to endeavour to combine this latter duty to our friends and allies, with as much mildness and indulgence even to the offending States, as circumstances will permit.’¹

This policy of creating a ‘just equilibrium’ Castlereagh had announced as his main object when he first entered the councils of the alliance in 1814.² The Congress of Vienna, however it may be criticised from the standpoint of liberal or national policy, may claim to have succeeded in establishing territorial equilibrium. That it was able to do so by amicable methods was due mainly to the exertion of its most disinterested member.

In the fight against France, English statesmen had almost forgotten the outlines of the policy of the balance of power. But no sooner had the Russian troops entered Germany than diplomatists had to face a situation which had been foreseen by more astute politicians like Metternich

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, November 11, 1814. *F.O. Continent*, 8.

² Fournier, *Congress von Chatillon*, p. 372.

for some time. If Napoleon were beaten, a new Europe must be re-created, and the fortunes of each Power stood in the hazard. The agreements of 1813 were sufficient to unite the allies and drive the French out of Germany. But the problems were only shelved, and the nearer the allies drew to Paris the more their gaze was diverted from the Seine to the Elbe and the Vistula. When Castlereagh joined the allied headquarters in January 1814 he found his allies as jealous and distrustful of one another as of the enemy. Fear of Russia had almost displaced fear of Napoleon in the minds of Austrian statesmen, and though the Prussian king was under the influence of the Czar, Hardenberg and his colleague were by no means blind to the difficulties of the position. Chief of all the dangers were the twin problems of Poland and Saxony, which it was the object of the Czar to unite. Castlereagh was not long in showing on which side his sympathies lay. He had inherited from Pitt that jealousy of Russia, which had for the moment been swallowed up by the fear of France. His first task was indeed to smooth difficulties and to weld the allies into a coalition which should prove as impregnable to Napoleon's diplomacy as their joint armies must be to his handful of troops. Once this was accomplished at Chaumont, he joined in Metternich's endeavours to remove Russian influence from the Prussian councils. This necessitated giving the whole of Saxony to Prussia, but Austria's consent was won to that policy and the result was an informal understanding between Metternich, Hardenberg, and Castlereagh by which Prussia was to obtain Saxony and unite with the other two courts against the Czar.¹ It was originally intended to settle the matter at once, and Hardenberg did indeed produce a complete scheme for the reconstruction of Europe.²

¹ Fournier, *Congress von Chatillon*, p. 317; *Historische Studien und Skizzen*, 2^e Reihe, pp. 297, 298.

² Muenster, *Historical Sketches*, pp. 159; *Mémoire of Hardenberg*, April 29. *F.O. Continent*, 4; cf. Oncken, *Das Zeitalter der Revolutionzeit* etc. ii. 842.

But the Czar was obdurate, and Austria and Prussia, though agreed about Saxony, quarrelled over Mayence.¹

The treaty of Paris therefore only settled subjects on which a general agreement could be at once obtained. Of the London conferences of the allies we have scarcely any information. Formal conferences were held which settled the date of the approaching Congress and some points concerning Belgium, but the Polish question does not seem to have been officially discussed.² All we know is that Alexander by insulting the Prince Regent and coquetting with the Whigs, whom he seems to have thought would soon be in power, turned official English policy still more against him, while Metternich by studious attention to the Prince and his foreign minister did much to make possible that working arrangement between the Tory ministry and the Vienna court which lasted till 1822 and even longer.³ Of Castlereagh's own views at the end of the summer we have a record in a letter to Hardenberg; in which he enforced the necessity of united action against Russia, and the Prussian reply assumed that Prussia would receive both Saxony and Mayence.⁴

This was the policy that he was to pursue during the first phase of the Congress. If it was successful he secured three objects at one stroke. Russia would be driven back from Poland and Europe thus saved from a considerable danger; Prussia would be made a powerful and compact state, able to guard both the Eastern and Western frontiers of Europe; and Austria and Prussia would be joined together in friendly alliance, and a united Germany offer an impenetrable barrier to both French and Russian aggression.

¹ Muenster, *op. cit.* pp. 169, 170.

² Memorandum of Gentz, August 18, 1814. Klinkowström, *Oesterreichs Theilnahme in der Befreiungskriege*, p. 393.

³ See the extract from Princess Lieven's Diary in 'Correspondance de l'Empereur Alexandre I avec sa sœur Catherine,' ed. the Grand-Duke Nicholas Michailowitch.

⁴ Castlereagh to Hardenberg, August 8, 1814; Hardenberg to Castlereagh, August 27, 1814. *F.O. Congress*, 20.

The negotiations of the spring and summer seemed to have assured the success of this plan. For to the allies belonged the decision, and, if three of the four members of the alliance were agreed, their united opinion must defeat that of the fourth.

France was, however, by no means a negligible quantity. Excluded by the treaty of Paris from full participation in the work of the Congress, and impotent if the allies remained united, her influence or her armies would perhaps turn the scale, if an open rupture took place. Castlereagh had realised from the first that France had a right to be consulted in the reconstruction of Europe. In January he had asserted, in opposition to the strongly expressed wish of Russia, that even a France under the rule of Napoleon could not be altogether excluded from taking part in the general settlement.¹ That sentiment grew when the Bourbons came into power, and it was doubtless knowledge of this state of affairs that was one factor in determining Talleyrand to choose his line of action. Metternich appears to have treated Talleyrand with scant ceremony as he passed through Paris on his return to Vienna from London, and it was to England that France turned for support.² Castlereagh did his best to win Talleyrand's goodwill. He wrote a civil explanation of the convention of June 20, which France might have regarded as a menace.³ Talleyrand met him more than half-way, and opened direct negotiations with regard to the coming meeting. He hoped to use English goodwill as a means to obtain a position in the inner councils of the Congress. To this overture Castlereagh replied politely, but refused to commit himself.⁴ He had no intention of admitting France to a position of full equality with the allies, but he wished to have some hold on her policy. He consented

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, Basle, January 22, 1814. *F.O. Congress*, 2.

² Sir Charles Stuart to Castlereagh, July 4, 1814. *F.O. France*, 97.

³ Castlereagh to Stuart, July 16, 1814. *F.O. France*, 96.

⁴ Stuart to Castlereagh, July 28, 1814. *F.O. France*, 96; later letters in *Wellington Supplementary Despatches*, ix, pp. 180-186.

therefore to visit Paris on his way to Vienna, and, in long interviews with Louis XVIII. and his minister, impressed on them the British point of view, and sought French co-operation with regard to Poland, which was freely promised. But at the same time he made it quite clear that he was not prepared to concede to France a full position of equality.¹

The first problem of the Congress was that of its own organisation. The four Powers were determined to maintain their exclusive control over the division of the spoils which they had claimed in the treaties of Chaumont and Paris. Talleyrand challenged their decision, but, though he won a formal victory on the question of public business, he was really completely beaten on the essential point, and for the next three months France was altogether excluded from the real work of the Congress, the attempt to solve the claims of the three Continental members of the coalition.²

On the Polish question Castlereagh, from the first, adopted a policy of complete candour towards Alexander. In his first interview with the Czar he told him frankly that his plans were impossible.³ To Nesselrode, who was sent next day to barter the political side of the Russian plans for the territorial, his refusal was still more uncompromising.⁴ As the union between Austria and Prussia, which depended on the cession of Saxony to the latter, was still incomplete, Castlereagh had to face the Czar almost alone. A second interview led to a memorandum in which the case against Russia was argued with the utmost frankness, but the result was only a further declaration that Russia would keep her conquests.⁵

Meanwhile Castlereagh was endeavouring to complete

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, Geneva, September 3. *F.O. Continent*, 7. Appendix, p. 22.

² *Ibid.* Vienna, September 24. *F.O. Continent*, 7.

³ *Ibid.* October 2 (No. 3). *F.O. Continent*, 7. Appendix, p. 23.

⁴ *Ibid.* October 2 (No. 4). *F.O. Continent*, 7. Appendix, p. 25.

⁵ *Ibid.* October 14. *F.O. Continent* 7. Appendix, p. 27.

the arrangement by which Austria and Prussia were to unite against the Czar. After an unsatisfactory interview with the King of Prussia, he approached Hardenberg and Metternich directly. Both were distrustful, but both expressed their willingness to work together.¹

Hardenberg brought the matter to a clear issue by his letter of October 9 which formally asked for assent to the incorporation of Saxony in Prussia, and the establishment of Mayence as a fortress of the Federation.² Castlereagh gave his consent immediately.³ Metternich was loath to commit himself and at first only gave a verbal promise, but a peremptory note of Hardenberg's of October 21 produced an Austrian reply which gave provisional assent to the incorporation of Saxony, but asserted Bavaria's claims to Mayence.⁴ This was by no means sufficient at first to satisfy Hardenberg, but Castlereagh, at a meeting at his house was able to bring his colleagues to an agreement, and the future course of action was at the request of the other two Powers mapped out in a Memorandum by him, and submitted to the Austrian and Prussian monarchs.⁵ The consent of the Emperor of Austria could not be considered doubtful, and as the Prussian King had promised not to disturb the plan, the triple alliance which had been building all the year might be considered to be consummated. If this was so, Russia was isolated, provided she could not rely on France, and Castlereagh took steps to prevent any *rapprochement* between the Czar and Talleyrand.⁶ When the sovereigns set out for Buda, he might hope that the most difficult part of his task was fulfilled.

But the fatal obstinacy of the Prussian King destroyed this position in a moment. Alexander proved that he had made no mistake in relying on his personal supremacy

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, October 9. *F.O. Continent*, 7. Appendix, p. 25.

² Angeberg, *Congrès de Vienne*.

³ *Ibid.* 274.

⁴ Castlereagh to Liverpool, October 24. *F.O. Continent*, 7.

⁵ Angeberg, 291. There wrongly dated.

⁶ See below, p. 14.

over the inferior intellect of Frederick William. Both Hardenberg and Metternich were bitterly attacked in the presence of their sovereigns, and though little impression was made on the Austrian Emperor, the King of Prussia yielded to the demands of the Czar.¹ Hardenberg was in a difficult position, but no choice was left to him short of resignation. When, therefore, on the return of the sovereign from Buda, Metternich submitted to him a note as a basis of joint action against Russia on the Polish question, he could only give an evasive answer and deprecate an opposition which might lead to hostilities. The negotiation was kept alive by his offer to lay the proposal before the Czar. Alexander's answer was delayed by illness, but when it came it left little doubt as to the situation.² The demands were peremptorily refused and at the same time the Prussian claims upon Saxony and Mayence were asserted. But Metternich, defeated on the question of Poland, could not, if he had wished, have maintained his offer of Saxony. His conditional promise was withdrawn, and a deadlock produced not only in the matter of Poland but upon the Saxon question.³ As Castlereagh had foreseen, the two German Powers, if they could not unite upon Poland, were placed in a position which threatened the peace of Europe. For neither could afford to give way on two frontiers.

Thus the first phase of the Congress closed with heavy defeat for Castlereagh. It was he who had initiated the policy of opposition to Russia, had himself conducted an argument on the Polish question with the Emperor and his ministers, had forced Metternich and Hardenberg into an alliance, and had checked the insidious tactics of Talleyrand. In this he had gone far beyond what opinion in his Cabinet or his country either expected or desired. He had not meant to

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, November 11. *F.O. Continent*, 8. Appendix, p. 30.

² *Ibid.* November 21. *F.O. Continent*, 8.

³ *Ibid.* December 5. *F.O. Continent*, 8. Appendix, p. 33.

push matters to the verge of war, but had hoped to overcome Russia by a united effort in which, as representing the most disinterested party, it was right and fitting he should take a leading part. This he was all the more ready to do because, if he could drive back Russia from Poland, he could solve at the same time the German problems. All hope of this was now gone. Poland was irrecoverably lost unless the sword won it back, and Russia had not merely driven a wedge into Germany, but its two leading Powers were now hopelessly estranged from one another and in no sense prepared to guard the balance of power against attacks from either East or West. To meet this situation a new policy had to be reconstructed, and Castlereagh was forced to give up much, though not all, that he had tried to obtain. But, though losing much upon the question of Poland, he did eventually succeed in establishing a balance of power in the centre of Europe, which should guard the Eastern and Western frontiers. This reversal of policy necessitated a change of attitude towards Prussia, on the question of Saxony, which has often been attributed to orders from home and the intrigues of Talleyrand. That view is, however, a mistake. The new policy was produced by the necessities of the situation; and though, for the moment, Castlereagh seemed to have lost control of affairs, it was soon realised both by himself and by his allies that it was indispensable that he should resume his rôle of conciliator and arbiter.

In considering the relations between Castlereagh and his Cabinet two things must be kept in mind. In the first place, the Cabinet had little knowledge and appreciation of the affairs of Europe; and secondly, its members were so far away that Castlereagh, even had he been less strong and determined, would have been forced to act on his own responsibility. Liverpool's letters, which contained suggestions rather than orders, no doubt produced an effect; but, by the time they arrived, the situation had so changed that they were of little use, and the only definite instruction Castlereagh

received from home he had deliberately to ignore. When Talleyrand claims, therefore, that he controlled Castlereagh by influencing public opinion in London, he is maintaining one of the least true of his partial truths. Castlereagh's task was indeed rendered more difficult by the attitude of his Cabinet and the English people. But at critical moments he was always able to take his own line.

On the Polish question the Cabinet was exceedingly lukewarm. 'I am inclined to think the less we have to do with it, except as far as regards giving an opinion, the better,' wrote Liverpool early in October.¹ Castlereagh's energy and activity during the early part of the Congress filled the home government with still more anxiety, and almost all Liverpool's letters deprecated too much interference on the part of Great Britain in affairs that only indirectly concerned her.² The Cabinet was far too much occupied in coping with the difficult problems of finance and parliamentary management to devote much consideration to such trifles as the balance of power and the reconstruction of a new Europe. Success or failure upon the question of the Slave Trade, which might do much to increase or depress their prestige in the country, was of more moment to them than a United Germany or a good Rhine frontier. It was only Castlereagh who saw that English interests were so bound up with those of the Continental Powers that if war broke out we should be forced to join one side or another.

Public opinion in this country on the question of Saxony was, however, growing, and this began to find expression in Liverpool's letters. At last on November 18 he wrote guardedly to Castlereagh in favour of allowing the King to keep part of his country, but this was in no sense an

¹ Liverpool to Castlereagh, October 4. Yonge, *Life of Liverpool*, ii. 35.

² E.g. Liverpool to Castlereagh, October 28. *Wellington S.D.* p. 382, with a memorandum from Vansittart, beginning: 'I begin to apprehend that we are making ourselves too much principals in the disputes concerning Poland.'

instruction.¹ Yet there must have been considerable discussion in the Cabinet, and the peace party must have won a definite victory, for on November 27 a definite instruction was sent to Vienna. It was written in reply to Castlereagh's despatch of November 11 which recounted the failure of his policy, and while not censuring him contained this sentence: 'It is unnecessary for me to point out to you the impossibility of H.R.H. to involve this country in hostilities at this time for any of the objects which have hitherto been under discussion at Vienna.'² Three weeks after he had received this despatch, Castlereagh was to sign a treaty which made definite provision for war.

In the second phase of the diplomacy, Talleyrand becomes an important factor and it is necessary to review Castlereagh's relations with him since the beginning of the Congress. In the negotiations as to the exact form of the Congress Castlereagh had shown more sympathy to French susceptibilities than any of the other statesmen, but he had not separated himself from the decision of the allies to keep affairs in their own hands and allow the other Powers, France included, only rights of consultation and suggestion.³ He had, however, carefully watched the policy of Talleyrand.

¹ It was believed at the Congress that Castlereagh had been ordered to give way on Saxony (*cf.* Muenster, *op. cit.* p. 201; Gagern, *Mein Antheil an der Politik*, iv. p. 81), and historians have naturally been puzzled (*e.g.* Delbruck, *Historische Zeitschrift*, xxvii. p. 249). It is clear, however, I think from Liverpool's letter and Castlereagh's despatches that the decision rested with him and was a natural development of his policy. Both Alexander (Martens, *Recueil*, xi. p. 211) and Talleyrand (Sorel, viii. p. 375) were trying to influence the Congress from London. The timid attitude of the home government was of course known at the Congress. Gentz wrote on December 9: 'Die englische Regierung, welche die Aufrechterhaltung des Friedens um jeden Preis wünscht' (Klinkowström, *op. cit.* p. 470). But though all this weakened Castlereagh's position it did not determine his course of action.

² Bathurst to Castlereagh, November 27. *F.O. Continent*, 6. Appendix, p. 22.

³ Castlereagh to Liverpool, September 24. *F.O. Continent*, 7.

He succeeded in preventing him from producing a Memorandum in which the principle of legitimacy was to unite the Polish and Saxon problems, and kept him from public declarations by vague hints that if the Polish question were first settled perhaps some concessions might be due for Saxony.¹ Alexander managed to insinuate to Castlereagh that Talleyrand in his previous conversation had offered to give up Poland, in return for Saxony.² Castlereagh took immediate steps to counter this attitude by an appeal to Paris through Wellington, which produced a letter from Blacas instructing Talleyrand to act as much as possible in harmony with the British Minister.³ The *Mémoire raisonné* upon Saxony had indeed been issued at a time by no means congenial to Castlereagh, but in November Talleyrand showed himself far more conciliatory, and the English Minister, without altogether trusting him, took care to treat him with all proper regard.⁴ When the Austro-Prussian scheme had broken down the way was already prepared for a rapprochement between Great Britain, Austria, and France. No one thought that Talleyrand's principles were unbending; it was merely a question of how much could he get for his support; nor did he, when the moment of crisis arrived, drive a hard bargain.

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, October 20. *F.O. Continent*, 7. Cf. Cook to Liverpool, October 25. *Wellington S.D.*, ix. 375.

² *Ibid.*, October 24. Appendix, p. 28. It is possible that the incident narrated by Talleyrand (*Mémoires*, ii. 394) was the actual occasion of this insinuation. Alexander tried to play the same game with Hardenberg concerning Metternich (cf. Delbrück, *op. cit.* p. 256).

³ *Ibid.*, October 25. *F.O. Continent*, 7. Wellington to Castlereagh, November 5. *Wellington S.D.* ix. 417; Talleyrand, *Mémoires*, ii. 435.

⁴ Castlereagh to Wellington, November 21. *Wellington S.D.* ix. 447: 'I have not deemed it prudent to disclose to him my operations in detail, finding that he was not always discreet, and that I should lose influence in other quarters if I was understood to be in close confidence with the French Minister. I have endeavoured, however, to treat him with all proper regard and to keep him generally informed of our endeavours to promote common objects. He is become infinitely more accommodating in our general conferences than at the outset.'

During the later part of the month of November, after the failure of his first effort, Castlereagh withdrew somewhat from the leading position he had taken up at first and allowed Metternich and Hardenberg to carry on the negotiations. But as relations became more and more strained between the three Powers it became evident that no solution could be produced except by the active interference of Great Britain. Poland had now to be regarded as in a great measure lost, for only a complete alliance between the two German Powers could have saved it and that was now impossible.¹ But Castlereagh could at least diminish their rivalry, and by creating a strong Prussia without at the same time inflaming too much the jealousy of Austria, a balance of power could yet be established, and the centre of Europe made strong enough to resist aggression either from the East or the West. Thus, though the Prussian alliance with Russia forced Castlereagh to act with Austria against her, he always tried to make her as strong as circumstances would permit.

His first step, however, was to withdraw his offer of Saxony to Prussia. In an interview with Hardenberg he made it clear that it was impossible for Austria to agree to such a sacrifice on her Bohemian border, now that she was not assured of a frontier on the side of Poland. When the Prussian Chancellor flamed up and talked of war, Castlereagh showed him that there were other means of opposing his plans beside simple force; for how could Prussia expect to rule Saxony unless her possession was ratified by the European concert? This language produced some effect, and Hardenberg promised to consider an Austrian counter-project. Castlereagh immediately visited Metternich to urge him to make this as conciliatory as possible. It was possible, too, that Alexander, successful in his main hopes, would relax a little in his demands

¹ Castlereagh to Wellington, December [circa 12]. *Wellington S.D.* ix. 459: 'I consider the Polish question as settled. Prussia never contended it in earnest, and Austria consequently has yielded.' *Cf. Muenster*, p. 203.

upon Poland, and some hope of peace was still left.¹ The Austrian note, however, categorically refused Saxony to Prussia² and so irritated Hardenberg (and the Prussian Cabinet) that he revealed the correspondence between himself and Metternich concerning Poland. There ensued a stormy scene between the Czar and the Austrian Chancellor, which, however, by showing Alexander the real state of affairs, was not altogether regrettable.³

Still, the four Powers were now hopelessly divided. It was Talleyrand's opportunity. It was obvious that France must at least be admitted to the inner councils of the Congress and that her weight would prove perhaps decisive. Talleyrand's policy had made it necessary for him to join the Austrian side. His government, too, was prepared for an alliance with England. Thus Metternich, some time just before December 18, with the cognisance of Castlereagh, approached Talleyrand officially with proposals for joint action.⁴

Meanwhile, Castlereagh was asked by both Metternich and Hardenberg to mediate on the Saxon question, and Czartoriski joined in the request.⁵ Castlereagh consented, and on December 20 he had an interview of two hours with Hardenberg, Stein, and Czartoriski, in which a new move was made by the Prussian Government. They tried to persuade Castlereagh to consent to transfer the King of Saxony to the Rhine. This measure would never have won the consent of Austria, but there were also other reasons why it should be refused by an English Minister. If the Rhine frontier were handed over to a weak State, which had besides a special connexion with France, there was no security for Germany on the West and no great

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, December 7. *F.O. Continent*, 9. Appendix, p. 35.

² Angeberg, 505.

³ Castlereagh to Liverpool, December 17. *Wellington S.D.* ix. 483.

⁴ *Ibid.* December 18. *F.O. Continent*, 9. Appendix, p. 36; Cook to Liverpool, December 18. *Wellington S.D.* ix. 493.

⁵ *Ibid.* December 18. Appendix, p. 36.

power specially interested in the protection of Holland. Castlereagh peremptorily refused the proposal. At the same time he showed quite clearly that he sincerely desired a powerful Prussia, and he informed the Russian representative that no further opposition would be made by himself upon the Polish point, if the other Powers consented to abandon their claims.¹ Moreover, Castlereagh made a further attempt to obtain the materials of a compromise by proposing the appointment of a statistical committee, which should attempt to settle the disputes concerning areas of territories and numbers of population, which each Power interpreted in its own favour.²

The appointment of the statistical committee was to reveal the new position of France. Talleyrand claimed representation upon it, and Castlereagh, though apparently not very willingly, insisted that a French Plenipotentiary should be placed upon it.³ This new factor produced some effect upon Alexander, who was now undoubtedly seeking for some compromise upon the Saxon point, and a conciliatory conversation took place between the Czar and the Emperor of Austria.⁴ Talleyrand was indeed now pressing for an alliance, but Castlereagh held him back in the hopes of an amicable settlement.⁵

On December 27 matters came to a head. Razumowski, appointed Russian Plenipotentiary (a sign of compromise on the part of the Czar), wrote demanding a conference of the 'Four' upon the Saxon point, and the divisions of the allies were thus brought to formal discussion. At the first

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, December 24. *F.O. Continent*, 9. Appendix, p. 37.

² *Ibid.* December 24; Muenster, *op. cit.* p. 216.

³ Talleyrand, *Memoires*, ii. 544.

⁴ Castlereagh to Liverpool, December 25. *F.O. Continent*, 9.

⁵ *Ibid.* December 25. *Wellington S.D.* ix. 511: 'He [Talleyrand] was urgent in his language to me two days since to begin with an engagement between France, Austria, and England. I told him that I thought we were already united in opinion, and that to form an alliance prematurely might augment the chances of war rather than an amicable settlement . . .'

meeting Austria and England demanded the introduction of France, but this was hotly combated by their allies.¹ The Prussian plenipotentiaries even went so far as to threaten a declaration of war unless their rights to the whole of Saxony were recognised. It was their truculent and unmeasured language which produced the greatest effect upon Castlereagh.² Hitherto, however much they had quarrelled among themselves, none of the statesmen, not even Alexander, had dared to treat him in so summary a fashion. His letter shows how much he resented Prussia's attempt to bully him, and he went straight from the Conference to Talleyrand with a project for a secret treaty. The possibility of this step had of course been present during the last fortnight and Castlereagh had written home for further instructions. But it is to be noticed that it was Castlereagh who drew up the draft of the treaty and that it was agreed to almost in every detail by Talleyrand and Metternich.³ The news of the American peace, which arrived so opportunely on the morning of the Conference, doubtless helped the English Minister to a decision. But that influence has probably been exaggerated, and it seems probable that he would not have acted otherwise, even if that news had been delayed. When it is remembered that his last instructions had expressly forbidden him to involve this country in war, the boldness of his action is more strongly realised, for war the treaty meant, if Prussia did not give way. It was, perhaps, as grave a responsibility as any Minister of this country has ever incurred on his own initiative and it demonstrates what historians are only just beginning to realise, that for unflinching courage and decision of character Castlereagh has rarely been equalled, much less excelled, among English Foreign Ministers.

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, January 1 (No. 43). *F.O. Continent*, 10. Appendix, p. 39.

² *Ibid.* January 1 (No. 44). *F.O. Continent*, 10. Appendix, p. 40.

³ *Ibid.* January 1 (No. 45). Appendix, p. 41.

However, the firm tone of Austria and Great Britain at the second and third conferences produced its effect. Hardenberg intimated privately to Castlereagh that he would yield. He secured from Castlereagh in return a promise that the Saxon question should be settled by the five Powers and that the King of Saxony's consent should not be considered necessary.¹ He further broached once more the object of transferring the King of Saxony to the Rhine, a plan which Castlereagh again pronounced to be impossible, and which even Talleyrand refused, sorely tempted though perhaps he was.² To avoid a repetition of this proposal, so obnoxious to him, Castlereagh sought a special interview with the Emperor of Russia and protested vehemently against the idea.³ The audience served further to enlighten the Czar's mind upon the diplomatic situation, for he questioned Castlereagh as to the rumours of an alliance and received a reply which could have left him little doubt on the subject.⁴ Henceforth the Russian plenipotentiaries worked their hardest for a settlement.

All risk of an immediate outbreak was now over, but the situation was still one of the greatest danger and difficulty. The Prussian and Austrian Cabinets were completely estranged and the materials for a compromise were hard to find. Moreover, in the flush of triumph the war party in the Austrian councils wished to press their victory home and began to put forward extravagant pretensions, while Talleyrand was not unwilling to see the quarrel go forward. For Castlereagh, who sincerely desired the

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, January 3. *F.O. Continent*, 10.

² *Ibid.* January 5. *Wellington S.D.* ix. 527. Cf. Lehmann, *Hist. Zeitschrift*, N.S. 24, p. 466; and cf. Oncken, *Das Zeitalter* etc. ii. p. 873 ff.

³ *Ibid.* January 8. *F.O. Continent*, 10. Appendix, p. 42.

⁴ *Ibid.* January 8. *F.O. Continent*, 10. Appendix, p. 43. Cf. Dorman, *History of the British Empire*, ii. 180. It is interesting to compare this with Castlereagh to Wellington, March 27, 1815, *Wellington S.D.* ix. 626. Castlereagh seems to have forgotten how much he told Alexander by implication. Cf. Martens, *Recueil*, xi. 246.

reconstruction of a powerful Prussian State, this policy was in the highest degree displeasing, and, having checkmated Prussia's attempts to dictate to Europe, he was by no means disposed to risk a war on behalf of a mere question of frontier. Thus in the final stage of the Congress, in the final effort that he made to avert disaster and produce a settlement, he was engaged more in combating his own allies than in attacking the other side. He had to work now with feverish haste. His colleagues were pressing him hard to come to their aid, yet he dared not leave Vienna with the problem unsettled. For six weeks his energy and activity were incessant and at last triumphed over all his difficulties.¹

His first care was to procure a formal statement from Talleyrand that he would not support Saxony if she refused the settlement of the Powers.² He then attacked the Austrian war party. Metternich had now apparently lost control of his Cabinet, and Schwarzenberg and Stadion were urgent that Torgau and Erfurt should be taken from Prussia. When Metternich attempted to urge these claims Castlereagh immediately sought a private interview with him and told him frankly that these places were indispensable to Prussia and that he could not think of going to war on a mere question of detail.³ When Metternich professed himself unable to control his Cabinet, Castlereagh sought an interview with the Austrian Emperor. At last, after a long wrangle with Talleyrand and Metternich, he secured a project which he could support.⁴ This gave Leipzig to Saxony, and, knowing Prussian prejudice upon

¹ Cf. Klinkowström, *op. cit.* p. 516: 'Er [Castlereagh] entfaltetete dabei einen ausserordentlichen Eifer und eine Ausdauer ohne Gleichen; er arbeitete Tag und Nacht.'

² Talleyrand to Castlereagh, January 8. *F.O. Continent*, 10.

³ Castlereagh to Liverpool, January 22. *F.O. Continent*, 10. Appendix, p. 44.

⁴ *Ibid.* January 29. *F.O. Continent*, 11. Appendix, p. 46. Cf. Metternich to Schwarzenberg, January 27. Klinkowström, p. 823, which shows the effect produced in the Austrian Cabinet.

that point, he disclosed the proposal privately to Hardenberg and vainly endeavoured to win his approval. When the Prussian Chancellor was not yet to be persuaded, Castlereagh met the King of Prussia himself and in an interview, 'the most painful in all respects that it has been my lot to undergo since I have been upon the Continent,' he tried in vain to win his assent to the loss of Leipzig.¹ A complete deadlock seemed again to have been produced, for Castlereagh could not hope to receive further concessions from Austria on the Saxon frontier. In this extremity he turned to Alexander and succeeded in obtaining his consent to the transference of Thorn to Prussia.² With this bribe he at last succeeded in extracting Leipzig from the reluctant Prussians, and the greatest of the difficulties was practically solved. Other points, however, such as Mayence, remained open. In this situation Castlereagh, on his own responsibility, forced sacrifices from Hannover and Holland (both of which Powers he could in the last resort control), and by this means constructed an entirely new scheme, by which he was able to bring Austria and Prussia to an agreement.³ Talleyrand had already been won over by a promise with regard to Naples, which Castlereagh had made him by the permission of his Cabinet,⁴ and on February 6 Castlereagh was able to announce to his Court that 'all the territorial arrangements on this side of the Alps are complete.' It was his zeal, his courage, his energy and his broad statesmanship that had made such a result possible.

¹ Castlereagh to Liverpool, February 6. Appendix, p. 50.

² *Ibid.* February 6. *F.O. Continent*, II. Appendix, p. 50. Cf. Delbrück, *op. cit.* p. 252; but this despatch shows clearly that it was Castlereagh who secured the concession.

³ *Ibid.* February 6. Appendix, p. 51.

⁴ *Ibid.* January 29 (Private). *F.O. Continent*, II. The permission of the Cabinet had arrived. Cf. Liverpool to Wellington, January 11. *Wellington S.D.* ix. 533.

APPENDIX

BATHURST TO CASTLEREAGH (No. 3), NOVEMBER 27, 1814.
'F.O. CONTINENT,' 6

... I am commanded by H.R.H. to acquaint you, that whilst He deeply laments the unfortunate course which the Discussions at Vienna have taken respecting Poland in consequence of the unjust demands & dangerous pretensions of the Emperor of R[ussia], H.R.H. Entirely approves of the firm and decided Manner, in w^h You have expressed the Sentiments of H.R.H. Gov^t on the different branches of this important Question: And in the Event of your failing to avert the Establishment of such pretensions, you will, as far as possible, avoid making H.R.H. a party to arrangements so injurious to the general Interests of Europe.

H.R.H. cannot contemplate the present State of Europe, and more Especially the internal State of France, Italy, and the Low Countries, without Entertaining the most serious Apprehensions of the consequences which would result from the renewal of War on the Continent under present circumstances.

H.R.H. has no doubt therefore that you will use your best Endeavours to prevent by all the means in your power so great an Evil.

It is unnecessary for me to point out to you the Impossibility of H.R.H. consenting to involve this Country in hostilities at this time for any of the objects which have been hitherto under discussion at Vienna.

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (No. 1), SEPTEMBER 3, 1814.
GENEVA. 'F.O. CONTINENT,' 7

... The Letters I received at Brussels, especially from The Duke of Wellington, determined me to go to Paris, and I consider that the Result has fully justified the Considerations which dictated this Measure, however inconvenient in it's Execution, as it enabled me to dissipate many doubts, to bring the French Government to a more temperate View of the Description of Understanding which ought to subsist between us, and to precede the Prince de Benevent to Vienna with a much more formed Notion of the mode of thinking of his Court than I could have otherwise obtained.

I cannot pretend, in the compass of a Despatch, to give Your Lordship, even in outline, the Substance of two long Interviews with that Minister occupying not less than five hours, in which, as he assured me by the King's Command, he discussed the various topics likely to come under consideration at Vienna with perfect unreserve. I was honoured also by The King with a Private Audience of above two Hours, in which His Majesty went, seriatim, through the same Points. I could observe shades of Opinion on some of the Points, but as to their desire and determination to cultivate a Connection with Great Britain, The King and His Minister were equally cordial and explicit.

My Task was rather to repress the Exuberance of this Sentiment, and to prevent it's assuming a Shape, which, by exciting jealousy in other States might impair our respective means of being really useful. I flatter myself I succeeded in this, and, as a proof, I have reason to believe that M. de Talleyrand, laying aside his former Jealousy, regarded with Satisfaction my preceding him to Vienna; and as no inconsiderable indication of Confidence, he left me at liberty to use at my own Discretion, in my Inter-course with the allied Ministers previous to his Arrival, what I had found to be the sentiments of his Court.

This Authority may be material in my preparatory Discussions with Count Nesselrode. I found the Sentiments of the French Gov^t with respect to Poland perfectly analogous to Our own.—A decided Repugnance to the Russian proj^t, as the most dangerous and unjust of the Three; a strong abstract preference (especially in The King's Mind) for the Re-existence of Poland as an independent State in the House of Saxony, but this Idea subdued by a sense of the danger of the Attempt, into a desire-not to subvert but to regulate the existing Principle of Partition. . . .

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (No. 3), OCTOBER 2, 1814.

'F.O. CONTINENT,' 7¹

The day after his Arrival, I received The Emperor of Russia's Commands to attend him, and was honoured with an Audience of Two Hours and a half. . . .

I represented that most certainly the British Government would view with great Satisfaction the Restoration of Poland to

¹ Cf. Oncken, *Das Zeitalter der Befreiungskriege* etc. ii. 844.

it's Independence as a Nation, but that they took a broad distinction between the Erection of a part of Poland into a Kingdom merged in the Crown of Russia, and the Restoration of the whole or a greater part into a distinct and independent State. That to the latter measure they would feel every friendly disposition, if it could be effected with the Concurrence and Support of the Neighbouring Powers, and if I was not authorised to press such a Measure upon His Imperial Majesty's Attention, it arose only from the Reluctance the Prince Regent felt to suggest any Measure for the adoption of his Allies, which might be felt by them to call for an unreasonable Sacrifice of Interest after the great Exertions they had lately been called upon to make—but that if the Question of restoring Poland was to be stirred at all, the British Government were of Opinion, to be either just in itself, or safe in it's operation, that it ought to be taken up upon a broad and liberal Basis; and that I had reason to believe neither Austria nor Prussia would hesitate to unite themselves with His Imperial Majesty for such a purpose, however strongly they deprecated the proposed Measure.

The Emperor frankly acknowledged that he was not prepared to make this Extent of Sacrifice on the part of his Empire, but continued to argue the Safety of the Measure to His Allies—it's Advantage to the Poles, and favorable collateral Influence upon Russia. . . .

I ventured to assure His Imperial Majesty that a Measure of this partial and disquieting Nature would be disapproved by all Europe, and that it was odious and alarming in the extreme to both his Allies: That if The King of Prussia, from personal deference and Regard, was apparently more acquiescent, His Majesty's Repugnance and that of His Subjects was not the less strong. That such was the universal Sentiment, His Imperial Majesty would find from all the Ministers present, and were the general Impression even founded in Prejudice, and not in reason it was in vain to hope that an Attempt so repugnant to the prevailing feeling of Europe could be productive of good.

I submitted that I had argued the Question more as a Russian than a British Minister, at least than as a British Minister having any Sinister View with respect to Russian Interests; that if I wished to involve His Imperial Majesty in internal Difficulties, to embarrass his Administration and to embroil him with his Neighbours, I should urge His Imperial Majesty to pursue the Course he had stated; but that the object

of my Government was to promote quiet, and there was nothing they more desired than to preserve their Connection with Russia and to see His Imperial Majesty enjoy the fruits of His most glorious Labours. . . .

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (No. 4), OCTOBER 2, 1814.
'F.O. CONTINENT,' 7

The day after my Interview with The Emperor, Count Nesselrode called on me, apparently to learn the Impression made upon me by my Conversation with His Imperial Majesty. . . .

I thought it material to explain myself to Count Nesselrode upon one View of the Subject, which the nature of my Discussion with The Emperor did not enable me to touch upon, namely upon the possibility of His Imperial Majesty abandoning the Political but adhering to the Territorial Part of his Plan. I told him that, feeling as the British Government did upon the Question of Polish Independence, it could not be expected that we should consent to bear the odium of any Disappointment the Nation might experience, whilst Russia carried into effect her Views of Aggrandizement against the declared Sentiments of her Allies, and, as I believed, equally against the general sense of Europe. That it was not only dangerous but degrading to Austria and Prussia in the Eyes of their own Subjects as well as of Europe, to deny them the Semblance of a military Frontier, and it was no remedy for such a menacing arrangement, to hold out to these Courts Indemnifications elsewhere, to reconcile them to this undisguised State of Military dependence upon Russia. . . .

I further pressed the Embarrassments it must expose us to in Congress especially the Plenipotentiaries of those Powers who had publickly to defend the System to which they gave their Sanction: That I looked with the more pain to any difference of this nature, wishing to find myself enabled to act in concert with the Allies throughout, but that to do so, they must give me a System which I could defend. . . .

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (No. 6), OCTOBER 9, 1814.
'F.O. CONTINENT,' 7¹

. . . I acquainted Your Lordship by my last Courier, that I feared no effectual Resistance could be made to the Views of

¹ Oncken, ii. 845.

Russia in that Quarter, and that the Two Neighbouring Powers were more likely to seek their Own Aggrandisement in other directions, than oppose themselves to the Prétentions of their more powerful Neighbour.

I was not the less confirmed in this Impression, from perceiving that the extravagant tone of War which Austria had held, was accompanied by an equal Jealousy of Prussia on the Side of Saxony, and of France in Italy, which at once proved, that Compromise and not Resistance was really intended, and further from knowing, that Prussia, feeling she had no other Support than Russia to secure to her Saxony against the Views both of Austria and France, could not afford to risk that support, by too decisive an opposition to the Emperor's Designs with respect to Poland.

Under these Circumstances I conceived, that the only chance of doing good was to take up some ground of opposition short of War, and to endeavour to bring Austria and Prussia to a compromise in Germany, in order that they might unite against Russia upon the Polish Question.

The existing Congress appeared to me to furnish a suitable Expedient, as it enabled those Powers to represent to Russia, without menacing her with War, that they could not make themselves, in the face of Europe, the Instruments of their Own Humiliation, by recommending *that* as just, wise and proper, against which they had been so long engaged in remonstrances—that it was one thing silently to submit, and another to originate a measure of National Danger.

With this view, I desired an Audience of The King of Prussia. I found His Majesty, as in England, the Advocate of The Emperor of Russia, although personally adverse to his Measures. I represented that the Evil might yet, with proper Management, be arrested without a Contest. I pressed His Majesty not to abandon the Interests of His Monarchy in Despair, and begged that he would oppose every obstacle, short of Arms, to an Arrangement which left his Provinces uncovered, and his State in obvious Dependence upon another Power.

I then opened myself unreservedly to Prince Metternich and Prince Hardenberg, and endeavoured to make them feel the Dangers to which their disunion exposed both their Monarchies. The latter explained himself very frankly, that whilst Saxony was in doubt, and with it the Possibility of Prussia being suitably reconstructed, it was impossible for him, more especially feeling

as his King did, to risk the favour of Russia, but that if Saxony was assured to him by Austria and England, he could then unite with Austria, to oppose such resistance as prudence might justify, to Russian Encroachments.

I found Prince Metternich without any fixed Plan. In descending from his War Language he appeared to me to fall into the other extreme, and to think in fact only of compromise. I represented the Necessity of an Understanding with Prussia, as the only chance of present good, or possibly of future Safety.

Prince Metternich, the following day, had an Interview with Prince Hardenberg, and professed his Willingness to enter into his Views with respect to Saxony, provided an Understanding could thereby be established with respect to Poland, and certain German Points of Minor Importance. The Parties profess a mutual desire to understand each other, but there is a certain degree of mutual distrust, and fear of Russia, which does not justify me in speaking confidently of the Result.

I endeavoured to derive some Aid in this Attempt from the Appui of France—but, unfortunately, the Manner in which Prince Talleyrand has conducted himself here, rather excited apprehension in both the Austrian and Prussian Ministers, than inspired them with any Confidence in His Views.

Although adverse to the designs of Russia in Poland, he betrayed not less Hostility to their's in Germany and Italy, and both, perhaps not unnaturally, seem equally to dread the appearance of a French Force at present in the Field. . . .

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (NO. 9), OCTOBER 14, 1814.
'F.O. CONTINENT,' 7

. . . In pressing upon The Emperor The Rights of Austria under the Treaty of the 27th June [1813] His Imperial Majesty was at first embarrassed, and appeared to have forgot the Article. After some Reflection, he attempted to bring his intended Arrangement within the Words of the Treaty, by stating, that he meant to cede the half of the Salines which belonged to the Dutchy, to Austria, an object too trifling to have deserved Notice, much less to be put forward in satisfaction of such an Engagement.

When driven in Argument upon the Territorial Question, His Imperial Majesty again took Shelter under his Moral Duty, that if it was merely a question of Territory, he would yield

it without a Struggle, but that it involved the Happiness of the Poles, and the People would never forgive his ceding them. I asked His Imperial Majesty how he distinguished between his Duty to the Poles on one side of his Line and on the other, and that, where he could not satisfy his Principle without denying even to Prussia any Share, he should not do Violence to his Engagements with Austria, to please the Poles.

I further represented, that if the Principle of Moral Duty was so far limited as to be controuled and even extinguished by deference for Russian Interests, which His Imperial Majesty had declared it was, in the Instance of making Poland really free, he must not expect other States to admit this Consideration as binding upon them, to the Sacrifice of Interests not less essential.

I met the Emperor afterwards in the Evening at Court. His Imperial Majesty assumed a very gracious Manner, and said he always respected my *franchise*, although he differed with me in opinion. . . .

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (NO. 12), OCTOBER 24, 1814.
'F.O. CONTINENT,' 7

[Transmits the Austrian answer to the Prussian demand for Saxony.]

. . . Having been shewn the Brouillon of the proposed Answer on the Night of the 22nd, I took the earliest Opportunity of preparing Prince Hardenberg for it, foreseeing that the Point of Mayence was likely to prove a serious Impediment in the Way of an Understanding.

I found him, when I saw him next Morning, extremely warm upon this Subject. I did not combat the Validity of His Reasoning; but represented that, important as this Fortress was, it should not be made an obstacle to so salutary a Measure, as the Union of the two Great German Powers at such a Conjunction.

That the Wishes as well as the Interests of Great Britain must be on the side of the Northern States, but when Austria chose to rely upon Bavaria, and to incur the greater Risque upon such a Combination, it appeared to me, that Prussia never could persuade the World, that she, *bonâ fide*, desired the Alliance, if she broke off upon this single Condition, after Austria had made to her so great a Sacrifice as the Saxon Point.

It was agreed that the Austrian and Prussian Ministers should meet the following Day (Sunday) at my House, and I have the Gratification to state, that the Result was satisfactory. Prince Hardenberg expressed himself satisfied with the Explanations he had received on the Point of Saxony, reserving to himself to reply to Prince Metternich's Reasoning against the total Incorporation of Saxony with Prussia. He stated strongly his Objections to entrusting so important a Fortress as Mayence to Bavaria alone ; but was ready to reserve these Points for further Discussion (satisfied that they could not impede the desired Union) and proceed at once to act in Concert with Austria, and England upon the Polish Question.

The Measures to be jointly adopted with this View were then discussed : and they desired me to prepare a Memorandum of the Result, a Copy of which (No. 4) I now inclose, on which they mean to take the pleasure of their respective Sovereigns.

I took occasion to see Prince Talleyrand soon after, anxious to render his Course, as far as possible, conformable to Our Views. I found He had had an Interview with The Emperor of Russia, in which He had been pressing his Saxon Views (and if I may credit His Imperial Majesty's Confidential Report of the Conversation to me) with a Disposition to make his Line on the Polish Question subservient to them. The Emperor however was equally obdurate with him upon both. In this fact their respective Reports concurred, but there can be no doubt that attempts are making, principally through Prince Czartorisky to play a Back Game of this Description. I have done my best to counteract it, and shall desire the Duke of Wellington, as from himself, to insinuate through M. de Blacas, that any Attempt on the part of France to make such a Collateral Point as that of Saxony a Question of War, in subversion of the more important object of opposing a Barrier to Russia, must, in all Probability, not only destroy their friendly Relations with England, but lead to immediate Hostilities, and that it's obvious and first effect must be to compel England to sign a Peace with Murat, in order to place Austria in Security on the Side of Italy, and thus enable her to direct her Efforts to her Polish Frontier. Whereas if France acts upon the broad Principles of European Equilibrium, instead of fighting smaller Points of local Influence, in the Event of success attending the common effort with respect to Poland, she would have improved means of urging amicably upon Prussia some Modification of her Demands upon Saxony. . . .

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (NO. 15), NOVEMBER 5, 1814.
'F.O. CONTINENT,' 8

[Narrates discussion with Alexander leading to correspondence.]

. . . I should have wished that this Species of discussion had fallen into more able hands, and especially that it could have been conducted by the Minister of one of the Powers more immediately interested in the Polish question; but when I saw the Service suffering from inaction, I found it difficult to be passive, and Your Lordship may be assured that England is still the only Power that either can, or dares raise her Voice against the Powerful and the Oppressor.

I wish I could lead Your Lordship to expect a favourable issue to these Polish Discussions. I shall furnish you with the Details of their intermediate progress since my last in a separate Despatch. My object has been that, at least, the Prince Regent should stand justified in the eyes of Europe, whatever may be the Event, and that if the Powers most immediately interested should find themselves obliged to submit to an unjust and illiberal Act of Power, that H.R.H.'s Ministers may have been found true to these Principles, which have distinguished the British Government throughout the War, and which have conciliated to her Councils the Respect and Confidence of the Continent. . . .

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (NO. 16), NOVEMBER 11, 1814.
'F.O. CONTINENT,' 8

. . . The Failure of the efforts hitherto made, is chiefly owing to the personal ascendancy, which the Emperor has unfortunately acquired over the King of Prussia. When at Buda His Imperial Majesty omitted no Exertion to operate on the minds of both the other Sovereigns. His usual mode is to represent their ministers as the obstacle to Harmony, and that the whole system of their policy ought to be settled by the Sovereigns themselves. This Language, which was particularly directed against Prince Metternich, made no sort of impression on *his* Master, but the Emperor was more successful in a long conversation with Prince Hardenberg, in presence of the King of Prussia, by which he contrived not only to embarrass that minister, but to deprive his intervention of much of its weight.

I was induced when I first arrived here, to undervalue the importance attached by the Austrian and Prussian Cabinets to the Polish question, and to suppose that they both might be more easily reconciled by arrangements elsewhere, to suffer the Emperor to execute His purpose than has proved to be the fact.

The prospect of reconciling their differences on German affairs was no sooner opened, than both Austria and Prussia resumed their former earnestness on this point, which was much augmented by a variety of collateral indications of the intriguing spirit, which actuated the Russian Councils in other quarters.

I deemed it of Great importance to contribute as far as depended upon me, to this concert : considering the establishment of Russia in the heart of Germany not only as constituting a great danger in itself, but as calculated to establish a most pernicious influence both in the Austrian and Prussian Cabinets ; and I also foresaw, that if these two Powers, from distrust of each other, gave up the Polish point as desperate, the contest in negotiation would then turn upon Saxony, Mayence and other German Points, and through the contentions of Austria and Prussia, the supremacy of Russia would be established in all directions, and upon every Question ; whereas an understanding previously established on German affairs, gave some chance of ameliorating the Polish arrangement, and, in case of it's failure, afforded the best, if not the only means of counteracting the Russian influence in the other European arrangements. . . .

I have certainly been led, from circumstances, to take a more active share in the discussions on this question, than I should have permitted myself to do, if it had been any part of my policy to push the Polish point to a hostile issue. In preparing for so serious an alternative, I should have felt the propriety, as a British minister, of preserving a greater degree of reserve ; it being the province of Great Britain to support, rather than lead, in such occasions. But in proportion as I felt that an effort ought to be made successively by conciliation, by moderation, by persuasion, by pressure of argument, and ultimately if necessary by an imposing negotiation, uniting the general sentiments of Europe upon sound and popular grounds, and not by arms. I felt the less precluded from taking a forward part. Some advantages perhaps have resulted from my being the person to do so, as the same arguments, had they

been urged by the parties most interested, might have rendered accommodation more difficult. Such are the principles upon which my conduct has hitherto been founded. It will be highly gratifying to me should they be honored with the Prince Regent's Gracious approbation, and with the concurrence of my colleagues in the Government. Since I have been on the continent, in my intercourse with the several Cabinets, I have conceived it my duty to keep in View the following principles; considering them as those on which it was the intention of His Royal Highness' Government that I should act. In the first place, so to conduct the arrangements to be framed for Congress, as to make the establishment of a just equilibrium in Europe the first object of my attention, and to consider the assertion of minor points of interest as subordinate to this great end. Secondly, to use my best endeavours to support the powers who had contributed to save Europe by their exertions, in their just pretensions to be liberally reestablished upon the scale to which their treaties entitled them to lay claim, and not to be deterred from doing so, by the necessity of adopting, for this end, measures, which, although not unjust, are nevertheless painful and unpopular in themselves. And Thirdly to endeavour to combine this latter duty to our Friends and Allies, with as much mildness and indulgence even to the offending states, as circumstances would permit.

I have pursued these views, with a fixed and anxious purpose, if possible, not to suffer the Peace of Europe to be disturbed, even upon just Grounds, if by any compromise or even reasonable sacrifice it could be avoided. If in discharge of this duty, I have felt myself obliged strongly to remonstrate against the principles and temper disclosed by the Russian Councils, I hope I have maintained honest principles, and I am confident that the Relations between the two Governments would not have been improved by a more pliant tone on my part, opposed to that in which the Emperor has of late been disposed to dictate.

Your Lordship may rest assured that no effort on my part shall be omitted to prevent disunion, and still more War; But I am confident I speak the universal sentiment, when I declare my perfect conviction, that unless the Emperor of Russia can be brought to a more moderate and sound course of Public conduct, the Peace, which we have so dearly purchased, will be but of short duration.

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (No. 26), DECEMBER 5, 1814.
'F.O. CONTINENT,' 8¹

... Your Lordship will recollect that the Circumstances which preceded the Transfer of the Negotiation into the Management of Prussia, were not such as to afford much prospect of insisting with effect upon any demand, more especially one of any Magnitude. This, as I understand, induced the Austrian Minister to represent to Prince Hardenberg the necessity under existing Circumstances of Prussia modifying her Saxon Pretensions, so as not only to secure the Concurrence of the several German powers, and if possible of France, to her Arrangements ; but also to compensate, in some Measure, the disappointment of Austria as to her Polish Frontier, by relieving her from that Jealousy, which the total Extinction of an intermediate Power on her Bohemian Frontier must occasion. . . .

It is not merely in her Territorial Relations that the Spirit disclosed in the late Negotiations embarrasses Austria. She feels still greater Uneasiness from the Temper of the Russian Councils, and from the Commanding Sway The Emperor has acquired, through the King, over those of Prussia. Had Prince Hardenberg been enabled to range himself, as he promised to do, on the side of Austria, in a sincere, open, and undisguised Negotiation with Russia upon the Polish Question, whatever might have been the Success of this effort, the world would have taken it as a Proof that Prussia was true to the Interests of Germany,—and it would have given Austria a strong moral Justification for making great Sacrifices to her in Saxony ; but the Misfortune is, that the Impression, as well as the fact is now the other way, and that Russia and Prussia are looked upon as one, pledged to support each other's objects, whatever may be their Effect either upon Austrian or German Interests.

Prince Metternich forcibly represented to me yesterday, the difficulty in which he found himself placed under the Circumstances above stated. He stated that he felt himself nominally allied with Russia and Prussia, but with the prospect, upon every litigated Question, of having both against him ; That under these Circumstances, however desirous of bending, as far as possible, for the sake of an Adjustment, He did not feel that he could venture to run counter, on the Saxon Question,

¹ Cf. Angeberg, *Congrès de Vienne*, p. 493.

to the moral feeling of Germany, to the Sentiments of his own Cabinet, and to the declared opinion of the French Government, without the hazard of leaving himself and his Government without the support in Europe, which was become indispensable to It's Security and Independence, whilst Russia possessed so commanding an Influence over the Prussian Cabinet.

I foresaw, from the first, that these German Questions, if they could not be resolved from a Sense of common danger, by a Union of common Interest between the two great German Powers, upon the Polish Question, would prove beyond all Comparison the most fruitful Source of Discord, from the Complexity of the Combinations amongst the German States, worked upon both by Russian and French Influence.

The Austrian Minister no sooner perceived from the Conduct and Language of The King of Prussia, and from the Retrocession of the Prussian Minister upon the Saxon Point, that the Intervention of Prussia in the Negotiation was little more than nominal, than, in despair of accomplishing any thing effectual on the Polish Question, he only considered how he could best make an accommodation with Russia subservient to a Modification on the Point of Saxony, which I look upon now as the point practically at issue, however the other may remain open to further Discussion.

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (NO. 27), DECEMBER 7, 1814.

'F.O. CONTINENT,' 8

[Interview with Hardenberg.]

. . . I stated to him that there was but one Sentiment amongst us all, that Prussia should be re-constructed upon the Scale to which her Treaties entitled her to lay claim; and that the only question was whether the whole of Saxony should be included in the Territories to be assigned to her. In observing on the Difficulties that opposed themselves to such an Arrangement, I delivered to His Highness an Extract of Your Lordship's Private Letter of the 18th Ulto., as the best proof not of what those usually opposed to The King's Government in Great Britain, might urge in the Controversy of Debate upon this Subject, but of the Sentiments deliberately entertained by those most friendly to the interests of Prussia. I requested Prince Hardenberg to lay this Extract before The King in corroboration of the Advice I had given him some time since,

namely that as Minister for Prussia, he ought to prefer a compromise on this Question to a total Extinction.

I did not however conceal from him that I considered the point as now standing on different Grounds from what it did when my Letter of the 11th of Oct' and Prince Metternich's of the 22nd of October were written.

That in doing Justice to the Loyalty of his Intentions, it was impossible to deny that the Concert on the Affairs of Poland, which was the Basis of the Understanding, had avowedly failed through the Conduct of his Sovereign; that under these Circumstances, neither Austria nor Great Britain could espouse his Claims in the manner they might otherwise have done. . . .

Prince Hardenberg endeavoured to maintain the hardship upon Prussia, after all her Exertions, to find herself thwarted in her views, and that He would run all risks rather than return home under such an humiliation. I represented that this was not a case of War, that he was in the occupation of Saxony, and that I apprehended no one would think of removing him hostilely, from thence, but that he could not regard an unacknowledged Claim as constituting a Good Title, and that he never could, in *conscience* or *Honour* advise his Sovereign to make the mere refusal of a Recognition Cause of War against other States; That Prussia would then remain in a State of disquietude and doubt, compelled to remain armed, and that his Return to Berlin would, under such Circumstances, be more painful, than if he brought back the accession of all the Powers of Europe to an equal Extent of Dominion, though differently constituted.

In impressing upon Prince Hardenberg's mind the friendly share Great Britain had always borne in asserting the Interests of Prussia, and the successful Efforts recently made by myself to prevail upon Austria to sacrifice her Objections on the Point of Saxony to the larger question of Poland, His Highness became more reasonable and agreed to take *ad referendum* a Counter Projêt from Austria, shewing how Prussia could be secured in her Rights without laying claim to the entire of Saxony. The Chancellor also allowed me strongly to impress upon him that, in proportion as the World imputed to His Court whether falsely or not, it was not necessary to decide, an alarming degree of Subservience to Russian Influence, that it became the more impolitick in him, wishing as I had no doubt he did,

to preserve the General Confidence of Europe, to attempt to force an Arrangement, which several of the principal Powers of Europe might decline to sanction. That in proportion as he had failed to bring forward his King upon the Polish Question, he ought to be accommodating on that of Germany, if he wished to be respected among his Co-Estates, and not to build his authority amongst them upon an external Influence.

I left the Prussian Minister more temperate upon the Point than I had expected to find him. Having prepared him for a Negative from Austria under present Circumstances to the total Incorporation of Saxony, I afterwards saw Prince Metternich, and urged him to frame His Answer to the Prussian Paper, in such a Manner as would present at once to Prince Hardenberg's Mind the Difficulty of executing his purpose against the prevailing Sentiment, and would shew him in a Counter Projêt how his just Views could be otherwise realized.

This Prince Metternich promised to do. He was much pleased with the Part I had taken, and, as he is but too apt to do, considered an Arrangement now as certain. Much will yet depend on obtaining from Russia some further territorial Means in Poland: Without these I do not see how the Various Pretensions can be at all adequately satisfied. We must still hope that The Emperor will not suffer things to get into Confusion for a limited Extent of Territory. If he cedes up to the Wartha and the Nidda it will give essential facilities. . . .

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (No. 35), DECEMBER 18, 1814.
'F.O. CONTINENT,' 9

I am not enabled to add anything on which I can absolutely rely relative to the Negotiation. I have some Reason however to believe that a new Projêt, assigning to The King of Saxony an increased indemnity to the Extent of Eight hundred thousand Subjects, *but not in Saxony*, has been laid before The Emperor Alexander, for his Sanction, by Prince Hardenberg. I have heard from another Quarter, that the Prussian answer or Projêt, whatever it is, was not approved by His Imperial Majesty. Baron Stein is the most earnest opponent in the Prussian Councils of any Modification of the Saxon Point. Prince Metternich declares that nothing will induce his Emperor to give way on this Subject; and as a proof that his Court is determined, he has transmitted his last Note to Prince Hardenberg officially to Prince Talleyrand. This is the first

regular overture that has been made by Austria to France; the personal Intercourse between these ministers has been considerably augmented within these few days.

The Austrian Minister having expressed a wish for my Intervention on the point of Saxony, and a similar Insinuation coming through Count Hardenberg on the part of Prussia, but accompanied by a doubt whether the recent Conduct of that Cabinet might not indispose me to interfere, I thought it right to declare, that no feeling with respect to the past would make me refuse my Intervention, if I thought I could be instrumental in bringing the Parties to an amicable Arrangement, however much I might desire, on personal Grounds, to be as little mixed as possible with this Question of Saxony; but that to afford any Chance of being of use, my Interference must be equally desired by the Parties, and I must be previously assured, that Prussia is prepared to admit as a Basis, a suitable Arrangement for the King in Saxony. . . .

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (No. 38), DECEMBER 24, 1814.

'F.O. CONTINENT,' 9

I stated to Your Lordship in my Despatch No. 35 the desire which had been evinced directly by Austria, and indirectly by Prussia, for my Intervention on the Saxon Point, and the Language I had held upon this subject.

The following day Prince Czartorinsky, who although not in any official Situation, appears now the actual Russian Minister, at least on Polish and Saxon Questions, desired to call on me. . . .

The object of his Conversation was to ascertain the Sentiments of my Court upon the Saxon Question, and to consider how we could best escape from the difficulties in which we were placed. . . .

The following day, Prince Hardenberg desired to see me, for the purpose of communicating to me his Memoir, and expressed a Wish, after our Separate Interview was closed, that I would allow him to have a Conference with me in Prince Czartorinski and Baron Stein's Presence, to all which I agreed; at the latter Conversation Baron Humboldt also assisted.

The object of this conference seemed to be, to ascertain how far I could be prevailed on to support the proposed Establishment of The King of Saxony beyond the Rhine, in favour of

which they urged all the reasons arising from the Evil of dividing that Country, and the discontent and Intrigues to which it would hereafter give occasion; The necessity of the whole of Saxony to give Solidity to Prussia, and the Hardship, after all their Hopes, of depriving them of this Possession.

To this I opposed the Impossibility of procuring the Acquiescence necessary to render such an arrangement really beneficial to Prussia. The King clearly would not relinquish his Rights for such an Establishment as was proposed. France certainly would neither encourage him to do so, nor recognise the Possession in Prussia to his Prejudice. Austria would be as little disposed to force upon The King of Saxony an Arrangement, which would work a particular Injury to herself; and with respect to Great Britain, although I had never held the Rights of The King of Saxony to be paramount to the Interests of Europe in the larger Sense, nor yet to the just Re-construction, according to her Treaties, of Prussia, yet that under all the Circumstances of the Present Case, I could not admit a necessity sufficiently strong to exist, as to justify the adoption of so harsh and strong a Measure as the total Incorporation of Saxony, in opposition to the prevailing Sentiment of Germany, not less so, as I believed, of Great Britain, and the declared opposition of some of the most preponderating Powers in Europe.

That I could the less do so as my Conviction was, that Prussia would not gain real Strength by such an unpopular Measure, even if acquiesced in, whereas, if it led to War, it was unnecessary to argue the Impolicy of an act, which might have the Effect of bringing a French Army into Germany to assail, and a Russian Army to defend, Prussia. . . .

This discussion lasted nearly two hours, during which time I had to sustain the United efforts of those present, to convert me, and to impeach the Conduct which Austria had pursued. It ended, however, in my contributing, as far as the Weight of the British Government could operate, to produce more temperate Councils on the part of Prussia, and in making the Russians more correctly appreciate the course that had been pursued towards Prussia; I added that whatever opposition I had given to the Polish Arrangement; and although I must still reserve to myself the Right to protest against that Measure, yet that being once acquiesced in by the Powers most interested, I should be found not the less desirous to promote a conciliatory Settlement on other Points. . . .

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (NO. 43), JANUARY 1, 1815.
'F.O. CONTINENT,' 10

. . . Before I gave my Consent to be present, I thought it right to have an Explanatory Interview with Count Razamoffski and Prince Hardenberg for two objects. The first was to desire it might be understood, that by assisting at the Arrangement of the details of the intended Polish Measure, I was not to be considered as altering or withdrawing any part of the Opposition I had felt it my Duty to give to the Principle of that measure on behalf of my Court, that, with this reserve however, I was perfectly ready to contribute, as far as lay in my power, to render the Arrangement as little exceptionable as possible in its minor Provisions.

The second point which I desired to press was that France might be invited to take a part in the Saxon Negotiations, not to the abandonment of Confidential Discussion between The Powers that had been allied in the War, but that the former Power might not feel that She was deliberately excluded from the Consideration of a Question, on which She had professed to take so strong an Interest. . . .

After this business was concluded there was much general Discussion on the Point of Saxony. The Prussian Ministers adhering tenaciously to the Principle of total Incorporation, but declaring their Willingness to consider any other Projêt that might be brought forward for adequately re-constructing Prussia under her Treaties.

To this it was replied by the Austrian and English Plenipotentiaries, that although they were of opinion that the Means existed of fulfilling their Engagements to Prussia, without divesting The King of Saxony of the whole of his Dominions, yet that until France was combined in the Negotiation, we had not the means of concerting a Counter Projêt, which, by uniting the Appui necessary, might induce The King of Saxony to cede what was required, that Prince Talleyrand would not concert Modifications with us in our Individual Capacity, and that to postpone communicating with him till the four Powers had come to a previous decision, was calculated to provoke opposition, instead of conciliating the important Power he represented, to assist in settling *à l'Aimable*, a question upon which we were unfortunately divided in opinion. . . .

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (No. 44), JANUARY 1, 1815.
'F.O. CONTINENT,' 10¹

Although I have had strong reason to hope that a disposition existed in the Prussian Cabinet to accommodate on the Saxon Point, should a liberal offer be made them, yet there are indications which justify the utmost Vigilance with respect to their ultimate Policy.

The Language of their Entourés is very warlike, and strongly against yielding any part of Saxony; Baron Humboldt's particularly so. His Reasoning yesterday in Our Conference, which he attends as one of the Prussian Plenipotentiaries, went every length, but that of refusing to discuss such Alternative as might be proposed. They are organising their Army for the field, and, I have heard to-day, are employed in fortifying Dresden. This may be all menace to sustain their Negotiation, but they may also meditate some sudden effort, in conjunction with Russia to coerce Austria, and place themselves in a Situation to dictate their own terms on all other Points—the Conduct of their Employés on the left Bank of The Rhine has been extremely vexatious of late towards the Prince of Orange's Government, and no attention has yet been paid here to any of their Reclamations.

These Indications have attracted the more seriously my Attention, from a declaration incidentally made by Prince Hardenberg in yesterday's Conference, that Should Prussia continue to consider the Annexation of the whole of Saxony necessary to Her Re-construction, She could not, in point of Expence, submit to remain in a State of Provisional Occupation, and that Russia and Prussia would, in such a Case, consider a Refusal to acknowledge, as tantamount to a Declaration of War.

I took occasion to protest in the strongest terms against this principle as a most alarming and unheard of Menace; That it should be competent for One Power to invade another; and by force to compel a Recognition which was founded upon no treaty, and where no attempt had been made to disturb the Possession of the invading Power in the Territory to which he laid Claim. That such an Insinuation might operate upon a Power trembling for it's Existence, but must have the contrary Effect upon all that were alive to their Own Dignity; and I

¹ Cf. Oncken, ii, 873.

added that if such a Temper really prevailed, we were not deliberating in a State of Independence, and it were better to break up the Congress.

This unguarded Declaration was afterwards softened down, and, to a degree, explained away; but it has not failed, coupled with other Expressions used in Private, to create a strong Sensation and Alarm, that if Prussia should not ultimately yield, she will attempt, as is the practice of her Government in lesser Concerns, some bold and desperate Coup to deliver herself suddenly from the Embarrassments of a protracted State of Armament and questioned Occupation.

This Sort of principle openly announced in a formal Conference in the name of two great Powers avowedly making Common Cause, and having large Armies ready to act, has appeared to Us to call for some precautionary corrective by which the other Powers may be induced to feel that, in the discharge of their functions in Congress, they are not exposed individually and in detail to the destructive Effects of such a domineering dictation.

Under these Circumstances I have felt it an act of Imperative Duty to concert with the French and Austrian Plenipotentiaries a Treaty of defensive Alliance, confined within the strict Necessity of this most Extraordinary Case: Without some such Bond, I feel that our Deliberations here are at an End; and although I flatter myself that the necessity will never arise for acting upon these Engagements, yet after what had passed, I should not consider myself justified in leaving either Our common Councils here, or the great Interests we have at Stake in other Quarters, at the Mercy of States promulgating such Principles, without providing for them in time the best Protection in my Power.

I indulge the Confident hope that my Conduct upon this Occasion may appear to the Prince Regent and to his Government to have been justified by the Circumstances of the Case, and the Exigency of the Occasion.

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (No. 45), JANUARY 1, 1815.

'F.O. CONTINENT,' 10¹

I inclose the Projêt of the Treaty of Defensive Alliance alluded to in my Despatch No. 44. I have just gone through

¹ Cf. Oncken, ii. 875.

it with Prince Metternich and Prince Talleyrand, and it has received their entire approbation. The latter has charged himself with the French Redaction.

It is due to Prince Talleyrand to state, that his Conduct throughout all our late Transactions, has done the utmost Honour to his Court, and altho' his Official Correspondence takes an inconveniently lofty Tone upon the Point of Saxony, yet I do not doubt he will ultimately lend himself to what may be wise and practicable on that question. I have expressly declared, that whilst I concur with him in opinion that Saxony ought not to be wholly absorbed in Prussia, that I will not suffer, as far as Great Britain is concerned, the Peace of Europe to be sacrificed upon any principle of Modification, of which the Question may be reasonably susceptible.

With respect to all the Stipulations calculated to secure and cover Our Interests in the Low Countries, etc., I have not only found His Highness *Coulant*, but ready to go before my Wishes; and I am confident, whatever bad principles may prevail in the French Nation or in the Army on this Point, The King's Government is sound upon it.

When I read to him that Article of the Treaty which goes to regulate by the Peace of Paris, in the Event of War, the future frontiers of the contracting Parties, he expressed the great Satisfaction He would feel in signing, and The King would have in making, in the face of Europe, this declaration, so conformable to all his Principles and Determinations.

I hope we shall be enabled, in the course of tomorrow or the day following, to sign the Convention. I shall then forward it to Your Lordship, but as I do not foresee that it is likely to experience any very material Alteration, I shall despatch the present Messenger, in order that Your Lordship may be prepared for it's reception, and that the Return of the Ratifications may be accelerated as much as possible.

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (NO. 50), JANUARY 8, 1815.

'F.O. CONTINENT,' 10¹

The Importance of counteracting by every possible Effort, and without Loss of time, the Attempts in Progress to prevail upon the King of Saxony to accept an Establishment on the Left Bank of the Rhine, determined me to solicit an Audience

¹ Cf. Oncken, ii. 878.

of The Emperor of Russia, for the purpose of representing to His Imperial Majesty, my Sentiments upon this Subject.

I had an Opportunity yesterday Morning, in a very long Interview, of going fully into the Subject, and I have since understood confidentially from Count Razamoffsky, who saw His Imperial Majesty after I left him, that my Reasoning had served to give Him a new View of this Question, and that my Objections were considered to have great Weight. I did not however deem it prudent to rest the Point merely upon the Argument, but represented the Impossibility, under the Negative expressly reserved to Great Britain by the Convention of Chaumont with respect to the disposal of the Territories on the left Bank of the Rhine, that I could consent, on the part of my Court to place a Prince so circumstanced and so dependent upon France, in the very Center of Our Line of Defence. That the obvious Policy in Military Prudence, was either to place there a great Military Power such as Prussia, or if that could not be, to bring forward some Secondary Power such as The Prince of Orange, the Mass of whose Dominions being interwoven in another System, became a Pledge, especially when supported by Russia en seconde Ligne, for the faithful Maintenance of these Possessions against France; but that to create a feeble and discontented State there, was to pave the Way for a future Cession of those Territories to France, in consideration of the Re-conquest of Saxony for the Family. I urged that the Policy of Austria was necessarily so much in favour of Saxony being independent of Prussia—that such a Scheme very possibly would be either supported or acquiesced in by her, and could only be successfully opposed by His Imperial Majesty sending a powerful Army at a vast expence into the Heart of Germany. . . .

After this Subject was disposed of, the Emperor went to other Matters, and rather to my Surprise, referred to Reports that had reached Him of an Alliance between Austria, France, Bavaria and Great Britain. Not feeling myself authorized to avow the Treaty, and not choosing to hold a Language of too much Disguise, I assured His Imperial Majesty that acting upon the pacifick principles which he had avowed in the early part of Our Conversation, He had nothing to fear from those Powers: That as His Imperial Majesty had condescended to speak to me without reserve, I would frankly avow to him, that the Language lately held by Prince Hardenberg in a formal

Conference in the name of both Courts, and not disavowed by His Imperial Majesty's Minister then present, had seriously, and I thought justly, alarmed the Powers alluded to. It was evident The Emperor was not unacquainted with the Declaration in question, from the Manner in which He endeavoured to soften it down. I expressed my Satisfaction that the Principle was not adhered to, as I could not conceal from His Imperial Majesty, that I would have imposed upon those Powers, and I thought upon all others who valued their Independence, the necessity of giving it the most determined Resistance.

Having got upon this Warlike Ground, I thought it the more material to convince The Emperor, by giving another direction to the Conversation, that it was to an early and amicable Adjustment of the Subjects in discussion that all my thoughts and efforts were directed. I happened to have with me the Documents which I had prepared, to shew how Prussia could be reconstructed without incorporating the whole of Saxony. His Imperial Majesty went with much Interest into this Question, was anxious to know whether France would consent to such an Arrangement, and whether Great Britain would support it, if necessary against her. The Emperor said that he should be satisfied with it if Prussia was.

His Imperial Majesty repeatedly asked me, whether I thought France really desired Peace. I expressed my Conviction That the King and His Ministers sincerely did, but that as certainly, if a War Broke out, that they would take a part. In this The Emperor agreed, and deprecated the Risk. I then urged the immense advantage to be derived from prevailing upon Prussia to listen to such an Arrangement as all the five great Powers could support, which I looked upon as within Our Reach, if Prussia was reasonable and if Prince Talleyrand was treated with the Consideration to which, as the Representative of so great a Power, he was entitled. . . .

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (NO. 57), JANUARY 22, 1815.

'F.O. - CONTINENT,' 101

. . . I certainly was prepared when I signed the Treaty of Defensive Alliance on the 3rd, to expect, that this Measure of Strength and Union might, if improperly understood, excite in the Austrian Councils a disposition to enterprize anew upon

¹ Cf. Oncken, ii. 880.

objects of local Policy, instead of turning it as was intended by me into the Means of extricating herself with honour and safety, from the difficulty in which the Menace of Her Opponents had placed her. I was not however deterred by this Consideration from adopting what appeared to me indispensable to check the Intemperance of the Two Northern Powers at a critical Moment of the Negotiation, whilst I reserved in my own hands the Means of effectually correcting at a future period any misconception of this nature should it arise.

The inclosed official Memoir presented To The Emperor by Marshall Prince Schwartzenberg, the Minister at War, will shew that I was not mistaken in this Supposition. I have reason to believe that similar Views prevail amongst other Members of the Austrian Cabinet, particularly Count Stadion, and I have lately observed Prince Metternich's Tone and Language to be proportionately changed, indicating a disposition to aim at Objects which before he had considered as unattainable.

Having examined this Paper attentively, I thought there was no time to be lost in having a full Explanation with Prince Metternich, both upon it's Contents, and the Attitude in which I felt myself placed under Our recent Treaty and the existing State of the Negotiations.

I represented to His Highness that I considered the Principles therein laid down as not sound in themselves, whilst they were calculated to throw us back in Our Discussions and to retard, if not defeat, our hopes of an amicable Settlement.

That admitting the facts alledged, namely, that the Eastern Frontier of Germany was menaced by Russia, and that it's Western Frontier would be endangered, if The King of Saxony was placed on the left Bank of the Rhine, it did not therefore follow, that the Security of Austria depended upon depriving Prussia of Torgau and Erfurt. . . .

That Saxony in it's natural Politicks appertained to the System of the North, preserving however an independent Existence to a certain Extent between it's two powerful Neighbours. To endeavour to combine it with the Austrian System and to take Torgau and Erfurth as advanced and menacing Points, appeared to me the surest Means of permanently uniting Prussia in close Alliance with either Russia or France, and rendering her Return to German connection hopeless, which I could by no means consider to be now the case, however established the Influence of Russia might, for the Moment, appear to be.

That in looking to the defence of Prussia against France, the line of the Elbe was imperfect, if Torgau was denied to that Power, and that with respect to Erfurth, whilst the Prussian Monarchy was spread out from the Niemen to the Rhine, and broke into two Masses but slenderly connected in the Center, such a Fortress as Erfurth was essential to cover her extended Line of Communication, and to afford a Point of Appui between Juliers beyond the Rhine, and the Line of the Elbe.

I added that both these Fortresses appeared to me indispensable to give to Prussia under the new Territorial Arrangement to which we required her to submit, an Independent Existence, and if such an Existence was not secured to her, she would always be driven to seek that Independence in a distant and dangerous Support, which she might otherwise be desirous of finding in the System to which she belonged.

I hope these Representations will have the effect of bringing back Our Views to their true Standard, namely to make an Arrangement which, by sufficiently saving the honor and interest of all the principal Powers, may admit of its receiving a general Sanction, and that we should make the best bargain we can for The King of Saxony, placing him in his own States where he may do some good and no harm instead of breaking down our whole System of Defence on the left Bank of the Rhine by placing him there.

I fully explained to Prince Metternich that, having saved the general Principle, and protected His Court by a decided measure of Support, when Austria was menaced with Invasion, if she refused to acknowledge a New King in Saxony and to transplant his Predecessor to a Position the most fatal to our whole System, that I could not suffer my Government to be involved in hostile Measures upon a mere question of Details, to which I now considered in fact the Issue was brought; and that if he expected my Support, he must not negotiate upon the Principles laid down in Prince Schwartzberg's Memoir,—to which I should feel it my Duty to object. . . .

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (No. 63), JANUARY 29, 1815.

'F.O. CONTINENT,' II¹

Having reason to believe, that the Party in the Austrian Cabinet who adhere to Prince Schwartzberg's Views, were

¹ Cf. Oncken, ii. 882.

employed in urging their Opinions, strongly upon The Emperor, I availed myself of a Confidential Channel, to intimate to Prince Metternich that, unless the Negotiation was replaced without delay upon the only Grounds that I thought were calculated to lead to Peace, and such as were consistent with the principles upon which the late Treaty had been brought forward on the part of Great Britain, I should feel it my Duty to present a Note explicitly disavowing all Concert in these new Measures, and taking my Court out of the Predicament of either being charged with a Breach of Engagement, or of being insensibly involved in a System to which I must decline to be any Party. I desired that it might be also understood, that, in that case; I should request an Audience to explain myself to The Emperor.

I received from Prince Metternich that Evening an Intimation that His Imperial Majesty desired to see me on the following day. I found him extremely *monté* upon the military Question, and his general Tone more warlike than on any former occasion. His Imperial Majesty received, with his usual Condescension, however, my representations of the advantage of exhausting every Expedient to preserve Peace, and, if we failed, the indispensable Necessity, if he looked for support from Great Britain, that the occasion of War should either be founded upon the maintenance of some Principle of clear and indisputable Importance, or an actual Attempt by force to disturb the Equilibrium of Europe.

The Emperor repeatedly pressed to know whether Great Britain would support Him, 1st in refusing Torgau and Erfurth to Prussia—2^{ndly}, in requiring that the former at least should be razed. . . .

For the Reasons already stated, I felt myself obliged humbly, but most expressly to reply to His Majesty in the Negative on both his Demands.

The following Day in an Interview with Prince Talleyrand, Prince Metternich renewed his Endeavours to urge the same View of the Question, and stated that The Emperor adhered to his Opinion. Prince Talleyrand agreed with the Austrian Minister, but stated his Sentiments with Moderation. I adhered to mine and the Interview ended by the Austrian Minister declaring his Intention of taking the final Orders of The Emperor.

There was a good deal of rather warm discussion upon the Impossibility of conceding largely to Prussia in Saxony. Prince

Metternich's Projêt did not go to one third of the whole Contents. I stated that it was á little hard the British Minister, who had no other possible Interest in the Question than to save the Continental Powers and especially Austria from War, should have the odious task thrown upon him of urging severe Measures towards Saxony, but that whilst I would do my best to save the Saxon Family from unnecessary Rigour, I would not sacrifice the Peace of Europe to preserve to them two or three hundred thousand Subjects more or less.

We then discussed the Counter Projêt to be given in—and I agreed, in consequence of The Emperor of Austria having rendered his Polish Acquisitions on the Side of Ternapole an object of Negotiation, to frame *Our first* Proposition on a Scale more favourable to Saxony, but I declared that I could not be a Party to any Counter Projêt, which did not assign the Fortresses of Torgau and Erfurth to Prussia.

The following Morning Prince Metternich acquainted me, that notwithstanding the military Advice The Emperor had received, His Imperial Majesty was ready to acquiesce in both Torgau and Erfurth being Prussian, if the British Minister pronounced it necessary, to effect an amicable and honourable Arrangement ; but that he expected Prussia to be proportionally moderate and conciliatory on other Points, and especially not to press the Session of Leipsick. Upon this the Counter Projêt I now inclose, extending to a certain degree the Cessions in Saxony beyond the Austrian Projêt, was agreed upon between Prince Metternich, Prince Talleyrand and myself, with the reserve, on my Part, of it's only being considered as a Proposition for Discussion, and not as an Ultimatum. In all these Deliberations the French Minister took I think a fair and not an unreasonable part. The Day but one after was fixed for Our Conference with the Russian and Prussian Plenipotentiaries, to deliver in the Counter Projêt, and I undertook, in the mean time, to see The Emperor of Russia and Prince Hardenberg, and to prepare them for it's favourable Reception.

My Interview with Prince Hardenberg took place first. I begged him not to give me any opinion, but to hear calmly what I had to represent, and to reflect upon it. I stated the Principles upon which the Counter Projêt was framed, both as to Numbers, Composition, and Locality, and endeavoured to remove the Objections to which I thought the Prussian Minister was likely to deem it liable.

In representing to His Highness the strong military Grounds of resistance that had been given to Prussia having Torgau and Erfurth, and the mode in which the Emperor's Opposition had been waved, I told the Prince that strongly as I had opposed myself in support of what I deemed to be just and essential for Prussia to possess in a Military Point of View, I would oppose myself with equal Energy to any Attempt on the part of his Government to render the Saxon Arrangement either unnecessarily severe or painful in It's Detail, to the Powers who were expected to acquiesce in it, and that I must specially protest against Leipsick being torn from Saxony.

Prince Hardenberg warmly resisted the Idea of parting with *this Trophy*. That Prussia ought to have at least one of the Saxon Capitals, and that he could not return to Berlin under such a mortification. I contended that one of the Capitals was precisely what Prussia in sound Policy ought not to desire to possess. That it was her Interest not to strive to create two Saxonies; If she did one would be always Austrian and opposed to the other; that, on the contrary the Prussian Object should be to render all her Acquisitions as Prussian as possible—to give every possible Unity to the State which was to remain, and to treat it with kindness, by which means a little sooner or a little later it must adhere to Prussia, and she would then have the Benefit of both.

That Prussia would defeat her own purpose, if She pushed her Demands upon Saxony too far; She might lose the Appui of some of the great Powers—delay if not prevent the King of Saxony's Acceptance, and drive the Saxon Nation into a permanent Feeling of Hostility against Her.

That the Sentiments of Berlin were less material than those of Great Britain, France, Austria and Germany and that if The British Government had listened to a popular Sentiment instead of to Considerations of Moderation and Prudence, we still should have been at War with America, in pursuit of an Object not essential to Our honour, and too dearly purchased, even if accomplished, by a protracted War.

On the same Evening I was admitted to an Audience of The Emperor of Russia, and presented the Outline of the intended Arrangement, in the light which I thought would best serve to interest him in it's favour. Although I begged to be understood as not asking for an opinion till the Plan was regularly before him, together with His Prussian Majesty's Sentiments, it was

impossible not to perceive that The Emperor received it favourably, and wished Prussia might listen to it.

I represented that much would depend on His Imperial Majesty, whose Sentiments without Indelicacy to Prussia on a point which principally concerned her Interest, could not but have the greatest weight, and that if His Imperial Majesty could so manage as to transfer a Portion of the Austrian Acquisitions in Poland, to Prussia, I did not see how the King could refuse the Proposal.

The Emperor repeated to me the Difficulties in which his promises to the Poles had placed him with respect to any further Cessions in the Dutchy of Warsaw. He said that to Him as Sovereign, it would be a matter of perfect indifference to make the Exchange proposed, but that his Hands were tied. I urged that the Poles might be reconciled by a corresponding Extension on the other Side of the Vistula joining the Dutchy, and that with this facility His Imperial Majesty had the fate of the Arrangement in his Hands.

It is due to The Emperor to state, that he shewed every Disposition consistent with the Delicacy he feels due to Prussia, and to his Polish Entanglements, which already begin to manifest themselves, as I understand, at Warsaw, to meet my Wishes. He was particularly gracious in his Reception of me, and will, I have no doubt encourage and not obstruct an Arrangement.

The Intelligence I have received privately of the Reception of the Contre Projêt by the Prussian Cabinet is not unfavourable. Prince Hardenberg has intimated to me, that the King proposes to see me upon it before he gives an Answer.

CASTLEREAGH TO LIVERPOOL (NO. 66), FEBRUARY 6, 1815.

'F.O. CONTINENT,' II

... Immediately after the Presentation of the Counter Projêt, I had an Interview with Prince Hardenberg, with a view of apprizing him of the Points, which I did not consider as admitting of any modification, viz. Leipsick and the re-entering Angle into Bohemia by Bautzen and Zittau.

I was directed to attend The King of Prussia on the following day, and I had with His Majesty an Audience of an hour and an half, the most painful in all respects, that it has been my fate to undergo since I have been upon the Continent. It is inconceivable to what a Degree His Majesty had been worked upon

on the point of Leipsick, the false importance he attached to it, and the deep disappointment, if not resentment, with which he spoke of Our espousing the Cause of the King of Saxony against him. I found it difficult to attract his Attention to the obvious Embarrassments in which the Line His Majesty was disposed to pursue towards Saxony would place him, and I did not escape without some severe personal Reproaches for the Representations I presumed to make. However my duty was to discourage the King from any false move, which might compromise us all, and as I wished to execute this without reserve, my Audience terminated as unpleasantly as it had begun.

The following Morning I thought it right to see the Emperor of Russia, to apprise him of the Temper in which I had found The King of Prussia, and to beg His Imperial Majesty's Assistance in calming it. The Emperor was very reasonable, and promised to do what in delicacy he could, and as some Means of assisting the Negotiation, he placed Thorn and its Rayon at my Disposal, to make such use of with Prussia as I might think fit.

Thorn being a Position on the Vistula to which Prussia had always attached considerable importance, I lost no time in communicating to Prince Hardenberg The Emperor's Intentions. The following day he told me that with the aid of Thorn, he had overcome The King's Reluctance to leave Leipsick with Saxony.

In the Evening he communicated to me the Conditions attached by the King to this Concession, which contained such a severe Infliction upon Saxony territorially, that I was obliged to declare to him my utter despair of bringing either the Austrians or Prince Talleyrand to listen to it; that The King would not venture to accept his Country under the fermentation it would occasion, and that we should all, and especially Prussia, be plunged in Difficulties.

Prince Hardenberg requested me to make the same Confidential Communication of his intended Projét to Prince Metternich and Prince Talleyrand, which he had received from them. I undertook to do so, but under a declaration of the Reception I was sure it would meet with.

I did so the following day, but requested before they took any Steps upon it, they would allow me to see the Prussian Minister again, and to try whether I could induce him to relax, in some measure, upon Saxony, by offering him a liberal Compensation in some other Quarter. In this state of things I

felt it necessary, and I conceived it would be approved by The Prince Regent, that some Sacrifice should be made of Interests directly or indirectly appertaining to His Royal Highness, from the difficulty of finding by any other Means adequate resource. After conferring with Count Munster, I proposed to reduce in the amount of fifty thousand, the Claims of Hanover under Treaty, and to add a Sacrifice of equal Amount, to those already made on the part of Holland. Uniting these with the slender Means otherwise available, a fund was created which might operate a salutary Reduction in favour of Saxony.

I prepared upon this principle a New Projêt of Arrangement which I submitted confidentially to both Parties. When I first carried it to Prince Hardenberg, I found him again inflamed upon the point of Leipsick, and desirous of making it at least a free Town. I represented that, in this State it would only prove a focus of Discontent, and probably, render the general Arrangement equally embarrassing to Prussia and Saxony. It is certain that many of the Prussian Officers, and the *Friends of Liberty* as they are called, who abound in The King's Dominions, were indignant at losing Saxony, where a new Constitution was to be set in motion; and it was evident a Struggle was still making, which became formidable in proportion as it might from The Tone of His Majesty, and many of his most distinguished Officers assume the Character of a Military and National Sentiment.

After some Effervescence, Prince Hardenberg received my Proposition with Calmness, and examined the details with Attention. The proposed Sacrifice on the part of The Prince Regent allayed his Impressions, that I was sustaining the Interests of The King of Saxony instead of trying to procure an Arrangement practicable and reasonable in itself with respect to his Territory.

This Morning he gave me his Answer, accepting with insignificant Modifications the Plan laid before him. I afterwards had a Conference with Prince Metternich and Prince Talleyrand. The former accepted the Arrangement without Hesitation; the latter, in consequence of a recent letter from The King, pressing that the Sacrifices to be imposed on Saxony might not go so far, had more difficulty. His Highness however very honourably considered it his Duty not to separate on this occasion from the two other Powers, his own opinion being, that every prudent Effort and every becoming Sacrifice had been made to fulfill the

Wishes of his Court, and Prince Talleyrand stated that he had no Inclination to withdraw from his fair Share of the Responsibility. He therefore fully acceded to the Measure proposed, which will to-morrow be submitted to the Approbation of His Prussian Majesty. . . .

I hope, under all the Circumstances of this difficult Transaction, The Prince Regent will not disapprove the part I have taken. His Royal Highness will personally have the Satisfaction of having contributed to the Settlement of a Question which has now for a length of time continued to threaten the Peace of Europe, and, in doing so, His Royal Highness's best Interests will I trust have been consulted. . . .

