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Chad E. Nelson

ABSTRACT

What explains the remarkable degree of great-power cooperation during the Concert of Europe? I focus on a period when there were regular congresses and argue that the transformation of the great powers' respective domestic politics to where they had active revolutionary movements and feared upheavals at home played a key role in undergirding the transformation of European international politics into a more cooperative order. Fears of a common domestic ideological threat can cause states to bind together rather than exploit one another. The cooperation among the great powers was not just because they were constrained by the balance of power or satisfied with the territorial order or because the powers were meeting together. Their considerable cooperation was largely due to their preferences rather than those interactions.

What are the sources of international cooperation? One of the key periods that exhibits great-power cooperation has been dubbed the Concert of Europe, the period of general cooperation between the great powers in Europe beginning in 1815 and typically ending with the Crimean War in 1854.¹ This was a stunning departure in the pattern of international conflict that preceded it. From the beginning of the French Revolutionary Wars in 1792 to the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, the great powers existed in an almost continual state of war, and even before that were regularly at war. The peace after 1815 is one of the most striking discontinuities in the history of great-power politics, on par with the absence of great-power war during the Cold War. What caused it?

This puzzle has attracted several explanations associated with prominent international relations (IR) theories. Balance of power theories suppose that it was not the actors' preferences toward cooperation that changed, but that the distribution of capabilities had changed in a way that discouraged aggression. A leading historian of the era disagrees and argues that there was a

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¹Some consider that the Concert, or a reconstituted Concert after German unification, ran until World War I. The perspective that the Concert ended in 1854 is more common, and the major scholars addressed below adopt it.

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“transformation” in leaders’ collective preferences to construct a more cooperative order. If there was more cooperation in this period, independent of states being checked by a reformed balance of power, what caused it? Some scholars emphasize the mechanism of “concert”—the fact that the great powers were meeting to act together on matters of importance—as causing cooperation. This is especially relevant in the period of the Concert of Europe that has been dubbed the Congress System (1814–22), where there were regular congresses—meetings between heads of state or foreign ministers.² This explanation for cooperation—how such informal institutions can keep the peace—is relevant to debates about the future of international cooperation. As the so-called unipolar moment of American dominance declines, some are predicting a rise of a more concert-like arrangement of great-power politics.³

I focus on a particular period of the Congress System when the great powers met regularly, the era around the Congresses of Troppau, Laibach, and Verona in 1820–22, to investigate the causes of cooperation. I argue for a different cause than these systemic arguments—one grounded in domestic politics. There was indeed a transformation in European international politics from conflict to cooperation, but not simply because leaders were hemmed in by a balance of power that discouraged aggression. That transformation was rooted in a transformation in the domestic politics of Europe. In contrast to the *ancien régime*, the great powers all had liberal revolutionary opposition movements and thus feared successful revolutions abroad because such a contagion could spread to their own polities. This prompted them to cooperate to ensure revolutions failed, even if it meant forgoing obvious ways to exploit revolutions for geopolitical advantage. Cooperation was not just driven by the fear of great-power war because there were steps the great powers could take to further these revolutions (and with them their geopolitical interests) without provoking war between them.

That leaders were meeting and publicly justifying their policies were not in themselves the sources of cooperation. The fear of revolution spreading motivated the call to congresses. Their purpose was in large part to coordinate a response to revolutions. But even those that did not participate in the congresses shared these fears. The calling of congresses was in fact divisive, because the conservative constitutional monarchies had the same aims of crushing revolutions but did not want public forums to air those aims.

²Several scholars separate the Congress System from the Concert because the former is considered a more institutionalized attempt at world government, whereas the Concert had no such aspiration. See Mark Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna and Its Legacy: War and Great Power Diplomacy after Napoleon* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2013), 369; Irby C. Nichols Jr., *The European Pentarchy and the Congress of Verona, 1822* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), 325. More commonly, this period is folded into discussions of the Concert of Europe.

³See, for example, Richard N. Haass and Charles A. Kupchan, “The New Concert of Powers: How to Prevent Catastrophe and Promote Stability in a Multipolar World,” *Foreign Affairs*, 23 March 2021.

Leaders facing the same transnational ideological threat have reason to be unusually cooperative with each other to contain it. These are often, but need not be, regimes of the same type. It is one reason why states with similar domestic ideologies cooperate. Concerns of maintaining domestic order are key to explaining international cooperation in certain places and periods, including the present era. In contrast to the dominant view of domestic instability as a cause of conflict in international relations, it can be a cause of cooperation when states face the same ideological threat.

I first discuss the key theories explaining cooperation in the Concert era and elaborate my explanation for the fear of revolution being a key motive for cooperation among great powers. I explain why I focus on the period when the great powers met in regular congresses as a test of the main arguments. The bulk of the article then examines the great-power reaction to revolutions in the Kingdoms of Spain, Naples, Piedmont-Sardinia, and in Greece. Finally, I assess the Concert and conclude with the broader implications of the findings.

Theories of Post-Napoleonic Peace

There are four predominant explanations for the peace among the European great powers after 1815, some of which are not mutually exclusive.⁴ The first is the fear of revolution. There was a fear of instability at home, and a fear that the type of aggressive politics as practiced previously would be a source of instability. Given the fragility of the domestic social order, the leaders of the great powers upheld the international order, even forgoing avenues of aggrandizement to keep the peace. One main mechanism is what has been dubbed the war–revolution nexus: that great-power war would cause revolution.⁵ Another is a diffusion mechanism: that the great powers must cooperate in suppressing revolutions rather than exploiting them for geopolitical advantage given the fear that revolution would spread to their own polities. Regarding the fear of great-power war, Eric Hobsbawm claims “it was evident to all intelligent statesmen that no major European war was henceforth tolerable, for such a war would almost certainly mean a new revolution, and consequently the destruction of the old regimes.”⁶ Large-scale war could strain state resources to the point of collapse. Even preparation for great-power war, which would involve enlisting mass armies, could invite revolution. In the other causal direction, leaders

⁴The explanations that follow are the main ones, though not exhaustive. Some emphasize the immediate factors of postwar Europe, including the leaders’ skillfulness at the time, how the habits of cooperation were forged fighting a common enemy, or war weariness.

⁵Mark L. Haas, *Frenemies: When Ideological Enemies Ally* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2022), 57.

⁶E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, 1789–1848* (New York: World Publishing Company, 1962), 99.

assumed revolution in France would mean more war. Revolutionary France would attempt to spread revolution abroad, and the other states would be compelled to suppress the revolution. But the fear of revolution went beyond this concern. Leaders feared revolution in their own countries. They feared revolutions abroad because they feared the spread of these subversive ideas about how to rule to their own polities. This was a source of cooperation. They could cooperate in suppressing revolutions rather than exploiting them for geopolitical purposes. This mechanism, which I focus on, is analytically distinct from the possibility of great-power war.

The other three explanations for the peace share an emphasis on systemic factors. One comes from the leading historical work of the period. Paul W. Schroeder's landmark *The Transformation of European Politics* is said to have revived the field of international history, and his argument has generated significant debate.⁷ What Schroeder meant by a "transformation" of European politics was that a system of unrestrained self-aggrandizement was replaced by an international order based on restraint and consensus. Schroeder has a constructivist view of structure, a collective view of how states are supposed to interact. He describes the late eighteenth century as a balance of power system, one where states constantly looked for ways to aggrandize power and got jealous of any other state increasing theirs. International politics was a zero-sum game where big states would carve up small states and engage in war whenever it served the state's geopolitical ambitions. Even leaders who desired peace and stability were constrained by the system to play by the game's existing rules. However, as the Napoleonic Wars wound up, leaders learned they could not play that game anymore; there was a shift in the collective mentality. There was a transformation in political thinking. They would construct a new order, where there was a "sense of inherent limits, acceptance of mutual rules and restraints, common responsibility to certain standards of conduct, and loyalty to something beyond the aims of one's own state."⁸ The motive underlying the transformation, according to Schroeder, was to avoid war, although he makes clear he thinks this was not simply the product of war weariness.⁹

A balance of power perspective on the post-Napoleonic peace, in contrast, asserts that the particular European distribution of power after 1815 allowed for potential aggression to be checked, and that is what kept the

⁷Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763–1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). For the debate, see: the exchanges in *American Historical Review* 97, no. 3 (June 1992): 683–735; *International History Review* 16, no. 4 (1994): 663–754; Marc Trachtenberg, "Peace and the Pursuit of Power," review of *Transformation of European Politics, 1763–1848*, by Schroeder, *Orbis* 40, no. 1 (Winter 1996): 158–64; Paul W. Schroeder and Marc Trachtenberg, "Correspondence," *Orbis* 40, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 307–17; Peter Krüger and Paul W. Schroeder, eds., *"The Transformation of European Politics, 1763–1848": Episode or Model in Modern History?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

⁸Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*, 802.

⁹Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*, 801.

peace.¹⁰ This argument rejects the notion that there was a fundamental reorientation of leaders' goals toward cooperation compared to the earlier period. As one historian has argued, explicitly against Schroeder, there was "nothing really different about 19th century diplomacy" than what preceded it.¹¹ Branislav L. Slantchev concurs.¹² But he rejects the notion that the balance of power checked all potential aggression because the great powers could do as they pleased in their respective spheres of influence. He argues that the distribution of capabilities the territorial settlement at the Congress of Vienna created a self-enforcing equilibrium. The main powers were territorially satiated (both concerning their direct control of territory and their indirect spheres of influence), and they had the ability to check potential revisionist powers. Slantchev's argument does not exclusively rely on states' ability to check aggression, but there is an element of that, as well as the fundamental importance of the distribution of capabilities. It thus can be considered a variant of the balance of power argument.¹³

Another explanation for the peace is the innovation in diplomacy seen in the Napoleonic Wars' aftermath: the Concert system. This is the practice of leaders meeting to coordinate policies regarding common concerns. From both the balance of power and Schroeder's perspective, these forums were relatively epiphenomenal for the peace that developed. Others, including Jennifer Mitzen, have argued that the Concert innovation is critical in explaining the cooperation.¹⁴ Mitzen argues there are what she calls "forum effects" when leaders meet. That leaders have to engage with each other and publicly justify their foreign policies causes a restraining effect and consequent policy moderation. Her book takes as evidence the period of the post-Napoleonic peace. Mitzen's argument has important implications not only for this period but the broader question concerning what international institutions can accomplish. Scholars have often looked back at

¹⁰See, for example, Enno E. Kraehe, "A Bipolar Balance of Power," *American Historical Review* 97, no. 3 (June 1992): 707–15; Wolf D. Gruner, "Was There a Reformed Balance of Power System or Cooperative Great Power Hegemony?" *American Historical Review* 97, no. 3 (June 1992): 725–32.

¹¹Alan Sked, "The European State System in the Modern World," in *The Fabric of Modern Europe: Studies in Social and Diplomatic History*, ed. Attila Pók (Nottingham, UK: Astra, 1999), 27.

¹²Branislav L. Slantchev, "Territory and Commitment: The Concert of Europe as Self-Enforcing Equilibrium," *Security Studies* 14, no. 4 (October–December 2005): 579.

¹³It should be noted, though, that he contrasts his argument with the balance of power approach precisely because he claims not all were checked by the balance of power. He is in agreement with the balance of power perspective by explicitly denying Schroeder's claim that there was a transformation of European leaders' views to more moderate aims. There is a contradiction in Slantchev's claim that state preferences were the same as they had been before and the claim that the major powers were content with their spheres of influence. If all states were satisfied with their sphere of influence, that would be a transformation of European politics, and it would beg the question of why they were satisfied with that sphere.

¹⁴Jennifer Mitzen, *Power in Concert: The Nineteenth-Century Origins of Global Governance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Jennifer Mitzen, "Reading Habermas in Anarchy: Multilateral Diplomacy and Global Public Spheres," *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 3 (August 2005): 401–17. See also Richard B. Elrod, "The Concert of Europe: A Fresh Look at an International System," *World Politics* 28, no. 2 (January 1976): 159–76.

this first attempt to actively manage the international system for theoretical insights.¹⁵ Mitzen specifically picks the Concert era as a period to assess the causal impact of forum effects when there are fewer confounding factors that could facilitate cooperation, such as the presence of democratic regimes. There are, of course, various reasons why international organizations can cause peace, many of which apply to more formal institutions rather than the ad hoc meetings of a few great powers.¹⁶ Mitzen's argument is the most important that is applied to the Concert period.¹⁷

Although not all four explanations are mutually exclusive, there is a distinction between whether leaders' basic aims were transformed into more cooperative ones or whether they were simply hedged in by a more effective balance of power, or territorially satisfied with the Vienna settlement. Of course, an intermediate position is possible, whereby some restraint is due to new thinking, and some is due to the new power or territorial arrangement. What deserves particular examination is if leaders are restraining themselves independent of the concern of being checked by the threat of coercion from the other powers. This is the more novel "transformation" thesis. Then the question is: If there was cooperation independent of the distribution of power, what was its source? The fear of war? Forum effects? The fear of domestic instability?

Prominent scholars have dismissed the argument rooted in domestic politics. One reason is theoretical—scholars have been attracted to systemic explanations. Schroeder's constructivist account and the balance of power account he disputes share an emphasis on systemic variables, as do Mitzen's "forum effects." Peace was the result of the properties of the system: the particular distribution of power, the prevailing norms of the system, or the interaction at the system level. In keeping with his systemic argument, Schroeder explicitly rejects the claim that a fear of revolution kept the peace.¹⁸ Mitzen also downplays the domestic politics argument.¹⁹

¹⁵See, for example, Robert Jervis, "From Balance to Concert: A Study of International Security Cooperation," *World Politics* 38, no. 1 (October 1985): 58–79; Richard Langhorne, "Reflections on the Significance of the Congress of Vienna," *Review of International Studies* 12, no. 4 (October 1986): 313–24; Louise Richardson, "The Concert of Europe and Security Management in the Nineteenth Century," in *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions over Time and Space*, ed. Helga Haftendorn, Robert O. Keohane, and Celeste A. Wallander (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 48–79; Bruce Cronin, *Community under Anarchy: Transnational Identity and the Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Dan Lindley, "Avoiding Tragedy in Power Politics: The Concert of Europe, Transparency, and Crisis Management," *Security Studies* 13, no. 2 (Winter 2003/4): 195–229.

¹⁶See, for example, Kenneth W. Abbott and Duncan Snidal, "Why States Act through Formal International Organizations," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42, no. 1 (February 1998): 3–32.

¹⁷Another main mechanism discussed is whether concerts facilitated transparency, which kept the peace. Dan Lindley specifically investigates the Concert period addressed below and does not find much evidence for this thesis. Lindley, *Promoting Peace with Information: Transparency as a Tool of Security Regimes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 69–75.

¹⁸Paul W. Schroeder, "Did the Vienna Settlement Rest on a Balance of Power?" *American Historical Review* 97, no. 3 (June 1992): 700; Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*, 802.

¹⁹Mitzen claims leaders were governing together not because they shared the same values about how to rule domestically but because they wanted to avoid war. Mitzen, *Power in Concert*, 20.

Furthermore, scholars have tired of the once commonly evoked notion that it was an age of “restoration and reaction,” which is at least adjacent to the domestic politics story. “Restoration” ignores the many changes in the post-Napoleonic world from the ancien régime, and while past liberals vilified conservative leaders, such as Austrian statesman Klemens von Metternich, as blindly reactionary, historians have pushed against that caricature and argued that these statesmen do not get the credit they deserve for the peaceful system they created. Even Schroeder’s balance of power critic welcomes his stance against the old clichés of restoration and legitimacy.²⁰

There certainly was not a restoration in international affairs. But the dismissal of the fear of revolution as a source of international cooperation is unwarranted. Beatrice de Graaf rightly calls the Congress an “(anti) revolutionary security experiment”: revolutionary in the sense that it was a sharp break from the past, but antirevolutionary—against domestic revolutions—in its motives.²¹ I argue there was a transformation of international relations into a more cooperative order, along the lines of Schroeder, but it was rooted in a transformation of the domestic political scene—namely, that there were revolutionary opposition movements among all the great powers. There is real restraint and cooperation in the era of the Congresses that I focus on, and it is not caused by the fact that the relevant actors are satiated or checked by countervailing coalitions. At least in this period, the balance of power is not the cause of restraint. Great powers refrain from expanding their influence not because of the forum effects Mitzen touts. In fact, the forums are a divisive tool. The great powers do not cooperate only because of the fear of war; the possibility of war between great powers given intervention in these revolutions is absent. They are restrained because of the fear of revolution.

My argument that the concern for domestic order prompted international cooperation is not new. Historians have emphasized this factor,²² as have political scientists. Kyle M. Lascurettes argues that great powers create order when it is targeted at excluding a threat, and the threat in the Concert period was liberal revolutionary movements.²³ Sandra Halperin catalogues the domestic disturbances of the “peaceful” nineteenth century and argues for the connection between those and the cooperation at the international level.²⁴ John M. Owen IV examines how transnational

²⁰Kraehe, “Bipolar Balance of Power,” 708.

²¹Beatrice de Graaf, *Fighting Terror after Napoleon: How Europe Became Secure after 1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

²²de Graaf, *Fighting Terror after Napoleon*; Jarrett, *Congress of Vienna and Its Legacy*.

²³Kyle M. Lascurettes, *Orders of Exclusion: Great Powers and the Strategic Sources of Foundational Rules in International Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 93–131.

²⁴Sandra Halperin, *War and Social Change in Modern Europe: The Great Transformation Revisited* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

ideological contests prompt states to engage in forcible regime promotion, and includes the Concert period.²⁵ Mark L. Haas argues that ideological similarities between states prompt cooperation (and differences prompt conflict) and uses the Concert as an example.²⁶ These works share an emphasis on how domestic contestation over the correct regime type affects international affairs. In the face of transnational ideological movements, states that resist those movements band together.

I argue that leaders will fear revolutionary contagion not just when a different regime type emerges beyond their borders, but when leaders have a significant domestic revolutionary movement of the same character as the revolutionary state. When this is the case, it prompts cooperation among states with similar fears to combat the menace.²⁷ Why would states cooperate rather than pursue their narrow self-interest? One basic answer to this question is if multiple states see their interests as aligning, then they cooperate to pursue a common goal. The international cooperation they sought to achieve in the Congress period did not simply involve cooperation to ensure there was no great-power war. It involved cooperation to ensure the social and political order. Cooperation in the context of this article involves preserving a system where domestic revolutions that bring liberal regimes to power are not allowed. What this necessitated is restraint—restraining oneself from exploiting liberal revolutions at the service of geopolitical or other aims. For some IR theories, leaders do not act to uphold a system; they act according to the dictates of their own narrow interests, with tragic results for international cooperation.²⁸ But their very interests in upholding a certain system means there is not necessarily a tension between the two, and this period shows how leaders can act together to uphold a system.

The root of this shared interest is not an abstract notion of the common good, but a very salient common threat to these states' social and political order. Domestic challenges to their regimes gave them a sharp sense of why they could not continue international politics as usual. This helps explain why the transformation of the domestic political realm is inextricably linked with the transformation of the international realm. In contrast to the situation among the great powers prior to the French Revolution, all great powers had revolutionary opposition movements in the 1820s. The great powers of Europe—Britain, France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia—are sometimes divided between the absolute monarchs in central and

²⁵ John M. Owen IV, *The Clash of Ideas in World Politics: Transnational Networks, States, and Regime Change, 1510–2010* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 144–57.

²⁶ Mark L. Haas, *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics, 1789–1989* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 73–104.

²⁷ For further elaboration of this argument, see Chad E. Nelson, *Revolutionary Contagion and International Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022).

²⁸ For example, Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 109.

eastern Europe and the constitutional monarchies in the west. There were differences. As we will see, Britain and France were more constrained by public opinion. But their distinctions paled in comparison with some of the aims that revolutionaries had for these regimes. Britain was still a deeply conservative regime run by an aristocracy. France had an elected body, but it had limited duties, and less than half a percent of the population, the largest taxpayers, were enfranchised. The Spanish constitution of 1812 that was promoted in the revolutions of 1820–21 called for universal manhood suffrage, among other liberties. The concessions made and not made did not bridge the gulf between to meet the demands of some of the population, and thus there were revolutionaries.

In France, a host of liberals, republicans, and Bonapartists opposed the reinstalled Bourbon monarchy. They had overthrown the monarchy in 1815, forcing the great powers to reinstall it again. A Bonapartist in February 1820 assassinated the Duc de Berri, the only Bourbon considered likely to produce an heir to the throne. There were secret revolutionary societies and unrest in the military.²⁹ In German lands, liberal opposition also existed. Prussia and Austria feared that liberal movements demanding constitutions threatened the stability of their own rule. Prussia had promised a limited constitution under duress during the Napoleonic Wars and had since rescinded that promise, provoking ire. In this context, in 1819, a radical theology student assassinated a conservative playwright and publicist. This was interpreted as part of a larger conspiracy of university radicals. Metternich won Prussia's support to pass the Carlsbad Decrees in the German Confederation, a series of acts that coordinated and enforced strict press censorship and created a central investigating committee to repress revolutionary agitation.³⁰ In Italy, the Carbonari and other clandestine groups threatened rulers of the Italian states and the Austrian Empire.³¹ Metternich "lived under the constant fear that he would become the target of an attack."³² Britain was not exempt from these trends. A wave of unrest in 1819 included the Peterloo massacre, when a crowd of

²⁹For an elaboration of the revolutionary movements against the Bourbons, see R. S. Alexander, *Bonapartism and Revolutionary Tradition in France: The Fédérés of 1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 248–79; Pamela M. Pilbeam, *Republicanism in Nineteenth-Century France, 1814–1871* (London: Macmillan, 1995), 71–80; David Skuy, *Assassination, Politics, and Miracles: France and the Royalist Reaction of 1820* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003); Alan B. Spitzer, *Old Hatreds and Young Hopes: The French Carbonari against the Bourbon Restoration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

³⁰See Donald E. Emerson, *Metternich and the Political Police: Security and Subversion in the Hapsburg Monarchy (1815–1830)* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968); Walter M. Simon, *The Failure of the Prussian Reform Movement, 1807–1819* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1955), 197–228; Hernrich von Treitschke, *Treitschke's History of Germany in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul, vol. 3 (London: Jarrolds, 1917), 135–233.

³¹See R. John Rath, "The Carbonari: Their Origins, Initiation Rites, and Aims," *American Historical Review* 69, no. 2 (January 1964): 353–70; R. John Rath, *The Provisional Austrian Regime in Lombardy-Venetia, 1814–1815* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), 190–242.

³²Wolfram Siemann, *Metternich: Strategist and Visionary*, trans. Daniel Steuer (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019), 616.

over 60,000, the largest mass meeting in British history to that point, gathered to hear radical Henry Hunt. Yeomanry cavalry dispersed the gathering, killing 18 people and injuring about 700. In February 1820, a group of London revolutionaries plotted to murder the entire cabinet, but government spies foiled their plans.³³ The leaders of what became known as the Cato Street Conspiracy were hung and then decapitated. Lord Castlereagh pushed through the House of Commons repressive acts, including one suspending habeas corpus. He made a provision in his will so that his wife could sell her diamonds in the event of a revolution, and after the Cato Street Conspiracy he carried two loaded pistols in the pockets of his breeches.³⁴ Russia was the least touched by revolutionary activity. The autocratic Tsar Alexander had ironically been attracted to some of the French Revolution's liberal ideas and had granted a constitution to the Polish kingdom. But his penchant for reform cooled significantly as opposition began to place demands on his own rule, in part driven by the tsar's failure to enact liberal reforms. Revolutionaries began to organize, especially in the restive Polish kingdom.³⁵ In addition, the tsar faced what he regarded as a revolutionary uprising in his military.

This major change in the domestic political scene—increasing the possibility of revolution at home—had decisive effects on rulers' foreign policy. Preserving their social orders involved not just repressing domestic revolutionary movements. It called for preserving a system without great-power war, which was thought to bring about revolution. But it also encouraged repressing revolutions abroad, lest revolutionary contagion spread through the system. Rather than exploit revolutions for geopolitical gain, ruling class strategies required that they preserve the social order throughout the system. Haas argues that fears of regime vulnerability are a core reason for enmity between ideologically dissimilar states, which inhibits cooperation among them even when they have strong geopolitical incentives to ally.³⁶ Likewise, I argue that such regime vulnerability facilitates cooperation with those that share an ideological enemy, even when they have geopolitical incentives not to.

³³Malcom I. Thomis and Peter Holt, *Threats of Revolution in Britain, 1789–1848* (London: Macmillan Press, 1977), 29–84; Edward Royle, *Revolutionary Britannia? Reflections on the Threat of Revolution in Britain, 1789–1848* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2000), 42–60; J. Ann Hone, *For the Cause of Truth: Radicalism in London, 1796–1821* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 270–354.

³⁴C. J. Bartlett, *Castlereagh* (London: MacMillan, 1966), 183; Peter Quennell, ed. and trans., with Dilys Powell, *The Private Letters of Princess Lieven to Prince Metternich, 1820–1826* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1938), 17.

³⁵See Frank W. Thackeray, *Antecedents of Revolution: Alexander I and the Polish Kingdom, 1815–1825* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 54–78; Anatole G. Mazour, *The First Russian Revolution, 1825: The Decemberist Movement: Its Origins, Development, and Significance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962), 64–85.

³⁶Haas, *Frenemies*, 24–38.

Case Selection

Rather than evaluate the entire period of great-power peace that is considered the Concert of Europe, I assess the arguments by focusing on the Congress System after the settlement of the occupation of France, in roughly 1820–23. This period, when there were regular congresses called, offers the best test of all the arguments in question. First, the meetings where the powers met in three cities in the Austrian Empire—Troppau in 1820, Laibach in 1821, and Verona in 1822—are best cases for Mitzen’s theory about forum effects. One critique of Mitzen’s argument is that she attempts to explain the restraint of the post-Napoleonic period when for much of this period there were no forums. We should at least see her mechanism at work in the period when there were regular forums.³⁷

Second, the period also provides a good opportunity to test the balance of power explanation, which argues that there was no transformation in the diplomacy of the post-Napoleonic era. These congresses met to coordinate a policy for dealing with revolutions that broke out initially in Spain in January of 1820 and then in Portugal, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies/Naples, Piedmont-Sardinia, and Greece, all within the space of roughly a year. These were the first revolutions since the defeat of Napoleon. If there was no departure from eighteenth-century diplomacy, we would expect that leaders would respond to revolutions as they had in the past: seeing revolutions in smaller powers as a means by which they could attempt to undermine each other’s sphere of influence. For example, the French supported revolution in the United States in 1778 to sap the British and turn the Americans toward France, and they supported the revolt in the United Provinces in 1785 as a means of wresting the Dutch Republic from the British sphere of influence. If international politics was not transformed from how things operated under the old regime, we would expect similar sorts of aims among leaders—using revolutions to undermine rivals’ spheres of influence. France would be looking to return the Italian states from the Austrian to the French sphere of influence, which could involve backing anti-Austrian revolutionaries. The other powers, Britain, Prussia, and Russia, would either support or resist these policies, depending on whether they saw Austria or France as the greater geopolitical threat. One might expect that France would use the Spanish Revolution to expand its influence in Spain, Russia would use the Greek Revolution to expand its influence in the Balkans, and other powers would resist for geopolitical reasons. Britain, for example, would resist an expansion of French influence in Spain, just as they had a few years prior. The

³⁷In the broader definition of the Concert era—from the end of the Napoleonic Wars to the First World War—there were congresses in Paris and Berlin in 1856 and 1878, and almost twenty conferences—ad hoc meetings of ambassadors—from 1830 to 1914. But this is the period where regular congresses took place. Charles Webster, *The Art and Practice of Diplomacy* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1962), 69.

reason not to pursue these policies is if they were checked by a state or coalition of states from doing so. Either that or, in Slantchev's version, the territorial settlement at Vienna satiated them.

Third, examining this period provides a means to distinguish between Schroeder's thesis, that the transformation to more restrained policies was because of the fear of war, and mine, that the fear of revolution undergirded this transformation. As mentioned, one mechanism in the domestic politics story is that war is feared because it is the handmaiden of revolution. Another mechanism is not wanting to allow successful revolutions to occur, regardless of potential geopolitical benefits. If leaders are exercising restraint and cooperating not because they believe their policies would result in great-power war but because they fear revolution spreading, then we have a means to separate these causes of the transformation of European politics. In other words, if great-power war is not on the table—not a concern for policymakers, perhaps precisely because of the war–revolution nexus—and there are steps great powers could take short of war to advance their geopolitical aims by aiding revolutions or cooperate because of fears of revolutions by quashing them—it tests the proposition that the cooperation was solely a function of wanting to avoid a great-power war. This also serves to test the proposition that solely war weariness caused cooperation. Indeed, there is no evidence in this period, and no historian has argued, that a great power was considering war or threatening war with another great power if one pursued a policy toward these revolutions that the other disapproved of.

The evidence from this Congress period supports my argument about the primacy of fears of revolution prompting cooperation. I endorse Schroeder's "transformation thesis" with qualifiers. The balance of power is not the salient factor restraining states in my cases, though that is not to say that the balance of power had no role in creating a cooperative order in the Concert era. The fear of war did prompt cooperation in the Concert era, but it was not prompting the cooperation we witness. The cases contradict claims that it was only the fear of war that prompted cooperation, or only the balance of power that restrained aggressors, and the claim that the fear of revolution was not a factor in prompting cooperation. I also show that the forum effects in the era when they should be most applicable were a source of conflict more than cooperation.

Tensions within the Concert

In 1815, Castlereagh stated, "The existing concert is [the great powers'] only perfect security against the revolutionary embers more or less existing in every state of Europe; and ... their true wisdom is to keep down the petty contentions of ordinary times, and to stand together in support of

the established principles of social order.”³⁸ But whether that could persist, he was unsure. France was a chief concern. Would they be content with their diminished sphere of influence? Would they fall prey to revolution? Russia was in some ways more alarming. It was not only the most powerful actor on the Continent; The tsar’s liberal proclivities were a cause for concern and could be weaponized to undermine other powers’ sphere of influence. Metternich was alarmed by the tsar’s ties to liberals and wondered whether he would use those ties to undermine the Austrian sphere of influence in the German Confederation and in Italy.

Another tension, or ambiguity, was to what extent the Alliance would be used to monitor internal politics in states besides France, which was the original cause of the Alliance. The tsar and his advisors had proposed at several stages—during the Napoleonic Wars, during the Second Treaty of Paris, and at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818 (which dealt with the settlement of the occupation of France)—that the Alliance explicitly support states’ domestic political order. Britain brushed these proposals aside. Castlereagh could not sell that kind of involvement on the Continent to his domestic audience, and neither Britain nor Austria were comfortable with giving Russia an excuse to meddle across the Continent, especially when Alexander was perceived as having liberal sympathies. The ambiguities and tensions in the Alliance would remain; what changed was Alexander’s commitment to liberalism, so that he would be advocating for the Alliance’s management of the internal affairs of states for illiberal purposes. Metternich did not like the tsar’s attempts to form an alliance that would meddle in other states’ affairs precisely because he did not trust the tsar’s aims. As I will show, when Metternich became convinced the tsar was a committed counterrevolutionary, he changed his tune. Castlereagh, on the other hand, would consistently oppose using the Alliance to manage states’ internal affairs, though he would support the Alliance’s counterrevolutionary aims.

Initial Outbreak of Revolution and Considerations of a Congress

The most concentrated series of congress meetings came in response to a series of revolutions that began in Spain in January 1820. If there was not a transformation of European international politics, as the balance of power perspective argues, we might expect great powers to use this revolution for geopolitical advantage if they could get away with it. For example, Britain could support the revolutionaries and move Spain firmly into the former’s sphere of influence. The British had liberated Spain from

³⁸Charles William Vane, ed., *Correspondence, Despatches, and Other Papers, of Viscount Castlereagh, Second Marquess of Londonderry*, vol. 11 (London: John Murray, 1853), 105.

French forces, but Spanish king Ferdinand had been moving toward the Continental powers. Spain had traditionally been in the French sphere of influence since the Family Compact between the Bourbon kings. But a possible British strategy to side with the revolutionaries to keep Spain from the Continental powers, especially France, did not take shape. Instead, the great powers shared common hostility to the revolution in Spain. They saw it in the light of the revolutionary upheaval that infected Europe and their own polities. Their unified hostility toward the revolution in Spain, though, was not something that forum effects brought about. The question of whether to call a congress on the matter was an immediate source of discord.

The Spanish Revolution was at first a military insurrection and then a broader revolution, where the king was forced to restore the radical constitution of 1812. Metternich immediately feared a “chain reaction” and thought Germany and Italy were in “grave danger.”³⁹ The Prussian chancellor wrote to Castlereagh that the revolution “may bring great dangers to the stability of Europe. The example of an army making a revolution is infinitely fatal.”⁴⁰ The French king was similarly alarmed.⁴¹ Spanish revolutionaries wrote to the tsar, asking him to approve of the 1812 constitution. It is one indication how revolutionaries placed their hopes in the tsar, which was a fear of the other powers. Instead, Alexander shared their concerns of the revolution’s negative example, and called for a congress.

Castlereagh, though, in his State Paper of 5 May, objected to the Alliance meeting both because he thought its purpose—coordinating intervention in Spain—would be ineffective and because he did not want the Alliance to have a general policy of regulating states’ internal affairs. The Alliance may all agree that the Spanish revolt is a “dangerous example” and inconsistent with “monarchical Government,” Castlereagh said, and they “may also agree, with shades of difference, that the consequence of this state of things in Spain may eventually bring danger home to all our own doors, but it does not follow, that We have therefore equal means of action on this opinion.” Castlereagh spoke of the “widespread apprehension of the fatal Consequences to the publick tranquility of Europe” from “dangerous principles” “at work more or less in Every European State.” He clearly feared the “volcanic masses” and wrote of the “dreaded moral

³⁹Paul W. Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy at Its Zenith, 1820–1823* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), 26.

⁴⁰Vane, ed., *Correspondence*, 12:223–24.

⁴¹Guillaume de Bertier de Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France après le Congrès de Vienne* [Metternich and France after the Congress of Vienna], vol. 2: *Grands Congrès (1820–1824)* [Great congresses (1820–1824)] (Paris: Hachette, 1970), 309.

Contagion” of revolution.⁴² But King Ferdinand’s cause was unpopular with the British public, and Britain had to temper its public support of counterrevolutionary measures in ways the “purely monarchical” states, such as Russia, did not. “In this country at all times, but especially at the present conjuncture, when the whole Energy of the State is required to unite reasonable men in defense of our existing Institutions,” referring to the recent revolutionary activity in Britain, “public sentiment should not be distracted or divided, by any unnecessary interference of the Government in events, passing abroad, over which they can have none, or at best but very imperfect means of controul.”⁴³

Castlereagh thought Alliance activities should be limited to matters where there was consensus, and the states would not be able to agree to a general principle upon which to intervene in the internal affairs of other states. This was not a new argument from him. He had rejected the Russian proposal in 1818 to expand the scope of the Alliance for the same reasons.⁴⁴ He favored states stamping out revolution on their own as much as possible, without involving Britain.⁴⁵ On the same day the State Paper was issued, he wrote to his ambassador in Austria to privately convey to Austria his pleasure at the work of the Carlsbad Decrees in stamping out revolutionary activity in Germany, much as he passed the Six Acts to suppress similar revolutionary activity at home.⁴⁶ “Although we have made an immense progress against Radicalism,” he wrote Metternich, “the monster still lives.”⁴⁷

Metternich rejected Allied intervention using many of the same arguments as Castlereagh. He thought the Spanish Revolution could be reversed without direct military intervention and objected to Russian and French intervention in Spain. He was still apprehensive of the tsar’s liberal sensibilities, he did not want Russian troops marching through Germany on their way to Spain, and he did not want to encourage a Franco-Russian alignment. He did not trust the French army—if loyal, it should remain to protect Louis XVIII. If not, a Spanish expedition could be an excuse to overthrow the French king. He also did not favor French and British solutions to the Spanish problem. They had proposed a moderate constitution, like the French Charter, could be granted by royal will rather than

⁴²Reprinted in A. W. Ward and G. P. Gooch, eds., *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783–1919*, vol. 2, 1815–1866 (New York: Macmillan, 1923), 627–28, 630, 632.

⁴³Ward and Gooch, *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, 2:628–29.

⁴⁴C. K. Webster, *The Congress of Vienna, 1814–1815* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1934), 166–71.

⁴⁵Castlereagh was not proposing a general policy of nonintervention, as is sometimes portrayed. He was opposing a general policy of intervention. He was not averse to states intervening unilaterally, or the Alliance doing so together in limited circumstances. See John Bew, *Castlereagh: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 481–83; D. L. Hafner, “Castlereagh, the Balance of Power, and ‘Non-Intervention,’” *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 26, no. 1 (April 1980): 71–84.

⁴⁶C. K. Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, 1815–1822: Britain and the European Alliance* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1925), 197–98.

⁴⁷Vane, *Correspondence*, 12:259.

through insurrection. Metternich welcomed what he regarded as the tsar's newfound zeal against revolution and sought to steer him in a more conservative direction. But at this stage he was content to let the Spanish Revolution burn itself out, and only assist Spanish royals with money and arms at the royals' initiative.

The great powers were not considering how to exploit the Spanish Revolution for geopolitical gain; they were united in their opposition, given their fear of revolution spreading. But they had different solutions to the problem. Britain's commitment to counterrevolution in private but its constraints in public would characterize its reaction to these revolutions, and contrasts with the forum effects thesis.

The Italian Revolutions and the Congresses of Troppau and Laibach

Revolution spread to Naples in July and to Piedmont in March 1821. For states looking to exploit revolutions for geopolitical advantage, unaffected by a transformation of international politics to a more cooperative order, the Italian revolutions provided a prime opportunity for France to undermine the Austrian sphere of influence by siding with the revolutionaries. The Italian Peninsula, formerly under French domination but now in the Austrian sphere, was seen as "a likely point of collision for Habsburg and French interests."⁴⁸ Piedmont's ambassador to Russia wrote a memorandum for Alexander in 1818, detailing the long history of rivalry there: "Neither France nor Austria will ever consent to yield to each other." He predicted the rivalry would upend European peace.⁴⁹ The revolutionaries were looking for support from France, as well as Russia. They had reason to expect their support. Metternich had been complaining about Alexander's previous support of liberals in Italy and Germany. This encouragement from Russia convinced some revolutionaries they would be protected from Austrian repression.⁵⁰ Britain could use the revolts to extend their influence over Sicily. None of this happened. There again was cooperation against revolutions, not because of forum effects or the fear that aiding revolutionaries would result in great-power war, but because the great powers feared revolutionary movements spreading.

⁴⁸David Laven, "Austria's Italian Policy Reconsidered: Revolution and Reform in Restoration Italy," *Modern Italy* 2 (August 1997): 10.

⁴⁹Laven, "Austria's Italian Policy Reconsidered," 10.

⁵⁰For Italy, see Alan J. Reinerman, "Metternich, Alexander I, and the Russian Challenge in Italy, 1815–20," *Journal of Modern History* 46, no. 2 (June 1974): 262–76; George T. Romani, *The Neapolitan Revolution of 1820–1821* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1950), 111; Webster, *Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, 95, 182; *Memoirs of Prince Metternich, 1815–1829*, vol. 3, ed. Richard Metternich (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1881), 261, 386. For Metternich's fear that Russia would use liberal movements to undermine Austria's domination of the German Confederation, see Enno E. Kraehe, "Austria, Russia and the German Confederation, 1813–1820," in *Deutscher Bund und deutsche Frage 1815–1866* [The German Confederation and the German question, 1815–1866], ed. Helmut Rumpel (Munich: Verlag, 1990), 274–75.

Austria was immediately alarmed by the revolution in Naples. Metternich “varied his metaphors between conflagrations, torrents, and earthquakes.”⁵¹ The “general consensus” of the Austrian government, Schroeder reports, was that the example might inspire revolution not just in Italian and German states but in Austria itself.⁵² The outbreak at Naples was a surprise; the kingdom was regarded as relatively well governed, in contrast to Spain. Metternich saw it as the most stable of all Italian states he visited on his tour the previous year.⁵³ One option was to let the Neapolitans stew in their own juice and hope for a counterrevolutionary coup d’état, but that possibility was considered too dangerous given the fear of contagion. Metternich decided that the revolution must be crushed. On the military front, he began reinforcing his army in Lombardy-Venetia. But the diplomatic front was just as important. He wanted the moral support of the other powers.

The Italian and German states (including Prussia) supported Metternich. Whatever fear they had of Austrian hegemony was superseded by a fear of revolutionary contagion. Britain also sided with Austria against the revolution. In private, the Duke of Wellington told Austrian and Russian representatives that “it is time to make an example” and the Austrians “must march.”⁵⁴ Castlereagh urged Metternich to crush the revolution. He also reassured Metternich that he would have nothing to do with the revolutionaries in Sicily, as there was some suggestion that they would appeal to Britain for help. Officially, however, he was clear that Austria could not expect direct British assistance, or even public moral support. Certainly, the Alliance should not be summoned for the cause. Metternich was pleased with Britain’s private endorsement.

Russia and France reacted similarly—both condemned the revolution but were hesitant to let Austria have its way. France feared Austria would strengthen its influence in Italy and the British would create a protectorate over Sicily, increasing its presence in the Mediterranean. French prime minister Armand-Emmanuel du Plessis, Duc de Richelieu, nevertheless praised Metternich for protecting the “social order” from the “revolutionary spirit,” promising that he could “count on us that we will do all in our power to prevent the evils that no one more than us has to fear.”⁵⁵ He indicated he would happily see Metternich crush the revolution on his own, but also suggested an Allied forum to show a united front against

⁵¹Webster, *Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, 264.

⁵²Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy at Its Zenith*, 42.

⁵³In fact, revolutionaries planned to seize the emperor and Metternich during their visit, but the plot was foiled when they changed their route. Jarrett, *Congress of Vienna and Its Legacy*, 233.

⁵⁴Webster, *Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, 263; Quennell, with Powell, *Private Letters of Princess Lieven to Prince Metternich*, 53.

⁵⁵Guillaume de Bertier de Sauvigny, *France and the European Alliance, 1816–1821: The Private Correspondence of Metternich and Richelieu* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1958), 94–95.

revolution. Russia also pushed for such a forum to deal with the problem, which would give it a say in what the outcome would be for the Neapolitan government. Metternich had no desire for such input, principally because elements in both France and Russia wanted to modify the constitution in Naples to resemble the French Charter. Metternich opposed this; he wanted an absolute monarchy. Since working through the Alliance would alienate Britain, Metternich proposed an informal Allied conference, committed in advance to the moral support of Austria. Castlereagh let it be known that he could not even publicly announce their policy of refusing to recognize the revolutionary regime for fear of the public reaction at home.

Metternich could ignore France and Britain, but not Russia. Metternich worried that with the tsar's backing, emboldened revolutionaries would arise throughout Germany and Italy. He needed Russian support, and Russia was pushing for a forum. Mitzen claims that Metternich, rather than unilaterally intervene, called for a congress to discuss the situation in Naples because he already agreed with Castlereagh's State Paper. This is in line with her argument about forum effects. Their "speech acts and norms of speech produced in a forum" prompted "behavioral self-restraint and commitment-consistent behavior."⁵⁶ But the State Paper argued that the Alliance should not have a system of intervention in other states' internal affairs, which is what Metternich would advocate in the congresses. Mitzen states, "It is difficult to think of any reason he would have acquiesced" to a congress besides being trapped by his own rhetoric,⁵⁷ but there is an obvious explanation. Russia wanted a forum and Metternich needed Russia to endorse Austrian policy because it could have very easily undermined it by supporting the revolutionaries, some of whom were counting on Alexander's help. Metternich would have preferred to "not hesitate" at the "beginning of a conflagration"—to "take the fire engines there" and "extinguish the fire."⁵⁸ But as Metternich said to an Austrian diplomat, "Placed at the front line, we are called upon to react according to our own calculations, but we must be able to count on the help, confidence, and moral uniformity of our allies."⁵⁹ As C. K. Webster says, "One word of encouragement" from Russia, Metternich thought, "and all of Italy and Germany would rise. Men must be clearly shewn that Russia was backing Austria, not the revolution."⁶⁰ Metternich had likewise solicited the tsar's input on the Carlsbad Decrees, before Castlereagh had issued the State

⁵⁶Mitzen, *Power in Concert*, 31.

⁵⁷Mitzen, *Power in Concert*, 114.

⁵⁸Metternich, *Memoirs*, 3:448.

⁵⁹Bertier de Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, 317.

⁶⁰Webster, *Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, 264. Metternich wrote to his close diplomatic confidant, "Of all evils, the greatest would be to see the Emperor Alexander abandon the moral tie which unites us and thus to set himself up again as the power protecting the spirit of innovation." Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy at Its Zenith*, 54–55.

Paper, for the same reasons: he wanted the tsar on board.⁶¹ That had not worked out well, because the tsar came out against the Carlsbad Decrees. But Metternich was confident the tsar was becoming more counterrevolutionary. As he told his ambassador in Turin, the meeting in Troppau would have “the benefit of proving to Europe that the best relationship of friendship and trust exists between the two imperial courts and that the doubts that malevolence has tried to spread on this subject are entirely unfounded.”⁶² For Metternich, the Congress’s purpose was not just to coordinate policy against revolution; it was sending a signal that the great powers were united against revolution—revolutionaries should not expect their backing.

Metternich tried in vain to convince Castlereagh to support a congress. Castlereagh, worried that Metternich’s plans would embarrass him and his government, said Britain was now forced to take a position of neutrality on the Naples question. This affected France. The French foreign minister admitted, “We find ourselves in a certain way forced by the conduct of England to modify our original intentions.”⁶³ Both constitutional powers could not be seen consorting with the “Holy Alliance,” the club of autocrats, against revolution. In other words, they agreed privately with crushing the revolution, but they could not do so in public. Thus, Austria, Prussia, and Russia arranged a congress to be held at Troppau in Austria in October 1820, with Britain and France sending only observers.

At Troppau, Austria had the backing of Prussia and Russia. The tsar had a foreign minister sympathetic to liberal ideas, but Alexander was souring on liberal causes after his frustrations in Poland and the internal developments in France. He came to Troppau via Warsaw, where he had refused to lift the recent censorship decree and secretly authorized his brother to override the Polish constitution if need be.⁶⁴ When Alexander arrived at Troppau, he announced he was repentant for his former liberalism: “You are not altered, but I am. You have nothing to regret, but I have.”⁶⁵ In other words, it was not the public diplomacy of the congress that moderated his behavior. He came to the congress a committed anti-revolutionary given the domestic disturbances he faced. While the tsar was at Troppau, the Semenovskiy Revolt occurred, and it was the final nail in the coffin of the tsar’s liberalism. This was a mutiny in the tsar’s most favored regiment. Alexander was convinced it was “part of a movement, which, if not unearthed and crushed at once, could eventually threaten

⁶¹Jarrett, *Congress of Vienna and Its Legacy*, 219.

⁶²Narciso Nada, ed., *Le relazioni diplomatiche fra l’Austria e il Regno di Sardegna* [Diplomatic relations between Austria and the Kingdom of Sardinia], 1st series: 1814–1830, vol. 2 (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano, 1970), 61.

⁶³Schroeder, *Metternich’s Diplomacy at Its Zenith*, 57.

⁶⁴Jarrett, *Congress of Vienna and Its Legacy*, 247.

⁶⁵Metternich, *Memoirs*, 3:399.

the Russian government.”⁶⁶ He backed unilateral Austrian action to crush the revolution in Italy. The preliminary Protocol of Troppau declared that a state that underwent a revolution, which threatens other states, would be excluded from the Alliance until order could be restored.

Metternich risked upsetting Britain, his natural geopolitical ally, in favor of Russian support against revolution. He hoped that at least the British would hold their tongue. Castlereagh made public his arguments in the State Paper, omitting reference to concerns about revolution at home, to distance his government from the actions of the eastern powers as parliamentary members and the public railed against the government for associating with the Holy Alliance. But the Austrian ambassador to London accurately described him as “like a great lover of music who is at Church; he wishes to applaud but he dare not.”⁶⁷ The reaction in France was much the same. Some on the left eyed a chance to restore French influence on the Italian Peninsula, as well as to support a more radical regime. Conservatives backed Austrian actions for the opposite reason. French policy in the face of these forces was to do nothing, and hope the Austrians completed their work quickly, while they, like Britain, publicly distanced themselves from Austria’s actions.⁶⁸

While the powers reconvened their Troppau conference in Laibach in 1821, the revolution in Piedmont broke out. The king of Piedmont appealed to Austria for support. Russia’s local representative pushed for mediation to prevent Austrian intervention, but Alexander supported crushing the revolution and proposed marching 100,000 men to do so. In part, this was to discourage French meddling. Some, including Metternich, thought France was behind this revolution, and not without reason. The French representative in Turin urged his government to support the uprising, and his predecessor had been removed in 1820 because of his ties with the liberals.⁶⁹ The French government, though, refused to support

⁶⁶Joseph L. Wiczyński, “The Mutiny of the Semenovsky Regiment in 1820,” *Russian Review* 29, no. 2 (April 1970): 176.

⁶⁷Webster, *Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, 326. He indirectly conveyed to Austria and Russia that his dispatch echoing the points of the State Paper was for domestic consumption, and that he was totally opposed to revolution. John Charmley, “Unravelling Silk: Princess Lieven, Metternich and Castlereagh,” in *A Living Anachronism? European Diplomacy and the Hapsburg Monarchy*, ed. Lothar Höbelt and Thomas G. Otte (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2010), 23.

⁶⁸Guillaume de Bertier de Sauvigny, *The Bourbon Restoration*, trans. Lynn M. Case (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966), 175–76.

⁶⁹Ambassador Duke Emmerich Joseph of Dalberg was in trouble with the French government for being “too liberal.” He was against Austrian domination of Italy, and his residence was a gathering place for the “club of plotters.” His successor, Count La Tour du Pin, urged his government to get behind the revolution. Federico Cuarto, ed., *Le relazioni diplomatiche fra la Gran Bretagna e il Regno di Sardegna* [Diplomatic relations between Great Britain and the Kingdom of Sardinia], 1st series: 1814–1830, vol. 1 (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano, 1972), 234; Cesare Spellanzon, *Storia del Risorgimento e dell’Unità d’Italia* [History of the Risorgimento and the unification of Italy], vol. 1 (Milan: Rizzoli, 1933), 843; Piotr Kozlovski, *Diorama social de Paris* [The social diorama of Paris] (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997), 99; Bertier de Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, 329, 481; Nada, *Relazioni diplomatiche*, 2:36–37, 48. The British diplomat in Tuscany also attempted to push back against Austrian actions, but Castlereagh shut him down. Bew, *Castlereagh*, 498–99.

revolutionaries. It proposed to mediate, but the British did not support this. Castlereagh preferred that the Russians suppress the revolt rather than the French or Austrians, if it could not be put down internally.⁷⁰ All the powers, with France and Britain doing so more discretely, approved of the quick work made of the revolution. Loyal Piedmontese troops, assisted by Austrian troops, crushed the revolution in April. Italian liberals who had counted on the support of the French, the British, and Alexander were sorely mistaken.

This was a remarkable concession for France in particular. Some French individuals thought their country should have a policy of bringing Piedmont back under French influence by supporting revolutionaries. Politicians on the left in the Chamber of Deputies, the French parliament, had been excoriating the government for the loss of French influence in Italy. “Those who have some knowledge of the politics that preceded the period of our Revolution know that France hastened to stop the enlargement of Austria in Italy,” liberal opposition leader Horace Sébastiani declared. “So! Today Austria advances towards Naples.”⁷¹

Concern about Austrian domination of the Italian Peninsula existed among the French leadership, as did an unease about how French acquiescence to Austrian hegemony would look at home, but this was secondary to the greater concern with crushing revolutions. France would accept Austrian hegemony if it served that aim. The French foreign minister outlined a possible French strategy in response to the revolutions in Italy: “There is no doubt that if [France] wanted to take 30,000 men beyond the Alps, throughout Italy people would throw themselves in their arms ... and, supposing that the other Powers want to oppose this union, they would have much to do in regards to attitudes in Europe. France, moreover, by thus placing herself at the head of ideas and constitutional undertakings, would be able to exercise among them an advantageous influence.”⁷² But it was clear that was no longer possible: “In other circumstances,” the minister later said, “France could have conceived the idea of acting alone in this role that suits her better than the other Powers; but today she would expose herself to the danger, immense for herself and for Europe, of encouraging, against her will, the spirit of revolution.”⁷³ In other words, he was explicitly considering how France could use these revolutions for its geopolitical advantage, but that had to be ruled out because it would encourage revolution, including in France itself.

⁷⁰Webster, *Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, 329–31.

⁷¹*Archives Parlementaires de 1787 à 1860*, 2nd series, vol. 30 (Paris: Librairie Administrative de Paul Dupont, 1875), 448.

⁷²Bertier de Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, 332.

⁷³Bertier de Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, 365.

The French restraint in Italy and cooperation with the great powers was not because they were satisfied with the Vienna settlement, as Slantchev's argument would suggest, or because other states constrained them, as the balance of power theory would expect. Nor were forum effects decisive for restraint. French policymakers were self-restrained from supporting revolutionaries even before the forum, or the anticipation of a forum, and they, in addition to Britain, did not directly participate in the forum. But they nevertheless completely agreed (in private) with its actions, which was to allow Austria to crush the revolt. And they stated clearly why this was the case—they feared revolution spreading.

It was also not the fear of great-power war that caused France or Russia to abstain from supporting the revolutionaries. One scholar has claimed, along with Mitzen, that the forum was critical in maintaining peace. "Had Austria acted unilaterally in Naples, and a few months later in Piedmont, the other powers would have responded vehemently, and probably forcibly; but by acquiring multilateral approval for its actions Austria could be seen to be acting legitimately."⁷⁴ This counterfactual is implausible. Britain, Prussia, and France on occasion expressed the sentiment to Austria that they would prefer Austria acted unilaterally. Russia wanted a forum, but it is doubtful that the tsar would have responded "vehemently," let alone "forcibly," had there not been one. He was in full agreement with the Austrian policy of suppressing the revolution.⁷⁵

The Greek Revolt and Restraint without a Congress

Word of the Greek revolt reached the great powers as they were conferring at Laibach. At stake was not just the nature of a regime, but the fate of the Ottoman Empire and the expansion of Russian power. The Russian army officer who initiated the revolt intended to incite a Russo-Turkish war, which would enable the liberation of Greeks from Ottoman rule. It was feared that such a war could lead to the collapse of Ottoman rule, which was the aim of Alexander's grandmother, Catherine the Great. Just as in other instances, this revolt promised geopolitical advantage for Russia, but it did not take the opportunity. This was not a result of Russia being restrained by the balance of power, or the fear of war between great powers had Alexander sided with the revolutionaries. He was not restrained by forum effects. Instead, the great powers cooperated against the Greek revolt because they feared the spread of revolution. Britain and Austria especially also had geopolitical motives in not wanting an expansion of

⁷⁴Richardson, "Concert of Europe and Security Management in the Nineteenth Century," in Haftendorn, Keohane, and Wallander, *Imperfect Unions*, 58; Mitzen, *Power in Concert*, 120.

⁷⁵In addition, as seen below, when France invaded Spain without the blessing of the Alliance, there was no hint of war from the other great powers.

Russian power, which would be the consequence of a successful Greek Revolution. Thus, cooperation in this case would be dependent on Russian restraint.

Alexander disavowed any involvement and gave the Turks a green light to repress the revolts. He told the British ambassador that the same liberal forces were at work throughout Europe, including “the mutinous conduct of one of his own regiments, as well as the serious disturbances which were arising through the whole of European Turkey.”⁷⁶ For this reason, he pledged not to aid the rebels. He kept such a policy despite the Turks giving them pretext to intervene. The Turks’ brutal suppression, including massacres and the hanging of the patriarch of Constantinople, increasingly raised the ire of the Russians, who claimed the right to protect Orthodox subjects. Other violations against Russian treaty rights included direct Turkish occupation of the Danubian Principalities, interference with Russian trade through the straits, and destruction of Russian property in Constantinople.

Metternich and Castlereagh hoped the Turks would quickly crush the revolution because the protracted conflict threatened to bring Russia in, which would mean an independent Greece. Metternich supported Turkish rule because “the interest of Europe pronounces against any major political change.”⁷⁷ He told the tsar this was a “firebrand thrown between Austria and Russia” to “keep the liberal fire going” and embarrass the tsar with his “coreligionists.”⁷⁸ He funneled reports to the tsar that the revolutionaries were only waiting for the outbreak of war between Russia and Turkey to make their move.⁷⁹ Metternich pressed the pope to condemn the Greek revolt, not wanting Alexander or other Catholic states to have an excuse to favor Greek independence.⁸⁰ Metternich also conferred with Castlereagh to restrain Alexander.

Alexander did not appreciate what he regarded as Austro-British collusion against him, and at one point he reached out to the French for an alliance against the Ottomans. France had a potential geopolitical advantage in siding with Russia as a balance against Britain and Austria. There was some support on both the left and right in the French parliament to

⁷⁶Webster, *Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, 358.

⁷⁷Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy at Its Zenith*, 173.

⁷⁸Bertier de Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, 152.

⁷⁹Whether it was due to Metternich's reports or not, the tsar accepted this view: “If we reply to the Turks with war the Paris directing committee will triumph and no government will be left standing. I do not intend to leave a free field to the enemies of order. At all costs means must be found of avoiding war with Turkey.” M. S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774–1923* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), 61.

⁸⁰Metternich's efforts to get the pope to condemn the Greek revolt and also the Carbonari shows the importance he placed on preserving a larger moral climate that would insulate the powers against revolution. Alan J. Reinerman, “Metternich, the Papacy, and the Greek Revolution,” *East European Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (Summer 1978): 177–88; Alan Reinerman, “Metternich and the Papal Condemnation of the Carbonari, 1821,” *Catholic Historical Review* 54, no. 1 (April 1968): 55–69.

exploit the Greek situation,⁸¹ but the cabinet under Richelieu declined, and the ultraroyalist cabinet that replaced him continued this policy. “While desiring a rapprochement with Russia, which places us in a position more like those of England and Austria,” Richelieu stated, “it is necessary to try to avoid anything that could harm the union between the five powers, even in the case where the Turkish war could break out. This union is the most powerful of the paths against the invasion of revolutionary principles.”⁸² Prussia was the most outwardly sympathetic to Russian aims, though it too urged restraint and, as usual, tied its antirevolutionary policy to Austria.

The great powers wanted Russian restraint, but they had nothing more than moral leverage to use against Russia—they were not willing to go to war with Russia over its policy. The British took the strongest stance but merely threatened neutrality in any possible Russo-Turkish war. Russian leadership knew there would not be any significant resistance by the great powers to their action against the Ottomans, and moreover expected that a war with Turkey would be relatively easily won. Thus, the war–revolution nexus, by which large-scale great-power war leads to revolution at home, did not restrain the tsar. And he had a compelling list of reasons to fight: geopolitical advantage, economic interests, and the situation of the Orthodox Christians. It is not surprising that many Russian officials advised Alexander to act, not the least of whom was his liberal foreign minister, Count John Capodistria.⁸³

Alexander, however, refused to intervene, leading to Capodistria’s resignation. Why did Alexander not act? However much he despised the sultan, Alexander saw him as the legitimate ruler, and the Greeks as Jacobin usurpers. “I could have permitted myself to be swept along by the enthusiasm for the Greeks,” he told the Prussian envoy, “but I have never forgotten the impure origin of the rebellion or the danger of my intervention for my allies.”⁸⁴ And any conflict with the Turks would only aid the revolutionary cause. To the British ambassador he said, “I am sensible of the danger which surrounds us all. When I look to the state of France and the new Ministry—when I see the state of Spain and

⁸¹Webster, *Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, 380.

⁸²Bertier de Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, 519.

⁸³This is well documented in Matthew Rendall, “Russia, the Concert of Europe, and Greece, 1821–29: A Test of Hypotheses about the Vienna System,” *Security Studies* 9, no. 4 (Summer 2000): 59–71. He decisively refutes the claims of Korina Kagan that Russia was restrained by the balance of power. Kagan, “The Myth of the European Concert: The Realist-Institutionalist Debate and Great Power Behavior in the Eastern Question, 1821–1841,” *Security Studies* 7, no. 2 (Winter 1997/98): 1–57. For Capodistria’s efforts to persuade the tsar, see Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *The Foreign Ministers of Alexander I: Political Attitudes and the Conduct of Russian Diplomacy, 1801–1825* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 256–74; C. M. Woodhouse, *Capodistria: The Founder of Greek Independence* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 260–78.

⁸⁴Cited in Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812–1822* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), 308.

Portugal, when I see, as I do see, the state of the whole world, I am well aware that the smallest spark which falls upon such combustible materials may kindle a flame which all our efforts may perhaps hereafter be insufficient to extinguish.”⁸⁵ The tsar, in other words, using a common metaphor for revolutionary contagion and citing revolutionary upheavals across Europe, did not want to add to the revolutionary tinder by aiding the Greek cause.

Although Mitzen uses Alexander’s restraint as a major piece of evidence for the causal weight of forums, the situation in Greece was not subject to a congress—Metternich proposed that, and Alexander refused. One can claim that public talk constrained him, but Alexander’s stance was consistent with the counterrevolutionary position he already adopted before the outbreak of revolution in Greece. The meeting the great powers had on the subject in October 1821 was mostly between Castlereagh and Metternich. The Russian ambassador arrived at the end and announced the tsar’s position. Metternich was relieved that the tsar “still remains in the same mind as he was at Laibach.”⁸⁶

Schroeder pointedly claims that the desire to preserve the Alliance, rather than an antirevolutionary strategy, drove Alexander’s policy.⁸⁷ But Matthew Rendall rightly critiques this as a false dichotomy.⁸⁸ As the tsar told the French ambassador in 1822, “The only aim of the Alliance is that for which it was formed: to combat revolution.”⁸⁹

The Congress of Verona and French Unilateral Intervention in the Spanish Revolution

With the Italian revolts crushed and the Greek situation put to the side, the polarization and anarchy in Spain commanded the great powers’ attention. After the failure of a royalist coup in 1822, the Spanish king repeatedly appealed to the tsar or the French to come to his rescue. Frenchmen, conservative and liberal, had been slipping over the border to aid their respective sides. Again, from a geopolitical perspective, one might expect the great powers to fear an expansion of French interests in Spain. But this was not so. They were hostile to the Spanish Revolution but feared French intervention would lead to more revolution. They tried to restrain France at the Congress of Verona, but failed.

Three camps existed within the French government on the Spanish matter: one wished to crush the revolution in concert with the Allied

⁸⁵Webster, *Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, 388.

⁸⁶Nichols, *European Pentarchy and the Congress of Verona*, 11.

⁸⁷Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*, 621.

⁸⁸Rendall, “Russia, the Concert of Europe, and Greece,” 71.

⁸⁹Nichols, *European Pentarchy and the Congress of Verona*, 91.

powers, another desired France crush the revolution on its own, and a third wanted to stay out. The government had largely been in the third camp, for the same reasons that Allied powers had misgivings about French action against Spain. Some in the French government were dissatisfied with the Spanish king, and concerned that, once restored, he would continue his misrule, which would foment radicalism. The more important concern in the French government and among the Allies was that French intervention could not only be unsuccessful at stamping out revolution in Spain: it could lead to revolution in France.

French intervention could be costly and dangerous, given the army's unreliability and its potential to get bogged down in Spain. Government officials worried that a military intervention in Spain would provide an opportunity for liberal elements in the French army to turn on the monarchy. The French had ample evidence that the reliability of the troops intervening in Spain was a cogent problem, including propaganda being circulated, uncovered conspiracies, and defections to Spain. The French Carbonari, a revolutionary movement inspired by Italian events, instigated several uprisings that were repressed but reminded everyone of the potential danger. The Allied powers were worried about a French intervention in Spain precipitating the military turning on the Bourbons.⁹⁰

Alexander advocated creating a European army to put an end to the revolution, which Metternich resisted. With Prussia at his side, Metternich opposed the Spanish Revolution, but he had few good options. For both geopolitical and ideological reasons he disliked the idea of either Russia or France marching into Spain. Alexander demanded that a deliberation on Spanish intervention be a major part of the upcoming great-power conference in Verona. Metternich counted on Britain restraining Russia and France. George Canning, Castlereagh's replacement, held the same position as Castlereagh regarding the Spanish Revolution. They hoped it would burn itself out and a moderate government would emerge. Both were irritated at French meddling that polarized the Spanish situation. Canning consistently opposed French intervention in Spain and was particularly worried France would get bogged down there, which might incite revolution in France.⁹¹ Canning sent Wellington to Verona as an observer to help prevent French intervention.

⁹⁰That their concern was warranted would be illustrated in 1830, when a French expedition to Algeria helped facilitate a revolution.

⁹¹Harold Temperley's influential work argues that Canning actually favored French intervention in Spain as a means to separate France from the Continental powers and break the great-power Concert system, which the British public disliked and thought restrained British freedom of action. But Norihito Yamada decisively refutes this. Temperley, *The Foreign Policy of Canning, 1822–1827: England, the Neo-Holy Alliance, and the New World* (London: Archon Books, 1966); Yamada, "George Canning and the Spanish Question, September 1822 to March 1823," *Historical Journal* 52, no. 2 (June 2009): 343–62.

At Verona, France sought—but did not get—Allied approval for intervention in Spain.⁹² Metternich had proposed instead a plan of joint “moral” action to get all the five powers to break their relations with Spain. But the French foreign minister broached the issue of Allied approval for an invasion. Alexander, shifting away from the idea of a European army, now supported French intervention. He was still worried about it bringing down the monarchy in France, but he wanted the Spanish Revolution crushed. Knowing the objections to Russian forces doing it, he decided to support the French and be ready to march to Paris if the Bourbons were overturned there.⁹³ Austria and Prussia waffled. Metternich tried to tie the French to an Allied policy of breaking relations with Spain and supporting French aid to the royalist rebels.⁹⁴

The Congress ended without Allied support for French intervention in Spain, but this did not prevent France from continuing alone. In other words, the Allies unsuccessfully attempted to use the forum of Verona to restrain France. In the aftermath of Verona, France increased their preparations and the counterrevolution in Spain was collapsing, increasing support in France for intervention. By January 1823, King Louis XVIII had decided on war. Metternich dropped his opposition when he realized his fear of France imposing a moderate constitution was misplaced. Canning still opposed French intervention. He attempted to get the Spaniards to modify their constitution, but when they refused, he gave up. The French army crossed into Spain in the spring of 1823, quickly crushed the revolution, and reinstalled Ferdinand on the throne.

Rather than react in disappointment at the expansion of French influence, the great powers were pleased by the successful intervention. Metternich wrote Foreign Minister François-René Chateaubriand a congratulatory note: “I regard it as one of the happiest chances, as much for the consolidation of matters in France, as for the weal of the entire social body, that it has been part of the destiny of a country, which has been the asylum of so many insurrections, to be called upon to strike a blow at revolution, from which, if struck with vigour, it can never revive.”⁹⁵ Canning, pleased his fears went unrealized, remarked, “Never had an army done so little harm and prevented so much of it.”⁹⁶

There was thus considerable friction among the great powers over how they should handle the Spanish Revolution, but this was a debate about tactics rather than goals. They shared hostility toward a radical regime in

⁹²Nichols, *European Pentarchy and the Congress of Verona*, 135.

⁹³Jarrett, *Congress of Vienna and Its Legacy*, 327.

⁹⁴The British, though, thought the strategy would only embolden the radicals and marginalize the moderates.

⁹⁵M. de Chateaubriand, *The Congress of Verona: Comprising a Portion of Memoirs of His Own Times*, vol. 2 (London: Richard Bentley, 1838), 35.

⁹⁶Bertier de Sauvigny, *Bourbon Restoration*, 193.

Madrid. There was resistance to France marching into Spain, with unsuccessful attempts to restrain France at the Congress of Verona. But that resistance was not grounded in apprehension over the expansion of French influence to Spain. This in itself is remarkable given the efforts the great powers had exerted to get France out of Spain only a few years prior. Instead, it was out of a concern that French intervention could lead to more revolution. When this did not happen, the great powers were satisfied.

Assessing the Concert of Europe

The evidence shows there was a transformation of European politics to a more cooperative order in the post-Napoleonic era. Great powers had previously exploited revolutions as a means to enhance their relative power position by undermining rivals' sphere of influence. This did not happen in the period under study. There were numerous opportunities not taken, and it was not because the balance of power prevented potential revisionists from doing so. Russia was not constrained by the balance of power from exploiting the revolution in Greece. France and Russia were not constrained by exploiting the revolutions in Italy because of the balance of power. Other powers' capabilities did not prevent their indirect, let alone direct, interference in these revolutions. Likewise, Britain could have easily used the revolution in the Two Sicilies to establish a British protectorate regime in Sicily. They also could have sided with the revolutionaries in Spain to keep it from the French sphere of influence, which one might expect to be a British aim. That could have been the aim of the other members of the former Quadruple Alliance against France as well. The Prussians could have taken steps to undermine Austrian dominance in Germany and Italy rather than supporting it. Even if one does not go as far as Schroeder to say that the balance of power played no restraining role after the Vienna settlement, it clearly did not account for the restraint in these cases.

One can argue that the great powers were restrained because they accepted the other powers' sphere of influence. In Slantchev's account, the territorial settlement at Vienna had left them satisfied. However, there are several instances where states did not seem to be content with their sphere of influence. Many French politicians and diplomats were unhappy that their former sphere of influence in Italy was now in Austria's sphere, and they were urging their government to back revolutionaries to do something about it. Many in the tsar's court were unhappy about what was happening in Greece, and perhaps it was time to seize longstanding Russian goals by establishing a greater influence. One might claim that Russian and French inaction is ultimately evidence that they were satisfied with their sphere of influence. But why? For example, why would the French, the

Russians, or even the Prussians, accept Austrian domination of the Italian Peninsula, by tacitly or explicitly backing the Austrians? If everyone accepted the sphere of influence of other great powers and forwent opportunities to undermine others' spheres, that represents a transformation of European politics, a change in leaders' preferences toward cooperation than had previously been the case.

There is, then, good evidence of Schroeder's thesis that there was a transformation of European politics. But what undergirded this transformation? One answer is Mitzen's claim that the forum effects explain restraint: the "option to meet enabled the settlement to hold, and that without it war would have been far more likely."⁹⁷ The fact that congresses were being held certainly speaks to the desire of the great powers to cooperate and, as she states, despite disagreement the Alliance did not break. But it was, for the most part, not the forum that was a source of peace; it was a manifestation of the desire for cooperation.

The forum's most pronounced independent effect was as a source of discord. Britain and France, given their domestic audiences, did not desire to be seen as aligning with the autocratic powers in crushing revolutions. They were receiving intense criticism at home from the left for doing so. This is why the calling of forums was so divisive to the Alliance. Britain made clear from the outset that it did not mind powers crushing revolutions, and it had no desire to take advantage of the revolutions. But if the Alliance was to be perceived as a club of absolutist monarchies crushing revolution, the British domestic situation would not allow it to participate.⁹⁸ And as Britain went, so did France. The last major congress would be Verona. There would be a lasting split between the absolutist and constitutional/semiconstitutional powers on the matter. Mitzen is right that this split is often exaggerated and that the Alliance was preserved. But this was no thanks to the forums. She claims: "Concert self-restraint cannot be understood separately from the practice of conference diplomacy. These former rivals were able to cooperate publicly when they could not privately."⁹⁹ In fact, it was the opposite. They could cooperate in private, but the constitutional regimes could not cooperate publicly; they said as much. During the formation of the Troppau Protocol, Castlereagh protested to the Russians: "It is not the goals and intentions of the monarchs that I am speaking against, but the forms and means they wish to apply. The same object might be achieved in more natural ways, ways more in conformity with the spirit of our times." He noted the domestic constraints of Britain, and especially France, and said the Austrians could simply

⁹⁷Mitzen, *Power in Concert*, 104.

⁹⁸Britain, Russia, and France also sometimes had a different solution—conservative constitutional monarchies, such as the French Charter, rather than absolutist monarchies.

⁹⁹Mitzen, "Reading Habermas in Anarchy," 412.

crush the revolutions, which would make its own statement.¹⁰⁰ As he said to the tsar, they “all agreed upon the substance, and it was only a question of management.”¹⁰¹

It was not the fear of war alone, or war weariness, that prevented the great powers from exploiting these revolutions for geopolitical advantage. For one, there were many steps great powers could have taken short of provoking war with one another to aid these revolutions. France could have given discreet or even outright moral support to revolutionaries, and it is doubtful the great powers would have declared war as a result. Given Russia's power position, it could do almost whatever it wanted without the expectation that the great powers would declare war on it. Furthermore, leaders were clear that the reason why they did not support revolutionaries was because they feared revolution, not because they feared war with a fellow great power.

Though the fear of war was insufficient for the cooperation assessed here, it surely did prompt cooperation in post-Napoleonic Europe, and one of the main reasons for this was the revolution-war nexus. One particularly salient mechanism for war causing revolution was the issue of the mass army. An extended period of war between the great powers could force them all to adopt the mass army. The French Revolutionary Wars had proven its effectiveness, and yet that successful innovation was dropped. The great powers recognized their effectiveness but also considered the political change they could cause at home, and decided they were better off without them.¹⁰² Mass armies were thought to be less reliable in suppressing domestic revolution, and perhaps would conduct the revolution themselves. Universal service also implied a set of political demands and was costly. The last these rulers needed was further strain on the state.

According to Schroeder, leaders did not fear revolution; they feared war. He goes so far as to say that the great powers were lax about stamping out revolutions, and “one of the distinguishing features of the Vienna era, compared to the earlier and later ones, was that it was relatively easy and safe to promote revolution.”¹⁰³ This claim is not supported. As one leading scholar notes, nineteenth-century revolutionaries rotting in jail would surely be surprised to learn that it was “easy and safe” to promote revolution.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰Mack Walker, ed., *Metternich's Europe* (New York: Walker, 1968), 132–36.

¹⁰¹Jarrett, *Congress of Vienna and Its Legacy*, 193.

¹⁰²See, for example, Daniel Moran, “Arms and the Concert: The Nation in Arms and the Dilemmas of German Liberalism,” in *The People in Arms: Military Myth and National Mobilization since the French Revolution*, ed. Moran and Arthur Waldron (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 49–74; John Gooch, *Armies in Europe* (Boston: Routledge, 1980), 50–80; Michael Howard, *War in European History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 94–95.

¹⁰³Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*, 673.

¹⁰⁴T. C. W. Blanning, “Paul W. Schroeder's Concert of Europe,” *International History Review* 16, no. 4 (November 1994): 711. For an overview of the repressive measures developed in European states in

Schroeder pushes the systemic argument too far and thus unwarrantedly separates international and domestic order.¹⁰⁵ He claims that “when someone like Metternich said, as he did at every turn at every crisis, that the existence of the social order was at stake, he meant first and foremost [the] international order.”¹⁰⁶ But Schroeder’s earlier work on Metternich shows clearly that Metternich saw war and revolution as two sides of the same coin. And he feared both.¹⁰⁷ For him, as for the other great powers, domestic order depended on a stable international order. As Richelieu stated to Metternich, “There is only one interest in European politics, that of maintaining social order. It is a question of preventing widespread conflict, and all the particular, undermining motives that so greatly occupied our diplomatic predecessors seem insignificant if they do not completely disappear before such a great interest.”¹⁰⁸ Revolution and war were both to be avoided, and leaders made clear they thought the Alliance was against both. Even though they thought there was a relationship between the two, they sometimes were explicit that there was a distinction between them and that they had both goals. For example, King Louis XVIII, in his opening speech to the French parliament in 1820, said, “This alliance, while at the same time removing the causes of war, must reassure against the dangers to which the social order and political equilibrium could still be exposed.”¹⁰⁹

The primary purpose of the congresses of 1820–22 was coordinating a response to revolutions and presenting a united front against revolutionaries. Because of their domestic instability, the great powers already agreed on the aims—that they were against the revolutions, which were a common threat. They welcomed their former rivals crushing them. There were disagreements about exactly how they should deal with the revolutions and over whether to have congresses to discuss the matter. But the great

this period, see Robert Justin Goldstein, *Political Repression in 19th Century Europe* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Books, 1983); de Graaf, *Fighting Terror after Napoleon*, 205–301.

¹⁰⁵Schroeder’s larger theoretical commitment to the notion that there is (or can be) a direction to the international system in favor of increasing order perhaps has him playing down an explanation for the post-Napoleonic peace that is circumscribed to conditions in that era.

¹⁰⁶Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*, 802. Another example is Schroeder’s incorporation of Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand’s appeal to “legitimacy” into his use of the term “equilibrium” when Talleyrand clearly distinguished between the concepts, the former having more to do with relations between rulers and ruled, and the latter having more to do with rulers. See Jarrett, *Congress of Vienna and Its Legacy*, 151, 427; Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*, 696.

¹⁰⁷Schroeder, *Metternich’s Diplomacy at Its Zenith*, 243. See also his claims for what accounted for peace among great powers after 1815 in Paul W. Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War: The Destruction of the European Concert* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972), 404–5, among other works.

¹⁰⁸Bertier de Sauvigny, *France and the European Alliance*, 100.

¹⁰⁹*Archives Parlementaires de 1787 à 1860*, 2nd series, vol. 29 (Paris: Librairie Administrative de Paul Dupont, 1875), 462. de Graaf goes as far to say that “for Metternich, the Allied Council’s [the European authorities who administered occupied France until 1818, the subject of her study] primary task was not just a prevention of another war and bloodletting. His greatest scare was the revolutionary character of those Napoleonic Wars. Not ‘war,’ but political upheaval and revolt, leading to large-scale destruction or expropriation of private property, was Metternich’s worst nightmare.” de Graaf, *Fighting Terror after Napoleon*, 217.

powers shared an understanding, whether they participated in congresses or not, that they would not exploit these revolutions for geopolitical gain because of their fear of revolutions, and even noted themselves how this was different than the politics of the past. The Prussian foreign minister remarked that all the great powers now had a general interest in “the maintenance of harmony, territorial existence, and the social order,” and thus the “old system of countervailing forces” has been replaced and “politics has assumed a lofty character,” where moderation has replaced “projects of ambition.”¹¹⁰

International Cooperation and Domestic Order

I have argued that the fear of revolution, which was a transformation of the domestic scene, undergirded the transformation of European international politics into a more cooperative order. How does this finding implicate IR theory and our understanding of contemporary international politics? The theory of forum effects is an important one, potentially explaining the future of world politics if concert-like arrangements are in the forecast. However, I argue that actors’ preferences for cooperation were largely independent of the forums held, and the forums held were largely a manifestation of that moderation. That leaders meet or publicly justify their policies does not necessarily moderate behavior. For this reason, one should not place too much hope in a concert system itself as a source of cooperation. This by no means refutes the expanding literature emphasizing the importance of diplomacy in international politics, including face-to-face diplomacy.¹¹¹ Nor does it dismiss other mechanisms by which more formal international organizations can be a source of peace. But it invites skepticism of forum effects’ power.

Another broader lesson concerns the theory argued—that states facing similar transnational ideological threats will be unusually cooperative.¹¹² Perhaps of greatest contemporary relevance for this theory is the Russo-China relationship. Given the deterioration of US-Chinese relations and changes in the distribution of power—the rise of China and the decline

¹¹⁰Lawrence J. Baack, *Christian Bernstorff and Prussia: Diplomacy and Reform Conservatism, 1818–1832* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1980), 79.

¹¹¹See, for example, Robert F. Trager, *Diplomacy: Communication and the Origins of International Order* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Marcus Holmes, *Face-to-Face Diplomacy: Social Neuroscience and International Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Trusting Enemies: Interpersonal Relationships in International Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Marcus Holmes and Keren Yarhi-Milo, “The Psychological Logic of Peace Summits: How Empathy Shapes Outcomes of Diplomatic Negotiations,” *International Studies Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (March 2017): 107–22; Seanon S. Wong, “Who Blinkered? Performing Resolve (or Lack Thereof) in Face-to-Face Diplomacy,” *Security Studies* 30, no. 3 (June–July 2021): 419–49.

¹¹²The findings here dovetail with recent work on international organizations as a source of authoritarian stability. See Christina Cottiero and Stephan Haggard, “Stabilizing Authoritarian Rule: The Role of International Organizations,” *International Studies Quarterly* (forthcoming).

of the United States—there have been calls for the latter to patch things up with Russia and turn them against China, in the manner of Nixon’s outreach to China during the Cold War when the Soviet Union was the greater adversary.¹¹³ That outreach was possible given the preexisting Sino-Soviet split. China and Russia’s similar ideological background not only did not prevent the Sino-Soviet split from occurring, it caused it.¹¹⁴ Debates over the nature and leadership of communism no longer exist, and although China and Russia will retain separate geopolitical interests that will sometimes put them at odds, that they feel similarly threatened by the US-led liberal international order causes them to be more cooperative than they would be otherwise.¹¹⁵ These great powers emphasize state sovereignty and see Western support of the Color Revolutions and other such democratic movements in their own countries and in their perceived spheres of influence as a threat to their domestic rule. In other words, the autocratic regimes of Russia and China see the West as not just a geopolitical threat but an ideological one, which supports democratic movements in places such as Belarus, Hong Kong, and Ukraine, and at its core wants regime change in their polities. This makes the conflict between Russia/China and the West more intractable. And it also brings Russia and China together. The source of cooperation and interest in crushing democratic movements in their states and their perceived spheres of influence will make them more difficult to pry apart.

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¹¹³See, for example, Timothy W. Crawford, “How to Distance Russia from China,” *Washington Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (Fall 2021): 175–94.

¹¹⁴Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

¹¹⁵On this point, see John M. Owen IV, “Sino-Russian Cooperation against Liberal Hegemony,” *International Politics* 57, no. 5 (October 2020): 809–33; Haas, *Frenemies*, 214–17. Haas also notes the difficulties of the United States securing the support of authoritarian regimes against China in Haas, “The Ideology Barriers to Anti-China Coalitions,” *Washington Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (Winter 2023): 113–32.