

The Congress of Vienna and its Legacy

War and Great Power Diplomacy after Napoleon

MARK JARRETT

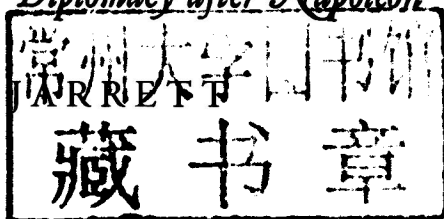


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Mark Jarrett holds an MA in International History from the London School of Economics, a PhD in History from Stanford, and a Law degree from the University of California, Berkeley. He has taught at Hofstra and Stanford and has worked as an attorney at the world's largest international law firm.

'The system established by the Congress of Vienna is of great interest to both historians and political scientists, and Mark Jarrett's is one of the rare treatments that will appeal to both groups. His narrative gives a clear guidance through the complexities of the era and his analysis engages the central arguments about the period. It is a model treatment.'

—**Robert Jervis, Professor of International and Public Affairs and
Adlai E. Stevenson Professor of Political Science, Columbia University**

'This book is more than a comprehensive and richly detailed account of the complex diplomatic and international relations in post-Napoleonic Europe, which will undoubtedly become a standard reference in the curricula of university students. It is, more importantly, a fascinating journey through the Europe of early the nineteenth century, from Sicily to Russia, from England to the Balkans. Whereas other historians mostly focus on the great powers that defeated Napoleon in 1815 (England, Prussia, Austria and Russia), Mark Jarrett avidly researched and brilliantly presents the diverse constellation of diplomatic interests and political movements that contributed to reshaping the European system.

Breaking free from the ideological prejudices still prevalent in the field (whether "international", "national", or "post-colonial"), Jarrett boldly assumes a broader perspective, where characters are seen as actors playing their respective roles within a bigger game of War and Peace: the Congress System. His is therefore not the ordinary Manichean account of "heroes" or "villains", "victories" or "defeats"—except in the minds of the characters themselves, which he depicts in a compassionate manner, regardless of the sides they happened to take.

He does so with an impressive display of scholarship; he is among the first English-speaking authors to take the measure of southeastern Europe and Russia in that crucial period—an accomplishment that has been long awaited. Under his pen, the Eastern Question (the ongoing division of the Ottoman Empire) and the independence of Greece are not presented as a mere chess game between ministries of colonial powers for land and commerce; it is also a story of real people, involved in a game of life and death.

In short, *The Congress of Vienna and its Legacy* successfully combines well-balanced historical research with fresh and vivid history-telling in the best sense of the word, truly enjoyable for all kinds of readers. This is one of the most comprehensively

documented and captivating books on the history of the Congress System published in years.’

—**Stella Ghervas, Institut d’études avancées, Paris, and author of *Réinventer la tradition. Alexandre Stourdza et l’Europe de la Sainte-Alliance* (winner of the Guizot Prize of the Académie Française, 2009)**

‘Mark Jarrett’s beautifully written book deploys a great deal of information without ever getting lost in detail. It weaves together personality and policy, providing a clear analysis of political structures as well as a vivid portrait of personalities.’

—**James J. Sheehan, Dickason Professor in the Humanities and Professor of Modern European History emeritus, Stanford University**

‘This will become the definitive work on the Congress of Vienna with all its personalities, intrigues and significance for the nation-state and how we think of diplomacy today. As someone who recently had responsibility for US policy at the UN and other international organizations, the challenges of multilateral diplomacy continue, only with more actors and problems of global scope. I wonder how a Castlereagh or Metternich would deal with the frustrations and intransigence we see in the UN Security Council. Or whether such persons could even emerge. It’s interesting that the Congress of Vienna still holds value for a new kind of diplomacy that has taken shape. Traditional multilateral organizations are often unable to address our greatest challenges, and what is emerging is a system of “variable geometry” where organizations, countries or individuals come together informally to develop a common approach. Look at the emergence of the G-20 in the financial crisis, the six-party talks for the DPRK, or 6+1 on Iran. And there are many more examples. These are no longer “conferences” or traditional bilateral diplomacy but are coalitions that form usually among the like-minded for a limited purpose and period. The Congress of Vienna seems to be a forerunner of this modern model, whether to contain France or put in place a “system” for addressing future issues. I can understand the common view that the Congress of Vienna was the model for how nation-states would conduct “modern” diplomacy. I’m sure this book will become a required read at the State Department’s Foreign Service Institute, whether in our classes in negotiations or on leadership.’

—**James Warlick, former US Ambassador to Bulgaria**

‘Mastering all the relevant primary sources as well as the secondary literature, encompassing all the latest research and analyses of international historians as well as the theories of international relations specialists, Mark Jarrett illuminates a vital two decades in European history that have long been neglected. His is indeed a wonderful book—clearly written, extremely well-researched, open to a whole variety of explanations from historians and political scientists, well balanced, fair in its judgments of historical characters and contemporary academic opinion, and seminal in its allusions to present-day events. I have little doubt that this book will become the standard work on the Congress System.’

—**Alan Sked, Professor of International History, London School of Economics and Political Science, from the Foreword to this book**

To my parents, Beverly and Paul, for their love and patience.

To my children, Alexander and Julia, for the joy they have given me.

To the memory of those of my teachers who did not live to see this publication: Gordon A. Craig, Alexander L. George, Kenneth Bourne, Marc Raeff, J.M.W. Bean, Matthew S. Anderson and John Dinwiddy.

And finally, to my wife, Małgorzata, who grew up in Puławy in the shadow of the Czartoryski Palace, where Tsar Alexander met the Polish nobility on his journey to the Congress of Vienna almost exactly two centuries ago.

FOREWORD

NINETEENTH-century European history is no longer fashionable. A century once remembered as an 'age of progress' is now remembered as an age of nationalism and imperialism, dominated by largely undemocratic regimes with cultural values—religious, racist or Social Darwinist—which strike quite the wrong note today. That is not to say that it lacks memorable characters; parliamentary leaders like Palmerston, Gladstone and Disraeli, *Realpolitiker* like Cavour, Napoleon III and Bismarck, heroes like Kossuth and Garibaldi, statesmen like Metternich and Salisbury, military leaders like Radetzky, Moltke and Kitchener. But, it lacks the drama and terror of the twentieth century with its tyrants like Lenin, Stalin, Hitler and Mao along with their mass-murdering regimes. It also lacks world wars.

And yet ... the nineteenth century was born in world war as Europe, East and West, North and South, struggled to free itself from the grip of the tyrant, Napoleon. True, he was more educated, more intelligent, more enlightened and sophisticated—even much more progressive—than twentieth century tyrants (whatever their own warped views of progress), but he was still the military conqueror rather than the legitimate ruler of the Continent and had ambitions to extend his rule beyond its shores. Fortunately, he was eventually defeated in 1813–15 by the military planning of Radetzky and the combined allied armies under military leaders like Schwarzenberg, Blücher and Wellington.

The people who organized his defeat diplomatically—principally Prince Metternich, Lord Castlereagh and Tsar Alexander I of Russia—are the main characters of Mark Jarrett's book. This tells the story of Europe's diplomatic development and organization from 1813 until 1823 with a look towards the present. Mastering all the relevant primary sources as well as the secondary literature, encompassing all the latest research and analyses of international historians as well as the theories of international relations specialists, Mark Jarrett illuminates a vital two decades in European history that have long been neglected.

His is indeed a wonderful book—clearly written, extremely well-researched, open to a whole variety of explanations from historians and

political scientists, well-balanced, fair in its judgements of historical characters and contemporary academic opinion, never dogmatic but always imaginative, exemplary in its structure and length and seminal in its allusions to present-day events.

It is a first-rate textbook on a neglected period, now brought vividly back to life by excellent scholarship and a compelling narrative. The detail never overwhelms but always clarifies; the quotes are always apposite and often arresting; the endnotes are fascinating; the chronology is excellent; and the conclusions are fluid, thoughtful and worth re-reading several times over. So, too, is the book. It really is that good.

As a historian of the period, it is not for me to enter into historical debate in this Foreword. Suffice it to say that Mark Jarrett's portraits of the leading figures are excellent; that he understands their fixation with the balance of power; that he is well aware of the tensions in both the policies and personality of Alexander I; that he has the measure of both Castlereagh and Metternich; and that, although he notes their differences of approach diplomatically, he can see how they complement each other. He also manages to slip in enough of the personal and social background to make all these characters come to life.

I have little doubt that his book will become the standard work on 'the Congress System'. I recommend it unreservedly.

Alan Sked
Professor of International History
LSE

PREFACE

IN early September 1814, carriages from throughout Europe were rolling across hot and dusty roads on their way to Vienna. In response to a public invitation from the victorious allied powers, monarchs, ministers, and dignitaries of every conceivable status and description were descending upon the Habsburg capital to participate in the reconstruction of Europe. The visitors included the Emperor of Russia, the Kings of Prussia, Bavaria and Denmark, scores of princes and high ranking nobles, German imperial knights, ambassadors, scholars, musicians, artists, writers, cooks, tradesmen and servants in the thousands. Most of them, as it turned out, would play no role at all in the high-stakes diplomacy to be conducted behind closed doors, but their presence provided a splendid backdrop and a fitting end to two decades of revolution and war.

The Congress of Vienna and the so-called ‘Congress System’ that dominated Europe for the next ten years can best be understood as reactions to the previous epoch. The very fabric of European political and social life had been torn asunder by the French revolutionaries and decades of warfare with Napoleon. The challenge of the postwar period was to come to terms with these new forces while restoring the rudiments of order and stability lost in the years of revolution and strife.

Although the French Bourbons and other toppled dynasties were suddenly restored to their thrones, the statesmen at Vienna recognized there could be no turning back of the clock to the days of the *ancien régime*, whose very imperfections had led to revolutionary upheavals. For the most part, the Congress statesmen looked to a reshaping of the international system to provide an anchor for maintaining the existing social order. They agreed on the general desirability of conducting international politics through consensus rather than by force of arms, and the need to treat one another, if not the lesser powers, with some degree of moderation and restraint.

In the years immediately following the Vienna Congress, the European great powers launched a bold new experiment in the history of international relations. Their ministers met for periodic summit conferences in which they attempted to resolve the major issues confronting Europe—from boundary

disputes between Norway and Sweden to Greek Orthodox uprisings in the Sultan's domains. This noble attempt at international cooperation was initially strengthened by a common fear of revolution, but eventually foundered on a deepening division among the powers on the extent to which their alliance could be used to suppress domestic uprisings and prop up unpopular regimes.

Later nineteenth-century historians often judged this generation harshly. Liberals such as Harriet Martineau condemned the Congress System as an alliance of kings against peoples. French historians resented the very existence of a European alliance directed against France, while German scholars like Heinrich von Treitschke believed the Vienna settlement did not go far enough in satisfying the demands of German nationalists. In the twentieth century, the reputation of the peacemakers of 1814–15 suddenly experienced a resurgence, in part because the chaos of that century placed their earlier achievement in greater prominence. Unlike the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, the Vienna Congress had been followed by a century of relative peace. Moreover, the systematic researches of modern scholars, such as Sir Charles Webster, Harold Temperley, August Fournier, Heinrich von Srbik, Guillaume de Bertier de Sauvigny, Francis Ley, Paul Schroeder, Enno Kraehe, W.H. Zawadzki, Stella Ghervas and Alan Sked, have led to a far better understanding of the motives and methods of the Congress statesmen.

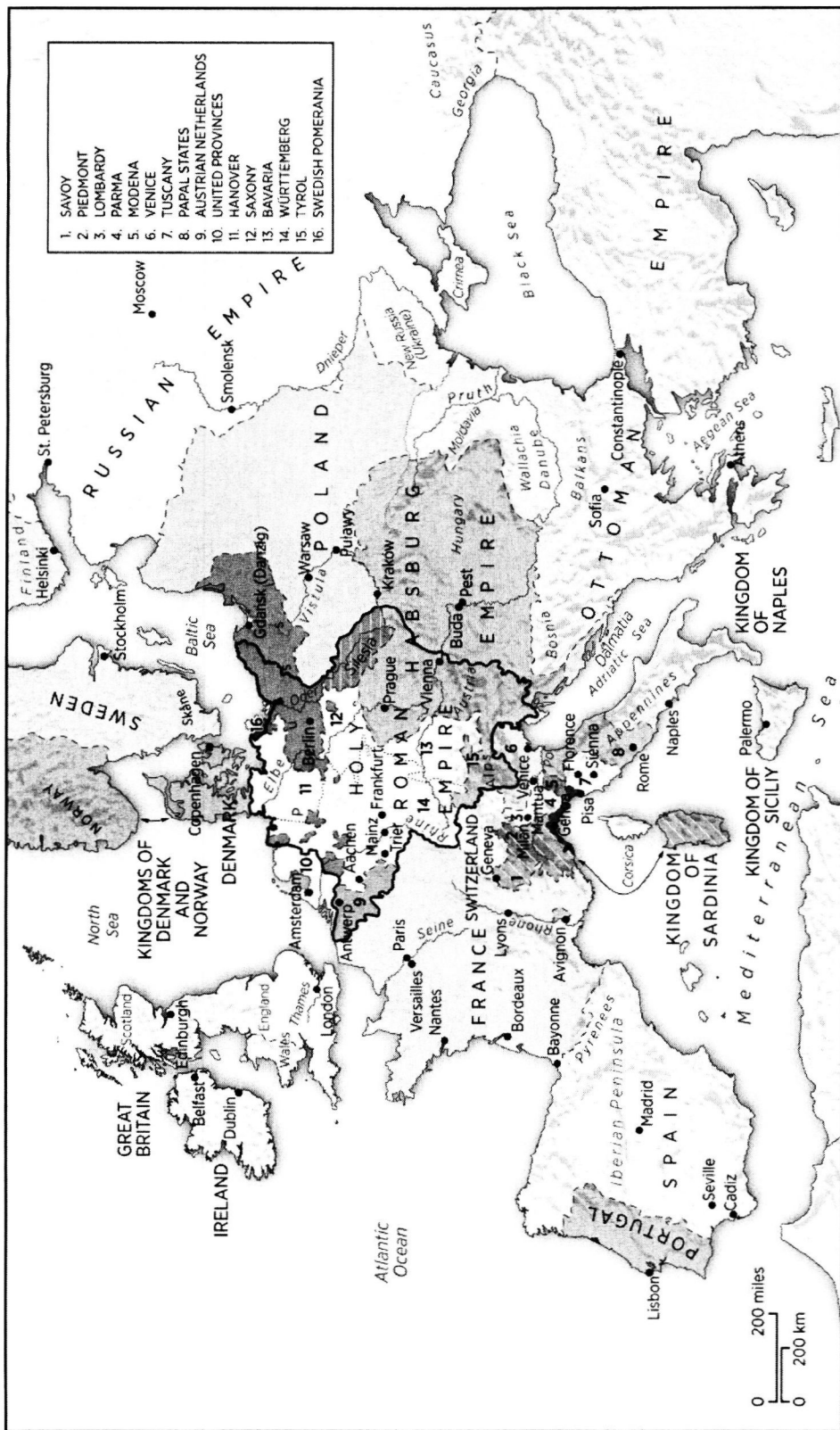
The work of these historians has been supplemented by the efforts of political scientists, who have increased our knowledge of leadership styles, decision-making processes, public opinion, military and economic power, national interests and the international system. Students of international politics, such as Kenneth Waltz, have introduced the notion of 'levels of analysis'—the critical insight that international events can best be explained when viewed from three different perspectives: those of the individual actors, the national forces behind those actors, and the structure of the international system itself.

The chief question posed by the Congress of Vienna and the Congress System nevertheless remains much the same today as in the nineteenth century. The Congress statesmen proved to be astonishingly adept at developing mechanisms for a new international order. But was their aim the purely negative one of shoring up the power and privileges of European elites—and if so, did this limitation doom their effort to failure?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book could not have been completed without the help of family, teachers and friends. First and foremost, I would like to thank Alan Sked of the London School of Economics and Peter Stansky at Stanford for their encouragement and support. James Sheehan at Stanford, Robert Jervis at Columbia, Stella Ghervas at the University of Geneva, Benjamin Ginsberg at Johns Hopkins, and James Warlick, then US Ambassador to Bulgaria, also each read through the entire manuscript. Peter Paret, Maria Mavroudi, Frances Malino, Heath Pearson, Susan Bell and the late Edwin Dunbaugh kindly read and commented on various sections. The late Roger Lockyer of the University of London originally suggested a book that dealt with both the Congress of Vienna and the Congress System. Elena Speed, a former colleague at the San Francisco office of the international law firm of Baker & McKenzie, helped with Russian translations; my wife, Małgorzata Jarrett, helped with Polish sources; and three students at Stanford, Simone Federico Bianchi, Greta Barilla, and Margherita Loro Piana, helped by translating passages from Italian. My good friend from Vienna, Helene Schuster, was helpful on my trips to that city, and especially obliging in arranging to obtain images from the Wien Museum and in helping me find the location of Metternich's original suburban villa on the Rennweg. Dr. Walter Öhlinger spent an afternoon showing me prints and maps at the Wien Museum, Dr. Helmut Selzer was kind enough to arrange reproductions from the same source, and Dr. Janusz Pezda showed my wife and myself some of Prince Adam Czartoryski's original letters to the Tsar and to his father, when we were at the Czartoryski Foundation Archives in Kraków. Dr. Agazio Mellace of Squillace was kind enough to furnish an image of General Pepe, and Dr. Christian Gottlieb of the Queen's Reference Library in Copenhagen corresponded with me regarding the possible use of images. For the splendid maps in this book, I wish to thank Helen Stirling of www.helenstirlingmaps.com; for the base relief image, Mountain High Maps* Copyright © 1993 Digital Wisdom*, Inc. I also wish to thank Barbara Loeb for typing and Pat FitzGerald for her thorough copyediting. I extend my special gratitude to Dr. Lester Crook, Joanna Godfrey and Alexandra Higson, the editors at I.B.Tauris, for their expertise, patience and

above all generosity with respect to deadlines, manuscript length and every other rule that a reprobate author could break. I also wish to acknowledge the assistance of the staffs of the National Archives in Kew, the Reading Room of the British Library, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna, the Archives des Affaires Étrangères at La Courneuve (in the northeast of Paris), the Centre for Kentish Studies in Maidstone, the Durham County Record Office in Durham, the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh, the London Library, and the libraries of Stanford and the University of California at Berkeley. And finally I wish to thank my wife, Małgorzata, for her patience, forbearance and tender affection; our two wonderful and talented children—Alexander, named in part after the mercurial Tsar, and Julia—simply for bringing joy to our lives each day, and for sharing a love of history and of Europe; and my parents, Beverly and Paul Jarrett, for their unflagging support.



Europe on the Eve of the French Revolution, 1789



Europe at the Height of the Napoleonic Empire, 1812





Europe after the Congress of Vienna, 1815

