

Examine the aims and principles of the European Powers who took part in the peacemaking 1814-15.

The peacemaking of 1814-15, also known as The Congress of Vienna, was considered to be a tool which sharpened Europe. Five major powers present at the congress were: Austria, Prussia, Russia, Great Britain, and France. This time, France was to blame, and all the others to decide its fate. From the beginning, the five powers proposed very different aims and objectives, however there was common ambition in certain areas. It is important to point out, that the outcome of Vienna congress was mainly affected by common ambitions, which allowed the conference to achieve beneficial results for all Europe.

The Great Powers had three main objectives, which they hoped to achieve through this congress. Surely all of them hoped that France would have been excluded from participating in their decisions. Their first objective was, the restoration and conservation of the European balance of power. Especially Great Britain was obsessed with preventing the French from further expansion and aggression. Their excuse for being so worried about French expansion, was to give Europe a period of peace to allow economic development and growth of trade between other Great Powers. In fact all of the Great Powers were intending to limit French power, but each of them had their own plans of how strict should the punishment be. The Great Powers, with the possible exception of Britain, were all intending to achieve the greatest possible influence in post-Napoleonic Europe. Prussia, Russia and Austria were all considering Congress of Vienna as a chance for expansion, such a plan was of no interest to Great Britain as it already had a vast Empire.

All objectives of a vision of peaceful Britain and France no longer posing a threat and a balance of power, were apparent to become true. Having four Great Powers going against France, it was obvious that all they wished for would have come true. However France still managed to exert some influence over the congress. This was done by offering

support and in the process gain allies. But nevertheless French representative in congress, Talleyrand, was a very important figure for achieving power for France. He used his diplomatic skills to influence the decisions of congress through Spain, Portugal, and Sweden. He also managed to convince other Great Powers to make France a Great European Power, by using their desires for expansion and appearing as a potential supporter. In this perspective it was France that gained most from the congress of Vienna.

The territorial battle between Russia, Austria and Prussia has created instability in the balance of power. Tsar Alexander I of Russia was anxious on taking Poland, and becoming it's Tsar. Having a large army behind him, Alexander I has created an accident where national interests of Russia took priority over the principle of the balance of power. Though both Prussia and Austria have benefited from that accident. Prussia has gained Saxony, and Austria has gained land in Eastern Europe and Italy. This way Great powers have expanded territorially, smaller ones became weaker and once again the balance of power has been disturbed. Looking at the long term affects, those expansions might have provoked Unification of Germany and even the first and second world wars. Congress of Vienna has actually managed to make a period of peace in Europe, but not for long. Obsessed with expansion, other Great Powers have rapidly deteriorated new balance of power.

Despite certain exceptions where the national interests of a country were ignored, still for the most part the common ambitions of the Great Powers were achieved. France was now surrounded by a band of neutral States, but still serious security changes have been made against possible French aggressions. Excuse for the expansion of The Great Powers was, that states such as Italy needed to be controlled by stronger states, in order to defeat French aggression. While most of the attention has been given to the territorial expansion, Great Powers have still shown a lot of willingness in limiting French power as much as possible, and trying to give Europe a period of peace.

In conclusion, the peacemakers of Vienna came to the congress with very different aims and ambitions. Great Powers, Prussia, Russia, and Austria, certainly cared more about national interests and ambitions than the containment of France. However, the remaining powers were more concerned with the principles of peace, containment of France and the balance of power. This was shown by the universal agreement that France should be confined to her 1790. Rather than abandoning national interests for the common

good, the Great Powers attempted to fit their national interests into the common principles and ideas for the future of Europe, and to a large extent they were successful as the main objective was peace, and peace ensued between 1815 and 1853.