

George Canning and the Concert of Europe,

September 1822-July 1824

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Abstract

This thesis is a study of the diplomacy of George Canning between September 1822 and July 1824. It offers a detailed analysis of Canning's diplomacy on all the major international questions of the period in which his country's vital interests were involved. Those questions were: (1) the Franco-Spanish crisis in 1822-3 and the French intervention in Spain in 1823; (2) the affairs of Spanish America including the question of the independence of Spain's former colonies and that of the future of Cuba; (3) political instability in European Portugal; (4) the question of Brazilian independence; (5) the Greek War of Independence and the Russo-Turkish crisis. This study challenges and revises the existing accounts of Canning's diplomacy on these questions in many important points. However, it is not merely a narrative account of Canning's diplomacy, but also an attempt to present a clear and comprehensive picture of the system of his diplomacy and some general principles which guided it. It pays particular attention to the relations between Canning's diplomacy and the Concert of Europe—the post-1815 system of great-power co-operation in Europe. It has been generally believed that Canning was an isolationist whose principal aim in foreign policy was to destroy this system of great-power co-operation—which he believed was ideologically unacceptable to Britain and was unduly restraining her freedom of action—and replace it with a more fluid eighteenth-century-style balance-of-power system—which he believed would give Britain greater freedom of action and would be more beneficial to her interests and influence in and outside Europe. This study challenges this widely accepted view, and argues that Canning's aim was not to break up the system of great-power concert

entirely but to transform it into such a shape that would be acceptable both to Britain and to the powers of the continent.

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Abbreviations

Add. MSS	Additional Manuscripts
Adm.	Admiralty Records, Public Record Office
BFSP	<i>British and Foreign State Papers</i>
BILA	<i>Britain and the Independence of Latin America, 1812-1830: Select Documents from the Foreign Office Archives</i> , ed. C. K. Webster (2 vols., London, 1938).
BL	British Library
Canning Papers	Papers of George Canning, West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds
<i>Chateaubriand</i>	<i>Correspondance générale de Chateaubriand</i> , ed. Louis Thomas (5 vols., Paris, 1912-24).
CO	Colonial Office Records, Public Record Office
CV	<i>Œuvres complètes de Chateaubriand. Vol.12: Le Congrès de Vérone; Guerre d'Espagne; Négociations: colonies espagnoles</i> (nouvelle édition, Paris, n.d.).
DCUS	<i>Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States concerning the Independence of the Latin American Nations</i> , ed. William R. Manning (3 vols., New York, 1925).
FO	Foreign Office Records, Public Record Office
GCHF	<i>George Canning and His Friends</i> , ed. Captain Josceline Bagot (2 vols., London, 1909).
GCHT	<i>George Canning and His Times</i> , ed. Augustus Granville Stapleton (London, 1859).
GCSOC	<i>Some Official Correspondence of George Canning</i> , ed. Edward J. Stapleton (2 vols., London, 1887).
<i>Genesis</i>	'Some Original Documents on the Genesis of the Monroe Doctrine', ed. Worthington Chauncey Ford, Massachusetts Historical Society, <i>Proceedings</i> , 2 nd series, vol.15 (1901-2).
<i>Hansard</i>	<i>Parliamentary Debates</i> , new series (2 nd series).
<i>Lebzeltern</i>	<i>Les rapports diplomatiques de Lebzeltern, ministre d'Autriche à la cour de Russie (1816-1826)</i> , ed. Grand-Duc Nicolas Mikhaïlowitch (St. Petersburg, 1913).
<i>Metternich</i>	<i>Mémoires, documents, et écrits divers laissés par le prince de Metternich</i> , ed. his son the Prince Richard de Metternich (8 vols.,

- Paris, 1880-4).
- Mrs. Arbuthnot* *The Journal of Mrs. Arbuthnot, 1820-1832*, eds. Francis Bamford and the Duke of Wellington (2 vols., London, 1950).
- Princess Lieven* *The Private Letters of Princess Lieven to Prince Metternich, 1820-1826*, ed. Peter Quennell (London, 1937).
- PRO Public Record Office Manuscripts
- Prokesch-Osten* Anton von Prokesch-Osten, *Geschichte des Abfalls der Griechen vom Türkischen Reiche im Jahre 1821 und der Gründung des Hellenischen Königreiches* (6 vols., Vienna, 1867).
- Villèle* *Mémoires et correspondance du comte de Villèle* (5 vols., Paris, 1887-90).
- VPR *Vneshniaia politika Rossii XIX i nachala XX veka: dokumenty Rossiiskogo ministerstva inostrannykh del*, ed. Ministerstvo inostrannykh del SSSR (Rossiiskoi Federatsii after vol.7), series 2 (8 vols., Moscow, 1974-95).
- Wellington* *Despatches, Correspondence, and Memoranda of Field Marshal Arthur Duke of Wellington, K.G.*, ed. his son the Duke of Wellington (8 vols., London, 1867-80).

Introduction

In early November 1822, shortly after his appointment as foreign secretary, Canning wrote to Sir Charles Bagot, his close friend and the British ambassador in St. Petersburg, that ‘ten years have made a world of difference and have prepared a very different sort of “world to bustle in” from that which I should have found in 1812’.¹ What had made the world look so different in Canning’s eyes since 1812, when he famously declined Viscount Castlereagh’s offer to give up the Foreign Office to him because of his reluctance to accept his rival’s lead in the House of Commons, were obviously the collapse of Napoleon’s empire and the peace settlement of 1814-15. However, when he wrote the letter, it does not seem that he had merely the territorial changes of 1814-15 on his mind. In fact, as we will see soon, between the two eras which were divided by these two eventful years, he saw greater changes in the way the European powers regulated their relations than in the map of Europe. Let us first look briefly at what these changes were.²

¹ Canning to Bagot, 5 November 1822, *GCHF*, vol.2, p.138.

² For my account of the European international relations between 1814 and the summer of 1822, I have depended chiefly on the following works: Walter Alison Phillips, *The Confederation of Europe: A Study of the European Alliance, 1813-1823, as an Experiment in the International Organization of Peace* (2nd ed., London, 1920); C. K. Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, 1812-1815: Britain and the Reconstruction of Europe* (London, 1931), and *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, 1815-1822: Britain and the European Alliance* (London, 1925); Paul W. Schroeder, *Metternich’s Diplomacy at Its Zenith, 1820-1823* (Austin, Tex., 1962); Guillaume de Bertier de Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France après le Congrès de Vienne, Tome I: De Napoléon à Decazes 1815/1820* (Paris, 1968) and *Metternich et la France après le Congrès de Vienne, Tome II: Les grandes Congrès 1820/1824* (Paris, 1970). Other works I consulted include: Jacques-Henri Pirenne, *La Sainte-Alliance: Organisation européenne de la paix mondiale* (2 vols., Neuchâtel, 1946-9); H. G. Schenk, *The Aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars: The Concert of Europe—An Experiment* (London, 1947); Maurice Bourquin, *Histoire de la Sainte-Alliance* (Genève, 1954); Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812-22* (Boston, 1957); Enno E. Kraehe, *Metternich’s German Policy* (2 vols., Princeton, N.J., 1963-83); Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *The Foreign Ministers of Alexander I: Political Attitudes and the Conduct of Russian Diplomacy, 1801-1825* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif., 1969); Essays in Alan Sked (ed.), *Europe’s Balance of Power, 1815-1848* (London, 1979), especially Douglas Dakin, ‘The

It is well known that between 1813 and 1815 the Fourth Coalition against France had succeeded in destroying French hegemony and restoring peace and a balance of power in Europe largely because the allies, despite their disagreements over war aims and postwar settlement, remained united. The leaders of the allied powers—such as Castlereagh, the British foreign secretary, Prince Metternich, Austria’s foreign minister and leading statesman, and Tsar Alexander I of Russia—attributed their success in preserving their unity, at least in part, to their habit of continuous personal contact and especially to their practice of conference diplomacy. It was only natural that an attempt was made to perpetuate the practice which was the key to their success both in war and in peacemaking. By the Quadruple Alliance Treaty of 20 November 1815, the four principal members of the Fourth Coalition—Austria, Great Britain, Prussia and Russia—not only renewed their alliance against France for twenty years, making French aggression or any return of Napoleon or his family an automatic *casus foederis*, but also agreed to continue their practice of conference diplomacy. By Article VI of the treaty, which was drafted by Castlereagh, the four powers agreed to ‘renew their Meetings at fixed periods, either under the immediate auspices of the Sovereigns themselves, or by their respective Ministers, for the purpose of consulting upon their common interests, and for the consideration of the measures which at each of those periods shall be considered the most salutary for the repose and prosperity of Nations, and for the maintenance of the Peace of Europe’. This article gave formal recognition to the idea of the Concert of Europe—a belief shared by many of the allied statesmen that the allied powers should jointly assume and co-operate to perform the responsibility of preserving

Congress of Vienna, 1814-15, and its Antecedents’ and Roy Bridge, ‘Allied Diplomacy in Peacetime: the Failure of the Congress “System”, 1815-23’; Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European*

the peace of Europe—and became the basis for the postwar allied congresses and conferences.³ The four allied powers decided to admit France to the Concert in 1818, when at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle (September–November 1818) they agreed to admit France to any future congresses or conferences summoned under Article VI of the Quadruple Alliance Treaty.⁴

This new system of diplomacy at first appeared—at least in the eyes of Castlereagh, its most ardent believer—to be ‘a new discovery in the European Government, at once extinguishing the cobwebs with which diplomacy obscures the horizon . . . and giving to the counsels of the great Powers the efficiency and almost the simplicity of a single State’.⁵ However, even before Castlereagh wrote this phrase in October 1818—or indeed before the Quadruple Alliance Treaty was signed—there had been considerable differences of opinion among the allied powers as to the nature and purpose of the European Concert. It was from the outset obvious to other allied leaders that Alexander I regarded the Concert as an instrument for the regulation of the internal affairs of European states as well as for the maintenance of the territorial order of 1815. In fact, his draft of the Quadruple Alliance Treaty proposed that the allied powers should pledge to support the Bourbon monarchy in France and the French constitution of 1814, the *Charte*.⁶ It seems that, encouraged by his mildly liberal foreign minister, Count

Politics, 1763-1848 (Oxford, 1994).

³ Treaty of Alliance and Friendship between Great Britain, Austria (Prussia, and Russia), 20 November 1815, Edward Hertslet (ed.), *The Map of Europe by Treaty* (4 vols., London, 1875-91), vol.1, pp.372-5; Webster, *Castlereagh 1815-1822*, pp.55-6.

⁴ Protocol of Conference, between the Plenipotentiaries of Austria, France, Great Britain, Prussia and Russia, 15 November 1818, Hertslet, *Map of Europe*, vol.1, pp.571-2; Webster, *Castlereagh 1815-1822*, p.159.

⁵ Castlereagh to Liverpool, 20 October 1818, Charles William Vane Stewart, 3rd Marquess of Londonderry (ed.), *Correspondence, Despatches, and Other Papers, of Viscount Castlereagh, Second Marquess of Londonderry* (12 vols., London, 1848-53), vol.12, pp.54-5.

⁶ Webster, *Castlereagh 1815-1822*, p.53.

Capodistrias, to propagate moderate liberalism and constitutionalism, the Tsar envisaged a grandiose scheme in which European sovereigns would find security in a joint European guarantee of their territories and thrones, and guarantee freedom and happiness to their subjects by granting them liberal institutions. He actually brought forward the first half of this scheme in 1818, when at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle he proposed the formation of a 'general alliance' of all the signatories of the 1815 settlement to guarantee to all sovereigns their territories and thrones.⁷ He attempted to invoke his general alliance in March 1820, when, on receiving the news of the outbreak of a military insurrection in Spain two months before, he proposed that the allied powers should discuss the line of action to be adopted by them in case King Ferdinand VII of Spain should fail to suppress the insurrection and apply for their aid.⁸ Coming from the ruler of the power which had just supplanted France as the strongest military power in Europe, Alexander's idea alarmed his allies. Was not the Tsar's general alliance a cover for Russian ambition, in other words, a means to extend her influence all over Europe by invoking her responsibility as a guarantor of domestic stability of European states? Besides, Castlereagh, despite his belief in the new system of great-power co-operation, had no doubt that his country could never enter into such extensive engagements that Alexander had proposed. The British government could not count on Parliament and public opinion, both of which were predominantly isolationist and liberal, to allow it to involve the country deeply in continental politics in peacetime especially if her commitments in Europe bound her to interfere in the domestic affairs

⁷ Mémoire confidentiel du cabinet de Russie, 8 October 1818, A. Polovtsoff (ed.), *Correspondance diplomatique des ambassadeurs et ministres de Russie en France et de France en Russie avec leurs gouvernements de 1814 à 1830* (3 vols., St. Petersburg, 1902-7), vol.2, pp.832-44.

⁸ Webster, *Castlereagh 1815-1822*, p.228.

of other states. Metternich, for his part, feared that the Tsar might use his general alliance to propagate liberal institutions throughout Europe. As a multinational and absolutist state, Austria could hardly embrace the idea. Metternich feared that any liberal or national movement in central and eastern Europe should threaten Austria's dominance in Italy and Germany and even her internal stability. On the other hand, he was prepared to accept the general alliance if its aim was simply to suppress revolutions. In fact, Metternich desired to use the Concert for counterrevolutionary purposes, and in the first few years of peace repeatedly made proposals that the allied powers should set up an ambassadorial conference in Paris, London, or Vienna to watch over the activities of the revolutionaries all over Europe. But, his proposals broke down on Castlereagh's refusal⁹, and in the first five years of peace Metternich generally followed Castlereagh's lead in opposing the Tsar's efforts to get the allied powers to accept his plan for the formation of a general alliance. At Aix-la-Chapelle, Castlereagh's determined opposition defeated the Tsar's proposal for the formation of a general alliance.¹⁰ The British foreign secretary also rejected Alexander's proposal for allied intervention in the Spanish revolution by arguing—in a famous State Paper of 5 May 1820—that any intervention in the internal affairs of other states that did not pose a threat to the 1815 settlement was incompatible with the purposes of the Alliance, while in Vienna Metternich declared for a policy of inaction and reserve.¹¹

However, the Anglo-Austrian common front against the Tsar's effort to get his allies

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.70-3, 205-10; De Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, vol.1, pp.227-9; Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy*, p.22.

¹⁰ Webster, *Castlereagh 1815-1822*, pp.150-2.

¹¹ Lord Castlereagh's Confidential State Paper of May 5th, 1820, A. W. Ward and G. P. Gooch (eds.), *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy 1783-1919* (3 vols., Cambridge, 1922-3), vol.2, pp.623-33; De Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, vol.2, pp.305-11; Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy*, pp.25-9.

to accept his general alliance collapsed by the end of 1820. In July 1820, a military coup in Naples forced Ferdinand I of the Two Sicilies to proclaim the radical Spanish constitution of 1812, which his nephew, Ferdinand VII of Spain, had already been forced by the Spanish revolutionaries to proclaim in March. This, unlike events in Spain, seemed to Metternich a clear threat to Austria, threatening to spread liberalism to northern Italy and Germany. The British government immediately approved Austria's right under the Austro-Neapolitan Treaty of 1815, which had debarred Ferdinand from introducing constitutional changes without Austrian consent, to intervene in the Neapolitan revolt, but insisted that Austria should act unilaterally on the basis of her special rights as Naples's ally rather than on general anti-revolutionary grounds. France and Russia, however, demanded a five-power congress. In Paris, the moderate ministry of the Duke of Richelieu suspected that Austrian intervention in Naples might lead Austria to extend still further her influence in Italy, and desired to place it under allied control. Besides, there existed a party in both Russia and France, led by Capodistrias and his French counterpart Baron Pasquier, which favoured modifying the constitution in Naples under allied supervision to make it resemble the French *Charte* instead of destroying it entirely. Fearful lest a rejection of the proposed congress should drive Russia and France to oppose openly Austrian policy in central Europe, in September Metternich agreed to a full-dress congress. The British government decided not to send a plenipotentiary to the congress, although it allowed Charles Stewart, Castlereagh's half-brother and the British ambassador to Austria, to attend it as an observer. Britain's decision led the French ministers to back away from their own congress proposal and send only observers to the congress, largely from the fear that a strong stance against

the Neapolitan revolution would alienate Britain.¹²

At the Congress of Troppau (October-December 1820) in Austrian Silesia, Metternich skilfully thwarted the plan for constitutionalist intervention by appealing directly to Alexander's growing fear of revolution, which had been caused by the successive revolutions in Spain and Naples. The Tsar was soon persuaded by Metternich that any mediation would encourage revolution throughout Europe, and assured that he had never intended to prescribe domestic institutions to King Ferdinand. Having gained this most essential point, Metternich decided to satisfy the Tsar on the point of principle by admitting that intervention was matter not for individual powers but for the Alliance. Now that Alexander's conversion to reaction appeared complete, he could use the power and influence of the mightiest of the continental powers, which had been his greatest anxiety until a few weeks before, for good purpose. On 19 November, Russia, Austria and Prussia signed a Preliminary Protocol asserting a general right of the Alliance to interfere, by peaceful means if possible but by force if necessary, in European states which experienced a revolution. The vigorous protest of the British and French observers induced the eastern allies to drop the Protocol. However, despite Castlereagh's repeated warning that any public declaration on the part of the eastern allies asserting the general right of the Alliance to interfere in revolutions would compel the British government to protest publicly against it, the eastern allies produced a circular despatch, dated 8 December 1820, which not only contained the substance of the Protocol but also attempted to implicate Britain and France in the decisions taken at Troppau. This document was soon leaked, and was summarised in an

¹² Webster, *Castlereagh 1815-1822*, pp.259-84; Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy*, pp.30-59; De Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, vol.2, pp.315-57.

English newspaper and reprinted by the rest of the English press. This forced Castlereagh to repudiate openly the doctrine implied in the circular. In a public circular of 21 January 1821, he declared the Troppau doctrine to be a violation of international law. Meanwhile, the Congress reopened at Laibach in Austrian Slovenia on 11 January. With its approval Austrian forces removed the revolutionary government in Naples by the end of March. Austrian intervention provoked a military revolt in Piedmont on 10 March, but the Turin government immediately appealed to Austria for help, and with the approval of the Congress Austrian troops easily suppressed it. Emperor Francis I paid tribute to Metternich's diplomatic success by conferring on him on his return from Laibach the title of House, Court and State Chancellor.¹³

The publication of the Troppau circular was a severe setback for Castlereagh. The conduct of the eastern powers was violently and repeatedly criticised in Parliament¹⁴, and Castlereagh reluctantly accepted that he had now to qualify his connections with his wartime allies and probably had to stay away from their meetings. However, he did not believe that the ideological dispute over the principles of intervention would destroy the entire edifice of post-1815 great-power co-operation. In the early summer of 1821, he told the Russian chargé d'affaires: '... it is perhaps much better if we march separately towards the same end than if you [the eastern allies] have us beside you with all the embarrassments of our parliament, provided only that we continue to communicate each other our ideas and our intentions without reservation, and by this means come to

¹³ Webster, *Castlereagh 1815-1822*, pp.285-332; Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy*, pp.60-128; De Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, vol.2, pp.359-503; Circular to the Austrian, Prussian, and Russian Missions at Foreign Courts, 8 December 1820, *BFSP*, vol.8, pp.1149-51; Circular Despatch to British Missions at Foreign Courts, 19 January 1821, Hertslet, *Map of Europe*, vol.1, pp.664-6.

¹⁴ *Hansard*, vol.4, House of Lords, 19 February, 2 March 1821, cols.742-95, 1039-65, House of Commons, 21 February, 20 March 1821, cols.837-95, 1350-80; *Hansard*, vol.5, House of Commons, 4 May, 20 June 1821, cols.510-9, 1222-8.

agreements in all matters.’¹⁵ What he had on his mind in the spring and summer of 1821 was a concert without Britain in allied congresses and conferences.

It was just when Castlereagh came to accept the limitations of the Concert that Europe faced the worst crisis since 1815. In March 1821, a small force under the command of Alexander Ypsilanti, a member of one of the most prominent Phanariot Greek families (powerful and wealthy Greek or Hellenised families who resided largely in the Phanar or lighthouse district of Constantinople and owed their privileged position in the Ottoman Empire to service in the Ottoman administration) and a Russian general who led a Greek conspiratorial secret society called the *Philiki Etairia*, or the Friendly Society, invaded the Principality of Moldavia, one of the two Danubian (Romanian) Principalities which were autonomous under Ottoman suzerainty, from the Russian territory of Bessarabia.¹⁶ Ypsilanti reckoned with a rebellion in the other Danubian Principality of Wallachia, which had already been started in January under the leadership of Tudor Vladimirescu, a Romanian boyar (landlord). By the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji of 1774, the Porte had promised to respect the autonomy of the Danubian Principalities, and Russia had obtained a right to ‘speak in their favour’. The treaty had also obliged the Porte to protect the Christian religion within the Ottoman Empire and to permit Russian ministers in Constantinople to make representations in its favour.¹⁷ Ypsilanti hoped that his action would trigger a general insurrection of the

¹⁵ Nikolai to Nesselrode, 11 July 1821, *VPR*, vol.4, p.198.

¹⁶ My account of the origins and the initial phases of the Greek revolt is drawn mainly from George D. Frangos, ‘The *Philiki Etairia*: A Premature National Coalition’, C. M. Woodhouse, ‘Kapodistrias and the *Philiki Etairia*, 1814-21’, and E. D. Tappe, ‘The 1821 Revolution in the Rumanian Principalities’ in Richard Clogg (ed.), *The Struggle for Greek Independence* (London, 1973), pp.87-155; Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence, 1821-1833* (London, 1973), pp.41-60; Barbara Jelavich, *Russia’s Balkan Entanglements, 1806-1914* (Cambridge, 1991), pp.49-54, and *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian Nation State, 1821-1878* (Cambridge, 1984), pp.1-25.

¹⁷ Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Amity between Russia and Turkey, signed at Kuçuk Kainardji, 21 July

Balkan Christians against Turkish rule and Russia's military intervention and would eventually result in the liberation of Greece. At the time of the uprisings, however, the Tsar was still in Laibach, enthusiastically supporting Austria's counterrevolutionary actions in Italy. He publicly disapproved the conduct of Vladimirescu and Ypsilanti and authorised the Porte to send troops into the Principalities to crush their uprisings.¹⁸ Deprived of Russian support, Ypsilanti's forces had been crushed by the Ottoman army by the end of June. However, by early April a revolt had broken out in other Greek regions, particularly in the Morea (Peloponnesus) and the islands. In a short period of time, the Greeks massacred thousands of Muslims in the Morea and forced the remaining Muslim inhabitants to take refuge in the fortified cities. This inevitably incurred a violent reaction on the part of Muslims in many parts of the Ottoman Empire. In Constantinople several prominent Greeks in the Ottoman administration and in the Orthodox Church, most notably the Patriarch of Constantinople, were accused of treason and executed. These developments increased tension between the Porte and Russia. Their relations had already been strained because of their dispute over the execution and interpretation of the Treaty of Bucharest of 1812, which had ended the last of a series of wars between them. To this was now added Russia's complaint against the Porte's treatment of its Christian subjects. In Constantinople, Baron Stroganov, the Russian minister, delivered to the Porte a strong protest against the execution of the patriarch and his bishops, grounding his protest on the Treaty of

1774, Clive Parry (ed.), *The Consolidated Treaty Series* (231 vols., New York, 1969-81), vol.45, pp.349-401.

¹⁸ Nesselrode to Stroganov, 7 March 1821, *VPR*, vol.4, pp.36-8; Nesselrode's circular despatch, 30 March 1821, *ibid.*, pp.70-1.

Kuchuk Kainardji.¹⁹ However, strongly suspicious of a Russian hand in the Greek revolt, the Ottoman ministers turned deaf ears to this and other representations of Stroganov and instead demanded the extradition of Greek fugitives who had fled from the Danubian Principalities to Russia, a demand that received a firm refusal from the Russian government.²⁰ The final showdown came in July, when the Russian minister received an instruction, dated 28 June, transmitting to him a note to be delivered to the Porte. The note demanded that damaged churches should be immediately restored; the Porte should return to the Christian religion its prerogatives and guarantee its inviolability in future; innocent Greeks who had remained loyal to the Sultan should not be punished; those Greeks who had taken part in the revolt should be pardoned if they submitted to the Sultan's authority within a given time limit; and the Porte should accept Russian co-operation in reorganising the internal affairs of the Principalities. Stroganov was instructed to allow a week for reply and then to break off diplomatic relations and leave Constantinople if the Porte refused to accept these demands. Stroganov delivered the note to the Porte on 18 July.²¹ When the Porte failed to give a satisfactory answer to the note, the Russian minister broke off relations with the Porte and soon departed for Odessa.²²

Castlereagh's first reaction to this sudden emergence of a European crisis was to instruct Viscount Strangford, the British ambassador at Constantinople, on 13 July to

¹⁹ Note delivered by Stroganov to the Turkish government, 23 April 1821, *ibid.*, pp.118-9.

²⁰ Stroganov to Nesselrode, 22 April, 9 May 1821, *ibid.*, pp.113-5, 132-3; Nesselrode to Stroganov, 13 May 1821, *ibid.*, pp.149-50; Strangford to Castlereagh, no.8, 24 March 1821, no.13, 31 March 1821, FO 78/98.

²¹ Two despatches to Stroganov from St. Petersburg, 28 June 1821, *Prokesch-Osten*, vol.3, pp.89-95; Note delivered by Stroganov to the Turkish government, 18 July 1821, *VPR*, vol.4, pp.203-7.

²² Stroganov to Nesselrode, 27 July 1821, *ibid.*, pp.224-6; Strangford to Castlereagh, no.79, 30 July 1821, FO 78/99.

try to prevent a Russo-Turkish diplomatic rupture by his 'amicable Intervention'.²³ Castlereagh's attention, however, was fixed rather on St. Petersburg than on Constantinople. In the middle of July, in his effort to restrain Russia, he resorted to a time-honoured device, that is, his personal appeal to the Tsar. Since there was unfortunately no prospect of his seeing the Tsar, he composed a personal letter to him. In his letter of 16 July, Castlereagh labelled the Greek insurgents as 'a branch of that organized spirit of insurrection which is systematically propagating itself throughout Europe', and asserted that the Ottoman Empire was 'a necessary evil' in the European system. In his effort to make an appeal to the Tsar's love of the Alliance, he argued that the Alliance was still intact notwithstanding the recent ideological controversy over its nature.

I feel intimately convinced [, he wrote,] that each State, avowing conscientiously in the face of all the world its own principles, and at the same time adhering to its peculiar habits of action, will nevertheless remain unalterably true to the fundamental obligations of the Alliance, and that the present European system, thus temperately and prudently administered, will long continue to subsist for the safety and repose of Europe.²⁴

On the other hand, when he was communicated a circular despatch of the Russian government, dated 4 July, to the allied governments, which not only requested that the allied governments should support Russia's demands at Constantinople but also demanded that they should declare what attitudes they would take towards Russia and Turkey in the event of the outbreak of a war between them and their ideas about new arrangements which should be established in the European Turkey as the result of such

²³ Castlereagh to Strangford, no.3, 13 July 1821, FO 78/97.

²⁴ Castlereagh to Alexander I, 16 July 1821, Castlereagh, *Correspondence*, vol.12, pp.403-8.

a war, he flatly refused to discuss any hypothetical cases.²⁵ In his despatch of 5 August to Strangford he instructed the ambassador to support the Russian demands contained in her note to the Porte. But, in the despatch he made it clear that Britain's general position in the dispute should be that of a mediator between Russia and Turkey rather than that of a supporter of Russia against Turkey.²⁶

During the summer and autumn of 1821, Castlereagh anxiously waited the Tsar's reaction to his personal letter of 16 July. However, he knew better than relying solely on his personal influence over the Tsar. In fact he did not wait long before resorting to another familiar means of restraining Russia, that is, Anglo-Austrian co-operation. In late September, Castlereagh invited Metternich to a personal conference at Hanover in October to coincide with a visit of the King to his German subjects, an invitation that the Austrian chancellor was only too anxious to accept.²⁷ This invitation was obviously the first step in Castlereagh's effort to resurrect the Concert of Europe. He had no doubt that the government should defy the British public's dislike for its association with the autocratic powers of the continent when the European balance of power was in imminent danger and Britain's vital interest was at stake. He wrote to Robert Gordon, the secretary of the British embassy in Vienna and the British minister *ad interim* during Stewart's absence:

. . . the question of Turkey, is of a totally different character [from that of Naples], and one which, in England, we regard, not as a Theoretical, but as a practical consideration of the greatest moment, and I have therefore no apprehension of giving

²⁵ Nesselrode to Alopeus, Nikolai, and Pozzo di Borgo, 4 July 1821, *VPR*, vol.4, pp.189-90; Nesselrode's two despatches to Golovkin, 4 July 1821, *Prokesch-Osten*, vol.3, pp.86-8, 101-4; Nikolai to Nesselrode, 2 August 1821, *VPR*, vol.4, pp.233-6.

²⁶ Castlereagh to Strangford, no.5, most secret and confidential, 5 August 1821, FO 78/97.

²⁷ Webster, *Castlereagh 1815-1822*, pp.365-6.

rise to any misconceptions by a meeting of this nature, which can for a moment be placed in the balance against the real public advantages, as well as the great Personal satisfaction, which I should derive from an unreserved communication with the Austrian Minister at such a Moment.²⁸

Communications from the Russian government on the eve of their meeting certainly increased the importance of Anglo-Austrian co-operation. In St. Petersburg, throughout the summer of 1821 Alexander was under considerable pressure to take an independent and active line of policy. Capodistrias, who was a native of the Ionian Islands, tried hard to dissuade the Tsar from entrusting his dispute with the Porte to the mediation of Britain or indeed of any of the allied powers, and proposed that Russia should deliver to the Porte an ultimatum that she would occupy the Principalities if it did not immediately accept the Russian terms contained in the note of 18 July and withdraw Turkish troops from the Principalities.²⁹ Alexander in the end refused to take an independent action. However, when he finally broke his silence in September, in his attempt to obtain allied support for Russia's coercive action against the Turks, the Tsar adopted some of the recommendations made by Capodistrias. In a circular despatch of 10 September he directed his representatives to the allied governments, first, to declare to them that Russia would not accept any offer of mediation between her and the Porte and, second, to invite them to give 'immediately' their opinions about how Russia and her allies should concert their views and principles in case the Porte persisted in refusing her demands.³⁰

Castlereagh and Metternich met in Hanover from 20 to 29 October, and agreed that

²⁸ Castlereagh to Gordon, private and confidential, 11 October 1821, FO 120/49.

²⁹ Report of Capodistrias to Alexander I, 10 August 1821, and memoir of Capodistrias for Alexander I, 21 August 1821, *VPR*, vol.4, pp.242-5, 256-61.

³⁰ Nesselrode's circular despatch to the Russian representatives at the allied courts, 10 September 1821,

Britain and Austria 'regard the maintenance of peace between Russia and the Porte as the principal aim of their common efforts'. They also agreed that in order to achieve this aim: 1. they should 'enlighten' the Tsar as to the dangers of a Russo-Turkish war; 2. they should use all the influence they had on the Porte to make it execute its treaties with Russia and adopt moderate policies; 3. they should not support any plan of Russia which was likely to result in war; and 4. their position in the dispute should be that of mediators between Russia and Turkey, and any plan for the reestablishment of amicable relations between Russia and Turkey should be produced in the form of a proposition made by Russia, and not as a collective proposition of the allied powers.³¹ Even more important, the two statesmen discussed how to adjust the European Concert to the new international environment after the Congresses of Troppau and Laibach. The discussion raised Castlereagh's hopes. Six months later, he wrote to Metternich that their interviews had been 'precious' to him 'in every point of view, publick [*sic*] and private, and especially from its enabling us so thoroughly to understand the common views, as well as the dissimilar facilities in point of action of our particular machines of Government . . .'.³² It is not difficult to imagine that their 'common views' included the necessity of tackling questions of general European concern, such as the eastern question, within the framework of the five-power alliance, while they agreed that Britain with her representative institutions could not take part in and should not be associated with the conservative alignment of the autocratic powers in central and eastern Europe. In fact, they seem to have agreed that the affairs of Turkey should be

ibid., pp.279-80. See also, Alexander I to Castlereagh, 10 September 1821, *Prokesch-Osten*, vol.3, pp.191-6.

³¹ Metternich to Francis I, 29 October 1821, *Metternich*, vol.3, pp.522-3.

³² Castlereagh to Metternich, most private and confidential, 30 April 1822, Webster, *Castlereagh*

discussed in the forthcoming allied congress which had originally been intended as a meeting of the three eastern allies to consider the affairs of Italy and was scheduled to open in Italy in the next year, and that Castlereagh should take part in it. On 29 October, Metternich reported to Emperor Francis his 'conviction' that he would be able to obtain Castlereagh's participation in the forthcoming congress. The Austrian chancellor cannot have imagined that Castlereagh might take part in a meeting whose sole aim would be to intermeddle in the internal affairs of Naples and other Italian states, nor can Castlereagh have hinted that he might do so.³³

Their appeal to the Tsar's fear of revolution and his love of the Alliance, however, at first appeared only to deepen his dilemma. In late November, in his long interview with Bagot he reiterated his desire for the preservation of peace, but warned that 'if His demands for the fair fulfilment of His Treaties could not be obtained, there remained for Him no resource but in Arms'.³⁴ The Turks, for their part, insisted that they could not withdraw all the troops from the Principalities and nominate hospodars until they pacified the Greek revolt, although—thanks to the effort of Strangford and Count Lützow, Internuncio or the Austrian minister to the Porte—they virtually withdrew their demand for the extradition of the Greek fugitives and in principle admitted all of Russia's so-called 'four points'—i.e., 1. the restoration of damaged churches; 2. a guarantee of the protection of the Ottoman Christians; 3. the maintenance of a distinction in the treatment of the guilty and innocent in the Greek rebellion; and 4. the evacuation by the Ottoman army of the Principalities and the Porte's acceptance of Russia's participation in the restoration of the administrative system in the

1815-1822, p.537.

³³ Metternich to Francis I, 29 October 1821, *Metternich*, vol.3, p.524.

Principalities.³⁵ In face of the growing danger of war, Metternich tried a new diplomatic manoeuvre in his despatch of 23 December to Baron Lebzeltern, his minister in St. Petersburg. He proposed that Russia should regard the first three of the four points as settled in principle but deferred on arrangements for execution, and renew diplomatic relations with the Porte solely on the basis of the evacuation by the Ottoman army of the Principalities and the nomination of commissioners who should rule the provinces provisionally before the formal nomination of hospodars. As for the questions concerning the pacification of Greece, he proposed that Russia should defer them until after the restoration of diplomatic relations with the Porte, when the allies would collectively negotiate them with the Porte.³⁶ Russia's initial reaction to Metternich's proposal was unfavourable, complaining of Austria's failure to support her demands at Constantinople with sufficient force.³⁷ This was, however, followed in the middle of February by Alexander's declaration to Lebzeltern that he had decided to send Count Tatishchev, his former minister to Spain, to Vienna as a special envoy to bear his thoughts directly to Metternich and to consult with him on future policy.³⁸

The Tsar's official instructions to Tatishchev and his representatives to the allied governments still contained various demands which went beyond the four points. Most importantly, he demanded that the Porte should send its plenipotentiaries to the frontier to agree with those of Russia and her allies on measures which it should take to assure a happy and peaceful existence to its Christian subjects. He suggested that the Greeks should be given autonomy under the Sultan's suzerainty. Furthermore, the Tsar

³⁴ Bagot to Castlereagh, no.55, 29 November 1821, FO 65/129.

³⁵ Translation of the Reis Effendi's note to the Internuncio, 2 December 1821, *Prokesch-Osten*, vol.3, pp.242-5.

³⁶ Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy*, p.182.

demanded of the allied powers an engagement that, if the Porte rejected or failed to execute Russia's demands, they would break off diplomatic relations with it. However, he knew that Britain would refuse to enter into any engagement of 'an eventual character'. He was prepared to accept from those allies who were not prepared to threaten the Porte to break off diplomatic relations with it an engagement to declare that they would remain neutral in the event of a war between Russia and Turkey, but would recognise the justness of Russia's action against the Porte to obtain the redress of her legitimate grievances. As for Russia's military action against Turkey in the event of the Porte's refusal of her demands, the Tsar instructed Tatishchev to declare to the Austrian government that Russia would not formally declare war against Turkey and limit her initial action to the military occupation of the Principalities.³⁹

Soon after Tatishchev's arrival in Vienna on 5 March, however, Metternich found that his official instructions were merely a cover to satisfy the hardliners in St. Petersburg, and that he had been personally and confidentially authorised by the Tsar to modify his conditions.⁴⁰ On the other hand, Metternich's effort to minimise Russia's demands was hindered by the news of the Porte's refusal of his proposal of 23 December 1821, which reached Vienna on 21 March. In a note of 28 February, the Porte in principle admitted Russia's four points, but again refused the immediate evacuation of the Principalities. Moreover, it asserted that, if Austria wished to insist on the fulfilment of treaties, she ought to put pressure on Russia to fulfil her own treaty obligations such as the extradition of the fugitives and the restoration to Turkey of the

³⁷ Nesselrode to Golovkin, 12 February 1822, *Prokesch-Osten*, vol.3, pp.290-6.

³⁸ Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy*, p.185.

³⁹ Alexander I's instruction to Tatishchev, 17 February 1822, *VPR*, vol.4, pp.426-8; Instructions to Golovkin, Alopeus, Lieven and Pozzo di Borgo, 18 February 1822, *ibid.*, pp.430-8; Nesselrode to

Asiatic fortresses which the Porte claimed Russia had kept in violation of the Treaty of Bucharest of 1812. On the receipt of the Turkish note, Metternich decided that some concessions to Russia were now necessary. He gave an oral engagement that, if the Porte's stubbornness forced Russia to war, Austria would join her in breaking relations with the Porte. Metternich's declaration, however, committed Austria to nothing, since he carefully added the provision that Austria would take the step only if all the other allies did likewise. He knew that Britain would never agree to withdraw Strangford from Constantinople.⁴¹ The result of the negotiation at Vienna was Metternich's memorandum of 19 April to the Tsar which he drew up as a guide for future negotiations. The memorandum admitted the necessity of 'solid and permanent pacification' of the Christian provinces of the Ottoman Empire. However, it insisted that any such pacification should be obtained without infringing on Turkish sovereignty and 'without touching the fundamental relations between the Turkish government and its Christian subjects'. Having thus evaded the Russian proposal for a political change in Greece, the memorandum proposed: 1. the allied powers should insist on the immediate evacuation of the Principalities and the reestablishment of old regime there; 2. they should urge the Porte to proclaim a new act of amnesty to the Greeks, and offer it their good offices to get the Greeks to submit to the Sultan; 3. they should demand that the Porte should send plenipotentiaries to negotiate with those of the allied powers measures for the pacification of its domains in Europe and for the reestablishment of its

Alopeus, Lieven and Pozzo di Borgo, 20 February 1822, *ibid.*, pp.443-4.

⁴⁰ Metternich to Lebzelter, 22 April 1822, *Metternich*, vol.3, pp.584-5.

⁴¹ The Porte's note to the Internuncio, 28 February 1822, *Prokesch-Osten*, vol.3, pp.278-87; Tatishchev to Nesselrode, 22 March 1822, *VPR*, vol.4, pp.454-6; Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy*, pp.184, 188-9.

diplomatic relations with Russia.⁴²

Meanwhile in London, Castlereagh declared to the Russians that Britain would not break her diplomatic relations with the Porte in the event of the outbreak of a Russo-Turkish war. He demanded that Russia should declare to the Porte that she would send a diplomatic representative to Constantinople as soon as the Porte admitted the four points, and insisted that only after the reestablishment of Russo-Turkish diplomatic relations the question of the pacification of Greece should become 'the object of an amicable negotiation' between Russia and the Porte under the good offices of the allied representatives at Constantinople. On the other hand, Castlereagh was delighted to learn that Alexander was prepared to be contented with a declaration that Britain would remain neutral in the event of war, for he saw in this concession evidence that the Tsar had, like Metternich, learnt from the experience of the Neapolitan question what he could and could not expect from Britain. Count Lieven, the Russian ambassador in London, reported:

He [Castlereagh] observed on this occasion that even if the resolutions of other allied courts were not uniform in this regard, the nuances which would be found among them would not cause any suspicion of a discord in the alliance, since the recent example given in this respect by the determinations of cabinets with regard to disturbances in Naples had presented much greater divergence in their opinions, but without undermining that union.⁴³

Castlereagh apparently believed that even the outbreak of a Russo-Turkish war would not result in the destruction of the Alliance. He expected, as he wrote in his private letter of 29 April to Strangford, that Austria and Prussia, and possibly France, would

⁴² Memorandum of Metternich for Alexander I, 19 April 1822, *Metternich*, vol.3, pp.574-9.

⁴³ Lieven to Nesselrode, 1 May 1822, *VPR*, vol.4, pp.482-90; Castlereagh to Bagot, nos.7 and 8, most

withdraw their missions from Constantinople in the event of war, a step which Britain with her Parliament would never be able to take. However, he thought that this probable difference among the allies would cause 'no practical inconvenience to the Alliance'. Austria and Prussia would, by giving moral support to Russia, not only 'make a return' to Russia for the support which she had given to Austria in Italy, but also 'strengthen their claims to the exercise of a moderating influence over the Russian Councils throughout the War'. Therefore, 'we shall not object to the Alliance subsisting as it did during the deliberations of Troppau, and Laybach [*sic*], and subsequently during the transactions at Naples, on which occasions the line of France, and that of Great Britain, was materially distinguishable from that of the other three Powers, and without any practical inconvenience resulting therefrom'.⁴⁴ Castlereagh communicated this view to Metternich in his private letter of 30 April. 'I begin to foresee a crisis approaching . . .', he wrote, 'which may possibly compel both Austria and England in pursuit of *their common purpose*, to place themselves as they did at Laybach [*sic*], somewhat in a different attitude, consonant to the nature and resources of their respective Governments.'⁴⁵

Metternich, however, was so certain of the success of his negotiation with Tatishchev that he did not feel any necessity of discussing what positions the allied powers should take in the event of war. He assured Castlereagh that his oral engagement to break off diplomatic relations with the Porte was 'merely one of

secret and confidential, 29 April 1822, FO 181/48.

⁴⁴ Castlereagh to Strangford, private and confidential, 29 April 1822, FO 78/105.

⁴⁵ Castlereagh to Metternich, most private and confidential, 30 April 1822, Webster, *Castlereagh 1815-1822*, pp.537-8.

courtesy and would remain without effect'.⁴⁶ As he had expected, by the middle of May, Alexander had decided to accept all of Metternich's proposals. The Tsar entrusted to Strangford the task of getting the Porte to accept his modified demands and sent Tatishchev back to Vienna to concert with Metternich and the allied representatives in Vienna measures which the allied powers should take in the event of the Porte's refusal of Strangford's representations.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, in Constantinople, Strangford had finally obtained from the Porte, on 25 April, an engagement to begin the evacuation of the Principalities.⁴⁸ In the early summer of 1822, there was no longer any danger of immediate hostilities in the east. To Metternich's delight, Capodistrias accepted his defeat and took leave of the Tsar in August⁴⁹, leaving the conservative Count Nesselrode in charge of the Russian foreign office.

Allied diplomacy from the summer of 1821 to the spring of 1822 which successfully averted a Russo-Turkish war did not involve any five-power congresses or conferences. Nevertheless, it must be regarded as a classic example of concert diplomacy. Having seen its success, we are tempted to conclude that the controversy among the allied powers in the early 1820s over the issue of intervention had more ideological than practical significance, and that the European Concert was never seriously affected by the lift caused by the Troppau Circular. Castlereagh himself believed in the spring of 1822 that the formation of the counterrevolutionary alignment of the eastern powers—which came to be called the 'Holy Alliance'—had made the relations of the allied powers somewhat more complicated than before, but had not destroyed the other

⁴⁶ Gordon to Castlereagh, no.19, secret and confidential, 18 May 1822, FO 7/170.

⁴⁷ Alexander I to Tatishchev, 26 May 1822, *VPR*, vol.4, pp.507-10.

⁴⁸ Strangford to Castlereagh, no.57, 25 April 1822, FO 78/107.

⁴⁹ C. M. Woodhouse, *Capodistria: The Founder of Greek Independence* (London, 1973), pp.283-91.

two alliance systems, namely, the defensive alliance of the four powers against France—the Quadruple Alliance—and the union of the five great powers for the preservation of the 1815 European international system—which was often called the Quintuple or ‘European’ Alliance. Since the Hanover meeting in October 1821, he was confident that he could count on Metternich to do his best to hold the different systems of great-power co-operation together, resisting any attempt of his conservative partners to extend the operation of the counterrevolutionary principles beyond central and eastern Europe and thus playing the role of a bridge between Britain and the eastern allies. Metternich’s proposal in June 1822 that only the issues of interest to Britain including the affairs of Turkey should be discussed at a pre-congress conference in Vienna and that the Italian questions should be reserved for the later congress at Verona, to which Castlereagh’s attendance would not be required, only strengthened his confidence. Castlereagh welcomed the proposal as the best way to answer all the purposes of his mission ‘without exposing the Government and the Alliance to . . . misconception’ and ‘without hazard of reviving the controversies of the former year’.⁵⁰

However, we should not allow Castlereagh’s optimism to blind ourselves to the fact that, shortly before his death, the success or failure of his post-Hanover diplomacy hung in the balance. First, allied diplomacy from the summer of 1821 to the spring of 1822 averted a Russo-Turkish war, but did not settle the Russo-Turkish dispute. Metternich’s project of 19 April was, as Strangford predicted as soon as he received it, totally impracticable as a recipe for the settlement of the Russo-Turkish dispute. The project included demands for the Porte to accept allied co-operation in its effort to restore

⁵⁰ Webster, *Castlereagh 1815-1822*, p.480; Castlereagh to Metternich, private and confidential, 22 June 1822, *ibid.*, pp.544-6.

tranquillity in Greece, but the Turks were determined to reject any demands which went beyond the four points. An attempt to force fresh demands on them, the British ambassador warned, might even drive them to retract their promise to execute the four points.⁵¹ Metternich obviously hoped that the Turks would make the best use of the breathing space his diplomatic victory had given them by swiftly suppressing the Greek revolt. But, what if the Turks failed to do so? In the early summer of 1822, seeing the inefficiency of the Turkish navy, Castlereagh in fact came to think that the war might be prolonged. There was little agreement between Britain and Austria about what to do in this case, except that they both desired to prevent Russia's military intervention. In his instructions for the forthcoming Vienna conference, which he prepared for his own use, Castlereagh wrote that 'it may be difficult for this country, if a *de facto* government shall actually be established in the Morea and the Western Provinces of Turkey, to refuse to it the ordinary privileges of a belligerent'.⁵² The recognition of rebels in a civil war as belligerents was distinct from the recognition of their political independence. Castlereagh's view must have nevertheless appalled Metternich, if he had known it. This question did not come to the surface during Castlereagh's lifetime, but it was only a matter of time before it would put strain on Anglo-Austrian co-operation in the east.

Second, no sooner had Anglo-Austrian co-operation succeeded in averting a Russo-Turkish war than it became obvious that war in the east had been averted only at the cost of another crisis in the west. Although the Greek revolt distracted Alexander's attention from Spain, he had never abandoned his desire to crush the Spanish revolution,

⁵¹ Strangford to Castlereagh, no.92, 11 June 1822, no.98, 25 June 1822, FO 78/108; Strangford to Metternich, 25 June 1822, *Prokesch-Osten*, vol.3. pp.368-74.

which he thought was the origin of all the other revolutions. In February 1822 Ferdinand VII appealed through King Ferdinand I of the Two Sicilies, his royal uncle, to the allied sovereigns for help. Alexander saw in this appeal, coming just when he had agreed to forego action against the Turks for the sake of allied unity, a means of distracting attention from his failure to help the Greeks. He immediately responded to the appeal by proposing the formation of an allied army to crush the Spanish revolution.⁵³ Alexander's proposal put Metternich in a difficult position. In engaging the Tsar to support Austria's intervention in Italy and also in keeping him from assisting the Greeks, Metternich had appealed to the Tsar's fear of revolutions. This was a double-edged strategy. As Gordon wrote, 'Austria has perhaps been but too successful in Her arguments for diverting them [Alexander's views] from the East, by darkening the picture of western Europe.'⁵⁴ In his reply to Alexander's proposal, Metternich did not reject his idea altogether, but merely alluded to practical difficulties of assembling the suggested allied army.⁵⁵ Gordon suspected that at the forthcoming allied meeting Metternich might agree to some allied action against Spain, which Britain would never be able to accept. He wrote to Castlereagh that his presence at the allied conference would be indispensable 'in assigning proper limits to the combined deliberations'.⁵⁶ We all know that Castlereagh eventually did not go to the Vienna conference, and therefore do not have any means to know whether Gordon was right in thinking that Castlereagh might be able to prevent any allied action against Spain. However, it is difficult to see how Metternich could have rejected Alexander's demand

⁵² Castlereagh's instructions, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.285-6.

⁵³ Ferdinand I to Alexander I, 7 February 1822, *Lebzeltern*, pp.403-5; Nesselrode to Golovkin, 15 April 1822, *ibid.*, pp.413-6.

⁵⁴ Gordon to Castlereagh, private and confidential, 2 July 1822, FO 7/171.

for some kind of allied action against Spain, even if Castlereagh had gone to Vienna and opposed it. It is perfectly true that we should not overemphasise the significance of ideological differences among the allied powers. However, it should not be forgotten that the debate on the nature and purpose of the European Alliance and Concert was not totally abstract. Metternich's acceptance of the Tsar's general alliance involved a substantial shift of emphasis in his policy. It meant, if anything, his decision to choose Russia over Britain as Austria's partner when he was forced to choose between them. In the summer of 1822, Castlereagh believed that Metternich and probably even Alexander had learnt from the mistake of Troppau. He did not realise that he had not yet seen full consequences of Metternich's acceptance of the Tsar's general alliance. After Troppau, Metternich became dependant on the Tsar's adherence to the Troppau principles in protecting Austria's vital interests. In central, eastern and south-eastern Europe, this arrangement broadly fitted Britain's aims. But, Britain could not accept the application of the Troppau principles in the west, which however Austria found very difficult to reject.

However, Metternich certainly desired to prevent any military action against Spain, and Austria and Britain could still co-operate for that purpose. In this regard, Castlereagh apparently felt it absolutely necessary to ascertain the policy of the French government, for it was obvious that any allied military action against Spain was impossible without France's participation or, at least, consent. The Tsar himself urged France in early 1821 '*to take on herself with regard to Spain, the same role which Austria is now filling towards Naples*'. Fearful lest a war with Spain should result in a

⁵⁵ Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy*, p.203.

⁵⁶ Gordon to Castlereagh, private and confidential, 2 July 1822, no.30, 8 July 1822, FO 7/171.

new revolution in France, Richelieu and Pasquier maintained a policy of neutrality and non-intervention towards the struggle between liberals and royalists in Spain. Border violations by both parties in the civil war in Spain led the French government to send sizable forces to the Pyrenees in August 1821 ostensibly to guard against the spread of yellow fever which had broken out in Spain. But, it sought an understanding with moderate liberals in the Cortes to forestall any declaration by the Cortes which could lead to war.⁵⁷ The Richelieu ministry fell in December 1821 to be replaced by an ultra-royalist ministry headed by Count Villèle, the minister of finance whose predominance in the ministry was confirmed later in early September 1822, when Louis XVIII appointed him the President of the Council. The new ministry initially continued the policy of neutrality. But, there soon appeared wide differences of opinion over Spain in the French ministry. Sir Charles Stuart, the British ambassador in Paris, reported in July 1822 that some members of the government advocated war and their opinion was vocally supported by the French ultra-royalists, led by Monsieur or the Count of Artois, Louis XVIII's brother and later Charles X.⁵⁸ 'It is of greater importance', Castlereagh wrote in his instructions for the approaching allied conference, 'that the British Plenipotentiary in his passage through Paris should have a full explanation with the French government, and should endeavour to come to some distinct understanding with them'⁵⁹ The growing pressure of the French ultras on Villèle for military intervention in Spain deepened uncertainties of the outcome of the approaching allied conference.

⁵⁷ Webster, *Castlereagh 1815-1822*, pp.339-41; The Marquis de Gabriac, 'Chateaubriand et la guerre d'Espagne: I. Les Conférences de Vienne et le Congrès de Vérone', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol.143 (1897), pp.545-6.

⁵⁸ Stuart to Castlereagh, no.191, 8 July 1822, no.199, 15 July 1822; FO 27/272.

Owing to the protracted session of Parliament, it was nearly the end of July before Castlereagh could tell Metternich that he would be setting out about 15 August and would arrive in Vienna about 7 September.⁶⁰ But, worn out by overwork and the strain of coping with two arduous jobs—he was the leader of the House of Commons as well as the foreign secretary—and suffering probably from a severe psychotic depressive illness, on 12 August he committed suicide.⁶¹

We have seen the history of the Concert of Europe since its birth to the death of its main architect because this is an indispensable preparatory step to the discussion of the diplomacy of Canning, who was offered and accepted Castlereagh's whole heritage—the leadership of the House of Commons and the foreign secretaryship—about one month after his death. In fact, the question of Canning's attitude towards the Concert of Europe was regarded by many historians as crucial for the understanding of his diplomacy in the years 1822-7. The historian who set this trend was Harold Temperley. Of the period between the end of the Napoleonic Wars and Castlereagh's death, Canning had been a member of the cabinet as President of the Board of Control for India for about four and half years from the spring of 1816 to December 1820, when he resigned from the government on account of an awkward position into which George IV's attempt to get rid of Queen Caroline, his old friend, had put him. In his 1905 biography of Canning, Temperley argued that it had been Canning who had opened Castlereagh's eyes to the danger of the system of periodical meetings of the allied powers and had got him to drift away from his allies and adopt

⁵⁹ Castlereagh's instructions, *Wellington*, vol.1, p.286.

⁶⁰ Castlereagh to Metternich, private and confidential, 29 July 1822, Webster, *Castlereagh 1815-1822*, pp.548-9.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp.482-6; Wendy Hinde, *Castlereagh* (London, 1981), pp.277-81.

the principle of non-interference. He even suggested that Canning had been largely responsible for the State Paper of 5 May 1820.⁶² By 1923, when he wrote a chapter on Canning's foreign policy after September 1822 in the *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy 1783-1919*, thanks to the works done by W. A. Phillips and C. K. Webster on Castlereagh, he had realised his mistake. However, Temperley persisted in his view that Canning's objection to the so-called 'Congress System' was much stronger than Castlereagh's. He argues that, while Castlereagh had 'predilections for diplomacy by conference' and even after the spring of 1820 'was not anxious to abandon' his 'great discovery', Canning was entirely opposed to this new system of diplomacy.⁶³ He repeated this view two years later in his *The Foreign Policy of Canning, 1822-1827: England, the Neo-Holy Alliance, and the New World*, which is today still regarded as a standard work on the subject.⁶⁴ In this work, Temperley suggests—although without clear evidence—that Canning disliked the rapprochement between Castlereagh and Metternich after October 1821 and their agreement that Britain should take part in the forthcoming allied conference in Vienna in the autumn of 1822.⁶⁵

In fact, the central theme of Temperley's famous work is Canning's attack on the system of diplomacy by great-power congresses and conferences. He points out that in

⁶² Harold Temperley, *Life of Canning* (London, 1905), pp.127-51. This biography is the first systematic biography of Canning. However, it essentially follows many other biographies of Canning which were written in the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century in depicting Canning as the liberal opponent of the so-called 'Holy Alliance', the champion of the independence of small powers, and the 'earliest upholder' of nationalism. Augustus Granville Stapleton, *The Political Life of George Canning* (2nd ed., 3 vols., London, 1831); Robert Bell, *The Life of the Rt. Hon. George Canning* (London, 1846); Frank H. Hill, *George Canning* (London, 1887); J. A. R. Marriott, *George Canning, and His Times: A Political Study* (London, 1903); Walter Alison Phillips, *George Canning* (London, 1903).

⁶³ Harold Temperley, 'The Foreign Policy of Canning', in Ward and Gooch (eds.), *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, vol.2, pp.51-5.

⁶⁴ Harold Temperley, *The Foreign Policy of Canning, 1822-1827: England, the Neo-Holy Alliance, and the New World* (London, 1925).

1822-7 Canning refused the participation of British cabinet ministers or diplomats in any allied congresses or conferences except five ambassadorial conferences at Paris which were all connected with the execution of the Treaty of Vienna of 1815.⁶⁶ Furthermore, as we will see in the following chapters, Temperley maintains that during the same period many of Canning's important decisions in international affairs were motivated by his desire to destroy the system of great-power co-operation. Temperley's explanation of why Canning desired to destroy what he calls the 'Congress System' is somewhat disorderly and confusing. However, he seems to think that there were two major reasons why Canning opposed it. The first reason was ideological. According to Temperley, Canning thought that 'future foreign policy should be both intelligible and popular', and he believed that 'public opinion would not any longer allow us to continue' the Congress System.⁶⁷ Temperley also suggests that Canning's own political creed led him to the same policy. According to Temperley, Canning 'preferred constitutional monarchy to any other form of government because it was the *via media* between despotism and democracy'. Canning believed that Britain should take a middle course between despotism and democracy and maintain the policy of neutrality and non-interference in their struggle, while trying to prevent them from coming to an open rupture. This belief prevented Canning from joining in the reactionary association of the continental autocrats as well as from supporting liberals in foreign countries.⁶⁸ This ideological objection to the Congress System, however, was obviously not sufficient reason for Canning to reject allied co-operation even when its aim was to preserve the

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.47-8.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.454-5.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.48, 453-4.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.457-9.

European balance of power. Temperley argues that there was another reason—which was power political rather than ideological—why Canning rejected the system of great-power co-operation. In Temperley's complex portrait, Canning was a masterful manipulator of European balance of power as well as a 'Philosophic Tory'⁶⁹ who opposed both universal democracy and universal despotism. While Canning understood the importance of ideas and the power of public opinion in international relations, his perception of European international relations was still essentially old-fashioned. He believed that Britain should continue to play her traditional role of a balancer in European great-power politics. He believed that Britain should interfere in continental affairs only if the European balance of power was threatened, but—as Canning himself said in 1818—'with a commanding force'. Temperley argues that Canning desired to destroy the union of the great powers because 'Great Britain could not have a commanding force if the chief Powers remained united'. In other words, Canning calculated that Britain could exercise her influence in European international politics more effectively if she dealt with each of the great powers of the continent individually and if she could exploit differences among them.⁷⁰

Since 1925, Temperley's account of Canning's foreign policy in 1822-7 has been generally accepted by historians. After the publication of Temperley's work, no attempt had been made to give another comprehensive account of the subject until 1973, when Wendy Hinde published a brilliant biography of Canning, *George Canning*, whose last six chapters deal mainly with Canning's foreign policy in 1822-7. Hinde's work is based on the examination not only of the Foreign Office Papers but also of the Canning

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.35.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.46-7; Temperley, 'The Foreign Policy of Canning', p.54.

Papers, the collection of Canning's private papers which was not open to historians when Temperley wrote his work. Probably partly because of this, Hinde's account of Canning's diplomacy is more balanced than Temperley's. However, as a biographer who discusses the whole life and career of Canning, she inevitably pays limited attention to the subject. She accepts Temperley's account of the subject in many important points. Moreover, her style is more narrative, although in the best possible way, than analytical, and her work fails to present a clear and comprehensive picture of Canning's system of diplomacy.⁷¹ Hinde's work was soon followed by another biography by Peter Dixon, *Canning: Politician and Statesman*. Dixon's work is, like Hinde's, based on extensive archival research. However, he pays even less attention than Hinde to Canning's diplomacy in 1822-7.⁷² On the other hand, since 1925, many studies have appeared which deal with Canning's diplomacy on particular questions, such as the questions of Spanish American independence, Brazilian independence, and Greek independence. Some of these studies are based on proper archival research, and contribute to better understanding of Canning's diplomacy in some important points. However, these studies discuss only limited aspects of Canning's diplomacy, and consequently do not present any alternative view of Canning's diplomacy as a whole to the one established by Temperley.⁷³ In the absence of any alternative, most historians—even some of those historians who have carried out proper archival

⁷¹ Wendy Hinde, *George Canning* (London, 1973).

⁷² Peter Dixon, *Canning: Politician and Statesman* (London, 1976).

⁷³ Those include: Alan K. Manchester, 'The Recognition of Brazilian Independence', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol.31, no.1 (February 1951), pp.80-96; Bradford Perkins, *Castlereagh and Adams: England and the United States, 1812-1823* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif., 1964); Leslie Bethell, 'The Independence of Brazil and the Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade: Anglo-Brazilian Relations, 1822-1826', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol.1, part 2 (November 1969), pp.115-47, and *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade: Britain, Brazil and the Slave Trade Question, 1807-1869* (Cambridge, 1970); Christopher Howard, *Britain and the Casus Belli, 1822-1902: A study of Britain's*

research—in their studies of certain aspects of Canning’s diplomacy or in their overviews of the nineteenth-century British foreign policy or European international history have more or less accepted the central theme of Temperley’s work.⁷⁴ It is true that recent studies of Canning’s policy on the question of Greek independence tend to challenge Temperley’s interpretation of the subject. However, even those studies accept Temperley’s view that Canning’s Greek policy was largely decided by his desire to destroy the European Concert. A good example is Paul Schroeder, who in his study of European international politics between the end of the Seven Years’ War and the revolutions of 1848 severely criticises Temperley’s ‘old Whig view’ of Canning’s foreign policy—especially on the question of Greek independence. However, in criticising Temperley’s view that Canning’s traditional balance-of-power politics contributed to the maintenance of the European balance of power and the European international system, Schroeder wholeheartedly accepts Temperley’s portrait of Canning as an isolationist who disliked great-power concert. The following is a passage from his study:

. . . Canning considered the [European] concert an intrinsically bad instrument of the

international position from Canning to Salisbury (London, 1974).

⁷⁴ Those include: C. W. Crawley, *The Question of Greek Independence: A Study of British Policy in the Near East, 1821-1833* (Cambridge, 1930), pp.26-82; R. W. Seton-Watson, *Britain in Europe, 1789-1914: A Survey of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, 1937), ch.2; C. K. Webster, ‘Introduction’ in *BILA*, vol.1, pp.17-26, 32-4; Manchester, ‘The Recognition of Brazilian Independence’; William W. Kaufmann, *British Policy and the Independence of Latin America, 1804-1828* (New Heaven, Conn., 1951), pp.136-222; P. J. V. Rolo, *George Canning: Three Biographical Studies* (London, 1965), pp.208-64; Leslie Bethell, *George Canning and the Independence of Latin America: A lecture delivered at Canning House, on 15th April 1970, to mark the Bicentenary of George Canning* (London, 1970); Irby C. Nichols, Jr., *The European Pentarchy and the Congress of Verona, 1822* (The Hague, 1971), especially pp.15-6; Bridge, ‘Allied Diplomacy in Peacetime’, p.52; Muriel E. Chamberlain, ‘Pax Britannica’: *British Foreign Policy, 1789-1914* (London, 1988), pp.60-8; Edward Ingram, *Britain’s Persian Connection, 1798-1828: Prelude to the Great Game in Asia* (Oxford, 1992), pp.243-88; C. J. Bartlett, *Peace, War and the European Powers, 1814-1914* (Basingstoke and London, 1996), pp.22-6; Klaus Gallo, *Great Britain and Argentina: From Invasion to Recognition, 1806-26* (Basingstoke, 2001), pp.134-6.

Holy Alliance and wanted to break it up, restoring the old European politics of normal everyday rivalries, to the benefit of Britain's interests and prestige and his own. . . . Canning, long celebrated as the liberal opponent of the reactionary Holy Alliance, was really, in a literal sense, reactionary and restorationist, trying to restore the competitive international politics of the eighteenth century.⁷⁵

The principal aim of this study is to disprove this general consensus on the question of Canning's attitude towards the Concert of Europe through the detailed examination of his diplomacy between September 1822 and July 1824, and present an entirely new interpretation of Canning's diplomacy in the period. It is true that, before his assumption of Foreign Office, Canning was highly critical of the system of periodical allied meetings. In fact, as Temperley and other historians point out, there is evidence in plenty in support of their view. However, it should also be noted that there is no conclusive proof to show that Canning's objection to allied congresses and conferences extended to those meetings which were aimed at preserving the peace of Europe. For example, in October 1818, when the British cabinet discussed Castlereagh's despatches from Aix-la-Chapelle, which indicated his intention to join with the plenipotentiaries of the other allied powers and France in a public declaration announcing their decision to meet at fixed periods, Canning famously said that he 'thinks that system of periodical meetings of the four great Powers, with a view to the general concerns of Europe, new, and of very questionable policy'. He further said that 'it [the system of periodical meetings] will necessarily involve us deeply in all the politics of the Continent, whereas our true policy has always been not to interfere except in great emergencies, and then

⁷⁵ Schroeder, *Transformation*, p.640. Other works of this nature include: Dakin, *Greek Struggle for Independence*, pp.148-84; Allan Cunningham, 'The Philhellenes, Canning and Greek Independence', *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.14, no.2 (May 1978), pp.151-81; Steven Schwartzberg, 'The Lion and the Phoenix: British Policy toward the "Greek Question", 1821-32', *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.24, no.2 (April 1988), pp.139-77, and no.3 (July 1988), pp.287-311; Loyal Cowles, 'The Failure to Restrain Russia: Canning, Nesselrode, and the Greek Question, 1825-1827', *International History Review*, vol.12,

with a commanding force'.⁷⁶ However, Canning's belief that Britain should not interfere in continental affairs 'except in great emergencies, and then with a commanding force' obviously came from his desire that she should avoid being involved in wars as far as possible. Did not this desire lead him to withdraw his objection to Britain's involvement in continental politics when an allied congress or conference offered better prospects for peace? Moreover, Canning on this occasion objected specifically to the system of 'periodical' meetings of the allied powers. He declared against committing the government to take part in future periodical meetings, but said that he would not object to a five-power agreement fixing a date for their next meeting. It does not seem that he objected to Britain's participation in ad hoc allied meetings to tackle specific international questions. Canning's remarks recorded in Stratford Canning's diary of 28 May 1820—another piece of evidence Temperley produces in support of his view—are equally ambiguous about Canning's attitude towards an allied concert for the preservation of the territorial order of 1815. When his cousin Stratford congratulated him on the communication by the government of the State Paper of 5 May 1820 to the continental powers, Canning answered by saying that 'Yes, we shall have no more congresses, thank God!' He continued that allied congresses were 'all very well' for such matters as the territorial dispute between Baden and Bavaria, while they should not be used to interfere in the internal affairs of Spain or France.⁷⁷ Is this really good evidence in support of the orthodox view that Canning was against any kind of allied congresses and conferences? It seems reasonable to conclude that we do not have sufficient evidence to determine the exact extent of Canning's

no.4 (November 1990), pp.680-720.

⁷⁶ Bathurst to Castlereagh, 20 October 1818, Castlereagh, *Correspondence*, vol.12, pp.55-8.

objection to the Concert of Europe before September 1822. We can ascertain his true opinions only by examining his thoughts and actions after he started his work at the Foreign Office. Let us now move on to our main task.

⁷⁷ Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Life of Stratford Canning* (2 vols., London, 1888), vol.1, p.291.

I

The Congress of Verona and the Spanish Question,

September 1822-March 1823

Shortly after Castlereagh's death, the British cabinet decided that the Duke of Wellington, who had held a seat in the cabinet since 1818 as Master-General of the Ordnance, should take Castlereagh's place at the forthcoming Vienna conference. After Castlereagh's death, Wellington was by far the most experienced of all British statesmen in European diplomacy. Between 1814 and 1818, he had played an important role in European diplomacy as British ambassador to France in 1814-5, British plenipotentiary to the Congress of Vienna in 1814-5, of Paris in 1815, and of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818, and commander-in-chief of the allied army of occupation in France in 1815-8. But illness delayed his departure for the continent until 17 September, the day after Canning started his work at the Foreign Office.¹

Meanwhile, the allied sovereigns and ministers had arrived at Vienna one after another in early September and begun their talks. Reports from Vienna which arrived at London shortly after Canning's assumption of office clearly indicated that Spanish affairs would dominate the allied meeting. According to Charles Stewart, Alexander appeared 'eager upon the State of Spain'. The Tsar told him on 14 September that he 'hardly knew how the Alliance could remain quiet' on the matter.² Equally alarming was Stewart's report that, on 12 September, Metternich, Nesselrode, and Viscount Montmorency, the French foreign minister and the head of the French delegation, had

remonstrated with him, demanding that the British government should arrest the journey of Sir William à Court, who was on his way to Madrid to take up the post of British minister there, at Paris until the conclusion of the allied deliberations on the affairs of Spain, lest his arrival should create in Madrid the impression that Britain was in favour of the Spanish revolutionaries.³ Although Stewart was not aware that the allied ministers were considering to withdraw their diplomatic missions simultaneously from Madrid⁴, this report led Canning, as we will see soon, to suspect that they feared lest à Court's arrival in Madrid should spoil the effect of their joint declaration which they were contemplating making against the Spanish constitutional government.

Wellington arrived in Paris on 20 September. Following the instructions Castlereagh had prepared for himself, he had two interviews with Villèle, now the President of the Council. Villèle told Wellington that, although some members of the council argued for attacking Spain by 'an *avanture*, or a *coup-de-main*', he was against the plan. However, he could not ignore the opinion of the war party that the aggravation of Spain's internal situation might result in her declaration of war against France or the deposition or murder of the King. He told the Duke that in preparation for such emergencies the French government would maintain its army of observation along the Pyrenees. As for the allied deliberations, Villèle declared that 'his whole policy in relation to Spain was founded upon French interests, and that it was entirely unconnected with anything the Congress might determine'. He told Wellington that he was determined to refuse any material assistance from any other power, especially 'if the assistance to be given was

¹ Temperley, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, p.53 n.1.

² Stewart to Bathurst, no.9, 15 September 1822, FO 7/172.

³ Stewart to Bathurst, no.8, 12 September 1822, *ibid.*

⁴ Montmorency to Villèle, 14 September 1822, *Villèle*, vol.3, pp.53-4.

to be a body of troops to be passed through France'. On the other hand, however, Villèle told the Duke that the allies should consider 'the hypotheses under which they might be forced into a war' and 'that the four other Powers of the Alliance should declare what line they would each take in case of the occurrence of any of the events which they conceived would force them to war'. Although Wellington protested against Villèle's opinion, stating Britain's well known maxim that 'it would be quite impossible for us to declare beforehand what would be our conduct upon any hypothetical case', Villèle did not appear to be impressed.⁵

In the interviews Villèle did not clearly explain why he wished to obtain from the allies the declaration of their conducts in the event of war. This is hardly surprising. What he wanted from the allies was a declaration that they would not support Spain in the event of a Franco-Spanish war and they would support France if any one of them took sides with Spain, in other words, 'an eventual treaty . . . in order to paralyse the evil intention of England'.⁶ Despite his desire to maintain peace, the French premier was aware that it was becoming increasingly difficult for the French government to do so. In Spain, the failure of a rising of the Royal Guard against the revolutionary regime in early July had worsened the situation. In the resultant reaction to the failed coup, moderate liberals, who considered the radical constitution of 1812 an unworkable experiment and wished to introduce a more conservative constitution, fell from power, leaving radicals or 'the thorough-going Constitutionlists of 1820'⁷, who regarded the preservation of the constitution of 1812 as a democratic duty, in control of the government and deepening partisan hatreds and confusion in Spain. In Villèle's own

⁵ Wellington to Canning, 21 September 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.288-94.

⁶ *Villèle*, vol.3, p.36.

estimation, the situation in Spain was now worse than 'France in 1793'.⁸ If military intervention in Spain became inevitable, it was essential for France to neutralise Britain's opposition. Except this point, however, Villèle's explanation of his Spanish policy in his interviews with Wellington was honest and precise. He desired to maintain peace as far as he could and was determined not to allow the eastern allies to force France into war. Even if war became inevitable, France should never accept their material assistance against Spain and should never allow them to control her actions. The only thing he wanted from them was to deter Britain from supporting Spain in the event of war. Before Montmorency's departure for Vienna, Villèle insisted and prevailed on his cabinet colleagues to accept that Montmorency should refrain from taking the initiative in the forthcoming allied discussions on the affairs of Spain, for fear lest France should only give others an opportunity to control her policy by showing her hand first. Montmorency should let others declare their positions in the event of war without committing France to any action.⁹

When Canning received Wellington's report, he attached weight to Villèle's determination to reserve France's free hand. The conduct of Viscount Marcellus, the French chargé d'affaires in London, strengthened Canning's impression that the French government was attempting to keep its distance from the eastern powers. In London, Neumann, the Austrian chargé d'affaires, and Baron Werther, the Prussian minister, called on Canning on the morning of 26 September to communicate the same

⁷ Hervey to Castlereagh, no.101, 8 August 1822, FO 72/257.

⁸ Raymond Carr, *Spain 1808-1975* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1982), pp.135-8; Villèle to Montmorency, 6 September 1822, *Villèle*, vol.3, p.44.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.35-8; Villèle to Montmorency, 6 September 1822, *ibid.*, pp.44-6; Alfred Nettement, *Histoire de la Restauration* (8 vols., Paris, 1860-72), vol.6, pp.231-3, 242 n.1; De Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, vol.2, pp.614-8.

remonstrance that Metternich, Nesselrode and Montmorency had made in Vienna on à Court's mission to Madrid, Neumann acting also on behalf of the Russian chargé d'affaires. While they were speaking, Marcellus arrived and immediately supported their representations. Their joint representations convinced Canning that the continental allies were contemplating 'some joint public declaration on the affairs of Spain'. On the other hand, Canning later found that the separate arrival of the French chargé d'affaires had been 'studiously contrived' by him. Canning naturally suspected that there was 'some shade of difference between the views of France and those of the other Allied powers'.

In his instructions of 27 September to Wellington, Canning attributed the separate arrival of Marcellus to Villèle's determination to maintain France's freedom of action from the control of the Alliance. He hoped that Villèle's policy would cause a discord between France and the eastern powers. 'From whatever cause it may arise', wrote Canning, 'such a discordance may probably afford to your Grace an opportunity of evading the proposal of a joint declaration.' Judging from the fact that Canning attached great importance to Villèle's determination to refuse the passage of foreign troops through France, Canning obviously placed his hopes ironically on Alexander's extravagance, calculating that Alexander's desire to lead the allied army into Spain and Villèle's refusal of it would paralyse allied negotiations. Wellington's principal duties were 'to discourage the notion of armed interference in the affairs of Spain' whether by Russia or by France and 'to evade any question of a threatening declaration without coming to an open difference of opinion with the Allies, such as might lead, though not to a general disunion, to a partial separation of counsels'. Then comes the most famous part of this despatch:

But if, as I confess I see reason to apprehend in the late communications both from Paris and Vienna, there is entertained by the Allies a determined project of interference by force, or by menace, in the present struggle in Spain, so convinced are his Majesty's government of the uselessness and danger of any such interference,—so objectionable does it appear to them in principle, and so utterly impracticable in execution,—that, if the necessity should arise, or (I would rather say) if the opportunity should offer, I am to instruct your Grace at once frankly and peremptorily to declare, that to any such interference, come what may, his Majesty will not be a party.¹⁰

No one has ever pointed out the fact that this famous paragraph was not included in Canning's original draft of this despatch. But, when Canning sent the draft to Lord Liverpool, prime minister, for his opinion, the latter returned it with a note. In the note, Liverpool told Canning his impression that the continental powers were more likely than before to agree on collective action against Spain, and wished him to prepare Wellington for the possibility. Liverpool argued that, 'considering this question as one of *principle* and *practicability*', he could not conceive any case in which it would be expedient for the allies to interfere in the internal affairs of Spain. Liverpool feared that, in the event of allied interference in Spain, the government would be criticised by the British public for its involvement in their discussions and would need to justify in Parliament its conduct during the discussions. He wrote: 'the Duke of Wellington cannot be too explicit in stating the opinion of his government, and of himself, as to any hostile operations against Spain.' Judging from the other parts of this despatch and also from the very fact that he did not include this paragraph in his original draft, Canning obviously thought that the continental allies were unlikely to agree on a common policy against Spain. But, when Canning received this note, he completely agreed with

¹⁰ Canning to Wellington, 27 September 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.301-4.



Liverpool's policy of non-interference and added the 'come what may' paragraph to the despatch.¹¹

Meanwhile, Wellington's absence prevented the allied delegations from reaching any decision. By the time Wellington reached Vienna on 29 September, it had already been decided to remove the transaction of all the business to Verona. Although Metternich assured Wellington that Italian affairs would not be discussed at Verona until his departure, the Duke remained in Vienna waiting for the arrival of instructions from home.¹² In London, informed by Stewart's reports of the wishes of the allied delegations to move to Verona, Canning had already sent instructions entrusting Wellington to choose either to repair immediately to Verona, or to wait at Vienna until the return of the allied delegations from Verona where they should have concluded their deliberations on the affairs of Italy.¹³ On receiving Canning's instructions in early October, the Duke decided to leave Vienna for Verona.¹⁴

In early October, Canning's hope that the clashing views of Russia and France would cancel each other appeared to materialise. On 3 October Wellington had his first audience with Alexander. The Tsar argued that 'the case of Naples was a precedent entirely applicable to the case of Spain'. But, he had no intention of giving his approval to France's intervention in Spain as he had done to Austria's in Italy. He maintained that France could not be relied on for such an operation and insisted that it should be 'the work of the Alliance'. Attributing Alexander's insistence on the employment of Russian army in Spain to his desire to appease its discontent with his policy in the east,

¹¹ Liverpool to Canning, 27 September 1822, *ibid.*, p.300; Canning to Liverpool, private and confidential, 28 September 1822, Canning Papers, 70; Canning to Wellington, private and secret, no.3, 27 September 1822, Canning Papers, 104.

¹² Wellington to Canning, 30 September 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.319-22.

Wellington judged that Alexander would not withdraw his project easily. But, he calculated that in face of France's firm opposition Alexander would 'give up the whole question, and join with us in endeavouring to prevail upon the French ministers to remain quiet'. On the other hand, Wellington recognised Metternich's reluctance to oppose Alexander's plan. But, attributing his reluctance to his fear lest the rejection of Alexander's plan should drive the Tsar into war against the Turks and considering it highly understandable, Wellington did not doubt Metternich's professed desire to avoid any interference in Spain. Wellington concluded that the result of the Congress would be 'an unanimous decision to leave the Spaniards to themselves'.¹⁵

But, as soon as the Congress opened, contrary to Wellington's expectation, the continental allies moved towards a compromise. Part of Wellington's miscalculation came from his failure to realise that Montmorency was the chief advocate of an active policy in the French cabinet.¹⁶ Soon after his arrival in Vienna on 7 September, Montmorency in fact took a position which was more European as well as more warlike than Villèle had desired him to take. Asked by Metternich France's view on the affairs of Spain, he answered that his government was convinced of the inevitability of war and desired to know if it could count on 'the moral support and all the other assistance' of the allied powers in the event of war. Metternich replied that France should act on the question of Spain as Austria had done on that of Naples, and asked Montmorency to prepare a memoir in which he should simply point out the existence of the revolution in Spain and ask the allied powers for advice. Ignoring Villèle's wish that he should not

¹³ Canning to Wellington, no.1, 24 September 1822, FO 92/48.

¹⁴ Wellington to Canning, 4 October 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, p.354.

¹⁵ Wellington to Canning, 4 October 1822, *ibid.*, pp.343-8.

¹⁶ *Villèle*, vol.3, p.33; Gabriac, 'Chateaubriand', pp.551-2; De Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, vol.2,

open the subject at the allied meeting, Montmorency consented to the request.¹⁷ While trying to bring French policy under allied control, the Austrian chancellor judged that the allied powers should appease the Tsar's restless zeal by agreeing on some diplomatic action against Spain which however should never lead any of them to military intervention in Spain. On 15 October, shortly after his arrival in Verona, he delivered a confidential memoir to Russia and Prussia, proposing that the allied courts should break diplomat relations with Spain. Metternich concealed his intentions from the Duke in order to retain his assistance to restrain the Tsar.¹⁸ When the chief ministers of the five allied powers met for the first session of the Congress on 20 October, Montmorency read a memoir on Franco-Spanish relations, in which he put three questions to the allies: First, if France was compelled to recall her minister at Madrid, would the other powers follow suit? Second, if war broke out, how and under what form would the allies give France moral support? Third, if France requested the active intervention of her allies, what material support would they be disposed to give?¹⁹ On the receipt of these questions, Alexander immediately declared himself ready to support France in all three cases and announced his intention to send his troops through Germany to Piedmont in preparation for a revolution in France or French defeat in Spain. Montmorency told the Russians that France could not consent to the plan, although he did not forget to praise the Tsar's 'chivalrous spirit'.²⁰ Despite

pp.617-8.

¹⁷ Stewart to Bathurst, no.6, 12 September 1822, FO 7/172; Memorandum from Mr. Gordon, 22 September 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.297-8; Nettement, *Histoire*, vol.6, pp.248-9; De Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, vol.2, pp.620-2.

¹⁸ Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy*, pp.211-2; De Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, vol.2, pp.631-2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.633. Montmorency gave a précis of his memoir to the allied ministers, which is printed in *CV*, pp.52-4.

²⁰ Wellington to Canning, 29 October 1822 (two despatches), *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.457-8, 460; Montmorency's report on his audience with Alexander I of 24 October 1822, *Villèle*, vol.3, pp.147-51;

Montmorency's refusal of Alexander's plan, when the second conference of the chief ministers met on 30 October, the Russian note promised support to France in all three cases of Montmorency's memoir. Adding to this, at the first full conference of all the allied plenipotentiaries on 31 October, Nesselrode stated Alexander's wish that the allies should sign a treaty or treaties stipulating the *casus foederis* for war on Spain, the makeup of troops to be furnished by each power for the assistance of France, and the line of march over which they should move.²¹ Obviously, Alexander was now content with playing an auxiliary role to France's intervention in Spain. On 5 November the Tsar told Wellington: 'I would attack them [Spain] with the French army, and move mine and others to their support if wanted.'²² Meanwhile, when Montmorency declared his intention to refuse the Tsar's plan to move his troops to Piedmont, Metternich felt safe enough to dispense with the Duke's co-operation. The answers of Austria and Prussia to Montmorency's memoir of 20 October were more hedging than that of Russia, virtually refusing to give material support to France in the event of war.²³ More important was a memoir Metternich read at the conference of 31 October. It proposed that the allies should make representations to Spain against the revolution and suggested that this could be done by sending a collective declaration or separate but similar notes to their representatives in Madrid.²⁴

At the conference of 30 October, Wellington, denying any real possibility of Spain's taking any action which might force France to the discontinuance of diplomatic

Montmorency to Villèle, 28 October 1822, *ibid.*, pp.157-63.

²¹ Wellington to Canning, 5 November 1822 (enclosing the Russian note of 30 October 1822, and Wellington's minute of the conference of 31 October), *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.492-3, 496-8, 505.

²² Wellington to Canning, 5 November 1822, *ibid.*, pp.491-2.

²³ Austrian and Prussian answers to Montmorency's communication of 20 October, 30 October 1822, *ibid.*, pp.498-9.

²⁴ 'Propositions du Cabinet Autrichien dans la Conférence du 31^{me} Octobre, 1822', *ibid.*, pp.501-3.

relations or war and pointing out France's failure to explain exactly on what grounds she might take these measures, refused even to consider Montmorency's three questions.²⁵ At the conference of 1 November, the Duke also vigorously protested against Metternich's proposal of 31 October. However, Montmorency, Nesselrode and Count Bernstorff, the Prussian foreign minister, all agreed to it.²⁶ Faced with Wellington's opposition to any mode of interference in the internal affairs of Spain, from 2 November the chief ministers of the continental allies concerted their policy in informal meetings without consulting with him. On 4 November, they decided to send separate but similar despatches to their representatives in Madrid, although Montmorency interposed the reservation that his despatch was subject to the approval of the French cabinet. It was agreed that their despatches should be such as would lead unfailingly to a rupture of diplomatic relations with Spain.²⁷

Meanwhile, when on 8 November Montmorency read him a draft of a despatch he was to send to Count La Garde, the French minister in Madrid, and explained that the necessity of conciliating the French ultra-royalists had compelled him to agree to the measure, Wellington at last became convinced that Montmorency had been pursuing a different line of policy from that of Villèle. He sent a memorandum on the Spanish question to Charles Stuart and asked him to communicate it to Villèle. In the memorandum, he warned Villèle that, if France sent the despatch prepared by Montmorency, it would inevitably cause a rupture of Franco-Spanish diplomatic

²⁵ 'Memoir on the Observations of the French Minister respecting Spain', 30 October 1822, and 'Minute of the Conference of the 30th October', *ibid.*, pp.499-501, 503-5.

²⁶ 'Minute of the Conference of the 1st instant', 2 November 1822, *ibid.*, pp.505-7.

²⁷ Montmorency to Villèle, 5 November 1822, *Villèle*, vol.3, pp.178-81; Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy*, p.217.

relations and ultimately a war.²⁸

But, this memorandum did not have any immediate influence on the French policy at the Congress. By 19 November, the four continental allies agreed on the *casus foederis*. Their *procès-verbal* stipulated as *casus foederis*: an attack with military force by Spain on French territory; an official act of the Spanish government directly inciting to rebellion the subjects of any one of the powers; the deposition, trial or death of the King or any member of his family; and a formal act of the Spanish government subversive of the rights of legitimate succession of the royal family. It was decided that all unforeseen cases should be referred to a conference of the French foreign minister and the allied representatives at Paris for consideration. On 19 November, after Wellington's refusal to sign it, the chief ministers of the four continental allies signed the document. On 21 November, after a brief debate on what documents should be published on the measures taken by the Congress, the conference on the affairs of Spain was adjourned. The following day Montmorency left for Paris.²⁹ Wellington left Verona on 30 November, intending to proceed to London as soon as possible after stopping shortly at Paris to pay his respects to Louis XVIII.³⁰

Owing largely to the distance between London and Verona, Canning could not exert any influence on all that happened in Verona on the Spanish question. He came to see Wellington's situation as 'hopeless' when he was informed of the agreement of the continental allies to send the despatches of protest to Madrid. But, he had not

²⁸ Wellington to Stuart, 12 November 1822 (enclosing 'Memorandum on the State of the Spanish Question', 12 November 1822), *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.518-23; Wellington to Canning, 12 November 1822, *ibid.*, pp.531-3.

²⁹ Wellington to Canning, 19, 22 November 1822, *ibid.*, pp.555-7, 562-4; 'Procès-verbal', *ibid.*, pp.648-9.

³⁰ Wellington to Canning, 26 November 1822, *ibid.*, p.592; Wellington to Metternich, 29 November 1822, *ibid.*, p.619.

abandoned all hopes yet. He showed a keen interest in the news that Montmorency would return to Paris to obtain the French cabinet's approval to the draft of his despatch to La Garde. Canning still hoped that Villèle, who in late September told Stuart that in Vienna Montmorency had been advocating a 'stronger' policy on Spain than he had desired, would refuse to send a despatch of protest to Madrid.³¹ Villèle in fact continued to assure Stuart in late November that his desire to avoid war had not changed.³² Canning judged that Villèle's remarks afforded him 'one more chance of preserving peace'. But, on the other hand, having regularly received reports from Stuart on the growing outcry of the French ultra-royalists against Villèle's Spanish policy and having just seen their sweeping victory in the November elections, he naturally feared that Villèle might be 'overborne'. On 3 December Canning requested Wellington to stay in Paris and 'encourage him, during the first conflict of the two parties in the French government'.³³

About the same time, Canning started to consider offering Britain's mediation between France and Spain. However encouraging Villèle's remarks were, it was obvious that Villèle's resistance to the war party would not last long if he could not obtain concessions from the Spanish government.³⁴ But, as long as France was committed to act together with the eastern powers and follow their counterrevolutionary doctrine, it would never be possible to mediate between France and Spain. His requirement of Britain's mediation was therefore that 'the question of peace and war' should be 'left in the hands of the French government'. On 6 December, presuming that

³¹ Canning to Wellington, 22 November 1822, *ibid.*, p.572; Stuart to Canning, no.266, 30 September 1822, FO 27/274.

³² Stuart to Canning, no.329, 28 November 1822, FO 27/276.

³³ Canning to Wellington, 3 December 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.624-5.

the Congress had left the question of peace or war in French hands, Canning instructed Wellington that, if this was the case, he should offer to Villèle the mediation of Britain between France and Spain.³⁵ Some hours after he sent off this conditional instruction, Canning received not only Wellington's reports on the final phase of the allied discussions on Spain but also Stuart's report on his interview of 1 December with Villèle. According to the ambassador, the French premier declared that the French Government was 'not committed to pursue any particular line', but was 'perfectly at liberty to adopt the decision, which the interests of this Country may, in the course of events, render the most desirable'.³⁶ In his despatch of 8 December to Wellington, Canning confirmed his instructions of 6 December.³⁷

But, the success of Britain's mediation required its acceptance not only on the part of France but also on the part of Spain. The truth was that Britain's relations with Spain were far more problematical than those with France, owing to their differences on the affairs of Spanish America, where the French usurpation of the Spanish monarchy in 1808 had set in motion movements for colonial independence. From the late 1810s to the early 1820s, various developments—the growing success of the rebels in various parts of Spanish America, the desire of British merchants to normalise their trade with the rebel colonies, and the decision of the United States in the spring of 1822 to recognise Buenos Ayres, Chile, Peru, Colombia and Mexico—all drove Castlereagh to consider recognition inevitable. Shortly before his death, he came to regard recognition 'rather as a matter of time than of principle'. In fact, in the summer of 1822, taking

³⁴ Stuart to Canning, no.320, secret and confidential, 21 November 1822, FO 27/276.

³⁵ Canning to Wellington, 3, 6 December 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.624-5, 625-7.

³⁶ Stuart to Canning, no.330, 2 December 1822, FO 27/277.

³⁷ Canning to Wellington, 8 December 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.628-30.

advantage of a contemplated change in the Navigation Acts, the British government recognised the flags of Spanish American vessels. Castlereagh desired to obtain, at the forthcoming Vienna conference, the recognition by Europe of the independence of those colonies that had completely severed their connection from Spain. But, at the same time, he decided that, if he failed to bring the continental allies to recognise their independence, Britain should act alone regardless of the approval or disapproval of other European states.³⁸

As soon as he had assumed office, Canning took up the question of Spanish America with great energy. He paid particular attention to the grievances of British merchants against the deplorable state of navigation in the American seas. Because of the general breakdown of law and order in the region, British merchants were suffering from the depredations of pirates who lurked on the coasts and in the harbours of Spanish America, not excepting those which were still under the control of the Spanish authorities. Worse still, their vessels were also confiscated by the Spanish authorities on the grounds that they were trading with the rebel colonies. The British government had repeatedly made representations to Spain, but the latter refused all compensation to British merchants and was totally unable to repress the piratical depredations. In Canning's view, 'a continued acquiescence in such injuries without vindication and without redress' was a policy impossible to 'preach successfully to Parliament'. He was determined that the government should take some decisive measures 'to soothe the growing impatience of our whole mercantile and manufacturing interests'. He had a clear idea of what these measures should be. The first was 'some vindication against

³⁸ Webster, *Castlereagh 1815-1822*, pp.405-36; *BILA*, vol.1, pp.3-17; Castlereagh's instructions for the Vienna conference, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.286-7.

Spain herself of the injuries' which British commerce had suffered in the American seas. In other words, Britain should take the task of suppressing the pirates into her own hands, demand directly of the Spanish authorities in America redress for the injuries, and, if they refused it, resort to reprisals. The second was the recognition of the new states in Spanish America. Canning had no doubt that, with all her naval power, Britain would not be able to protect her commerce from the piratical depredations without the co-operation of the new local authorities which occupied the ports and coasts of Spain's former colonies, and their co-operation could not be obtained without more or less formally recognising them. Canning's desire for an early recognition of the new states is manifestly shown in his instructions to Wellington of 27 September. In the instructions, he directed the Duke to discountenance 'any declaration in the name of the Allies, as to the maintenance of the rights and dominion of Spain over her revolted colonies', to decline, if the other allies should persevere in such a declaration, 'to take any share in it, or to fetter in any degree the discretion of your government, as to time, the mode, or the degree' of Britain's recognition of the new states, and to declare to the allies that the British government might 'come to some understanding more or less distinct, with some of those self-elected governments' before the opening of Parliament in early 1823.³⁹

Canning, however, soon learnt Wellington's strong opposition to Britain's recognition of the new states in Spanish America. In his private letters of 18 October and 10 November, the Duke explained that he considered it 'a point of honour' not to recognise the independence of the Spanish colonies in a hurry. He argued that Britain would lose 'character' in the eyes of the world by causing such severe damage to Spain

³⁹ Canning to Wellington, 27 September, 29 October 1822, *ibid.*, pp.304-5, 463-6.

for the sake of commercial interest when Spain was suffering from internal disorder and was threatened by France. In his view, this was particularly true when deserters from the British army and navy had been playing a significant part in the South American wars of independence. Interestingly, this does not mean that Wellington was not interested in the economic aspect of the question. But, while Canning believed that the government should promote the interests of a newly-emerging manufacturing and mercantile class, the Duke attached importance to the interests of British planters and landowners in the British West Indies. He argued that the opening of British ports to the products of Colombia, which were identical to those of the British West Indies, would bring immediate ruin to them. The Duke conceded that it might be necessary to send commercial agents to the principal ports of Spanish America for the protection of British merchants, but insisted that Britain should delay as far as possible more formal recognition such as the conclusion of commercial treaties with the new states.⁴⁰

Canning assured Wellington that the question should be 'kept entire' until his return. However, Wellington's opposition did not prevent Canning from taking some preparatory steps towards recognition. In October, he requested Frederick Robinson, the President of the Board of Trade, to prepare a sketch of desirable commercial arrangements with the new states. Robinson drew up a memorandum in which he rejected, obviously in conformity with Canning's desire, an idea to obtain from the new states exclusive commercial advantages at their expense in return for Britain's acknowledgement of their independence, and recommended that any commercial arrangements should be based on the principle of 'a fair reciprocity'.⁴¹ Then, about 15

⁴⁰ Wellington to Canning, 18 October, 10 November 1822, *ibid.*, pp.384-5, 516-7.

⁴¹ Canning to Wellington, 29 October 1822 (enclosing 'Heads of commercial and political articles to be

November Canning circulated among his cabinet colleagues a memorandum recommending that the British government should recognise Buenos Aires, Chile and Colombia and send commercial agents to Peru and Mexico. He declared his intention to prepare by the time of Wellington's return from Verona a note to give the Spanish government notice of Britain's decision to enter into relations with these new states.⁴²

Furthermore, Canning was vigorous in his pursuit of 'some vindication against Spain'. In his despatch of 18 October to à Court, he took up a particular case of a British merchant vessel, *Lord Collingwood*, among numerous cases of the injuries which had been inflicted on British commerce in the American seas. The vessel was captured by a royal Spanish privateer and confiscated by the Spanish authority at Porto Rico in 1821 partly on the ground that she had been trading with the rebel colony of Buenos Aires. In the summer of 1822 the British government made remonstrance against the confiscation in vain. Canning directed à Court to renew the demand for redress and reparation in a tone which should 'preclude delay and elicit a categorical answer'. À Court was to warn that, if the Spanish government failed to stop the royalist authorities in Spanish America from attacking British vessels and continued to refuse redress for the injuries, the British government would certainly choose to 'legalize the trade by a public recognition of the Spanish American governments'. Adding to this, à Court was to communicate to the Spanish government that the British government had sent orders to the commander of the British squadron in the West Indies not only to protect British traders but also to go after the pirates and, if necessary, to land on the Spanish island of Cuba, with or without the local governor's consent, in order to hunt

proposed in any agreement with the States of South America'), *ibid.*, pp.466-8.

⁴² 'Memorandum for the cabinet', *GCSOC*, vol.1, pp.48-60.

them down.⁴³ Canning in this instance singled out the case of *Lord Collingwood* from the expectation that the settlement of this notorious case would placate the dissatisfaction of British merchants, but on 31 October directed à Court to confront the Spanish government with 'the whole aggregate' of similar cases.⁴⁴

The orders to the British naval commander were bold ones, for their execution might have led to a violation of the Spanish territory. However, Canning soon came to think that they were not decisive enough. He attached particular importance to a report that the Spanish commander in Porto Cabello, the only place of which the Spanish forces were still in possession in the former Spanish viceroyalty of New Granada, had commissioned ships of war to capture the merchant ships of every country trading with the rebels.⁴⁵ The report drove Canning to propose, in the memorandum which he circulated among his cabinet colleagues about 15 November, that the government should send naval reinforcement to the West Indies with instructions to demand of the Spanish authority in the island of Porto Rico the immediate restitution of the *Lord Collingwood*, and, of the Spanish commander in Porto Cabello, the withdrawal of a blockade of the port and the retraction of the orders for the capture of merchant ships. If these demands were refused, it should capture or destroy any armed vessels under the Spanish flag and capture any merchant ships under the Spanish flag coming from or entering these ports.⁴⁶

Until the middle of November, still expecting the failure of the Congress to agree on a common policy against Spain, Canning had attached greater importance to the affairs

⁴³ Canning to à Court, 18 October 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.377-80.

⁴⁴ Canning to Wellington, 8 December 1822, *ibid.*, p.629; Canning to à Court, no.13, 31 October 1822, FO 185/86.

⁴⁵ Canning to Wellington, 8 November 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, p.514.

of Spanish America than to those of European Spain. In fact, in his despatch to Wellington of 8 November, he instructed the Duke to avoid acceding to a proposal for Britain's mediation between France and Spain unless Britain's refusal incurred the risk of a warlike combination of the continental allies against Spain. The most important reason for this was his fear that the 'coincidence' of the naval actions against the Spanish authorities in the West Indies with the acceptance of the role of mediator between France and Spain would be 'not less embarrassing in fact, than awkward in appearance'.⁴⁷ Even in October, Canning did not completely ignore the possibility of Franco-Spanish war. But, this possibility drove him to take a firmer rather than softer stance towards Spain on the affairs of Spanish America. He feared that, once the French crossed the Pyrenees, it would be more difficult for Britain to take hostile action against the Spanish authorities in the Caribbean or take steps towards the recognition of the new states in Spanish America, since the coincidence of any such action with a French attack on Spain would give an appearance of Anglo-French concert against Spain. To avoid such an appearance, Britain needed to 'hasten our proceedings'.⁴⁸

Canning soon obtained the cabinet's approval of his proposal for the despatch of naval forces to Porto Rico and Porto Cabello. On 23 November, he sent instructions for the use of the naval commanders to the Admiralty. The next day, he drew a despatch to à Court directing him to communicate to the Spanish government Britain's decision to send naval forces to Porto Rico and Porto Cabello.⁴⁹ About the same time, however, he came to fear that the decision of the Congress might force France into war, and started

⁴⁶ 'Memorandum for the cabinet', *GCSOC*, vol.1, pp.54-5.

⁴⁷ Canning to Wellington, 8 November 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.514-5.

⁴⁸ Canning to Liverpool, secret, 21 October 1822, *Canning Papers*, 70.

⁴⁹ Canning to à Court, no.16, 24 November 1822 (enclosing Canning to Bathurst, secret, 23 November

to consider offering Britain's mediation between France and Spain. Canning faced the possibility of the occurrence of at least one of the two embarrassing coincidences, that of the naval actions against Spain in America and the mediation on her behalf in Europe, and the other, of British and French actions against Spain. Canning had no doubt that of the two coincidences the first was less embarrassing than the second.⁵⁰ He must have feared that the coincidence of British and French attacks on Spain would be so embarrassing to Britain that, if a Franco-Spanish war broke out, she would be forced to postpone any action for the protection of British commerce in the American seas. War in Europe had to be prevented at any cost. If Britain's mediation was the best means to prevent it, she should offer it to France and Spain. On the other hand, however, the coincidence of the naval actions against Spain in the Caribbean and the mediation on her behalf in Europe would still be embarrassing to Britain. Canning delayed sending off his despatch of 24 November to à Court in the hope that a messenger from Verona would bring him the decision of the continental allies not to take any action against Spain and save Britain the trouble of offering her mediation between France and Spain. By early December, however, 'all the rumours of Verona & of Paris' describing the result of the Congress to be 'neither war nor peace, but *tending to war* between France & Spain', he abandoned his hope. On the other hand, reports from Madrid raised his hope that Spain might spare Britain from the embarrassing coincidence by immediately sending orders to Cuba, Porto Rico and Porto Cabello to satisfy Britain's demands. According to à Court, the majority in the Cortes were in favour not only of the immediate payment of such claims of British merchants for indemnification of their

1822), FO 185/87.

⁵⁰ Canning to Wellington, 6 December 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.627-8.

injuries that had been already admitted by the Spanish government, but also of the plan to request Britain's mediation for the settlement of its differences with the rebel colonies on the basis of the immediate acknowledgement of their independence except that of Peru. Moreover, Canning naturally hoped that Wellington's endeavours at the Congress to prevent any interference in Spain and the very offer of Britain's mediation between Spain and France would impress the Spaniards with Britain's friendly feeling towards them and induce them to do her justice.⁵¹

On 3 December, Canning sent off his despatch of 24 November to à Court with directions to press the Spanish government to send off orders without delay to Cuba, Porto Rico and Porto Cabello to execute the objects of Britain's naval operations. He still did not instruct à Court to offer Britain's mediation between France and Spain. But, he sent the minister copies of his correspondence with Wellington on the question of European Spain in order to enable him to impress the Spanish government with Britain's effort to protect Spain from external aggression in Europe. Besides, Canning instructed à Court to communicate to the Spanish government Britain's willingness to mediate between Spain and her late colonies on the basis of Spain's acknowledgement of their independence. He took great care lest this offer should restrict Britain's freedom of action, declaring that she would never bind herself to make her recognition of the new states dependent on the issue of the mediation and demanding that Spain should decide whether to request Britain's mediation or not as speedily as possible. By the end of November, however, he had given up his hope to recognise the new states before the opening of Parliament. As he wrote to à Court, the prevention of French

⁵¹ Canning to à Court, private and confidential, 3 December 1822, *GCHT*, p.386; Canning to Wellington, 6 December 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, p.628; À Court to Canning, no.30, 9 November 1822, FO 72/259.

intervention in Spain now took 'precedency' over the recognition of the new states in Spanish America as the object of his diplomacy. He still needed to obtain from Spain some concessions, which might enable him to placate the dissatisfaction of British merchants. But, as soon as he obtained them, he should devote all his energy to the task of maintaining peace in Europe.⁵² His hope was strengthened on 4 December, when Colomb, the Spanish chargé d'affaires in London, communicated to him a despatch from San Miguel, the Spanish foreign minister, requesting the British government to offer its mediation between Spain and France.⁵³ On 9 December, Canning sent another instruction to à Court to inform the Spanish government that it would be entitled to Britain's mediation between France and Spain, first by redressing her commercial grievances or by consenting to her naval operations, and secondly, by giving her confidential assurances that the King and his family were altogether safe from violence. Canning did not believe that the Spanish government could satisfy Britain's demands for reparation in all cases, but the suspension of naval operations required some 'eclatante' reparation such as the restitution of the *Lord Collingwood*.⁵⁴ At the same time, he instructed à Court to inform the Spanish government that the British government had decided to 'take no other step with regard to the late Spanish Colonies than the sending *commercial* agents, with no other than a *Consular* character' to the various ports of Spanish America and suspend 'for a time' the question of political recognition, in the hope that the decision would 'incline her [Spain] the more to seek

⁵² Canning to à Court, no.19, 30 November 1823, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.398-401; same to same, no.20, 30 November 1822, no.25, 3 December 1822, FO 185/87; same to same, private and confidential, 3 December 1822, *GCHT*, pp.385-7.

⁵³ San Miguel to Colomb, Extract, 15 November 1822, *BFSP*, vol.10, pp.13-6.

⁵⁴ Canning to à Court, no.32, 9 December 1822; FO 185/87; same to same, private and confidential, 9 December 1822, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41541.

our Mediation with France'.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, in Paris, Villèle won the first round of his conflict with the war party. On 5 December he instructed Viscount Chateaubriand, the French ambassador in London and one of the French plenipotentiaries at Verona, to request that the eastern allies should suspend the transmission of their despatches of protest to Madrid.⁵⁶ Wellington reached Paris on 9 December and immediately had an interview with Villèle. In the interview Wellington did not give Villèle a direct offer of Britain's mediation. He judged that Britain's mediation was particularly disagreeable to Louis XVIII and his ministers who 'would prefer anything to an acknowledgment of the influence of the British government' in Spain. Moreover, the French government had never specified the exact causes of its complaint against the Spanish government 'excepting the existence of the Spanish constitution'. In Wellington's opinion, it was impossible to mediate between the two irreconcilable principles. But, he did not fail to communicate to Villèle 'the sincere desire of his Majesty to endeavour to remove the difficulties of the relative situation of France and Spain'. In reply to this communication, Villèle told the Duke that he had offered the Duke of San Lorenzo, the Spanish ambassador at Paris, and Count Toreno, who stayed in Paris as an intermediary between the two governments without official status, France's mediation between Spain and any colony whose independence Spain was disposed to recognise. Moreover, he said that he had offered them to place a fleet at Spain's disposal if the Spanish government wished to send a Spanish prince and troops to Mexico or Peru, or to any other part of Spanish America with a view to making an endeavour to renew the connection between those

⁵⁵ Canning to à Court, no.35, 9 December 1822, *BILA*, vol.2, p.401.

⁵⁶ Nettement, *Histoire*, vol.6, pp.313-6; Villèle to Chateaubriand, 5 December 1822, *CV*, pp.79-81.

colonies and Spain. Villèle told the Duke that France would do everything which could tend to the benefit and honour of Spain, provided that she would endeavour to 'reconcile the King to their system' and that 'France should in all commercial advantages be upon the same footing with Great Britain'.⁵⁷ Soon after this interview, Wellington saw Toreno. His account of Villèle's remarks in their interview was even more striking. According to Toreno, Villèle declared that 'he did not care what their system of government was, provided the King was secure, and provided they applied to France to mediate for them with their colonies'.⁵⁸

Villèle's plan on Spanish America was completely new to Wellington. However, the truth was that Villèle had from the start attached much greater importance to the affairs of Spanish America than to those of European Spain, although he carefully concealed his true aims on the matter from Wellington during their interviews on 20 September.⁵⁹ His instructions for the Congress directed the French delegation to propose mediation by the Alliance between Spain and her American colonies as well as between Portugal and Brazil. If this mediation were refused by Spain and Portugal, the allied powers should recognise those American states which had won their independence. The French delegation was also to obtain an allied agreement denying to any power special commercial advantages in South America.⁶⁰ Villèle's intention was to prevent Britain from establishing advantageous position in South American trade by recognising the new states ahead of France.⁶¹ European recognition seemed to Villèle the only means

⁵⁷ Wellington to Canning, 9, 10 December 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.633-4, 635-40.

⁵⁸ 'Memorandum on M. Torreno's account of his conversation with M. Villèle', 12 December 1822, *ibid.*, pp.644-5.

⁵⁹ Wellington to Canning, 21 September 1822, *ibid.*, pp.296-7.

⁶⁰ William Spence Robertson, *France and Latin-American Independence* (Baltimore, Md., 1939), pp.229-30; Nichols, *European Pentarchy*, pp.145-6.

⁶¹ Villèle to Montmorency, 12, 15 October 1822, *Villèle*, vol.3, pp.115-6, 122-3.

by which France would be able to prevent Britain's single-handed recognition, since he did not dare to recognise the independence of the colonies which had revolted against the legitimate sovereign without the consent of the eastern allies. His desire to obtain the consent of the eastern allies to recognition is manifestly shown in his suggestion to Montmorency that the allies should agree to aid Spain by mediation or intervention in establishing a Spanish Bourbon prince in Mexico. In Mexico, the insurgents under the leadership of Agustín de Iturbide, a former Spanish commander who had been converted to the cause of independence by the end of 1820, had subdued the whole country by September 1821. Yet the Mexicans expressed their readiness to accept a Spanish prince as their sovereign. The Spanish government refused to treat with the Mexican government on the basis of Mexico's independence under the sovereignty of a Spanish Bourbon prince, and in May 1822 Iturbide was elected as Emperor Agustín I of Mexico. But, Villèle hoped that the Mexicans would still accept a Spanish prince as their sovereign. He obviously calculated that the success of this project would weaken the opposition of Spain and the eastern allies to the acknowledgement of the independence of Mexico.⁶²

But, also on this question, Villèle was badly served by his foreign minister at the Congress. Fearful lest the eastern allies should refuse Villèle's scheme as a violation of the principle of legitimacy, Montmorency left Verona without taking any initiative on the matter.⁶³ It was on 24 November, two days after Montmorency's departure, that the allied plenipotentiaries started their discussion on the Spanish colonial question. On that day, Wellington delivered them a memorandum warning that Spain's failure to

⁶² Leslie Bethell (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Latin America, vol.3: From Independence to c.1870* (Cambridge, 1985), pp.84-92; Villèle to Montmorency, 23 September 1822, *Villèle*, vol.3, pp.70-2.

suppress the depredations of pirates in the American seas should compel Britain to recognise 'the existence *de facto* of some one or more of these self-created Governments'.⁶⁴ While the Austrian, Prussian and Russian plenipotentiaries in their answers of 28 November all expressed a strong repugnance to the measure which should violate the principle of legitimacy, Chateaubriand in his reply essentially followed a line of policy prescribed by Villèle. But, in face of the eastern allies' opposition to recognition, he was cautious in expressing his government's desire to recognise the new states, and confined himself to expressing its hope that the allies would in concert with the King of Spain find a way 'to reconcile the rights of legitimacy with the necessities of politics, for the common welfare of governments'.⁶⁵ In the end, the allied plenipotentiaries ended their discussions on the subject without reaching any decision, leaving Britain 'at full liberty' to take any step which she might think necessary.⁶⁶

Thus, Villèle's plan to restrain Britain's freedom of action within the framework of the Alliance did not materialise. His proposition to San Lorenzo was an attempt at obtaining through a separate negotiation with the Spanish government what he had failed to obtain through the allied negotiation at Verona. He obviously calculated that he would be able to trade a peace in Europe with Spain for her acceptance of France's mediation between her and her colonies, which might, in its turn, enable him to prevail on the French cabinet to maintain peace with Spain. Meanwhile, he did not conceal from Canning his hostility and suspicion towards Britain's aims in Spanish America. In

⁶³ Montmorency to Villèle, 9, 23 October 1822, *ibid.*, pp.107-8, 142-5.

⁶⁴ 'Memorandum on the Spanish Colonies of America', 24 November 1822, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.76-8.

⁶⁵ The Austrian, French, Prussian, and Russian answers to Wellington's memorandum of 24 November 1822 are printed in *ibid.*, pp.80-3.

late November, Villèle told Stuart that the French government was 'extremely anxious' about the possibility of Britain's violation of the Spanish territory in Cuba, and also expressed his suspicion that the Spanish government had been attempting to get Britain's support in its disputes with France by offering commercial advantages to her. Canning promptly gave Villèle assurances on these two points.⁶⁷ However, far from satisfied with Canning's assurances, Villèle told Wellington on 9 December that 'France could not submit to an extension of our [Britain's] advantages and our territory'.⁶⁸

Canning was, of course, relieved to know the decision of the French government to request the eastern powers to suspend the transmission of their despatches to Madrid. But, he was far from satisfied with the Duke's reports on his interview with Villèle. Two points caused him anxiety. The first was Wellington's failure to offer Britain's mediation to the French government. To say the truth, Canning was quite in agreement with Wellington in thinking that their 'utter ignorance' of the causes of France's grievances against Spain would make the mediation very difficult. 'The real, though unavowed cause', wrote Canning, 'is perhaps the passion which is now felt in France for something of *éclat* and of national exertion; a sort of false appetite for glory' Canning feared that it would be very difficult to 'combat this sentiment directly', even though Britain would be able to 'strip it of the pretexts' with which it was disguised.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, in his despatch of 13 December Canning again instructed Wellington to offer Britain's mediation immediately to the French government 'for the clear and

⁶⁶ Wellington to Canning, 29 November 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, p.616.

⁶⁷ Stuart to Canning, nos.324 and 325, 25 November 1822, FO 27/276; Canning to Stuart, no.12, 29 November 1822 (enclosing Marcellus to Canning, 26 November 1822, and Canning to Marcellus, 28 November 1822), nos.14 and 15, 1 December 1822, FO 146/50.

perfect discharge of the duty of the British government'. Obviously, Canning and other members of the cabinet feared that in case of French invasion of Spain their failure to offer mediation would be criticised in Parliament.⁷⁰

The second cause of Canning's anxiety was Villèle's overtures on Spanish America. As soon as he received the Duke's report of his interview with the French premier, he wrote:

The truth seems to be, that having got the three continental Powers at their back, the use which M. de Villèle intends to make of them with Spain is not against Spain, but against us. He will say (or probably has said) to Spain, 'See, we have all Europe ready to fall upon you. We can crush you in a moment; but give up all connexion with England, and we will spare you; nay more, we will help you to do her and her commerce all manner of harm.'⁷¹

Canning doubted if Villèle could obtain the eastern allies' consent to his sudden change of course.⁷² However, he judged that Britain should forestall Villèle's project by 'rapid as well as decisive' action, that is, by obtaining immediately from Spain the settlement of Britain's commercial grievances and the request for Britain's mediation.⁷³ On 17 December Canning sent à Court yet another instruction, directing him to press the Spanish government to satisfy Britain's demands and solicit Britain's mediation. He directed à Court to lay aside for the present any cases of remonstrance which appeared to him the Spanish government was never prepared to satisfy.⁷⁴

Even after he received Canning's instructions of 13 December, Wellington was still

⁶⁸ Wellington to Canning, 10 December 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, p.640.

⁶⁹ Canning to Wellington, 8 December 1822, *ibid.*, pp.629-30.

⁷⁰ Canning to Wellington, 13 December 1822, 13 December 1822, 6 p.m., *ibid.*, pp.649-51.

⁷¹ Canning to Wellington, 13 December 1822, 6 p.m., *ibid.*, p.650.

⁷² Canning to Wellington, 17 December 1822, *ibid.*, p.658.

⁷³ Canning to Liverpool, private and secret, 15 December 1822, Canning Papers, 70.

⁷⁴ Canning to à Court, no.37, secret, 17 December 1822, FO 185/87.

against offering France Britain's mediation. But, on 17 December Wellington presented Montmorency a note to offer the mediation of Britain. On 19 December, Louis XVIII, Villèle and Montmorency all told the Duke that France had no intention to ask for or to accept Britain's mediation. Wellington urged the French ministers to give an answer to his note which would enable Britain to continue her good offices in Spain, and Montmorency promised to do so.⁷⁵

Meanwhile, Wellington found that after 9 December Villèle no longer talked about his Spanish American project. Obviously, Villèle abandoned the project as soon as he told it to the Duke. On reflection he must have concluded that he would not be able to obtain the consent of the eastern allies to his project and, if he could not obtain it, France would be totally isolated in Europe. The French premier in fact feared that the eastern allies would not agree even to the suspension of the transmission of their despatches to Madrid.⁷⁶ His fear became a reality on 17 December, when a messenger arrived at Paris from Verona telling him that both Alexander and Metternich had agreed to grant France only some days' delay in the transmission of the despatches.⁷⁷ On 19 December, Villèle in his interview with Wellington stated 'distinctly the desire of the French government to act in concert with that of his Majesty' on the question of Spanish America.⁷⁸ On the other hand, the Duke found that Villèle was not so indifferent to the internal situation in European Spain as Toreno's account of their conversation had led him to believe. But, Villèle's demands were certainly very moderate. The French premier told Wellington that he was 'very indifferent as to the

⁷⁵ Wellington to Canning, 16 (a despatch and a letter), 17, 19 December 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.653-5, 656, 660; Wellington to Montmorency, 17 December 1822, *ibid.*, pp.655-6.

⁷⁶ Wellington to Canning, 16 December 1822, *ibid.*, p.651.

⁷⁷ Wellington to Canning, 17 December 1822, *ibid.*, pp.656-7; Chateaubriand to Villèle, 12 December

nature or degree of the alteration' of the Spanish constitution, but only that the revision should be made in a mode which should 'imply the consent and approbation of the Sovereign to the whole system', in other words, in a mode which would make the constitution '*légitime*'.⁷⁹ Wellington left Paris on the morning of 20 December. Canning was satisfied with the development of events in Paris after 9 December. France's refusal of Britain's mediation did not preclude her from employing good offices between the French and Spanish governments. Moreover, Villèle's conditions of peace were moderate enough to encourage Canning's hope.⁸⁰

The day Wellington left Paris, Chateaubriand returned to Paris with the decision of the eastern allies that they would delay the transmission of their despatches to Madrid only until the French government modified its despatch and that they would withdraw their missions from Madrid if the Spanish government did not promise to revise the constitution.⁸¹ Chateaubriand's return was a signal for the start of the second round of the conflict between Villèle and the war party. Shortly after his return, the French council of ministers met to discuss the question. Montmorency argued for transmitting his despatch to La Garde to Madrid simultaneously with those of the eastern powers and withdrawing the French mission from Madrid in the event of the withdrawal of those of the eastern allies. Villèle proposed that the government should send La Garde a more moderate despatch than the one prepared by Montmorency, unaccompanied by an order to quit Madrid. But, all the other members of the council took sides with

1822, *Villèle*, vol.3, pp.265-6.

⁷⁸ Wellington to Stuart, 21 December 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, p.664.

⁷⁹ Wellington to Canning, 16, 19 December 1822, *ibid.*, pp.652-3, 659-60.

⁸⁰ Canning to Wellington, 23 December 1822, 11 a.m., *ibid.*, pp.664-5.

⁸¹ Stuart to Canning, no.350, 23 December 1822, FO 27/277.

Montmorency.⁸² On 24 December, acting under the direction of Count Pozzo di Borgo, the Russian ambassador in Paris, the representatives of the eastern powers in Paris sent off their despatches to Madrid without waiting for the decision of the French government. A final showdown came on the afternoon of 25 December when the French council met under the presidency of the King. In the council, Villèle was again totally isolated. But, Louis XVIII overruled the council in favour of the premier. Villèle immediately sent off his despatch to La Garde to be communicated to the Spanish government. He assured Stuart that it was worded moderately enough to avoid a rupture of Franco-Spanish diplomatic relations. Montmorency resigned from the government after transmitting his answer to Wellington's note of 17 December, declining Britain's mediation but accepting her good offices.⁸³

The news of Villèle's victory encouraged Canning. But, he could not afford to waste a breathing space Villèle's victory gave him. He immediately directed à Court to communicate to San Miguel his hope that Spain might react temperately to the communications of the continental allies and solicit Britain's good offices.⁸⁴ At the same time, Canning decided to send Lord Fitzroy Somerset, who had served as the Duke's aide-de-camp and military secretary during the Peninsula War, to Madrid without any official character but with a memorandum of Wellington. In the memorandum, responding to Villèle's demand that Spain should make her constitution 'légitime', Wellington emphasised the necessity that the constitution should be altered 'in concert with the King' and his powers and prerogatives in the new system should be

⁸² Nettement, *Histoire*, vol.6, pp.322-9.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp.335-41; Villèle, vol.3, pp.274-6; Stuart to Canning, no.356, 25 December 1822, no.360, 30 December 1822, FO 27/277; Montmorency to Wellington, 24 December 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, p.667.

⁸⁴ Canning to à Court, private and confidential, 29 December 1822, *GCHT*, pp.387-9.

'such as in reason a king ought to be satisfied with'. Canning hoped that Spain might offer concessions 'less reluctantly' through the person acting on behalf of Wellington, 'the friend and well-wisher of Spain', than directly to the British minister.⁸⁵

Meanwhile, in Madrid, San Miguel on 21 December told à Court that the Spanish government had decided to order the governor of Porto Cabello to raise the blockade of the neighbouring coasts.⁸⁶ Then, on 24 December, à Court finally obtained from San Miguel a promise to demand immediately from the Cortes full powers to settle all the differences with Britain.⁸⁷ Immediately on the receipt of à Court's report, in early January 1823 Canning sent directions to the British naval commander in the West Indies to suspend the executions of his instructions, so far as they related to Porto Rico and Porto Cabello.⁸⁸ The Cortes for its part passed a decree stipulating the immediate payment of compensation for some of the claims of British merchants and the nomination of arbitrators to examine other cases.⁸⁹

On the other hand, San Miguel denied any intention on the part of the Spanish government to ask for Britain's mediation. Ironically, long after Villèle abandoned his Spanish American project, the reports of San Lorenzo and Toreno on Villèle's moderate remarks regarding the revision of the constitution and his offer of assistance on the question of Spanish America came to mislead the Spaniards into believing that

⁸⁵ Canning to à Court, 29 December 1822, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41541; Canning to Somerset, 6 January 1823 (enclosing 'Memorandum of the Duke of Wellington, for Lord Fitzroy Somerset', 6 January 1823), *BFSP*, vol.10, pp.31-4; Canning to à Court, 6 January 1823, *ibid.*, pp.34-5; same to same, private no.7, 8 January 1823, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41542.

⁸⁶ À Court to Canning, no.55, 22 December 1822, FO 72/259.

⁸⁷ À Court to Canning, private, 24 December 1822, Canning Papers, 118; same to same, no.57, 24 December 1822, FO 72/259.

⁸⁸ Canning to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, secret, 2 January 1823, enclosed in Canning to à Court, no.2, 7 January 1823, FO 185/91.

⁸⁹ Decree of the Cortes of Spain, 9 January 1823 (Translation), *BFSP*, vol.10, pp.867-8.

there was little possibility of war.⁹⁰ The communication of Villèle's despatch of 25 December to La Garde strengthened their false sense of security. In fact, Villèle's despatch was far more moderate than those of the eastern powers, even suggesting that, happy to content himself with the promise of the eastern allies to support France in the event of war, he was reluctant to communicate it to the Spanish government.⁹¹ Besides, La Garde did not fail to explain the premier's desire to maintain diplomatic relations even after the representatives of the eastern allies left Madrid. The Spanish government in its reply demanded the withdrawal of the army of observation without offering any concessions. But, this was more moderate than the answer given to the representatives of the eastern powers, in which San Miguel wrote that their notes were full of 'perverted facts' and 'calumnious suppositions'.⁹² On 9 and 10 January the representatives of the eastern powers demanded passports. San Miguel transmitted their passports on 11 January.⁹³ On 12 January, San Miguel sent à Court a note telling him the Spanish government's wish to accept Britain's good offices, but the note did not contain a clear promise of the modification of the constitution, while it demanded the withdrawal of the French army of observation.⁹⁴

The development of events in Paris during the month of January proved that the Spaniards were mistaken in thinking that there was no imminent danger of war. In Paris,

⁹⁰ À Court to Canning, private, 24 December 1822, Canning Papers, 118; same to same, no.57, 24 December 1822, no.59, 26 December 1822, FO 72/259.

⁹¹ The despatches of the Prussian, Russian, Austrian and French governments to their representatives in Madrid are printed in *BFSP*, vol.10, pp.909-20, 930-1.

⁹² À Court to Canning, private, 5 January 1823, private, 8 January 1823, Canning Papers, 118; same to same, no.6, 7 January 1823, FO 72/269; Instructions to the Representatives of Spain, at the Courts of Vienna, Berlin, and St. Petersburg, relative to the Decisions of the Congress of Verona, Circular, 9 January 1823 (Translation), and Instructions to the Spanish Minister at Paris, 9 January 1823 (Translation), *BFSP*, vol.10, pp.925-6, 931-3.

⁹³ Communications between the Austrian, Prussian and Russian chargé d'affaires and San Miguel are printed in *ibid.*, pp.927-9.

⁹⁴ À Court to Canning, no.12, 12 January 1823 (enclosing San Miguel's note of 12 January 1823), FO

the day Montmorency tendered his resignation, Villèle offered the post of foreign minister to Chateaubriand, who accepted it on 27 December.⁹⁵ Canning welcomed the news of the resignation of Montmorency, who 'was as much bent upon keeping France and Her Continental Allies closely united, as M. de Villèle now professes himself to be desirous, of separating them from Her in action'.⁹⁶ But, Chateaubriand's appointment was another matter, and Canning was, of course, concerned about the effects it might have on the policy of the French government. As soon as he was informed of the news, Canning on 31 December wrote a private letter to Chateaubriand, praising Villèle's decision to avoid a diplomatic rupture with Spain and offering his service for the maintenance of peace.⁹⁷ But, on his assumption of office Chateaubriand immediately started to pursue a policy which was no less warlike than that of Montmorency. On 1 January 1823, he directed La Garde to hold a firmer tone towards the Spanish government than he had hitherto taken.⁹⁸ Chateaubriand repeatedly instructed Marcellus to tell Canning that he desired peace, but only with 'the honour and the safety of France'.⁹⁹ On receiving San Miguel's answer to Villèle's despatch to La Garde, Chateaubriand on 18 January instructed La Garde to demand his passports.¹⁰⁰

On the other hand, after Chateaubriand's assumption of office, the French government started to indicate its conditions of peace more clearly than before. They included the publication by the Spanish government of a general amnesty and the modification of the Spanish constitution including the creation of the second legislative

72/269.

⁹⁵ *Nettement, Histoire*, vol.6, pp.345-7; *Villèle*, vol.3, pp.278-9; M. Louis de Viel-Castel, *Histoire de la Restauration* (20 vols., Paris, 1866-77), vol.12, pp.20-8.

⁹⁶ Canning to Stuart, no.3, 10 January 1823, FO 146/55.

⁹⁷ Canning to Chateaubriand, 31 December 1822, *CV*, pp.204-5.

⁹⁸ Chateaubriand to La Garde, 1 January 1823, *Chateaubriand*, vol.4, pp.2-4.

⁹⁹ Chateaubriand to Marcellus, 6, 13 January 1823, *ibid.*, pp.17-8, 29.

chamber and the reestablishment of the royal prerogatives such as the right of veto and the right to choose ministers.¹⁰¹ But, Chateaubriand had no intention to accept Britain's good offices between the French and Spanish governments. All that he wanted from Britain was, as he wrote to Canning on 14 January, to tell the Spaniards: 'your political system is monstrous, it justly alarms Europe and above all France: change it, or do not count on any support, on any assistance of arms or money on the part of England.'¹⁰² In the middle of January, the French government brought forward a plan to settle the Franco-Spanish dispute by a direct negotiation at the frontier between Ferdinand VII and the Duke of Angoulême, a nephew of Louis XVIII who had been designated to command the French army in the forthcoming war.¹⁰³ His opposition to war notwithstanding, Villèle was in agreement with the foreign minister in this regard, declaring to Stuart that France could never consent to 'the interference of His Majesty's Government, "en première ligne", in the conduct of a negotiation with a Bourbon Prince, and a Neighbouring Power'.¹⁰⁴

Canning had no means to halt this unfavourable development in Paris. All that he could do was to point out to Chateaubriand in private letters the danger that a war with Spain 'would shake the monarchy of France and its yet unconfirmed institutions to their foundation' and ask him 'to keep *one* channel open' to obtain concessions from Spain.¹⁰⁵ It was generally believed in Paris that the decision to attack Spain would lead to Villèle's resignation, and Stuart still hoped that Chateaubriand's uncertainty about his own survival in the government after Villèle's downfall would compel him to

¹⁰⁰ Chateaubriand to La Garde, 18 January 1823, *CV*, pp.216-7.

¹⁰¹ Stuart to Canning, no.13, 16 January 1823, no.23, 24 January 1823, FO 27/286.

¹⁰² Chateaubriand to Canning, 14 January 1823, *CV*, p.213.

¹⁰³ Chateaubriand's two despatches to La Garde, 18 January 1823, *BFSP*, vol.10, pp.933-6.

co-operate with the premier. This report revived Canning's hopes which had been 'nearly extinguished'.¹⁰⁶ But, when he received Louis XVIII's speech on the opening of the French chambers, his hopes were shattered. On 28 January, Louis declared from the throne that his army of 100,000 men was ready to march 'to conserve the throne of Spain to a descendant of Henry IV, to preserve that beautiful Kingdom from ruin, and to reconcile her with Europe'. 'Let Ferdinand VII', he continued, 'be free to give to his people institutions which they cannot obtain but from him and which will, by assuring her repose, dispel just uneasiness of France: in that moment war will end'¹⁰⁷ The speech did not mean an immediate war. Chateaubriand had some expectation that La Garde's departure and the King's speech would cause 'some commotion' in Madrid.¹⁰⁸ As late as early March, he expected that a growing threat of war might cause a political upheaval in Spain which would bring those who desired a compromise with France into power.¹⁰⁹ However, France had taken a decision and Spain now had only a short time to make concessions and avert a war.¹¹⁰

As soon as he received Louis XVIII's speech, Canning proposed to omit the profession of Britain's neutrality in the event of war from George IV's speech at the opening of Parliament.¹¹¹ In accordance with his proposal, the King's speech on 4 February made no mention of Britain's future policy in the event of war.¹¹² But,

¹⁰⁴ Stuart to Canning, no.23, 24 January 1823, FO 27/286.

¹⁰⁵ Canning to Chateaubriand, 11, 21, 24 January 1823, *CV*, pp.207-9, 219-27.

¹⁰⁶ Stuart to Canning, no.21, 23 January 1823, FO 27/286; Canning to Stuart, private and confidential, 27 January 1823, Canning Papers, 109.

¹⁰⁷ Speech of the King of France, 28 January 1823, *BFSP*, vol.10, pp.758-9.

¹⁰⁸ Chateaubriand to Marcellus, 1 February 1823, *Chateaubriand*, vol.4, p.89.

¹⁰⁹ Chateaubriand to Marcellus, 6 March 1823, *ibid.*, p.137.

¹¹⁰ Chateaubriand to Marcellus, 28 January 1823, *ibid.*, p.76.

¹¹¹ Canning to Liverpool, secret and confidential, 31 January 1823, secret, 1 February 1823, Canning Papers, 70.

¹¹² *Hansard*, vol.8, The King's Speech, 4 February 1823, cols.1-3.

Canning did not intend war. When Stuart in his despatch of 30 January suggested an allusion in the King's speech to the probability of a maritime war against France in the event of French invasion of Spain, Canning flatly rejected the idea telling the ambassador that such a menace would only help the French government to 'popularize' its war against Spain, which was by Stuart's account very unpopular in France, by enabling it to appeal to anti-British sentiment of Frenchmen.¹¹³ Besides, Canning knew that a threat of war could be only an empty one. In a cabinet memorandum of this period Canning wrote that a maritime war would be ineffective in assisting Spain, and Britain was not prepared for a land war. Canning did not believe that Austria would enter war even if Britain declared war against France. But, if Russia and Prussia came to France's aid, Hanover and Portugal would be at risk and the Netherlands would take sides with the continental powers severing her special relations with Britain. Britain's policy should be 'in the first instance' neutrality. Only in two cases, if France tried to aid Spain to recover her American colonies or if she invaded Portugal, Britain should fight.¹¹⁴ Canning's intention was to use an indirect threat of war. In England Louis XVIII's declaration of the doctrines of legitimacy and divine right was disapproved by Tories and Whigs alike both in Parliament and in newspapers, in Canning's words, '*throughout the nation*'. In his despatch of 3 February to Stuart, Canning himself denounced it as 'a principle which strikes at the root of the British Constitution'. Canning attempted to imply that the government might be forced into war by public opinion against its will. There was a sign that the French government was anxious about Britain's position in the event of war. On the day of the King's speech Marcellus

¹¹³ Stuart to Canning, no.31, 30 January 1823, FO 27/286; Canning to Stuart, private and secret, 4 February 1823, Canning Papers, 109.

enquired of Canning if the speech would contain a declaration of neutrality. On 7 February, Canning wrote to Chateaubriand himself: 'you have united the opinions of this whole nation *as those of one man* against France. . . . The government has not on this occasion *led* the public; quite otherwise. . . . if the word «neutrality» had found its way into the speech, we should have had to combat the combined efforts of all parties in the House of Commons, to get rid of it.'¹¹⁵ But, Canning did not expect that his bluff alone would deter France from war. Obviously, the French government was now 'too much advanced' to retreat without disgrace or without the danger of confusion at home. All that he intended was to cause some anxiety and hesitation on the minds of the French ministers which might give à Court and Somerset some extra time to obtain concessions from the Spanish government. As early as 11 January Canning instructed à Court to make San Miguel clearly understand Britain's unshakable determination to maintain 'a strict and rigorous neutrality' in a war between France and Spain. On 9 February he again instructed à Court to prevent the Spanish government from falling into a false security by placing its hopes in Britain's participation in a war, and to get it to revise the constitution 'at the present moment'.¹¹⁶

Chateaubriand's reaction to Canning's bluff was to remind him that France could count on the support of the eastern powers against Britain. On 15 February Chateaubriand conferred with the representatives of the eastern powers in Paris on the matter. According to Chateaubriand, they 'thought unanimously that their Courts would

¹¹⁴ Canning's memorandum, *GCSOC*, vol.1, pp.85-8.

¹¹⁵ Canning to Stuart, 3 February 1823, *BFSP*, vol.10, pp.51-3; same to same, no.11, 4 February 1823, FO 146/55; same to same, private and secret, 4 February 1823, private and confidential, 5 February 1823, secret and confidential, 5 February 1823, Canning Papers, 109; Canning to Chateaubriand, 7 February 1823, *CV*, pp.235-7.

¹¹⁶ Canning to à Court, no.8, 11 January 1823, no.20, 9 February 1823, FO 185/91; same to same, private, 9 February 1823, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41542.

not have any difficulty in declaring to England that, if she attacked us [France], the continental powers would be obliged to make common cause with us'.¹¹⁷ The Austrian ambassador's account was somewhat different. According to Baron Vincent, in his private conversation with Chateaubriand which preceded the conference, he told the French foreign minister that Austria's assistance to France against Britain would depend on 'a nature which France would give to the enterprise'.¹¹⁸ In fact, alarmed by signs that the French ministers were trying to establish a moderate constitution in Spain, in early February Metternich started desperate efforts to prevent French intervention or, at least, to control her aims in it. He told the Marquis of Caraman, the French ambassador in Vienna, that the allied powers could not accept the modification of the same constitution that they had just condemned openly, and that the question of Spain's future regime should be decided only by Ferdinand himself after the restoration of his liberty.¹¹⁹ At the same time, he started an attempt to gain for Austria control over Spain's future by making Ferdinand I of the Two Sicilies, the uncle of Ferdinand VII of Spain and Austria's puppet, the regent of Spain during Ferdinand VII's captivity. At Metternich's instigation, the Neapolitan government in its note of 19 February proposed the idea.¹²⁰ But, Metternich's efforts to control French action did not trouble Chateaubriand. Alexander was as determined as ever to drive France into action against Spain.¹²¹ Chateaubriand was certain that Alexander would promise his support against Britain, and 'Austria and Prussia would be obliged to follow'.¹²² Chateaubriand declined the Neapolitan proposal in his note of 10 March. Russia also flatly rejected

¹¹⁷ Chateaubriand to Caraman, 16 February 1823, *Chateaubriand*, vol.4, pp.105-6.

¹¹⁸ De Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, vol.2, p.718.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.713.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.725-6; Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy*, pp.232-3.

it.¹²³

Meanwhile in London, Austria's uneasiness about the French policy after the Congress did not escape Canning. Moreover, in Paris, the representatives of the eastern powers including Pozzo di Borgo did not conceal their dissatisfaction with Louis XVIII's speech, regarding it as a manifestation of the intention to give the question a French rather than a European character.¹²⁴ Canning's last attempt to stop French intervention was to appeal to the eastern powers to prevent France from embarking on what was fast becoming a purely French enterprise to enhance her influence and prestige. On 25 February, Canning instructed his representatives at St. Petersburg, Vienna and Berlin to request that the eastern allies should direct their representatives at Paris to renew the conference of the four continental powers and exert all their influence to deter France from 'her present offensive Enterprise' which was clearly beyond the scope of defensive engagements of the *procès-verbal*. Canning did not expect 'any advantage from the interference of Russia with the French Government, in the present crisis of their deliberations'. But, he was at least certain that the two German powers still desired the prevention of any French invasion of Spain. He instructed Stuart to communicate to the Austrian and Prussian representatives in Paris his despatches of 25 February to Vienna and Berlin and urge them to act in anticipation of instructions from their governments.¹²⁵

But, Canning's appeal to the eastern powers did not produce any good result. In

¹²¹ Nesselrode to Pozzo di Borgo, 23 January 1823, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.23-5.

¹²² Chateaubriand to Marcellus, 10 March 1823, *Chateaubriand*, vol.4, p.142.

¹²³ Chateaubriand to Ruffo, 10 March 1823, *ibid.*, pp.139-40; De Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, vol.2, pp.727-8; Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy*, p.233.

¹²⁴ Stuart to Canning, no.31, 30 January 1823, FO 27/286.

¹²⁵ Canning to Bagot, no.5, 25 February 1823, FO 181/52; Canning to Gordon, no.5, 25 February 1823, FO 7/176; Canning to Rose, no.4, 25 February 1823, FO 244/15; Canning to Stuart, no.20, 25 February

Paris, Vincent declined to take any action without instructions from home.¹²⁶ Certain that the Tsar would never agree to dissuade France from war, both Metternich and Bernstorff declined to take any positive action in response to Canning's request, although the former expressed his strong disapprobation of the conducts of the French government after the Congress and the latter his desire for the maintenance of peace.¹²⁷ It soon became clear that they had not been mistaken. On 15 March the Tsar sent a despatch to Pozzo di Borgo, instructing him to assure the French government that, if Britain declared war against France, he would regard it as 'a general attack against all the allies' and that he would 'accept without hesitation the consequences of this principle'.¹²⁸ Two days later Canning's despatch reached St. Petersburg. Nesselrode and Alexander, of course, refused to comply with his request.¹²⁹

Canning's faint hope was shattered when the Spaniards failed to yield to France. According to à Court, 'the great Mass of the Nation' wished for peace and the modification of the constitution. In fact, in private many leading Spaniards admitted to à Court and Somerset that the constitution required very essential modifications in order to give stability to their country. But, their fear of being accused of betraying their cause and their distrust of Ferdinand prevented them from taking the initiative in coming to a compromise with the King.¹³⁰ In the middle of February the Cortes granted to the

1823, FO 146/55.

¹²⁶ Stuart to Canning, no.80, 3 March 1823, FO 27/288.

¹²⁷ Gordon to Canning, no.13, 18 March 1823, FO 7/176; Metternich to Esterhazy, 20 March 1823, *Metternich*, vol.4, pp.34-9; Rose to Canning, no.21, confidential, 10 March 1823, FO 64/135.

¹²⁸ Nesselrode to Pozzo di Borgo, 15 March 1823, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.54-6.

¹²⁹ Bagot to Canning, no.9, 22 March 1823, nos.17 and 18, 26 March 1823, FO 65/139; Nesselrode to Lieven, 27 March 1823, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.74-5.

¹³⁰ À Court to Canning, no.41, 12 February 1823, FO 72/270; Somerset to Canning, no.1, 21 January 1823, no.2, secret, 25 January 1823, no.3, secret, 26 January 1823, no.4, 10 February 1823, no.5, 20 February 1823, FO 72/274.

ministers the right to remove the seat of government from Madrid to the south.¹³¹ Ferdinand's refusal to leave Madrid and his dismissal of the San Miguel ministry caused a crisis in Madrid.¹³² Beltrán de Lis, an influential banker who was in secret communication with the French government through James de Rothschild, tried to form a new government on the understanding that it should immediately enter into negotiations with France, and also attempted to prevent the King's removal in the hope that the delay in the removal of the government from Madrid would force the Cortes to negotiate with France.¹³³ The Cortes, however, refused to accept a new ministry unless the King left Madrid, and decided that the King should leave Madrid for Seville on 20 March and the Cortes should follow him.¹³⁴ This decision made the immediate modification of the constitution impossible. In fact, when the failure of Beltrán de Lis' attempt reached Paris, Chateaubriand told Stuart that, all his endeavours to prevent a war having failed, the French army would cross the frontier at the beginning of April.¹³⁵

Canning was still reluctant to declare Britain's neutrality in the forthcoming war. On the other hand, the King and most of his colleagues in the cabinet were highly dissatisfied with his policy to use an indirect menace of war against France. Some members of the cabinet in fact openly expressed to Marcellus in the middle of February their sympathy with the French cause against the Spanish revolutionaries¹³⁶, while

¹³¹ À Court to Canning, no.44, 16 February 1823, FO 72/270.

¹³² À Court to Canning, no.47, 19 February 1823, separate and secret, 20 February 1823, no.48, 20 February 1823, *ibid.*

¹³³ À Court to Canning, no.49, 21 February 1823, no.60, 7 March 1823, *ibid.*; Bertrand Gille, *Histoire de la maison Rothschild. Tome I: Des origines à 1848* (Genève, 1965), pp.197-200; De Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, vol.2, pp.729-31.

¹³⁴ À Court to Canning, private, 5 March 1823, no.63, 14 March 1823, FO 72/270; Somerset to Canning, no.6, 8 March 1823, FO 72/274.

¹³⁵ Stuart to Canning, no.99, 13 March 1823, FO 27/288.

¹³⁶ Harold Temperley, 'Canning, Wellington, and George the Fourth', *English Historical Review*, vol.38, no.150 (April 1923), p.210.

George IV in early March criticised his foreign secretary's stance as 'double-faced' in his conversation with Madame Lieven, the wife of the Russian ambassador and the confidante of Metternich, and said that 'we will never help Spain'.¹³⁷ Wellington also criticised Canning's 'tone of great harshness & acrimony' in his communication with the French government, believing that more conciliatory attitude must have been more effective in inducing it to refrain from attacking Spain.¹³⁸

Canning turned a deaf ear to this and other criticisms of his diplomacy on the affairs of Spain. However, among Wellington's arguments for an immediate declaration of neutrality, there was one which Canning cannot have ignored. The Duke argued that if the government delayed declaring for neutrality, 'the country and Parliament will declare for neutrality before the government will have an opportunity of doing so'.¹³⁹ Liverpool also feared that a declaration of neutrality would be '*extorted* from us' by the public's desire to avoid being involved in war. Britain would lose all her influence in Europe, if foreign countries believed that the government was 'forced to adopt the Policy of Neutrality because the People of the Country were unwilling or thought themselves unable to go to War'.¹⁴⁰ Canning himself knew that he 'had but to take off the pressure of my finger from many mouths, now closed in deference to the policy, & in reliance on the prudence of Govern[men]t.—to let loose the cry of "peace, through neutrality, so long as it can be honourably preserved" . . .'.¹⁴¹ On 18 March in the House of Commons Canning admitted that his hopes for the maintenance of peace were 'almost extinguished', and said that there was nothing 'in *present Circumstances*'

¹³⁷ Madame Lieven to Metternich, 5 March 1823, *Princess Lieven*, p.197.

¹³⁸ 24 January 1823, *Mrs. Arbuthnot*, vol.1, p.206; Wellington to Canning, 21 March 1823, *Wellington*, vol.2, pp.73-4.

¹³⁹ Wellington to Lamb, 11 March 1823, *ibid.*, p.64.

which needed to excite an apprehension that Britain would be involved in hostilities. This was virtually a declaration of the government's intention to maintain neutrality in the forthcoming war. After 18 March he no longer tried to stop the French invasion of Spain, but did his best to limit its damage to Britain's interests. On 18 March, Canning directed Stuart to tell Chateaubriand his regret that the assurances of the French government that France would never attack Portugal and would confine the operation of the war in Spain to an auxiliary character had not yet assumed a public shape.¹⁴² Then, on 31 March he instructed Stuart to inform Chateaubriand that, provided France did not occupy Spain permanently, attempt to bring under her dominion any of Spain's former colonies either by conquest or by cession from Spain, or invade Portugal, England would remain neutral in the coming war.¹⁴³

On 6 April the French army crossed the Bidassoa. The French invasion of Spain was undoubtedly a severe setback for Canning. There is no evidence in support of the orthodox view established by Temperley that, concerned less with the prevention of French invasion of Spain than with the destruction of the Congress System or the European Concert, Canning was content to accept French action against Spain so long as she acted independently of the Alliance because he 'saw in this process a way of breaking up the European Concert'.¹⁴⁴ True, Canning desired to separate France from the eastern allies. But, he desired this with the sole aim of bringing about a peaceful settlement of the Franco-Spanish dispute through Britain's mediation. After all, if

¹⁴⁰ Liverpool to Canning, secret, 16 March 1823, Canning Papers, 70.

¹⁴¹ Canning to à Court, private, 2 April 1823, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41543.

¹⁴² Canning to Stuart, private and confidential, 18 March 1823, Canning Papers, 109.

¹⁴³ Canning to Stuart, 31 March 1823, *BFSP*, vol.10, pp.64-70.

¹⁴⁴ Temperley, 'The Foreign Policy of Canning' in Ward and Gooch (eds.), *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, vol.2, p.56. See also, Temperley, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, pp.53-86; Seton-Watson, *Britain in Europe*, p.77; Nichols, *European Pentarchy*, p.136.

Canning had been more concerned with the destruction of the Congress System than with the prevention of French intervention, why did he request the renewal of the Paris ambassadorial conference which in Temperley's own account constituted an essential part of the Congress System? Canning's sole aim on the question of Spain was to prevent the intervention of any power in Spain. His desire to prevent a Franco-Spanish war was strengthened by his considerations for Britain's commercial interests in Spanish America, for he expected that, once France attacked Spain, Britain would have to refrain from taking punitive action against the Spanish authorities in America or taking decisive steps towards the recognition of the new states in Spanish America. This connection between Canning's Spanish diplomacy and his policy on the affairs of Spanish America has been totally overlooked by historians.

But, did Canning pursue his aim in a right way? Canning took three measures to prevent allied or French intervention in Spain. The first was his instructions to Wellington of 29 September to take advantage of the Franco-Russian differences on the question. Finding that this measure had ended in failure, in early December Canning moved to the second measure, that is, Britain's mediation between France and Spain. The third was the use of an indirect threat of war in February 1823. Wellington's diplomacy at Verona was not well calculated to materialise the first of these three measures. Until early November he did not realise that Montmorency was pursuing his own policy which was significantly different from Villèle's. As for Austria's policy, the Duke from the start noticed Metternich's reluctance to oppose Alexander's desire to use his own troops against Spain. But, sympathetic to Metternich's fear of a war in the east, he rather considered that it was his duty to fight the whole battle alone on Metternich's behalf. This helped Metternich and Montmorency, who wished to avoid clashing with

Alexander in order to obtain his support to French action against Spain, smoothing over their disagreements with the Tsar. To make the best of the disagreements among the continental allies, Wellington should have abstained from playing a principal part in the allied negotiations and let Alexander, Montmorency and Metternich quarrel with one other. Canning was partly responsible for this. He failed to give the Duke precise directions as to how to take advantage of the disagreements among the allies. But, the truth seems to be that, whoever Britain's plenipotentiary was and whatever instructions he carried, he cannot have made any significant differences to the results of the Congress. Alexander strongly desired to lead his own troops into Spain, but wanted some kind of allied action against Spain more than anything else. No one could prevent him from supporting French action against Spain. The moment he gave affirmative answers to the three questions of Montmorency's memoir of 20 October 1822, the Spanish question as an international question was essentially decided. Certain of Russian support against Britain's possible intervention in the war and Austrian and Prussian neutrality, France could go to war at any time after 30 October 1823. It is no exaggeration to say that the allied discussions after 30 October were all irrelevant. After all, France ignored the allied agreements reached after 30 October and still did not face any serious opposition from her allies when she invaded Spain. Alexander's decision to support French action against Spain made Canning's second and third measures totally ineffective. What in reality Canning was allowed to do under the name of mediation or good offices was to induce the Spanish government to yield to France. This policy was doomed to fail. As the despatches of à Court and Somerset clearly show, there was virtually no possibility that the Cortes as a body would agree to the revision of the constitution. As for the last of his three measures, as we have seen, Canning himself

knew that an indirect threat of war would not prevent French invasion when she was certain of allied support against Britain. After 30 October 1822, only Villèle stood in the way of the march of French troops into Spain. All that Canning could do was to 'encourage' him.

Canning can hardly be blamed for all this. We cannot bring ourselves to accept Webster's suggestion that the results of the allied discussions would have been very different if Castlereagh had met Villèle in Paris and then gone to Vienna.¹⁴⁵ True, if Castlereagh had met Villèle, he must have reached a better understanding with the French premier than Wellington had actually done. True, Castlereagh's death and Wellington's tardy arrival in Vienna weakened Metternich's position vis-à-vis Alexander. But, the truth was that even a perfect understanding between a British foreign secretary and Villèle meant little when the latter's policy had little chance of gaining ascendancy in his own country in face of the growing influence of the extreme royalists. As for Metternich, it is difficult to believe that Castlereagh would have succeeded in dissuading him from proposing allied diplomatic action against Spain or in inducing him to oppose French invasion of Spain at the risk of alienating the Tsar. It is probably more natural to think that Metternich's decision to appease the Tsar by allied moral action was an inevitable result of his success at Troppau. With all his misjudgements at Verona, Wellington was right when he wrote on 22 November:

Since Prince Metternich has removed Mons. Capo d'Istria from the Emperor's presence, he has become in a great degree himself his Imperial Majesty's principal adviser; but in order to maintain the description of influence which he has acquired over his Imperial Majesty's counsels, he is obliged to bend his own opinions, and to guide the conduct of the Austrian government in a great degree according to the

¹⁴⁵ Webster, *Castlereagh 1815-1822*, p.478.

views of Russia.¹⁴⁶

After Troppau, Britain and Austria could co-operate only where Britain's aim was counterrevolutionary, that is, in the east. The very fear of a war in the east forced Metternich to follow Alexander's lead when the Tsar argued for counterrevolutionary actions in the west. It was beyond Canning's power to bring about radical changes to this unfavourable international situation overnight. Moreover, it did not take long for him to realise that the French invasion of Spain made the situation even worse, giving France and the eastern allies a chance to establish their influence in Madrid and extend it therefrom further into Lisbon. Canning was soon forced to face their counterrevolutionary policies on the questions of Spanish America, Portugal and Brazil. Let us now turn to see how he dealt with these consequences of the French invasion of Spain.

¹⁴⁶ Wellington to Canning, 22 November 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, p.568.

II

The War in Spain and the Spanish American Question,

April—9 October 1823

On 14 April Canning came to the bar of the House of Commons with an extensive selection of diplomatic correspondence to be laid before the House in his hand. Canning's task on the question of Spain did not end with the French invasion. He needed to defend his diplomatic defeat in Parliament. In his speech, Canning defended the government's Spanish diplomacy by arguing, firstly, that during the late negotiations the British government had never violated the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states and, secondly, that his policy of settling the Franco-Spanish dispute through Britain's good offices had had, although having ended in failure, a good possibility of success. To prove this second point, he exaggerated both the defensive nature of the agreements among the continental powers at the Congress and the peaceful intentions of the French government after the Congress. While criticising France for her invasion of Spain for the sake of the counterrevolutionary principle and expressing his hope that Spain 'would come triumphantly out of this struggle', he argued that Britain should maintain 'an honest and real neutrality' in the struggle provided France satisfied the three conditions shown in his despatch to Stuart of 31 March.¹

At first, it appeared that Canning's speech did not satisfy anyone. His expression of

¹ *Hansard*, vol.8, House of Commons, 14 April 1823, cols.872-96. 'Papers concerning the Negotiations relative to Spain' are in cols.904-64. On 21 April the government presented to Parliament additional

his wish for Spain's success in the war exasperated George IV, the ultra-Tories in the cabinet, and the allied representatives in London. The allied diplomats expected that Canning's 'double dealing'—his lip service to the Spanish cause and his policy of neutrality—not only would increase the opposition of the ultra-Tories to him but also would disillusion the opposition, and would eventually result in his downfall.² Canning's explanation of the government's policy on 14 April certainly did not satisfy the opposition. On 28 April, when the House of Commons opened a debate on the question, the opposition introduced a motion of censure. In the debate which continued for three days, the addresses of the opposition members of the House were mostly in line with this motion. They argued that the triumph of despotism in Spain would threaten liberal institutions in Portugal and even in Britain and sooner or later force her into war. If the government had taken 'a tone of more dignified remonstrance' against the pretensions of the continental powers at Verona and France after the Congress to interfere in the internal affairs of Spain to restore despotism, it must have saved Spain from French invasion and Britain from this danger of war.

In reality, however, Canning had little difficulty in refuting the opposition's argument. During the debate, while those who spoke for the government unanimously joined with the opposition speakers in their condemnation of France, those who spoke against the government with only a few exceptions agreed with the supporters of the government that Britain should not be involved in the war between France and Spain.³ Herein lay the flaw of the opposition's argument against the government's policy. The

papers, which are printed in cols.1136-44.

² 14 April 1823, E. Beresford Chancellor (ed. and trans.), *The Diary of Philipp von Neumann, 1819 to 1850* (2 vols., London, 1928), vol.1, pp.119-20; Madame Lieven to Metternich, 4, 18, 20 April 1823, *Princess Lieven*, pp.205-6, 208-9.

question was whether it had been appropriate to make a 'vigorous' protest when Britain had in reality decided not to enforce it. Sir Robert Peel, the home secretary, and Viscount Palmerston, the Secretary at War, in their defence of the government's policy argued that Britain could neither act the degrading part of a 'bully' nor run the risk of war while unprepared for war.⁴ When Canning appeared at the bar again at the end of the debate, he tactfully toned his speech to the consensus which had emerged across party lines during the debate. In the first part of his speech, where he again defended his diplomacy in the late negotiations in detail, he said that his principal aim on the question of Spain had been 'to hinder the impress of a joint character from being affixed to the war—if war there must be,—with Spain;—to take care that the war should not grow out of an assumed jurisdiction of the congress;—to keep within reasonable bounds that predominating *aeropagitical* spirit', and boasted that because of his 'come what may' instructions he had achieved this aim. The very papers he presented to the House disprove this explanation. It was principally Villèle and Chateaubriand, not Canning, who removed 'a joint character' from the war. But, at least, he successfully showed that he was in union with his countrymen in his condemnation of 'the doctrine of an European police'. In the second half of his speech, where he justified the government's decision for peace and neutrality, Canning appealed to the pride of his countrymen in their unique political institutions with great effect. 'It is perfectly true . . .', said Canning, 'that there is a contest going on in the world, between the spirit of unlimited monarchy, and the spirit of unlimited democracy.' Britain's constitution was established with 'so happy a mixture' of these two elements. 'In this

³ *Hansard*, vol.8, House of Commons, 28, 29, 30 April 1823, cols.1301-437, 1442-78.

⁴ *Ibid.*, House of Commons, 29, 30 April 1823, cols.1422, 1453.

enviable situation', he asked, 'what have we in common with the struggles which are going on in other countries . . . ?' Nothing certainly. Britain could try 'to enlighten, to reconcile, to save' others 'by our example in all cases, by our exertions where we can usefully interpose', but its position should be 'essentially neutral:—neutral not only between contending nations, but between conflicting principles'. Canning was so certain of his triumph that he blocked the opposition's attempt to get the motion of censure withdrawn. The Speaker desired those who intended to vote for a pro-government amendment to go into the lobby. 372 moved to the lobby and only 20 remained in the House, the latter including those who tried to move to the lobby but could not 'in consequence of the lobby being too small to contain the united numbers'.⁵

This impressed even his opponents. Madame Lieven, who had just a few weeks before predicted that the debate on the affairs of Spain would result in Canning's downfall, now changed her estimation of his strength, and wrote to Metternich that he would ultimately prevail over his opponents in the cabinet.⁶ Canning himself believed that his parliamentary triumph had consolidated his position within the government. In July 1823, he wrote to Bagot: '. . . I believe you may now consider my politicks as those of the Government, as well as of the Country; and what these politicks are, is it not written in my published speech of the 30th of April . . . ?'⁷

While Canning was defending his Spanish diplomacy in the House of Commons, the French forces under the command of the Duke of Angoulême marched towards Madrid without meeting any serious opposition. When the French forces entered Spain in early April, the French ministers were still prepared to end the war if the Cortes modified the

⁵ *Ibid.*, House of Commons, 30 April 1823, cols.1478-548.

⁶ Madame Lieven to Metternich, 3 May 1823, *Princess Lieven*, pp.212-3.

constitution. Villèle, Chateaubriand and Angoulême clearly knew not only that an uncompromising attitude towards the Cortes would prolong the war but also that the restoration of absolutism would never be a solution to Spain's internal disorder. As Angoulême wrote to Villèle, they regarded 'a general amnesty' and 'institutions having as their bases a national representation and a sufficient authority given to the sovereign' as essential for the stability of postwar Spain. Here, the greatest problem was Austria's opposition to any compromise with constitutionalism. But, Chateaubriand expected that France could neutralise Austria's opposition by obtaining Alexander's support to a moderately liberal solution to Spain's political disorder.⁸ In fact, it appeared that Alexander did not share Metternich's absolutist views on Spain. As Bagot wrote to Canning, on the question of Spain's future regime the Russian government was 'ultra-liberal compared with that of Austria'.⁹ Another possible obstacle to the French plan for an early termination of the war was the expectation of the Spanish constitutionalists that Britain would eventually come to their rescue. The French ministers thought that it was essential for them to make Britain withdraw her moral support from the Cortes. To achieve this aim, they drew a plan to establish a royalist provisional government in Madrid on Angoulême's arrival there and demand that European powers should accredit diplomatic representatives to it. They expected that European recognition of a royalist authority in Spain would isolate Britain and drive her to sever her diplomatic relations with the constitutional government.¹⁰

The French plans, however, soon run into various obstacles. On entering Spain

⁷ Canning to Bagot, 14 July 1823, *GCHF*, vol.2, pp.178-80.

⁸ Angoulême to Villèle, 24 April 1823, *Villèle*, vol.3, p.372; Chateaubriand to La Ferronnays, 21 April 1823, *Chateaubriand*, vol.4, p.198.

⁹ Bagot to Canning, private, 13 May 1823, *GCHF*, vol.2, p.176.

Angoulême established a Spanish royalist Junta at his headquarters as a provisional administrative body which was to be replaced by a provisional government on his arrival in Madrid. To the dismay of the French ministers, the provisional Junta did not conceal a strong inclination towards absolutism and a desire to get out of French control.¹¹ Under the circumstances, in late April and early May Chateaubriand told Stuart his apprehension that the continuation of the war would enable the Spanish royalists to materialise their reactionary aims, and expressed his desire to obtain an immediate termination of the war through à Court's good offices in Seville. On 5 May he told Stuart that the modification of the constitution which had originally been demanded by the French government was still admissible as the condition of peace.¹² But, when Stuart met Chateaubriand two days later, he found that this was no longer the case. This sudden change was caused mainly by Metternich's demand that the provisional government to be established in Madrid should not decide Spain's political regime until after Ferdinand's liberation. Fearful lest that Austria should refuse to recognise the provisional government unless France accepted her demand, the French ministers abandoned the plan to negotiate a peace with the Cortes and decided to offer it only the guarantee of the personal safety of its members in return for Ferdinand's liberation. Chateaubriand hastened to assure Metternich that the functions of the provisional government should only be administrative.¹³ Although Austria's opposition

¹⁰ Chateaubriand to La Ferronnays, 13 March 1823, *Chateaubriand*, vol.4, p.158.

¹¹ Villèle to Angoulême, 25 April 1823, *Villèle*, vol.3, p.375; Chateaubriand to Caraman, 26 April 1823, *Chateaubriand*, vol.4, pp.206-7.

¹² Stuart to Canning, no.165, 24 April 1823, FO 27/289; same to same, no.183, 5 May 1823, FO 27/290.

¹³ Stuart to Canning, no.188, 8 May 1823, *ibid.*; De Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, vol.2, pp.757-9; Villèle to Angoulême, 9 May 1823, *Villèle*, vol.3, pp.424-6; Chateaubriand to Caraman, 13 May 1823, Guillaume de Bertier de Sauvigny (ed.), 'Un dossier de lettres inédites de Chateaubriand', *Revue d'histoire moderne e contemporaine*, vol.3, no.4 (October-December 1956), pp.307-8; Chateaubriand to Caux, 12 May 1823, *CV*, pp.254-5. This last letter is dated 22 May in *CV*. But, there is no doubt that the

was the direct cause of their change of policy, there were some other obstacles to their project which must have forced them to change their policy sooner or later. First of all, as Angoulême's troops advanced towards Madrid, it became more and more obvious that the Spaniards, including even those who desired the maintenance of liberal institutions, would not approve any concessions to the Cortes.¹⁴ Meanwhile in France, the extreme royalists did not conceal their discontent with the government's policy to negotiate a peace with the Seville government.¹⁵ Lastly, Pozzo di Borgo declared, although without precise instructions, that even the Tsar's anxiety for Ferdinand's liberation would not allow him to countenance concessions to the revolutionary government.¹⁶ In fact, the Russian ambassador soon received Alexander's instructions prohibiting him from giving his consent to any negotiations with the Cortes.¹⁷

On 16 May, Chateaubriand clearly explained to Stuart that the French government could no longer abide by any arrangement with the Spanish constitutional government which was not preceded by Ferdinand's liberation.¹⁸ Two days later, Villèle instructed Angoulême that he should not accept any offer from à Court of his good offices without referring it to Paris unless their immediate result would be the liberation of the King.¹⁹ Villèle told Stuart that the French government was unable to oppose openly the restoration of absolutism in Spain which was demanded both by the violent royalists in France and Spain and by the eastern allies, and that for the present the French government could merely ask for Britain's co-operation in persuading the Cortes to

letter is that of 12 May which Chateaubriand enclosed in his despatch to Caraman of 13 May.

¹⁴ Martignac to Villèle, 13 May 1823, *Villèle*, vol.3, p.447.

¹⁵ Stuart to Canning, no.177, 1 May 1823, no.193, 12 May 1823, FO 27/290.

¹⁶ Stuart to Canning, no.207, 19 May 1823, *ibid.*

¹⁷ Alexander I to Pozzo di Borgo, 16 June 1823, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.130-1; Nesselrode to Pozzo di Borgo, 22 June 1823, *ibid.*, pp.136-7.

¹⁸ Stuart to Canning, no.204, 17 May 1823, FO 27/290.

consent to Ferdinand's liberation.²⁰ But, in reality, their change of policy did not cause any significant alterations in the way they tried to use Britain's influence in Spain for the termination of the war. Since the start of the war, they had always wanted only one thing from Britain. It was the recall of à Court from Seville, which they expected would induce the constitutionalists to lay down their arms. Chateaubriand was totally insincere when he told Stuart his desire to avail himself of à Court's good offices. During the month of May, Chateaubriand continued to instruct Marcellus to get Canning to recall à Court from Seville and accredit him to a provisional government which was to be established in Madrid.²¹ After all, the French ministers decided to accept Metternich's demand for the very reason that they wanted Austria's assistance in forcing Britain to sever her diplomatic relations with the constitutional government.

Meanwhile in London, the swift advance of the French troops relieved Canning from the greatest of his fears, that is, another revolution in France. When France was clearly the invader, he could not express publicly his wish for her success. But, Canning never desired French defeat in Spain. In his view, the political institutions of France after the Restoration were too weak and too unsettled to get over a serious crisis such as the death of Louis XVIII or a military setback in Spain without agitation.²² Relieved of this fear, Canning wished France to make good use of her military success. According to a report which Marcellus sent to Chateaubriand on 13 May, Canning said: 'I abhor the armed intervention of France; it is unjust and guilty in principle, but I must admit that it

¹⁹ Villèle to Angoulême, 18 May 1823, *Villèle*, vol.3, pp.465-6.

²⁰ Stuart to Canning, no.220, 26 May 1823, FO 27/290.

²¹ Chateaubriand to Marcellus, 5, 19, 22, 29 May 1823, *Chateaubriand*, vol.4, pp.211-2, 225, 233-4, 246-7.

²² Canning to Stuart, private, 29 October 1822, Canning Papers, 109; Canning to à Court, private and confidential, 29 December 1822, *GCHT*, p.389; Canning to Stuart, no.15, 18 February 1823, FO 146/55; Canning to Bagot, 20 February 1823, *GCHF*, vol.2, p.156.

makes the peace easier and nearer, and it will contribute a great deal to the internal repose of the Peninsula.’²³

But, when he received Stuart’s despatch which reported Chateaubriand’s first expression of his wish for à Court’s good offices in Seville, his reaction was far from favourable. On 6 May he wrote to Stuart that in the past three months Britain’s efforts in Spain had been ‘crossed and thwarted by the language of France herself’, that is, Louis XVIII’s speech on 28 January. ‘We are disposed still to give every credit to the sincerity of the professions of the French Government, at the moment when these professions are made: but it is impossible not to see that their plans are from time to time liable to variation, perhaps from circumstances not under their own coutroul [*sic*].’ The French government seemed to be in disagreement with the royalist Junta on Spain’s future. Their relations appeared very ambiguous, and so did the relations between France and the Spanish constitutional government. If the French ministers wished to employ Britain’s good offices, they should pursue a fixed policy on the affairs of Spain and their propositions to the Spanish constitutional government should accordingly be ‘clearly and unequivocally described and defined’.²⁴

As to the repeated request of the French chargé d’affaires that the British government should recall à Court from Seville, Canning turned a deaf ear to it. Well before the start of the war, on 18 February, Canning instructed à Court to follow the King ‘whenever, or to whatever place’ he might remove, unless ‘that removal should be accompanied with Circumstances of violence, such as to mark a determined reluctance

²³ Marcellus to Chateaubriand, 13 May 1823, *CV*, p.248.

²⁴ Canning to Stuart, no.40, 6 May 1823, FO 146/55. See also, Canning to Stuart, no.41, 12 May 1823, *ibid*.

on the part of the King, and a manifest duressse [*sic*] on his person'.²⁵ On 23 May the French troops entered Madrid, and two days later Angoulême proclaimed the establishment of a regency.²⁶ But, this did not induce Canning to change his policy on the matter. On 6 June Canning wrote a private letter to à Court with the aim of providing him with a general guide of his conduct in case the Cortes tried to remove the King from Seville to Cadiz. Canning accepted that Ferdinand had quitted Madrid against his will. But, 'we have not acted in this belief; nor can a Constitutional Government do so'. 'There would be no end of uncertainties and interferences, if we were to take upon ourselves to inquire into the degree of freedom or constraint under which all the Sovereigns of Europe may execute their functions.' Therefore, 'the business of Foreign Powers is with *the King*, who, till he is actually deposed, represents the nation of which he is at the head'. Moreover, even if Ferdinand proved to be a mere prisoner in Seville, how could one know that the provisional government in Madrid had his mandate to act as his agent during his captivity especially when it was erected 'under the superintendence or coercion of foreign arms'? Britain would never approve the French invasion, and therefore would never recognise the provisional government. Canning instructed à Court that he should follow Ferdinand unless he was 'carried *out of the kingdom*'. If Ferdinand was carried out of Spain, he should decline accompanying him and proceed to Gibraltar where he should wait for fresh instructions. Canning concluded the letter by pointing out one practical reason for not taking any step whose effect should be to acknowledge the illegitimacy of the Spanish constitutional government. On 12 March, San Miguel and à Court finally signed a convention for the

²⁵ Canning to à Court, no.22, 18 February 1823, FO 185/91.

²⁶ Angoulême's 'Declaration', 25 May 1823, *BFSP*, vol.10, pp.85-6.

settlement of the Anglo-Spanish dispute over the capture and detention of the British vessels and property by the Spanish authorities in America. To acknowledge the illegitimacy of the government which had concluded the convention would be to acknowledge that of the convention itself. 'This inference', Canning wrote, 'we can never sanction, nor will we suffer others to draw it and act upon it.'²⁷

Meanwhile in Seville, even before Canning's letter reached à Court, the Cortes had decided to retire from Seville to Cadiz. Ferdinand again refused his removal, and on 11 June the Cortes temporarily deposed him and set up a regency. Ferdinand told à Court that he was to be carried to Cadiz 'as a private Individual and a Prisoner'. Following Canning's instructions of 18 February, à Court decided not to follow Ferdinand to Cadiz and notified to the constitutional government the suspension of his mission. However, he prudently refrained from completely terminating his mission. He remained in Seville and waited for instructions from home.²⁸ On the receipt of à Court's reports, on 26 June Canning instructed him that, if Ferdinand after the resumption of his authority invited him to proceed to Cadiz, he should choose to proceed to Cadiz or not according to circumstances, but if he accompanied his invitation with an intimation that à Court's presence in Cadiz was necessary for his personal safety, he should comply with the invitation. But, unless either of these two cases occurred, à Court should proceed to Gibraltar without breaking diplomatic relations between Britain and the Spanish constitutional government and inform the latter of his willingness to convey

²⁷ Canning to à Court, private and confidential, 6 June 1823, *GCHT*, pp.390-3; Convention between Great Britain and Spain, signed at Madrid, 12 March, 1823, *BFSP*, vol.11, pp.44-8.

²⁸ À Court to Canning, no.100, 12 June 1823 (enclosing à Court to Pando, 12 June 1823), private, 12 June 1823, FO 72/271.

any of its propositions to the French government or army.²⁹

By the time Canning's instructions reached Seville, the Cadiz government had requested à Court to repair to Cadiz.³⁰ However, on receiving Canning's instructions, à Court decided to proceed to Gibraltar. He was certain that Angoulême would exclude him from any negotiation with the Cortes. Moreover, his presence in Cadiz would end up in arousing the enmity of all parties in Spain towards Britain. It would be seen by the royalists as a sign of her approbation of the deposition of the King. On the other hand, it would raise the Cortes' hope for Britain's intervention in the war, which would never be realised. He judged that 'a temporary removal to Gibraltar' would be the best way out of his difficulties.³¹ When Canning received à Court's decision, he approved it.³²

Meanwhile, the tensions between the French headquarters and the Spanish royalists continued to grow. Villèle still desired to terminate the war immediately and preserve the power of the constitutionalists as 'a useful counterpoise' to that of the ultra-royalist party in postwar Spain. However, the obstinacy of the Cortes appeared to ensure the total ruin of constitutionalism.³³ In face of the provisional government's opposition to any concession to liberalism, by early June Villèle had abandoned his desire to introduce into Spain a French-style legislative body composed of two chambers, and decided to restore the traditional Spanish institution of the ancient Cortes in the hope that France would be able to introduce liberal elements into this obsolete institution in the process of its modification.³⁴ Worse still, in spite of Chateaubriand's assurance that

²⁹ Canning to à Court, no.47, 26 June 1823, FO 185/91.

³⁰ Pando to à Court, 16 June 1823 (Translation), *BFSP*, vol.10, p.986.

³¹ À Court to Pando, 11 July 1823, *GCSOC*, vol.1, pp.102-3; À Court to Canning, 12 July 1823, *ibid.*, pp.103-5.

³² Canning to à Court, no.51, 19 August 1823, FO 185/91.

³³ Villèle to Angoulême, 24 May 1823, *Villèle*, vol.3, pp.496-7.

³⁴ Angoulême to Villèle, 31 May 1823, *ibid.*, p.538; Villèle to Angoulême, 7 June 1823, *Villèle*, vol.4,

the provisional government could only be administrative, in late May Metternich brought up Ferdinand I's claim to become the regent of Spain again. In early June, with the assistance of Pozzo di Borgo, Chateaubriand rejected the claim which was brought forward by Prince Castelcicala, the Neapolitan ambassador in Paris, and supported by Vincent. However, anxious to obtain an immediate departure of Count Brunetti, who had been appointed as Austrian minister to the Madrid regency, for Madrid, Chateaubriand at a conference on 7 June agreed to a protocol which stipulated that the allied representatives to the Madrid regency should be authorised to cease their functions if the regency tried to negotiate with the Cortes.³⁵

Under the circumstances, it does not come as a surprise that the French ministers turned to Britain. From the middle of June, both Villèle and Chateaubriand repeatedly told Stuart their desire to enter into close co-operation with Britain to defeat the reactionary aims of the eastern allies in Spain, Villèle speaking of 'a thorough understanding between the two Constitutional Governments' and Chateaubriand 'the natural Alliance between the two Constitutional Governments'.³⁶ But, here again, it is a mistake to take the French ministers at their word. On 1 July, Villèle instructed Angoulême that he should bring about Ferdinand's liberation without a Court's assistance.³⁷ Now that the constitutionalists shut themselves up in Cadiz and their surrender was a matter of time, the French ministers did not see any point in allowing Britain to play a part which would enable her to claim credit for Ferdinand's liberation. Also in their pursuit of their ultimate aim, that is, the establishment of liberal

pp.27-8.

³⁵ De Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, vol.2, pp.765-74; Protocol of the conference of 7 June, *ibid.*, p.805.

³⁶ Stuart to Canning, no.286, 23 June 1823, no.291, 24 June 1823, FO 27/291.

institutions in Spain, the French ministers had no intention to enter into such close co-operation with Britain that their remarks to Stuart suggest. On 21 June, Villèle wrote to Angoulême that Britain desired to preserve liberal institutions in Spain only because she thought that they would be a good means to maintain her influence in Spain through pro-British radicals.

Therefore, Your Royal Highness, [he continued,] to want to establish representative institutions in Spain in concert with and with the support of the cabinet of Saint James, it will be to run the risk of pursuing an impossibility or contributing to replace that country under an influence of English-revolutionary, that is to say, [our] double enemy.³⁷

In the summer of 1823, while there was no doubt about Metternich's desire to see absolutism restored in Spain, Alexander's views on Spain's future regime appeared to be reasonable. Notwithstanding his opposition to any negotiation with the constitutional government, the Tsar instructed Pozzo di Borgo that he should proceed to Madrid after Ferdinand's liberation as a special ambassador and urge the King to establish a political system based on a compromise between the absolutism of 1814 and the revolution of 1820.³⁸ Encouraged by Alexander's support to France in her opposition to the Neapolitan regency project and his moderate views on Spain's future, Chateaubriand continued to count on Russian's assistance in his effort to prevent the restoration of absolutism in Spain.³⁹ On the other hand, a profound mistrust of Russia drove Villèle to suspect that Pozzo di Borgo had been secretly instructed to expand Russian influence

³⁷ Villèle to Angoulême, 1 July 1823, *Villèle*, vol.4, p.177.

³⁸ Villèle to Angoulême, 21 June 1823, *ibid.*, pp.106-7.

³⁹ Alexander I to Pozzo di Borgo, 16 June 1823, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.130-3; Nesselrode to Pozzo di Borgo, 22 June 1823, *ibid.*, pp.136-7.

⁴⁰ Chateaubriand to La Ferronnays, 11 July 1823, *Chateaubriand*, vol.4, pp.319.

in Spain by supporting the Spanish ultras.⁴¹ However, he still hoped that, after Ferdinand's liberation, even if the eastern allies supported the restoration of absolutism in Spain, France could impose her will on the Spanish royalists without the co-operation of Britain by threatening them that France would withdraw military and financial support which they would certainly require even after the end of the war.⁴² Both Chateaubriand and Villèle had no intention to enter into co-operation with Britain. They feigned that they desired to co-operate with Britain, but were unable to do so owing to the opposition of the eastern allies, in order to camouflage their own anti-British intentions.

Canning considered the French ministers' failure to seek Britain's assistance almost inexplicable. He believed that the French ministers desired the establishment of liberal institutions in Spain. This required an early termination of the war. If so, why did not they ask for Britain's mediation or good offices for Ferdinand's liberation with an official request and specific terms? Canning naturally attributed their failure to seek Britain's co-operation to their mistrust of her and their desire to deny her any influence in Spain. But, probably influenced to a certain extent by Stuart's reports that the French ministers were prevented from co-operating with Britain to establish liberal institutions in Spain by the determined opposition of the eastern allies to any concession to liberalism, he did not think that these factors alone could account for it. Were the French ministers so unreasonably anti-British as to decide not to seek Britain's assistance simply because of their dislike of her when everyone except her opposed their aims in Spain? Canning found an answer in what he called 'the most lenient

⁴¹ Villèle to Angoulême, 18, 21 June, 1 July 1823, *Villèle*, vol.4, pp.84-5, 105-6, 175-6.

⁴² Villèle to Angoulême, 4, 5 July 1823, *ibid.*, pp.190-1, 198-200.

opinion' of the French policy in his private letter of 2 July to à Court. According to this explanation, the French ministers 'have never exactly known their own mind; but have trusted to accidents; & that accidents have favoured too rapidly to allow of their making up their mind, as they went on'.⁴³ In his letter of 8 August to John Hookham Frere, he again took up this view:

. . . if the Spaniards have little to boast of in the War, France has little to show, for all the exertions which she has made and is making. The difficulties increase every hour. . . . The truth is that the French Government never seriously resolved upon the war, and upon the plan and object of it, but suffered themselves to be driven on from position to position (*political* position I here intend) by the Ultrageous party of their followers—their pokers and goaders—and have been lured on from one military position to another in Spain, by the unexpected facilities of their advance. . . . The capture of Cadiz would involve them in difficulties of another sort—the Allies with Russia at their head being all for the *Re Absoluto*, and the French being pledged to something liberal and representative, and the Spaniards agreeing upon nothing but to hate and persecute each other.⁴⁴

Then, on 20 August, he wrote to à Court: 'The French government, I verily believe, has not yet made up their mind as to the course of their proceedings; when the King & Cadiz shall fall into their hands.'⁴⁵ Canning's opinion of the French policy was in fact too 'lenient'. He failed to understand the depth of French hostility towards Britain. Although the plans of the French leaders were often unrealisable and suffered considerable alterations according to the progress of events, they certainly had plans which were always aimed at the realisation of their main object, that is, to introduce moderately liberal institutions in Spain in such a way that would not allow Britain to

⁴³ Canning to à Court, private, 2 July 1823, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41544.

⁴⁴ Canning to Frere, 8 August 1823, Gabrielle Festing (ed.), *John Hookham Frere and His Friends* (London, 1899), p.258.

⁴⁵ Canning to à Court, private and confidential, 20 August 1823, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41544.

maintain her influence in Spain.

Canning's misperception of the French policy, however, did not have any immediate impact on his policy. He was determined to ignore the French ministers' vague profession of their desire to establish Anglo-French liberal partnership unless they told him precisely 'what they meant or what they wanted'. By July 1823, he became convinced that, uncertain of what course they should take, they would never propose anything concrete to obtain Britain's co-operation.⁴⁶ In late July Villèle again started to communicate to Stuart his desire to avail himself of Britain's assistance for 'the adoption of a constitutional System in Spain' which in reality he had already given up. He successfully deceived Stuart into believing that the vagueness surrounding his communications was caused by Russia's opposition to his policy of Anglo-French liberal co-operation.⁴⁷ But, Canning had no intention to act on Villèle's vague communications. On 20 August he answered that he was determined to 'persevere in a steady abstinence from all uncalled-for interference', although he was ready to receive and answer any 'explicit' communication of the views and opinions of the French government.⁴⁸

Canning saw the strong likelihood of the restoration of absolutism in Spain with regret. He obviously knew that the establishment of moderately liberal institutions in Spain under French auspices would result in French predominance at Madrid, especially if it was achieved without British intervention. However, it was certainly much better than the restoration of absolutism and the ascendancy of the eastern allies

⁴⁶ Canning to Bagot, private, 14 July 1823, *GCHF*, vol.2, pp.182-3.

⁴⁷ Stuart to Canning, no.368, 1 August 1823, no.374, 4 August 1823, no.379, 8 August 1823, 12 p.m., no.392, 14 August 1823, FO 27/293.

⁴⁸ Canning to Stuart, no.68, 20 August 1823, FO 146/56.

in Madrid, which would have unfavourable effect on his diplomacy on various questions such as those of Spanish American independence, Portugal's internal instability, and Brazilian independence. As he wrote to Frere on 8 August, he was particularly concerned with the influence that the triumph of the counterrevolution in Spain was likely to have on Portugal. As we will see later, in the summer of 1823, Canning started his effort to support the new Portugal government of moderate liberals and get it to establish moderately liberal institutions. He feared that the triumph of absolutism in Spain would encourage Portuguese absolutists and incite them to attempt to overthrow the moderate government. In the spring and summer of 1823, Canning apparently came to think that the best way to protect Britain's interests in the Iberian Peninsula was to reach an understanding with France and place the Peninsula under informal Anglo-French condominium. He was prepared to accept French predominance at Madrid in return for her acceptance of British ascendancy at Lisbon. The political situations in the two Iberian states were closely connected. By helping the Spaniards to establish and consolidate mildly liberal institutions France could facilitate Britain's effort to get the Portuguese to introduce similar institutions and stabilise Portugal's internal situation, and vice versa. In the summer of 1823, however, it appeared that the French ministers were not prepared to enter into such co-operation with Britain. Canning judged that he could do nothing to stop the triumph of absolutism in Spain. 'The best thing for all the world', he wrote to Frere, 'would be a compromise in Spain; but that is the one thing not to be had. Long years of havoc must precede it.' Canning decided to keep away from the 'havoc'. 'We are not of all this—and have no disposition to get into it.'⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Canning to Frere, 8 August 1823, *Frere and His Friends*, pp.258-9.

Meanwhile in Paris, the French ministers decided to make the final attempt to terminate the war through a negotiation with the Cortes before the start of an assault on the besieged constitutionalists in Cadiz. In early August, Villèle instructed Angoulême to propose to the Cortes that the French government would guarantee an amnesty and the convocation of the ancient Cortes in return for Ferdinand's liberation. This proposal was designed partly as a guard against à Court's interposition between Angoulême and the Cortes. If à Court made a similar proposal and the Cortes accepted it, it would be difficult for Angoulême to refuse it. Angoulême should forestall the danger by making the proposal himself. Villèle instructed Angoulême that, if he received à Court's offer of his mediation, he should gain time by referring it to Paris and meanwhile continue his efforts to take Cadiz by force. On 17 August, Angoulême executed Villèle's instruction to make the proposal to the Cortes.⁵⁰ Four days later, the Cortes rejected it.⁵¹ On 23 August, however, the Cadiz government sent a note to à Court in Gibraltar applying for his mediation. The note was far from satisfactory. It contained no definite propositions to France, but suggested that Britain should guarantee the preservation of representative institutions, a condition which à Court knew his government would never accept. Nevertheless, à Court in his note of 27 August offered Angoulême his mediation between him and the Cadiz government. The next day, Angoulême, following his instructions, answered that he was not authorised to accept à Court's interposition without referring it to Paris, and promised to transmit the offer to Paris. On the other hand, à Court prudently declined the Cadiz government's request that he

⁵⁰ Villèle to Angoulême, 4, 5, 6, 7 August 1823, *Villèle*, vol.4, pp.283-4, 285-6, 288-9, 292-5; Angoulême to Villèle, 17 August 1823, *ibid.*, pp.315-6; Angoulême to Ferdinand VII, 17 August 1823, *BFSP*, vol.10, p.994.

⁵¹ Ferdinand VII to Angoulême, 21 August 1823 (Translation), *ibid.*, pp.994-6.

should repair to Cadiz. The French blockading navy would probably refuse his entry into Cadiz. Even if he successfully got through the blockade, his communications with London would be interrupted by the French. The British radicals would certainly try to capitalise on such circumstances to stir up anti-French sentiment in Britain. À Court actually suspected that the true aim of the request was to drag Britain into war with France.⁵²

À Court's reports on his communications with the Cadiz government and Angoulême reached London on 14 September. Canning in his despatches of 15 and 18 September entirely approved of à Court's conduct. He instructed that à Court should not leave Gibraltar while the war continued, but should resume his residence near the King's person immediately on his liberation. As to the Cadiz government's desire to obtain Britain's guarantee of Spain's internal institutions, he wrote to à Court that 'the British Government will not, in any case, undertake any guaranty whatever, either of territory or of internal Institutions'.⁵³

Meanwhile, the Cadiz government in its note of 7 September requested that à Court should proceed to the Bay of Cadiz on board a British frigate where Ferdinand and Angoulême should negotiate for peace under the protection of a neutral flag. On 11 September, à Court transmitted this proposition to Angoulême. However, having received from Paris instructions to refuse à Court's mediation, Angoulême on 13 September answered that he could not accept any proposal of mediation from any

⁵² Yandiola to à Court, 23 August 1823 (Translation), *ibid.*, pp.988-92; À Court to Yandiola, 27, 31 August 1823, *ibid.*, pp.992-4; À Court to Canning, no.118, 24 August 1823, no.119, 30 August 1823 (enclosing à Court to Angoulême, 27 August 1823, Angoulême to à Court, 28 August 1823, and Eliot to à Court, 30 August 1823), FO 72/272; À Court to Canning, private, 30 August 1823, private, 31 August 1823, Canning Papers, 118; Angoulême to Villèle, 28 August 1823, *Villèle*, vol.4, pp.334-5.

⁵³ Canning to à Court, no.53, 15 September 1823, no.54, 18 September 1823, FO 185/91.

foreign power and his sole condition was now the unqualified liberation of the King.⁵⁴ In the end, the constitutionalists forced Ferdinand to sign a decree of amnesty on 30 September, liberated him on the next day, and surrendered to the French unconditionally.⁵⁵

In the summer of 1823, while Canning became resigned to the inevitability of the restoration of absolutism in Spain, he started to pay more attention to the other aspect of the Spanish question, that is, the affairs of Spanish America. While he underestimated France's hostility towards Britain in European Spain, Villèle's remarks in his interview with Wellington of 9 December 1822 had already taught him that she was 'as jealous as a cat' of Britain's intentions in Spanish America.⁵⁶ Canning was particularly alarmed by Villèle's project to set Spanish Bourbon princes on the thrones of the newly independent Spanish American states by France's armed intervention, regarding it as nothing less than 'invasions for Spain of the Spanish American colonies'.⁵⁷ In December 1822 he refrained from telling Villèle his objection to the project. But, this was simply because he did not want their differences on the affairs of Spanish America to disrupt their uneasy co-operation in European Spain when the French premier appeared to set his project aside for the time being.⁵⁸ Canning soon found that Villèle had not abandoned his plan. In the middle of June, Villèle told Stuart his fear that the

⁵⁴ À Court to Canning, no.123, 11 September 1823 (enclosing Luyando to à Court, 7 September 1823, à Court to Luyando, 11 September 1823, and à Court to Angoulême, 11 September 1823), no.124, 15 September 1823 (enclosing Angoulême to à Court, 13 September 1823, Eliot's report of his conversation with Angoulême, 15 September 1823, and à Court to Luyando, 15 September 1823), FO 72/272; Villèle to Angoulême, 6 September 1823, *Villèle*, vol.4, pp.370-3.

⁵⁵ Declaration of the King of Spain to the Spanish Nation, 30 September 1823 (Translation), *BFSP*, vol.10, pp.998-100; À Court to Canning, 8 October 1823, *GCSOC*, vol.1, pp.107-8.

⁵⁶ Canning to Bagot, private and confidential, 3 January 1823, *GCHF*, vol.2, p.153.

⁵⁷ Canning to Wellington, 13 December 1822, 6 p.m., *Wellington*, vol.1, p.650.

⁵⁸ Canning to Wellington, 17 December 1822, *ibid.*, p.657; Canning to Stuart, no.25, 31 December 1822, FO 146/50.

agents of the United States were labouring to establish in Spanish America 'a system favorable to the democratical principles of their own Government' and to attain special commercial advantages, and said that he was 'ready to concert with His Majesty's Government arrangements which may tend to preserve a monarchical form of Government in the New States, and give to each Power a fair proportion of the commercial advantages'. France would follow Britain's example by refusing every territorial advantage in the region, and was prepared to acknowledge the independence of the colonies *de fait*, if not *de droit*. But, in order to preserve monarchical institutions in the New World she 'should be very ready to send the younger branches of the Spanish Royal Family to America' and 'the French Government would afford them every assistance to make good their pretensions to the sovereignty of the country'.⁵⁹ From early to the middle of July, Villèle and Chateaubriand repeatedly alluded to the project in their conversations with Stuart.⁶⁰

In fact, the project to set Spanish Bourbon princes on the thrones of the new states in Spanish America was in the centre of their Spanish America policy. While Chateaubriand on 9 June instructed the Marquis of Talaru, whom he was about to send to Madrid as his ambassador to the royalist provisional government there, to 'prepare the spirit of the Spanish ministers' for the project which the French government would certainly bring forward after the termination of the war,⁶¹ Villèle in early July directed Angoulême that after Ferdinand's liberation he should propose to him the conclusion of a treaty which should oblige France to provide Spain with a loan, vessels and troops to

⁵⁹ Stuart to Canning, no.285, 23 June 1823, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.112-3. See also Stuart to Canning, no.239, 5 June 1823, FO 27/291.

⁶⁰ Stuart to Canning, no.307, 7 July 1823, no.332, 17 July 1823, FO 27/292.

⁶¹ Robertson, *France and Latin-American Independence*, pp.260-1.

realise the project.⁶² When Angoulême expressed his fear that Britain would oppose the project, the premier answered that Britain had not made any overtures in reply to his communication of the project to Wellington in December 1822 and that he considered her silence to be a sign of her approval of it.⁶³ It was Canning's mistake that he did not express Britain's opposition to Villèle's project in December 1822 or in his despatch of 31 March to Stuart. When in late June he received Stuart's report of his conversation with Villèle, he must have regretted this omission and felt the necessity of making the French ministers clearly understand Britain's opposition to it. The question was how to communicate it to them. It did not take long for Canning to find an answer to this question. On 10 July, interesting reports reached London from his cousin Stratford Canning, the British minister in Washington.

Britain and the United States obviously had a common interest in the prevention of French invasion of Spanish America. But, each feared the other's territorial designs on the Spanish island of Cuba more than they feared French invasion of Spanish America. Apart from the island of Porto Rico, Cuba was the only Spanish colony in America which remained loyal to Spain. This was largely because Cuban planters, whose expanding sugar economy depended on slave labour, did not support the movement for Spanish American independence which they feared might lead to emancipation of the slaves in the island. This meant, however, that their loyalty to Spain depended on her ability to preserve slavery in Cuba. Any sign of Spain's inability to do so shook their faith in Spain, as did the Anglo-Spanish treaty of 23 September 1817, by which Spain agreed to abolish the slave trade north of the equator immediately and that south of the

⁶² Villèle to Angoulême, 3, 4, 5 July 1823, *Villèle*, vol.4, pp.187-9, 190-1, 197-201.

⁶³ Angoulême to Villèle, 13 July 1823, *ibid.*, p.222; Villèle to Angoulême, 18 July 1823, *ibid.*,

equator from May 1820. In the early 1820s, some planters in Cuba began to explore the idea of joining the United States, where not only slavery but also a thriving internal slave trade existed, as a new state of the Union. In September 1822 they approached the American government. The Americans, for their part, had long recognised the island's strategic and commercial importance. Many leading Americans including John Quincy Adams, the Secretary of State, supposed that Cuban adhesion to their Union was only a matter of time. In the autumn of 1822, however, the American government held back for fear lest any attempt on its part to annex Cuba would lead to a war with Britain. As Adams told the cabinet, there was no doubt that 'a war with Great Britain for Cuba would result in her possession of that island, and not ours'.⁶⁴

Nevertheless, loose talk about acquiring the island circulated through the United States and the Caribbean. The rumours soon reached London seriously troubling Canning, who immediately instructed Stratford Canning to ascertain the truth.⁶⁵ Canning's fear of American occupation of Cuba influenced the British government's decision in the autumn of 1822 to send a naval force to Cuba. In his memorandum of 15 November, Canning pointed out that the United States had for some time been taking naval actions against the pirates in the Caribbean. He expressed his fear that, not contented with the capture of the privateers, she might make the military occupation of Cuba, and argued that 'the presence of our squadron in the neighbourhood of the Havannah [*sic*] cannot be otherwise than desirable with a view to keep in check the

pp.239-40.

⁶⁴ Philip S. Foner, *A History of Cuba and Its Relations with the United States, vol.1: 1492-1845, From the Conquest of Cuba to La Escalera* (New York, 1962), pp.78-143; Hugh Thomas, *Cuba or the Pursuit of Freedom* (London, 1971), pp.93-101; Adams to Hugh Nelson, 28 April 1823, Worthington Chauncey Ford (ed.), *Writings of John Quincy Adams* (7 vols., New York, 1913-7), vol.7, pp.372-3; 26, 27, 30 September, 1 October 1822, Charles Francis Adams (ed.), *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, comprising portions of his diary from 1795 to 1848* (12 vols., Philadelphia, 1874-7), vol.6, pp.69-74.

Americans'.⁶⁶ His anxiety was so great that in late November he even drafted fresh instructions to the naval commander in the West Indies to warn the Spanish governor of the island of Britain's determination not to permit the United States to take possession of it. However, Earl Bathurst, the colonial secretary, expressed his fear that the proposed communication to the governor of Cuba would not be kept secret from the Americans and, if it came to their knowledge, it might stir up their anti-British feeling and even drive them into war against Britain. He suggested that the British commander should make the communication only if he discovered that the Americans were making preparations for an expedition to Cuba.⁶⁷ Canning accepted Bathurst's suggestion, but still insisted that the government should do something more positive about the matter.⁶⁸ Bathurst in his note of 28 November suggested that Canning should instruct Stratford Canning to give the American government an explanation of the objects of the British naval operations in the Caribbean and disclaim any intention on the part of the British government to take possession of any part of Spanish America. Bathurst argued that, unless the American government was decided on war, it would most probably give Stratford similar assurances.⁶⁹ The cabinet decided to adopt Bathurst's suggestion, and Canning sent the proposed instructions to Stratford in early December.⁷⁰

However, John Quincy Adams being determined to leave the way open for future American annexation of Cuba, Canning's instructions to Stratford did not produce the desired result. When Stratford executed the instructions in early February 1823, Adams 'had rather the air, perhaps an assumed one, of receiving your [Canning's] Dispatch less

⁶⁵ Canning to Stratford Canning, no.7, secret, 11 October 1822, FO 115/40.

⁶⁶ 'Memorandum for the cabinet', *GCSOC*, vol.1, pp.51-3, 56.

⁶⁷ Bathurst to Canning, private, 27 November 1822, Canning Papers, 106.

⁶⁸ Canning to Bathurst, private and secret, 28 November 1822, 10 a.m., *ibid.*

as an intended disavowal of any ambitious project imputed to His Majesty's Government, than as a simple declaration of the fact and object of the British expedition destined for the West Indies', and did not give Stratford any assurance as to the intentions of his government with regard to Cuba.⁷¹ On the other hand, Stratford's examination of the debates in Congress, the press and public opinion, and the activities of the American navy had brought him 'not indeed to a conviction, but to a very strong impression' that the American government had 'no intention at present of attempting to extend their dominion over the Island of Cuba'. He predicted that Britain's assurance would strengthen the resolve of the American government not to take action now, since the assurance would dispel its apprehension that its inaction might lead to British acquisition of the island.⁷² This report allayed Canning's fear of immediate American action, but did not completely dispel his suspicion. Besides, in the early summer of 1823, the British government received reports that the Mexicans had ousted Agustín I from the throne in March 1823 and were now contemplating a union or connection with the United States. In early June, Liverpool proposed to Canning that the government should 'send immediately some Person of *Intelligence*' to Mexico 'with full Instruction to communicate with the *Gov[ernmen]t. Defacto, &* to declare our readiness to acknowledge them upon certain Conditions'. He argued that, as long as Mexico had remained a monarchy, Britain had been able to postpone the question of her recognition of Mexico. But, now that Mexico had become a republic and appeared to be considering a union with the United States, she should lose no time in forestalling the

⁶⁹ Bathurst to Canning, 28 November 1822 (enclosing Bathurst's note of 28 November 1822), *ibid.*

⁷⁰ Canning to Stratford Canning, no.13, 7 December 1822, FO 115/40.

⁷¹ Stratford Canning to Canning, no.17, 4 February 1823, FO 5/175.

⁷² Stratford Canning to Canning, no.18, secret, 7 February 1823, *ibid.*

danger by recognising the independence of Mexico.⁷³ The British cabinet soon decided to send Lionel Hervey to Mexico as special commissioner of inquiry, despite the apparent reluctance of Wellington to agree to the measure.⁷⁴

The British suspicion of American designs on Cuba was fully reciprocated by the American government. Notwithstanding Canning's disavowal of British designs on Cuba, it attached great importance to a warning from Albert Gallatin, the American minister in Paris, that Britain might obtain the cession of Cuba from Spain in return for her assistance in the Franco-Spanish war. Gallatin's report drove James Monroe, the President, to propose to his cabinet on 17 March that the United States should propose to Britain 'a mutual promise not to take Cuba'. Monroe, however, soon dropped the idea because of the opposition of Adams and John Caldwell Calhoun, the Secretary of War. Adams did not want to bind the United States not to take Cuba in future. Besides, the result of such a proposal would be that 'we should plunge into the whirlpool of European politics'. The result of the cabinet's discussions was Adams' instructions of 28 April to Hugh Nelson, his new minister to Spain, to communicate informally to the Spanish constitutional government 'the repugnance of the United States to the transfer of the island of Cuba by Spain to any other power'. If the inhabitants of Cuba resisted such transfer by declaring their independence from Spain, he wrote, 'the United States will be fully justified in supporting them to carry it into effect'.⁷⁵

At the same time, however, Britain's policy on the question of European Spain made a very favourable impression in the United States. This was actually the very situation

⁷³ Liverpool to Canning, secret, 9 June 1823, Canning Papers, 70.

⁷⁴ Wellington to Canning, 31 July 1823 (enclosing his 'Memorandum on the Instructions to Mr. Hervey'), *Wellington*, vol.2, pp.108-10; Wellington to Liverpool, 31 July 1823, *ibid.*, p.112.

⁷⁵ Arthur Preston Whitaker, *The United States and the Independence of Latin America, 1800-1830*

that Canning had been trying to create since early 1823. Before the French invasion of Spain, he communicated to the American government the British government's determination to persist in its principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, and instructed Stratford to read Adams some of the communications between the British and French governments on the question.⁷⁶ Soon after the commencement of the war in Spain, when the opposition moved a motion for the repeal of the Foreign Enlistment Act of 1819 with a view to making the enlistment of British subjects in the Spanish constitutional army lawful, Canning in his defence of the government's policy of 'strict neutrality' referred to the American neutral doctrines of 1793, which had prohibited any vessels of France, then at war with Britain, from fitting out and arming in American ports, as his 'guide in a system of neutrality'. A week later, he gave a dinner to the diplomatic corps to celebrate the King's birthday. Richard Rush, the American minister, offered the toast, 'Success to neutrals!' Canning applauded and made further flattering references to the neutral doctrines of 1793.⁷⁷ When in late March Stratford read Adams some of the communications between London and Paris on the question of Spain, the latter was apparently impressed by Canning's policy on the matter, regarding it as more decidedly in favour of the principle of national independence than he had expected.⁷⁸ On 6 May Stratford reported that Canning's Spanish diplomacy had had 'the effect of making the English almost popular in the United States', and even Adams had 'caught a something of the soft infection'. 'On the whole', wrote he, 'I question whether for a long time there has been so favourable an

(Baltimore, Md., 1941), pp.402-4; 14, 15, 17 March, 2 April 1823, Adams, *Memoirs*, vol.6, pp.137-9; Adams to Nelson, 28 April 1823, Adams, *Writings*, vol.7, pp.376-81.

⁷⁶ Canning to Stratford Canning, no.1, 13 January 1823, no.2, 14 February 1823, FO 115/42.

⁷⁷ *Hansard*, vol.8, House of Commons, 16 April 1823, cols.1019-22, 1056-7; Whitaker, *The United*

opportunity, as far as disposition & general good-will are concerned, to bring the two Countries nearer together.⁷⁹

It soon became apparent that Adams more or less shared Stratford's opinion in this regard. During the few weeks which preceded the British minister's departure from Washington for London in late June, they had several conferences in which they discussed virtually all the issues pending between the two governments, such as their differences over the trade between the United States and the British colonies, controversies over the boundaries between the United States and Canada, American opposition to the belligerent rights to visit and search neutral vessels, and her refusal to accept Britain's proposal to establish between the two countries the mutual right of visit and search for the suppression of the slave trade. In one of the first conferences between them, Adams led the conversation further to world politics. 'Important changes', he said, 'had recently taken place both in Europe & in America. In Europe, the grand alliance was virtually dissolved. . . . In America the independence of the late Spanish Provinces was now essentially secured' Adams went on to prove that the positions of the United States and Great Britain in world politics in the time of these important changes were essentially identical. While in Europe they stood in the same neutral attitude towards the two powers which had just commenced hostilities, in the Caribbean the two countries, 'acting upon the same principles, had also a common interest in continuing to protect their commerce & to put down Piracy'. As for the question of Spanish American independence, he said that 'it was not to be expected that Great Britain would delay much longer to recognise that independence'. His remarks on the

States and the Independence of Latin America, pp.435-6.

⁷⁸ Stratford Canning to Canning, no.35, 27 March 1823, FO 5/176.

policy of the United States on this important question are highly interesting. He explained that the United States had hitherto refrained from 'any immediate connection with the general system of European Affairs'. 'With respect to the vast continent of the west', however, 'the United States must necessarily take a warm and decided interest in whatever determined the fate or affected the welfare of its component members.' Adverting more particularly to the possible effects of the French invasion of Spain on Spanish America, he declared that 'the conquest or cession of any part of the Independent Provinces was highly . . . to be deprecated'. He assured that the United States, for her part, 'had no exclusive advantages in view' in cultivating the good will and friendly dispositions of her southern neighbours. Adams suggested that the similarity of the attitudes of the United States and Britain towards these important questions would afford them a good opportunity to renew their efforts to settle all the major disagreements between them. He was, for his part, willing to seize on this opportunity to obtain their settlement. Adams even suggested that, if he found the British government disposed to meet the American views on the most difficult of these questions, that is, their disagreement on the principles of maritime law and neutral rights, 'he would perhaps extend his negotiation still further, and . . . venture to propose a closer understanding between the two countries . . . than has existed for many years'.

But, what did Adams mean by 'a closer understanding'? In his report of the conference, Stratford Canning was careful not to overemphasise the significance of this part of the conversation which he entirely omitted from his official despatch and reported only in his private letter, both of which were dated 6 June. Adams had certainly said that his idea had not been thoroughly matured yet. It seemed to the British

⁷⁹ Stratford Canning to Canning, private, 6 May 1823, Canning Papers, 121.

minister that 'connection would be too strong a term' as a description of what Adams had in mind. He also reported that he 'almost' doubted if he could trust Adams' avowed desire for a closer understanding between the two countries. It seemed to him that Adams' ambition to be the next president had been the real obstacle to the Anglo-American co-operation for the suppression of the slave trade and the settlement of the colonial trade question. Stratford promised his cousin that, before his departure from Washington, he would 'endeavour to give him [Adams] an opportunity of opening himself further'.⁸⁰ He fulfilled his promise two weeks later. At the conference of 20 June, he affected to consider Adams' former remarks 'as a proposal to Great Britain for an alliance with the United States'. Adams 'distinctly' denied this, and said that his intention had been merely to propose 'the accommodation of great interests upon which they had heretofore differed'.⁸¹

It is clear that Adams' principal concern in the summer of 1823 was to come to agreements with Britain on the outstanding disputes between the two countries. Among them, he attached particular importance to the question of the principles of maritime law, for he believed that this was the very question whose settlement by him would immortalise his name in the history of mankind.⁸² His desire to contribute to the firm establishment of the neutral rights explains why he repeatedly alluded to the 'coincidence of principle' between the two countries in his conversations with Stratford. Strictly speaking, in Adams' view there were two major coincidences between their positions in world politics. The first was their opposition to the principle of general

⁸⁰ Stratford Canning to Canning, no.56, confidential, 6 June 1823, FO 5/176 (partly printed in *BILA*, vol.2, pp.495-6); Stratford Canning to Canning, private, 6 June 1823, Canning Papers, 121.

⁸¹ 20 June 1823, Adams, *Memoirs*, vol.6, pp.151-2.

⁸² 28, 31 June 1823, *ibid.*, pp.164-5, 166-7.

intervention in the internal affairs of other states. The second was their neutrality in the ongoing wars in Spanish America and in Spain. Adams attached as much importance to the second coincidence as to the first. His instructions of 28 July to Rush on the question of maritime law clearly shows why. After pointing out that the United States and Britain were both neutral in the war between Spain and France and that between Spain and her former colonies, he wrote:

The general *interests* of Great Britain therefore, in all parts of the world, were interests of *neutrality*. . . . From many recent indications of the policy of the British Cabinet we had seen cause to hope that the *rights* of neutrality were more favorably viewed by them than heretofore; and we thought it probable they would not be unwilling to review the doctrines heretofore held by them with a disposition more favorable to neutral interests.

Adams hoped that Britain's growing interest in the rights of neutrals would lead her to abandon the belligerent right to visit and search neutral vessels.⁸³

At the same time, Adams hoped that the settlement of the outstanding disputes between the two countries would, as he wrote to Rush on 29 July, lead to 'a more permanent and more harmonious concert of public policy and community of purpose between our two countries, than has ever yet existed since the period of our Independence'.⁸⁴ However, he certainly did not mean to enter into an alliance with Britain. True, on the question of European Spain, there existed between the two countries what Adams called 'community of purpose'. They both desired to stay away from the war in Spain. On the other hand, however, Adams was determined that the

⁸³ Adams to Rush, 28 July 1823, *American State Papers: Documents, Legislative and Executive, of the Congress of the United States, from the First Session of the First Congress to the Second Session of the Thirty-Fifth Congress, Inclusive: commencing March 4, 1789, and ending March 3, 1859. Class I. Foreign Relations.* (6 vols., Washington, 1832-59), vol.5, p.530.

positions of the two countries should no longer be the same if Britain should intervene in the war for the protection of her European interests such as the maintenance of the political independence or territorial integrity of Spain and Portugal. 'It has been', he wrote in his instructions of 28 April to Nelson, 'a maxim in the policy of these United States, from the time when their independence was achieved, to keep themselves aloof from the political systems and contentions of Europe.'⁸⁵ But, what if Britain took up arms against France to prevent her invasion of Spanish America? It is clear that in the spring and early summer of 1823 the American government did not have any fear that France would make such an attempt. 'Whatever may be the issue of this war, as between those two European powers [France and Spain]', Adams wrote to Nelson, 'it may be taken for granted that the dominion of Spain upon the American continents, North and South, is irrecoverably gone.'⁸⁶ From the early to the middle of 1823, the attention of the American government was directed wholly to the island of Cuba. And, on this question the Americans regarded Britain not as their potential ally against France but as the most dangerous threat. True, Adams thought that Cuba would be liable to invasion from France during the Franco-Spanish war. But, his fear of French invasion of Cuba was completely overshadowed by that of British occupation of the island. He thought that, if France attempted the occupation of Cuba, Britain would provably resist it.⁸⁷ He cannot have had any doubt that Britain would succeed in repelling it. The real question was what Britain would do next. The only way to bind Britain not to take Cuba seemed to be, as Monroe had proposed, to give her a pledge on

⁸⁴ Whitaker, *The United States and the Independence of Latin America*, pp.432-3.

⁸⁵ Adams to Nelson, 28 April 1823, Adams, *Writings*, vol.7, p.370.

⁸⁶ Adams to Nelson, 28 April 1823, *ibid.*, p.372.

⁸⁷ Adams to Nelson, 28 April 1823, *ibid.*, p.374.

the part of the American government not to take Cuba. But, as we have seen, Adams was wholly opposed to the idea. It is clear that in the summer of 1823 Adams did not consider entering into an understanding with Britain on Spanish American affairs. In his view, it was unnecessary for the protection of the independence of the new states of the American continent, and impossible on the question of the island of Cuba.

Nevertheless, when on 10 July Stratford's reports of 6 June reached London, Canning judged that Anglo-American co-operation on the affairs of Spanish America was now possible. Canning opened the matter on 16 August in his interview with Richard Rush. In the interview, Rush alluded to the Spanish American part of Canning's despatch of 31 March to Stuart. Canning in reply asked Rush what he thought the American government would say 'to going hand in hand with his [the British government], in the same sentiment' on the affairs of Spanish America.⁸⁸ He put his proposition into 'a more distinct' shape in his private and confidential note of 20 August. His proposal was an Anglo-American declaration in the form of their convention or the exchange of ministerial notes on the following points:

1. We conceive the recovery of the Colonies by Spain to be hopeless.
2. We conceive the question of the Recognition of them, as Independent States, to be one of time and circumstances.
3. We are, however, by no means disposed to throw any impediment in the way of an arrangement between them, and the mother country by amicable negotiation.
4. We aim not at the possession of any portion of them ourselves.
5. We could not see any portion of them transferred to any other Power, with indifference.

Canning explained that the five points were designed to be 'the most effectual and the least offensive mode of intimating our joint disapprobation' of any project of any

European power which 'looks to a forcible enterprize for reducing the Colonies to subjugation, on the behalf or in the name of Spain; or which meditates the acquisition of any part of them to itself, by cession or by conquest'.⁸⁹ His point 3 implied Anglo-American opposition to the first of these two kinds of projects, while the point 5 clearly stated their opposition to the second. However, having already warned France, in his despatch of 31 March to Stuart, that any attempt on her part to obtain Spanish possession in America would involve her in a war with Britain, he had little reason to be anxious about French territorial ambition in Spanish America. Among his five points, the most important was undoubtedly the point 3.

On the other hand, as we shall see later, when Canning's five points reached Washington, his point 4 led the Americans to suspect that his proposal was as much intended to pledge the United States not to take any part of Spanish America including Cuba as to prevent France from doing so. Dexter Perkins believes that such was actually Canning's intention.⁹⁰ C. K. Webster doubts this explanation for lack of evidence. However, even he seems to believe that an American acceptance of the point 4 would certainly have pledged her not to take Cuba.⁹¹ So do many other students of the so-called 'Monroe Doctrine'.⁹² A careful reading of Canning's five points disproves this interpretation of his point 4. It is clear that by 'the Colonies' in the point 1 Canning meant only those colonies whose 'recovery' by Spain he believed to be 'hopeless'. Therefore, 'the Colonies' did not include Cuba which was loyal to Spain,

⁸⁸ Rush to Adams, 19 August 1823, *DCUS*, vol.3, pp.1475-8.

⁸⁹ Canning to Rush, private and confidential, 20 August 1823, *ibid.*, pp.1478-9.

⁹⁰ Dexter Perkins, *The Monroe Doctrine, 1823-1826* (Cambridge, Mass., 1927), pp.61-2.

⁹¹ *BILA*, vol.1, p.46.

⁹² J. Fred Rippy, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain over Latin America, 1808-1830* (Baltimore, Md., 1929), pp.84-5; Whitaker, *The United States and the Independence of Latin America*, p.439; Bradford Perkins, *Castlereagh and Adams*, pp.320-1.

and neither did the word 'them' in the point 4. The point 4 could never pledge Britain or the United States not to take Cuba. In fact, in his note of 20 August, Canning drew a distinction between Spain's former colonies and her 'remaining Colonies', namely, Cuba and Porto Rico. While he meant his point 4 to be an Anglo-American disavowal of their ambition to take possession of Spain's former colonies, as for Cuba and Porto Rico, he confined himself to expressing his hope that the point 4 'would at the same time put an end to all the jealousies of Spain with respect to her remaining Colonies—and to the agitation which prevails in those Colonies, an agitation which it would be but humane to allay; being determined (as we are) not to profit by encouraging it'.⁹³ As he explained to Liverpool on 26 August, Canning designed this sentence as 'my disavowal of any design upon Cuba', which he hoped would be reciprocated by Rush. Canning's five points, therefore, dealt only with the question of Spain's former colonies, but he thought that the Anglo-American discussion on this question provided the two countries with a good opportunity to come to an understanding also on the question of Cuba. When he received Rush's note of 23 August in which the American minister, who apparently understood that Canning's point 4 would not apply to Cuba, expressed his government's agreement with the point 4 without touching on the question of Cuba at all, he was naturally disappointed, but did not press Rush further.⁹⁴ Canning realised that the American government was reluctant to give up its future acquisition of the island. He did not want their rivalry over Cuba to preclude their co-operation on the question of Spain's late colonies. He decided to set aside the question of Cuba for the time being in the hope that an

⁹³ Canning to Rush, private and confidential, 20 August 1823, *DCUS*, vol.3, p.1479.

⁹⁴ Rush to Canning, 23 August 1823, *ibid.*, pp.1479-80; Canning to Liverpool, private, 26 August 1823,

Anglo-American agreement on Spain's former colonies would pave the way to their agreement on Cuba. However, obsessed with their rivalry with Britain over the island, the Americans failed to see Canning's true intention.

But, why did Canning seek the co-operation of the United States on the question of Spain's former colonies when Britain's maritime supremacy was so great that further assistance was not really necessary to prevent French intervention in Spanish America? No one has ever given a clear answer to this question. C. K. Webster honestly admits that he cannot find any reasonable answer to the question, confining himself to suggesting hesitatingly that 'in face of the opposition to his foreign policy from the Powers of the Alliance and from many of his own Cabinet, Canning turned instinctively to the one country where his actions had been viewed with approval'.⁹⁵ But, Canning's proposal to Rush was by no means instinctive. He had a clear aim in seeking the co-operation of the United States. In the summer of 1823, he had no doubt that the French ministers intended to bring forward their Spanish Bourbon project soon after the termination of the war in Spain and, moreover, they counted on the eastern powers, Russia in particular, for their support to the project. As early as May 1823, Villèle and Chateaubriand told Stuart their desire that Britain would participate in postwar allied deliberations in Madrid on the affairs of Spanish America.⁹⁶ On 23 July, Sir Henry Wellesley, Wellington's brother and the new British ambassador in Vienna, reported a remark made by Tatishchev, now the Russian minister in Vienna, that the state of Spanish America 'must necessarily occupy the early earnest attention of the Allied

Canning Papers, 70.

⁹⁵ *BILA*, vol.1, pp.46-7.

⁹⁶ Stuart to Canning, no.182, 5 May 1823, no.227, 29 May 1823, FO 27/290.

Sovereigns'.⁹⁷ Certain of the support of the eastern allies to their project, the French ministers would not easily give it up. Canning feared that Britain's single-handed declaration against the project would not induce them to abandon it immediately.⁹⁸ However, as he told Rush on 16 August, Canning expected that a joint declaration by Britain and the United States who shared between them 'the large share of the maritime power of the world' would 'by its moral effect' induce the French ministers to abandon their project immediately.⁹⁹ This was the reason why Canning desired to obtain the co-operation of the United States.

But, a question still remains. Britain was obviously in such a strong position that she could veto any common decision of the continental allies. If so, why did Canning wish to make France abandon her project immediately? The answer is simple. Canning desired to avoid a diplomatic confrontation with the continental allies. The reports of Stuart and Wellesley convinced him that France and Russia intended to hold allied deliberations of the affairs of Spanish America after the termination of the war in Spain. Canning was determined to refuse Britain's participation in them. With Britain's naval supremacy, he could safely do so. But, Canning must have feared that Britain's refusal would inevitably revive the theoretical dispute between Britain and the continental allies on the principles of intervention, and deepen her isolation in Europe. His reaction to Stuart's despatch of 18 August strongly suggests so. According to Stuart, Chateaubriand told him on 17 August that the affairs of Spanish America 'should be

⁹⁷ Wellesley to Canning, no.5, 23 July 1823, FO 7/179.

⁹⁸ Later in December, Canning wrote to à Court that he had been 'doubtful as to the effect' of Britain's single declaration. Canning to à Court, private, 30 December 1823, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41544. A copy of this letter, which bears the date of 31 December 1823 and is slightly different from the original, is printed in *GCHT*, pp.394-6.

⁹⁹ Rush to Adams, 19 August 1823, *DCUS*, vol.3, p.1476.

discussed in a Congress, convened for that purpose'.¹⁰⁰ This report raised Canning's alarm. The term 'a Congress' suggested a meeting of the allied powers which was more formal in its character and grander in its scale than Canning must have expected from the previous remarks of the French ministers. On 23 August, Canning informed Rush of the information representing it as 'an additional motive . . . for wishing that we might be able to come to some understanding'. He added: 'I need not point out to you all the complications to which this proposal, however dealt with by us, may lead.'¹⁰¹ Undoubtedly, the immediate aim of this note was to play on the American fear of the interference of a league of European absolute monarchs in the affairs of the New World. But, when he mentioned to 'all the complications', he must have had on his mind another diplomatic imbroglio within the European Alliance.

Canning's proposal to Rush of August 1823 has long been regarded as his attempt to form a blocking alliance with the United States against French invasion of Spanish America, in other words, as a typical example of balance-of-power diplomacy.¹⁰² This, however, was not the case. Canning's aims in the proposal were far subtler than historians believe. Its main aim was to frustrate the French plan for an allied congress or conference and, by doing so, prevent the recurrence of the futile ideological dispute between Britain and other members of the European Alliance. Besides, Canning in any case was greatly interested in coming to a better understanding with the United States on the future of Spanish America and especially on that of Cuba. While he was determined to reject the interference of the eastern allies in the affairs of Spanish

¹⁰⁰ Stuart to Canning, no.395, 18 August 1823, FO 27/293.

¹⁰¹ Canning to Rush, private and confidential, 23 August 1823, *DCUS*, vol.3, p.1482.

¹⁰² Temperley, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, pp.103-11; Dexter Perkins, *Monroe Doctrine*, pp.58-9; Kaufmann, *British Policy*, pp.150-1; Kenneth Bourne, *Britain and the Balance of Power in North*

America, he recognised the United States as the regional great power in the western hemisphere and desired to come to an understanding with her on the future of Spanish America. 'It would be strange indeed', he wrote later in September, 'that the powers of the European continent, some of whom never had a colony, nor saw a ship in their lives, should sit in judgment upon a great maritime, colonial question, from which the American government should be excluded.'¹⁰³

It appeared to Canning that his second note to Rush of 23 August had produced a strong effect on the American minister. In reply to Canning's first note of 20 August, Rush had already expressed his conviction that Britain's policy listed in the five points belonged also to his government.¹⁰⁴ Canning found that Rush's reply of 27 August to his second note showed 'a greater degree of promptness & alacrity' than his reply to the first note. Rush declared that his government would 'view with . . . uneasiness any interference whatever, by the powers of Europe in the affairs of those new states' including 'the convening of a congress'. Canning became convinced that the American government would at least issue a separate, if not a joint Anglo-American, declaration against any attempt by the European powers to meddle in the affairs of Spanish America including the opening of a European congress when it was formally proposed.¹⁰⁵ This was better than nothing, and Liverpool seems to have thought that such a declaration on the part of the United States might enable Britain to evade a European conference easily, by arguing that discussions on the future of Spanish America required the participation of the United States, a power who was deeply

America, 1815-1908 (London, 1967), p.37; Hinde, *George Canning*, p.348; Roger Bullen, 'The Great Powers and the Iberian Peninsula, 1815-1848', in Sked (ed.), *Europe's Balance of Power*, p.65.

¹⁰³ Canning to Wellington, 24 September 1823, *Wellington*, vol.2, p.137.

¹⁰⁴ Rush to Canning, 23 August 1823, *DCUS*, vol.3, pp.1479-80.

involved in the question.¹⁰⁶ But, this was still short of what Canning really wanted. Canning's sense of urgency increased by the middle of September when the fall of Cadiz appeared to him only a matter of time. Canning requested an interview with Rush, and on 18 September they met at the Foreign Office. At the interview, pointing out a provability of an immediate termination of the war in Spain, Canning pressed Rush to join him in the proposed declaration at his own discretion. If Rush waited until he could receive specific powers, a congress would be called. Even after this, Britain would be able to frustrate France's efforts to materialise her project. But, 'the cooperation of the United States with England . . . , afforded with promptitude, would ward off altogether the meditated jurisdiction of the European powers over the affairs of the new world'. Canning even threatened that if Rush refused the joint declaration and if a congress was in fact assembled, he would propose to the continental powers to invite him to it. Rush answered that he would put his name on the proposed declaration if Britain 'immediately and unequivocally' acknowledged the independence of the new states.¹⁰⁷ Without having detailed information on the manoeuvres of the European powers on the matter, Rush believed that Canning had evidence of France meditating enterprises against the independence of the Spanish American states. But, he hesitated to take a step which amounted to a departure from the traditional American policy of not implicating herself in the politics of the Old World without instructions from home. He judged that, if he could obtain Britain's immediate recognition of the new states, which would certainly achieve the most important aim of the policy of his government in the

¹⁰⁵ Canning to Liverpool, secret, 30 August 1823, Liverpool Papers, BL Add. MSS 38193; Rush to Canning, 27 August 1823, *DCUS*, vol.3, pp.1482-3.

¹⁰⁶ Liverpool to Canning, private and confidential, 30 August 1823, Canning Papers, 70.

¹⁰⁷ Rush to Adams, 19 September 1823, *DCUS*, vol.3, pp.1487-90.

region, that is, the firm and irreversible establishment of the independence of the new states, his government would not disavow his unauthorised action.¹⁰⁸ Canning, of course, was not prepared to accept this condition. Britain's immediate and formal recognition of the new states must have shocked Europe and completed her isolation. He tried to evade Rush's demand, saying that there were some objections to recognising the new states immediately, including 'that of the uncertain condition, internally, of these new states, or, at any rate, of some of them'.¹⁰⁹ However, when they met again on 26 September, he was more honest, telling Rush that the British government 'felt great embarrassments as regarded the immediate recognition of these new states, embarrassments which had not been common to the U. States'. He asked the American minister if he could give his assent to the proposed declaration 'on a promise by Great Britain of *future* acknowledgment' of the independence of the new states. Rush gave 'an immediate and unequivocal refusal'.¹¹⁰ This was the end of their negotiations. To Rush's surprise, when they met again on 8 and 9 October, Canning did not say a single word about his proposal.¹¹¹

Towards the end of his interview with Rush on 18 September, Canning realised that their negotiations had ended in a failure. He decided that he should lose no time in communicating directly to the French government Britain's opposition to France's armed intervention in Spanish America. On 22 September, Canning drafted a note, which was to be handed to Prince Polignac, the new French ambassador, declaring that Britain 'could not see with indifference the transfer of any portion of those Colonies to

¹⁰⁸ Rush to Adams, 28 August 1823, *ibid.*, pp.1483-5.

¹⁰⁹ Rush to Adams, 19 September 1823, *ibid.*, pp.1490-1.

¹¹⁰ Rush to Adams, 2 October 1823, *ibid.*, p.1494.

¹¹¹ Rush to Adams, 10 October 1823, *ibid.*, pp.1500-1.

any foreign Power, nor the interference of any foreign Power, either by joining its arms with those of Spain or by making war on behalf of Spain for their subjugation'.¹¹² Liverpool approved it with a few verbal alterations.¹¹³ But, Wellington, whose consent Canning could not dispense with in taking such an important step, considered the note to be too offensive to France and recommended not to send it. In his view, it was utterly impossible that 'France or all the Powers of Europe' would dare to attempt armed intervention in Spanish America without Britain's consent. Canning, of course, knew this very well. What the Duke failed to understand was Canning's desire to forestall France's attempt to obtain Britain's consent to her armed intervention in Spanish America at an allied congress. Britain, of course, would be able to thwart such an attempt by refusing her participation in a congress. But, her refusal would in itself involve her in a diplomatic confrontation with the continental allies. Canning was, therefore, 'for avoiding, if possible, the necessity of refusing such an invitation'. This could best be done 'by taking our line beforehand', in other words, 'by speaking plainly to France while she is yet uncommitted'. In the end, however, Canning accepted the Duke's suggestion that he should ask the French government verbally through Polignac or Stuart for an explanation of its intentions.¹¹⁴ On 1 October, Canning expressed to Polignac his 'readiness and desire to enter into a full and unreserved conversation' with him on the subject of Spanish America. He did not conceal from Polignac his suspicion that the French government intended to intervene in Spanish America by force after the termination of the war in Spain. He suggested that the communication be made either

¹¹² Canning's draft of the note which he intended to send Polignac is printed in *BILA*, vol.2, pp.114-5.

¹¹³ 26 September 1823, *Mrs. Arbuthnot*, vol.1, p.258.

¹¹⁴ Wellington to Canning, 23, 25 September 1823, *Wellington*, vol.2, pp.134-5, 138-9; Canning to Wellington, 24 September 1823, *ibid.*, pp.137-8; Canning to Liverpool, private, 27 September 1823,

by an official note to Polignac, by a despatch to Stuart which should be communicated to Chateaubriand, or by a conference between Polignac and Canning, a minute of which should be afterwards drawn up by one of them and authenticated by the other. Polignac preferred the last of the three modes of communication, but desired time to receive from his government the confirmation of his choice and instructions as to his part at the conference.¹¹⁵

When Polignac's report of this conversation reached Paris, the French ministers were daily in expectation of the arrival from Spain of the news of the fall of Cadiz. The time had finally come for them to make up their mind as to how to handle the question of Spanish America. They decided, first, to persist in their plan to hold an allied deliberation of the question. Interestingly, Chateaubriand inferred from Polignac's report that Canning's intention was to propose the establishment of an Anglo-French separate understanding on the affairs of Spanish America with a view to their joint recognition of the new states. In other words, the French foreign minister judged that Britain still did not dare to recognise the new states single-handedly without an accomplice, as France did not dare to recognise the new states conjointly with Britain without the approval of the eastern allies. He calculated that, if France refused to enter into a separate understanding with Britain, she would, however reluctantly, agree to take part in an allied congress for fear of her total isolation in Europe. Chateaubriand instructed Polignac to tell Canning that the French government could not form any opinion on the future of the Spanish colonies without consulting with their legitimate sovereign as well as the other members of the Alliance, and to ascertain whether

Canning Papers, 70.

¹¹⁵ Canning to Wellesley, no.18, 28 November 1823, *BILA*, vol.2, p.16; Robertson, *France and*

Canning was disposed to send a plenipotentiary to an allied congress. Second, however, the French ministers decided to abandon their plan for French armed intervention in Spanish America for fear lest Canning should use it as a pretext for recognising the new states immediately. They still attached great importance to the establishment of Spanish Bourbon monarchies in Spanish America as an inducement for Spain to acknowledge the independence of the new states, but the use of force was now out of the question. Their aim at a congress was now to obtain Spain's consent to the mediation of the Alliance between her and her former colonies on the bases of the acceptance by the new states of Spanish princes as their new sovereigns and the recognition by Spain of their independence. Thus, Chateaubriand instructed Polignac to disclaim any intention on the part of France to appropriate to herself any part of the Spanish possessions in America, to obtain for herself any particular advantage in Spanish America, or to use force against Spain's rebel colonies. Third, the French ministers had no intention to act in co-operation with Britain even within the framework of an allied congress. On the contrary, they designed to play at a congress the role of a protector of Spain's interests against Britain and bring forward their plan for allied mediation on the pretence that it would be the only way to prevent Britain from finalising the complete separation of the colonies from the mother country by her recognition of the republican governments in Spanish America. Fourth, while the French ministers were determined not to enter into a separate understanding with Britain before and during a congress, they were aware that they would not be able to afford to reject Anglo-French co-operation after a congress in the event of its failure. They feared that 'madness of Ferdinand and Spanish obstinacy' would spoil their game at a congress. If Ferdinand persisted in his refusal to

treat with his former colonies, the eastern allies, who had 'no interest in the question of colonies but that of theory', might take sides with him. Britain would sooner or later recognise the new states and France would be forced to follow her example. In this case, it would be better for her to act in concert with Britain than to act alone. Therefore, Polignac should decline what Chateaubriand expected to be Canning's 'proposition' with 'great politeness'.¹¹⁶

Canning and Polignac held a conference on 9 October. Canning opened the conference by explaining Britain's views on the question of Spanish America, which can be summarised as follows: 1. The British government believed that 'any attempt to bring Spanish America again under its ancient submission to Spain must be utterly hopeless'; 2. It nevertheless had no desire to precipitate the recognition 'so long as there was any reasonable chance of an accommodation . . . by which such a Recognition might come first from Spain', but 'it could not wait indefinitely for that result' and it might 'cut short' any attempt by Spain to obstruct British trade 'by a speedy and unqualified Recognition'; 3. It would similarly abstain from interposing any obstacle to any attempt by Spain at negotiation with her colonies, but would oppose 'the junction of any foreign Power in an enterprize of Spain against the Colonies' and would consider any foreign interference by force or by menace in the dispute between Spain and her colonies as a motive for recognising the latter without delay; 4. It 'absolutely disclaimed, not only any desire of appropriating to itself any portion of the Spanish Colonies, but any intention of forming a political connection with them, beyond that of amity and commercial intercourse'; 5. Far from seeking any exclusive commercial

¹¹⁶ Chateaubriand to Polignac, 5, 6 (2 letters) October 1823, *Chateaubriand*, vol.5, pp.27-33; Villèle to Angoulême, 5 October 1823, *Villèle*, vol.4, p.446.

advantages, it would be content to be ranked 'equally with others, only on the footing of the most favored nation' but after the mother country who was entitled to some preference; 6. It 'could not go into a joint deliberation upon the subject of Spanish America upon an equal footing with other Powers, whose opinions were less formed upon that question, and whose interests were no way implicated in the decision of it'. Polignac, for his part, declared his government's agreement with the first of these six points. But, pointing out political instability in Spain's former colonies, he took exception to Canning's declaration in the point 2 that Britain might under certain circumstances recognise their independence without delay. As regards the points 3, 4 and 5, Polignac disclaimed his government's intention to obtain any territorial or exclusive commercial advantages in Spanish America, and declared that it 'abjured, in any case, any design of acting against the Colonies by force of arms'. But, his government's Spanish Bourbon project naturally did not allow him to follow Canning's example in disclaiming the establishment of 'a political connection' with Spanish America. With respect to the point 6, he, of course, did not agree with Canning, suggesting that the aim of an allied deliberation should be to re-establish monarchical institutions in Spanish America. Canning in his reply carefully avoided 'entering into any discussion upon abstract principles', but told Polignac that it would be difficult for the allies to induce the Spanish Americans to introduce monarchical institutions and the British government could not take upon itself to make such recommendation to them. As to the European congress, he remarked that 'he could not understand how an *European Congress* could discuss Spanish American affairs without calling to their counsels a Power so eminently interested in the result as the United States of *America*, while Austria, Russia and Prussia, Powers so much less concerned in the subject, were

in consultation upon it'.¹¹⁷

The conference was timely, for on the same day the news of Ferdinand's liberation reached London. Canning was satisfied with Polignac's 'assurances'.¹¹⁸ However, in the conference Polignac made it clear that his government would not easily give up its plan to hold an allied deliberation of the affairs of Spanish America. Even after he received Polignac's assurance that France would not use force against the new states in Spanish America, Canning was as determined as before to evade an allied congress or conference, for it was clear that Britain's participation in the joint mediation of the allied powers would result in the loss of her freedom of action, while her refusal of it would deepen her isolation in Europe. One important consequence of the conference of 9 October was that it revived Canning's interest in the reaction of the United States to his proposal to Rush of 20 August, which by a curious coincidence reached Washington on 9 October. As we have seen, in late August Canning expected that his proposal would result in a separate American declaration against any European interference in the affairs of Spanish America including the opening of a congress. Such a declaration might be a useful auxiliary to his effort to evade a Spanish American congress. Therefore, in examining Canning's Spanish American diplomacy after 9 October 1823, we must be attentive to the American, as well as the European, side of the story.

¹¹⁷ 'Memorandum of a Conference between the Prince de Polignac and Mr. Canning, begun Thursday, October 9th, and concluded Sunday, October 12th, 1823', *BILA*, vol.2, pp.115-20.

¹¹⁸ Canning to Liverpool, private, 9 October 1823, Canning Papers, 70.

III

The Aftermath of the War in Spain and the Question of Spanish America, 10 October 1823-July 1824

Canning had no sooner ended his conference with Polignac than he started to adjust his Spanish American policy to the new diplomatic situation which had emerged as the result of his discussions with the French ambassador. The conference of 9 October taught Canning that the British and French views on the subject were almost identical. The only significant difference which arose at the conference between the two countries was Britain's opposition to the French plan for an allied congress and allied joint mediation to effect the establishment of monarchies in Spanish America. Canning was certain that the similarity of their views would put France in a difficult position in her relations with Spain and the eastern allies. He had no doubt that, in their effort to obtain the consent of Spain and the eastern allies to their plan, the French ministers would try to contrast their fidelity to the monarchical principles with Britain's hostility to them by lending emphasis to Britain's opposition to their plan for allied diplomatic intervention to establish monarchical institutions in Spanish America. However, he was confident that he would be able to outmanoeuvre them by bringing Britain's stance on the question closer to that of France.

Canning's diplomatic manoeuvres immediately after his conference with Polignac clearly show that such was his calculation. As we have seen, even when he expressed to Polignac Britain's objection to the French plan for allied diplomatic intervention, he carefully avoided 'entering into any discussion upon abstract principles' and based

Britain's objection on its impracticability. No sooner had he ended his conference with Polignac than he started his effort to make it clear that the British government desired the preservation of monarchical institutions in Spanish America. Canning had long delayed sending consuls to Spanish America in view of Spain's predicament in Europe. Shortly before the end of the war in Spain, he finally decided to send consuls to Buenos Ayres, Chile and Peru, and consuls-general and special commissioners of inquiry to Mexico and Colombia. He had already drafted general instructions to Lionel Hervey, the chief commissioner to Mexico, in the summer, directing him to ascertain if the country was fit for recognition.¹ On 10 October, he drew an additional instruction, directing Hervey to co-operate with the Mexican authorities if they made any proposal for the restoration of a monarchy in the person of a Spanish prince.² The next day, he sent it to Liverpool with the following comment: 'I think we ought to show *thus much* preference for Monarchy; & doing this, I think we cut from under the French the only ground on which they could take their stand against us. If the Yankees had concurred with us heart and hand, it might have been more difficult to express such a preference.'³ Having read this comment, we can no longer accept C. K. Webster's view that Canning desired the establishment of a Spanish Bourbon monarchy in Mexico solely because 'he saw in it a possible barrier against the encroachments of the United States which he foresaw'.⁴ True, as we will see later, Canning thought that a monarchy in Mexico might be a useful barrier to the danger of the expansion of American influence in Latin America. Yet the immediate object of his additional instruction was not to give a check

¹ Canning to Hervey, no.1, secret, 10 October 1823, *BILA*, vol.1, pp.433-6.

² Canning to Hervey, no.5, secret, 10 October 1823, *ibid.*, pp.436-8.

³ Canning to Liverpool, private, 11 October 1823, Canning Papers, 70.

⁴ *BILA*, vol.1, pp.32-3. See also, Temperley, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, p.138.

to this danger but to forestall that of Britain's diplomatic isolation in Europe.

Meanwhile, Canning drew up a memorandum of the conference of 9 October and transmitted it to the French ambassador on 10 October.⁵ He had no doubt that there existed between him and Polignac an agreement to leave a record of their conference. In reality, however, Polignac was not authorised by Chateaubriand to agree to do so. When Chateaubriand received Polignac's report on the interview of 1 October, at which Canning suggested three possible ways of communication to the French government of Britain's views on the question of Spanish America, he wrongly believed that Canning was offering to him a choice of methods of negotiating a separate understanding between the two countries. He took it for granted that the French refusal of what he believed to be Canning's 'proposition', that is, the establishment of an Anglo-French separate understanding, should make the discussion on the method of negotiating it entirely meaningless. He believed that, once Polignac declined Canning's 'proposition', it would no longer be necessary for him to take the trouble to refuse to leave a written record of their conversation.⁶ Polignac, however, could not in the first place decline Canning's 'proposition' since he could never decline something which had not been offered to him. He was clearly under the necessity of telling Canning that he was not authorised to leave a record of their conversation. The problem was that he was instructed by Chateaubriand to assure Canning of the determination of the French government not to use force against Spain's former colonies. He must have feared that his refusal to leave the assurance on record would arouse Canning's doubt about its

⁵ Canning to Wellesley, no.18, 28 November 1823, *BILA*, vol.2, p.16.

⁶ Chateaubriand in his letter of 6 October told Polignac that, only if a European congress should end in a failure and the establishment of an Anglo-French separate understanding should become necessary, the French government would consider the question of the mode of reaching it, but suggested that it should

value. Probably because of this fear, the ambassador decided that he should agree to keep a record of his conversation with Canning. When on 12 October they met again and read Canning's draft of the memorandum of their conference of 9 October together, Polignac essentially agreed to it. However, devoid of authority to acknowledge any record of their conference, the ambassador refused to recognise the memorandum as an official document.⁷

On 12 October, Polignac also informed Canning of the news of the occupation of Cadiz by the French force. In the absence of detailed information from Spain, Canning in his despatch of 13 October to à Court confined himself to giving the minister a general guide of his conduct. He directed à Court that he should 'recommend on all occasions moderate Counsels and mutual oblivion of injuries' to the new Spanish government. But, beyond this, he should 'abstain from all uncalled for interference in the affairs of the restored Government' and 'mix as little as possible' in the discussions of the allied representatives on Spain's internal affairs.⁸

Now certain that the war had ended, Canning set out on a holiday shortly after he had drafted this despatch. However, even during his holiday, he could not take his eyes off from the affairs of Spain and Spanish America. One of his problems was Polignac's persistent refusal to recognise the memorandum of the conference of 9 October as an official document. Totally unaware of the difficulty of Polignac's position, Canning was puzzled by his refusal to recognise the memorandum. Polignac's assurance that the document correctly represented the views of his government led Canning and Liverpool

be negotiated either by conferences between Polignac and Canning or by the exchange of notes between Chateaubriand and Canning. Chateaubriand to Polignac, 6 October 1823, *Chateaubriand*, vol.5, pp.32-3.

⁷ Polignac to Canning, 18 October 1823, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.120-1.

⁸ Canning to à Court, no.63, 13 October 1823, FO 185/92.

to believe that his declarations at the conference of 9 October had been authorised by the French government. Canning decided not to press Polignac further or question the French government through Stuart as to the authenticity of Polignac's declarations for the time being. However, in his note of 26 October he took the precaution of requesting the French ambassador that he should at least transmit the memorandum to Paris. If he recognised the memorandum as an official document, so much the better. But, the most important point was 'to ensure a frank and full explanation to your government of the views and intentions of the British cabinet'.⁹

Informed by Polignac of his embarrassing situation, the French ministers decided to recognise the memorandum. As Polignac had warned, if they refused to do so, Canning might suspect them of having an '*arrière-pensée*' and precipitate Britain's recognition of the new states.¹⁰

The French ministers' fear of Britain's immediate recognition of the new states, however, was not the only reason why they decided to recognise the memorandum. They decided to do so partly because they realised that they could use the document to their advantage. On 1 November, Chateaubriand instructed Count La Ferronnays, his ambassador in St. Petersburg, Count Rayneval, his minister in Berlin, and Caraman to communicate to the Russian, Prussian and Austrian governments the memorandum of the Canning-Polignac conference of 9 October, and demand that the eastern allies should give their representatives in Paris powers to negotiate the question of Spanish

⁹ Polignac to Canning, 18 October 1823, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.120-1; Canning to Polignac, 19 October 1823, enclosed in Canning to Stuart, no.83, 31 October 1823, FO 146/56; Polignac to Canning, 23 October 1823, *Wellington*, vol.2, pp.159-60; Canning to Liverpool, 26 October 1823, Canning Papers, 70; Liverpool to Canning, private, 29 October 1823, *ibid.*; Canning to Stuart, no.83, 31 October 1823, *BILA*, vol.2, p.121; Canning to Polignac, 26 October 1823, *Wellington*, vol.2, p.161.

¹⁰ Polignac to Chateaubriand, 28 October 1823, *CV*, p.391; Stuart to Canning, no.568, 4 November 1823, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.123-4.

America with the French government and the Spanish ambassador in Paris. Furthermore, Chateaubriand directed La Ferronnays, Rayneval and Caraman to demand of each of these three governments answers to the following four questions: First, would it recognise the independence of Spain's rebel colonies, if Britain should acknowledge their independence without the consent of Ferdinand VII? Second, was it determined to 'make common cause with France', if she felt obliged to take sides with Spain in refusing to recognise the independence of those colonies that were recognised by Britain? Third, without having any colonies, would it regard itself as a stranger to the question and let France and Britain take such decision that they would judge appropriate? Fourth, would it think that each power should be at liberty to act towards Spain's rebel colonies according to her particular interests, if Spain refused to come to terms with them and persisted in claiming her rights over them without having any means of recovering them? A note scrawled on the margin of this circular queried whether in the contingency mentioned in the second question each of the three eastern powers would unite her forces with those of Spain in order to oppose Britain's recognition of the independence of the Spanish colonies.¹¹ This was an attempt on the part of the French ministers to use Canning's declarations recorded in the memorandum to discourage the eastern allies from giving support to Spain's claim on her colonies. Chateaubriand explained that it had always been the intention of the French government to treat the question of the independence of Spain's rebel colonies in concert with Spain and the eastern allies. However, Canning's declarations to Polignac had completely changed the situation. Now that the British government had declared its intention to

¹¹ Chateaubriand to La Ferronnays, 1 November 1823, *CV*, p.398; *Projet de dépêche à envoyer à MM. de la Ferronnays, Rayneval et Caraman*, 1 November 1823, *ibid.*, pp.398-9; Robertson, *France and*

prevent armed intervention of any power in Spanish America and recognise the independence of the colonies sooner rather than later, was not it useless for the continental allies to support Spain's claim on her colonies? The eastern allies should answer the first, third and fourth of his four questions—or at least the last of them—in the affirmative, unless they were prepared to 'make common cause with France' against Britain's recognition of Spanish American independence.

Chateaubriand transmitted a copy of this despatch to Talaru with instructions to get Spain to request the mediation of the allied powers.¹² About the same time, the French ministers also decided to send commissioners to Mexico and Colombia with secret directions to offer them the mediation of France to arrange peace between them and Spain on condition that they accorded France the privileges of the most-favoured-nation after Spain who should obtain special advantages in her commerce with the new states in return for her acknowledgement of their independence. Chateaubriand specially instructed the commissioner to Mexico to suggest to the Mexicans that they should accept Spain's nominal sovereignty by consenting to receive a viceroy from Spain.¹³

Meanwhile, Chateaubriand and Villèle repeatedly told Stuart that Britain would not lose anything by taking part in an allied meeting, for, if the Spanish government rejected the mediation of the allied powers, each power would be at liberty to pursue the course which her particular situation and interests should require.¹⁴ Besides, adopting Polignac's idea, Chateaubriand on 9 December instructed Talaru to urge Ferdinand to issue a declaration granting freedom of trade with his colonies to all

Latin-American Independence, pp.275-6.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp.276-7.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 310-21.

¹⁴ Stuart to Canning, no.528, 20 October 1823, no.557, 31 October 1823, FO 27/295; same to same,

nations, which, he expected, would remove the commercial pressure in Britain on behalf of immediate recognition of the new states.¹⁵

Canning in the meantime continued his effort to make known Britain's desire to see monarchical institutions established in Spanish America. In early November, Canning at last received Polignac's consent to give an official character to the memorandum of their conference of 9 October after he made some revisions to his part of the memorandum.¹⁶ Canning himself added the words 'however desirable the establishment of a monarchical form of Government might be' to the part of the memorandum where he had made objection to Polignac's proposal for allied diplomatic intervention to establish monarchical institutions in Spanish America. When on 9 November Canning sent Stuart the revised version of the memorandum which Polignac had finally consented to certify as authentic and transmit to Paris as an official document, he called his ambassador's special attention to this addition as a description of what the British government believed to be 'the most satisfactory arrangement of the Government in some at least of the new Provinces, and perhaps in Mexico especially'.¹⁷ When shortly after his return from the holiday, on 24 November, he communicated the memorandum to the representatives of the eastern allies in London, he expressed his hope to strengthen monarchic or aristocratic principles in some of the new states such as Mexico, Peru and Chile.¹⁸

On the other hand, Canning intimated to Polignac that he might invite France to try

no.562, 3 November 1823, no.568, 4 November 1823, no.580, 10 November 1823, no.587, 15 November 1823, no.596, 18 November 1823, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.122, 123-4, 126, 127-8, 129.

¹⁵ Polignac to Villèle, 25 November 1823, *Villèle*, vol.4, pp.517-8; Robertson, *France and Latin-American Independence*, p.304.

¹⁶ Canning to Liverpool, private, 1 November 1823, Canning Papers, 70.

¹⁷ Canning to Stuart, no.84, 9 November 1823, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.125-6.

¹⁸ Temperley, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, pp.138-9.

Anglo-French joint mediation between Spain and her former colonies.¹⁹ The significance of this intimation, which seems to have been made through Joseph Planta, the under-secretary at the Foreign Office, should not be exaggerated. Obviously, he did not expect that the French ministers would respond favourably to his suggestion. However, he undoubtedly desired that the two countries should enter into a separate understanding and concert their actions on the question of Spanish American independence. Later in November 1824, he wrote to Lord Granville, his close friend whom he had just appointed as British ambassador in Paris:

We [Britain and France] would, we might, have understood each other on that question at the outset, if France had had the openness (or the courage) to declare with us against a Congress. But her object was to keep well with both parties (I mean with the Alliance, and with us); to take credit with the Alliance; to wheedle us into a Congress; and to wheedle us into it by promising to side with us when once fairly *in*. . . . I am not at all sorry to be disembarassed of their co-operation: but I have solicited it anxiously and sincerely; not because I thought that it would be any help to us in this particular case, but because I should have been glad to make a beginning of a close and separate good understanding between us and France; on which, more than on any other political combination, the permanency of peace depends.²⁰

Canning clearly knew that Britain's naval power was preponderant enough to enable her to act without an ally on the question of Spanish America. However, he still desired that Britain and France should concert their policy on the question. An Anglo-French understanding would certainly have curtailed the interference of the eastern allies in the question. Moreover, Canning expected that their separate understanding on the affairs of Spanish America would, once established, develop into their general agreement on Iberian affairs. In late 1823, however, there was little sign that the French ministers

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.121.

²⁰ Canning to Granville, private, 15 November 1824, *GCHT*, pp.403-4.

were disposed to enter into such an understanding with Britain.

While Chateaubriand and Canning were trying to outmanoeuvre each other on the question of Spanish America, French difficulties in Spain continued to increase. At the end of the war, the French government intended to force Ferdinand to appoint a moderate ministry in place of that of reactionaries headed by Víctor Sáez, the foreign minister, and to put an end to proscription and reprisals against the former supporters of the constitutional regime by threatening him to withdraw the French force from Spain. Its project of a convention for the military occupation of Spain fixed the date of the termination of the occupation for 1 July 1824, but prescribed that the date would be anticipated if either party desired a more speedy termination. Chateaubriand also counted on Pozzo di Borgo to prevail on the representatives of the eastern allies in Spain, some of whom he suspected of having been encouraging Ferdinand to restore absolutism, to assist Talaru in his effort to put an end to reaction. Before his departure for Madrid in the middle of October, the Russian ambassador assured Chateaubriand that he would urge on the Spaniards the necessity of adopting a policy of moderation and conciliation. He also supported the French foreign minister when, at an ambassadorial conference of the continental allies on 13 October, he refused Vincent's demand for the establishment in Madrid of a conference of the representatives of the continental allies.²¹ However, neither Pozzo's mission nor the threat of the withdrawal of the French force produced the desired effect in Madrid. Ferdinand refused to accept the French project of the military convention, demanding the extension of the term for the withdrawal of the French force. On the other hand, in early December he finally

²¹ Chateaubriand to Talaru, 15, 17 October, 11 December 1823, *CV*, pp.380-1, 382-3, 405-7; Chateaubriand to Pozzo di Borgo, 21 October 1823, *ibid.*, p.385; Villèle to Angoulême, 26 October 1823,

dismissed Sáez. But, the effect of his fall was counterbalanced by the growth of the influence of the infamous *camarilla* and the apparent weakness of the new ministry.²² Towards the end of the year, Chateaubriand became increasingly despaired of the situation in Spain.²³ Canning, for his part, instructed à Court on 29 December that he should keep away from the factional strife and the intrigues of foreign envoys in Madrid and should refrain even from recommending the Spanish ministers a policy of moderation and conciliation.²⁴

The Spanish royalists ignored French advice also on the colonial question. They were determined to attempt to recover their colonies²⁵, and were naturally furious about Polignac's declarations in the conference of 9 October. To Chateaubriand's dismay, when Talaru proposed to the Spanish government that it should submit the colonial question to the consideration of an allied conference and accept the joint mediation of the allied powers, it made a protest to the ambassador about 'the near approach' of the French and British opinions on the question, and answered that it would accept the allied mediation only if it was 'exclusively conducted by the Continental Powers'.²⁶ The intelligence, which Chateaubriand himself communicated to Stuart obviously with the aim of impressing Canning with the earnestness of his effort to induce the Spanish government to treat with the colonies, only taught Canning that the French plan for an allied conference was getting nowhere.²⁷ By the end of November, Talaru persuaded

Villèle, pp.476-7; De Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, vol.2, pp.863-4.

²² Chateaubriand to Talaru, 11 December 1823, *CV*, pp.405-7; Stuart to Canning, no.634, 11 December 1823, no.636, 12 December 1823, FO 27/297.

²³ Chateaubriand to Polignac, 22 December 1823, *Chateaubriand*, vol.5, p.106.

²⁴ Canning to à Court, no.76, 29 December 1823, FO 185/92.

²⁵ À Court to Canning, no.137, 8 November 1823, FO 72/273.

²⁶ Stuart to Canning, no.607, 25 November 1823, FO 27/296; Chateaubriand to Talaru, 25 November 1823, *CV*, pp.401-2.

²⁷ Canning to Stuart, no.88, 28 November 1823, FO 146/56.

the Spanish government into withdrawing its opposition to Britain's participation in the allied mediation. However, the Spanish government persisted in demanding that the aim of the allied conference should be to help Ferdinand to recover his colonies.²⁸ On 12 December, Canning informed Rush of the state of the negotiations in Madrid. According to Rush, Canning seemed to infer that Spain's demand for the material assistance of the allied powers and France's refusal of it had 'vanished the project of the congress'.²⁹

Reports from Vienna and Berlin were also favourable. In the middle of November, Metternich expressed to Wellesley his fear that any attempt on the part of the continental allies to bring the Spanish colonial question under their joint deliberation should lead to a recognition on the part of Britain of the independence of the colonies, and said that Britain had no right to interpose an obstacle to the King of Spain's consulting the continental allies upon the measures best calculated to re-establish his own interests in Spanish America. However, the Austrian chancellor expressed his general approval of Britain's policy declared in the Canning-Polignac memorandum and appeared prepared to acquiesce in Britain's refusal of the allied deliberation of the question.³⁰ Bernstorff's reaction was even more favourable. In the middle of December, the Prussian foreign minister clearly stated to the Earl of Clanwilliam, the British minister in Berlin, his opposition to the idea of assembling an allied meeting.³¹

In early December, Canning also received from Henry Addington, the British chargé d'affaires in Washington, a satisfactory report of his conversation with Adams.

²⁸ Stuart to Canning, no.625, 4 December 1823, no.629, 8 December 1823, FO 27/297.

²⁹ Rush to Adams, 27 December 1823, *DCUS*, vol.3, p.1512.

³⁰ Wellesley to Canning, no.41, 19 November 1823, FO 7/179.

³¹ Clanwilliam to Canning, no.20, 17 December 1823, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.283-5.

Canning's proposal to Rush reached Washington on 9 October. Due to President Monroe's absence from the capital, the United States cabinet did not start a discussion on the matter until 7 November. On 1 November, however, Adams confidentially imparted to Addington, who was not even informed of the proposal by Canning who had made it without consulting with his colleagues in the cabinet except Liverpool and desired to keep it secret from them, the correspondence which had passed between Canning and Rush in August. Adams expressed his approval of Rush's cautious reaction to Canning's proposal, saying that there would be 'a certain awkwardness' in any joint proceeding between the two powers whose positions to the new states were totally different. However, when Addington expressed his hope that 'some middle course might be hit upon, and acceded to on the part of the United States' by which the object of Canning's proposal might yet be accomplished, Adams replied that he considered it 'as by no means impracticable'. After ridiculing the idea of interference by Russia, on whom 'he seemed willing to lay the whole onus of the proceedings of the "Holy Alliance" ', in the affairs of Spanish America and 'the paltry intrigues' of the French government, that is, the Spanish Bourbon project, Adams declared in 'a serious and solemn tone':

It is my deliberate and decided impression that a time will come, and is probably not far distant, when Great Britain and the United States—"the Mother and the Daughter"³²—(he used these terms) will feel it incumbent upon them to stand

³² It was Canning who first used the phrase 'the daughter and the mother'. In August 1823, shortly after he had made his famous proposal to Rush, he visited Liverpool. At a banquet at Liverpool, Canning proposed the health of Christopher Hughes, an American diplomat who was there en route to London and St. Petersburg. After comparing the relations between Britain and the United States to those between a mother and her estranged daughter, he said: '. . . after a lapse of time, the irritation is forgotten, the force of blood again prevails, and the daughter and the mother stand together against the world.' R. Therry (ed.), *The Speeches of the Right Honourable George Canning* (3rd ed., 6 vols., London, 1836), vol.6, pp.413-4; Samuel Flagg Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy*

forward, and make a broad declaration of their principles in the face of the whole world. What those principles are can scarcely be doubted.³³

Addington's report of the conversation reached London on 1 December. Now that he had made a declaration of his own in the conference of 9 October, Canning certainly did not see any sense in making a joint declaration with the United States. In fact, he did not give any answer to Addington's report except informing the chargé that its substance was of too confidential a nature to be the subject of an official despatch and it had therefore been withdrawn from the official correspondence of the Foreign Office.³⁴ Neither did he try to resume his negotiations with Rush, to whom he had read, on 24 November, the memorandum of his conference with Polignac.³⁵ Nevertheless, Canning was highly satisfied with the report. On 2 December, he wrote to Liverpool that Adams' reaction to his proposal was 'now less important than it would have been'. 'The tone, however, is all—or rather is more than all—that we could desire.'³⁶ The French plan for an allied meeting appeared to be getting nowhere, but was not yet abandoned altogether. Canning seems to have expected that, if a Spanish American conference should be called by Spain, the United States would make some declaration against it.

Meanwhile, in Washington the American government came to a decision about how to respond to Canning's proposal to Rush. Monroe was in favour of accepting it. Two

(New York, 1949), pp.378-9.

³³ Addington to Canning, no.18, confidential, 3 November 1823, Canning Papers, 125. Addington's draft of this despatch, which is virtually the same as the one which he actually sent to Canning, is printed in Bradford Perkins (ed.), 'The Suppressed Dispatch of H. U. Addington, Washington, November 3, 1823', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol.37, no.4 (November 1957), pp.480-5.

³⁴ Conyngham to Addington, private, 8 December 1823, FO 5/177. Canning wanted to keep his communications with Rush secret from the King and his colleagues in the cabinet. He was actually appalled by Adams' indiscreet handling of his confidential communication. Canning to Liverpool, private, 2 December 1823, ½ p[ast]. 3, Canning Papers, 70.

³⁵ Rush to Adams, 26 November 1823, *DCUS*, vol.3, pp.1503-6.

³⁶ Canning to Liverpool, private, 2 December 1823, ½ p[ast]. 3, Canning Papers, 70.

ex-presidents to whom Monroe turned for advice, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, also recommended the President to accept Canning's proposal. Among the members of the cabinet, Calhoun, the Secretary of War, argued for giving discretionary powers to Rush to join with Canning in the proposed declaration in case of any sudden emergence of the danger of European intervention in Spanish America. They more or less regarded Canning's proposal as a confirmation of the current idea that the powers of the European continent were planning armed intervention in Spanish America. They saw in an acceptance of Canning's proposal the double advantages of pledging Britain not to join with the powers of the European continent in their crusade against Spanish American independence and of tying her to oppose any such attempt. Jefferson and Calhoun mistakenly believed that Canning's point 4 would pledge the United States not to take Cuba. But, this did not deter them from recommending the President to accept the proposed declaration, partly because they believed that it would equally bind Britain against taking the island from Spain. While Jefferson and Calhoun were concerned mainly with the question of Spanish America, Madison went so far as to suggest that the two powers should join in condemning the French intervention in Spain and in a declaration on behalf of the Greeks.³⁷

John Quincy Adams, however, was decidedly averse to any joint declaration with Britain. To begin with, like Jefferson and Calhoun he believed that Canning's point 4 would bind the United States and Britain not to take Cuba, but unlike them he was

³⁷ Monroe to Jefferson, 17 October 1823, Stanislaus Murray Hamilton (ed.), *The Writings of James Monroe* (7 vols., New York, 1898-1903), vol.6, pp.323-5; Jefferson to Monroe, 24 October 1823, Paul Leicester Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (10 vols., New York, 1892-9), vol.10, pp.277-9; Madison to Monroe, 30 October 1823, Gaillard Hunt (ed.), *The Writings of James Madison* (9 vols., New York, 1900-10), vol.9, pp.157-60; 7 November 1823, Adams, *Memoirs*, vol.6, p.177.

determined to leave the way open for future American annexation of the island.³⁸ Second, Adams refused to be terrified by the danger of European intervention in Spanish America. In his view, it was no longer possible that European invasion of Spanish America would make more than 'a temporary impression for three, four, or five years'.³⁹ Moreover, he thought that European invasion of Spanish America was highly unlikely, and even suspected that Canning's alarm had been 'affected' by him simply 'to obtain by a sudden movement a premature commitment of the American Government against any transfer of the island of Cuba to France, or the acquisition of it by ourselves'.⁴⁰ He said to the cabinet in late November: 'the interest of no one of the allied powers would be promoted by the restoration of South America to Spain.' The powers of the European continent might still try to invade Spanish America with a view to its partition among themselves, but Britain would resist any such attempt even without American assistance. The only possible bait the continental allies could offer to Britain for acceding to their new partition of Spanish America was Cuba. But, neither the continental allies nor Spain would consent to give the island to Britain.⁴¹ Third, Adams strongly desired that the United States should avoid taking the position of 'a cock-boat in the wake of the British man-of-war'.⁴² He thought that Britain's refusal to recognise the independence of the new states gave him a good excuse for declining Canning's proposal.⁴³ He insisted that, while evading the proposed Anglo-American joint declaration, the government should make an independent declaration against European intervention in Spanish America, and proposed that such a declaration should

³⁸ 7 November 1823, *ibid.*, pp.177-8.

³⁹ 15 November 1823, *ibid.*, p.186.

⁴⁰ 7, 17 November 1823, *ibid.*, pp.177, 188.

⁴¹ 25 November 1823, *ibid.*, p.203.

be made in a diplomatic communication to the Russian government. On 16 October, Baron Tuyll, the Russian minister in Washington, had made a verbal communication of 'the wish and hope of the Emperor, that the United States should persevere in that course of neutrality' in the war between Spain and her American colonies, and had delivered a note declaring that the Tsar, 'faithful to the political principles which he follows in concert with his Allies', would never receive any agents whatsoever from any of the rebel governments in America.⁴⁴ This was followed, later on 17 November, by the communication of an extract of Nesselrode's despatch of 30 August expressing the Tsar's satisfaction with the fall of the revolutionary regimes in Spain and Portugal and the determination of the allied monarchs 'to guarantee the tranquillity of all the states of which the civilised world is composed'.⁴⁵

The fear of European invasion of Spanish America strongly inclined Monroe to adopt Calhoun's idea of giving discretionary powers to Rush. However, on 21 November, when the cabinet discussed what instructions Adams should send to Rush, Adams obtained the cabinet's approval of his opinion that the government should not give any discretionary power to Rush. The cabinet thus agreed on a text which clearly stated that Britain's recognition of the new states was the indispensable condition of any Anglo-American joint action, and that even if Britain should recognise their independence, the two governments should for the time being 'act separately each making such Representation to the Continental European Allies or either of them, as

⁴² 7 November 1823, *ibid.*, p.179.

⁴³ 7 November 1823, *ibid.*, p.180.

⁴⁴ 7 November 1823, *ibid.*, pp.178-9; 'Adams's Account of his Communications with Baron Tuyll', *Genesis*, pp.394-5; Tuyll to Adams, 16 October 1823, *ibid.*, p.400; Tuyll to Nesselrode, 27 October 1823, *ibid.*, p.400.

⁴⁵ 17 November 1823, Adams, *Memoirs*, vol.6, pp.189-90. 'Adams's Account of his Communications with Baron Tuyll', *Genesis*, p.399; Nesselrode to Tuyll, Extract, 30 August 1823, *ibid.*, pp.402-5.

circumstance may render proper'. Should a great emergency suddenly present itself, the United States should be willing to join with Britain in any act which might contribute to Spanish American independence. But, even in this case, Rush should refer the matter to Washington before agreeing to any joint action.⁴⁶

After this decision, Adams gave the cabinet a brief explanation of the 'purpose' of his proposed communication to the Russian government. Monroe approved Adams' ideas, and then suddenly read a sketch of his forthcoming annual message to Congress. The President had already told Thomas Jefferson in June 1823 his desire that the United States should now 'take a bolder attitude' than in 1789 towards the ideological struggle in Europe 'in favour of liberty'. Apparently influenced by this desire, he now proposed that in his message to Congress he should reprove France for her invasion of Spain and for the principles avowed by her sovereign to justify it. His sketch also contained a broad acknowledgement of the rebel Greeks as an independent nation, and a recommendation to Congress to make an appropriation for sending a minister to them. Adams earnestly recommended the President to revise the message which would be seen, in the form in which the President had written it, as 'a summons to arms—to arms against all Europe, and for objects of policy exclusively European—Greece and Spain'.⁴⁷ The next day Adams visited the President and told him that he should 'make an American cause, and adhere inflexibly to that'.⁴⁸ In the end, Monroe agreed to revise his draft. On 24 November, the President read Adams his revised draft. Adams found it 'quite unexceptionable, and drawn up altogether in the spirit that I had so

⁴⁶ 13, 18, 20, 21 November 1823, Adams, *Memoirs*, vol.6, pp.185, 190, 192, 193-4; Adams' draft of his despatch to Rush, Monroe's amendments to it, and Adams' substitute for the last paragraph of Monroe's amendments, *Genesis*, pp.384-8.

⁴⁷ Monroe to Jefferson, 2 June 1823, Monroe, *Writings*, vol.6, pp.308-10; 21 November 1823, Adams,

urgently pressed'.⁴⁹

The next day, Adams drafted his note to Tuyll. 'The Government of the United States of America is', he emphatically wrote at the beginning, 'essentially *Republican*.' He explained, however, that the United States did not intend to propagate republicanism. The most important principle of republican diplomacy was that of 'National *Independence*', which meant that 'each Nation is exclusively the judge of the Government best suited to itself, and that no other Nation, can justly interfere by force to impose a different Government upon it'. Faithful to this principle, the United States had abstained from propagating republicanism in Europe and had recognised the independence of Spain's colonies only after they had become really independent. However, having recognised their independence, she could not tolerate the allied monarchs of Europe extending their system of counterrevolutionary intervention to the western hemisphere. Her relations with the independent nations of South America were the more important to her interests as they were geographically in her vicinity. Adams concluded his draft by declaring that 'the United States of America, and their Government, could not see with indifference, the forcible interposition of any European Power, other than Spain, either to restore the dominion of Spain over her emancipated Colonies in America, or to establish Monarchical Governments in those Countries, or to transfer any of the possessions heretofore or yet subject to Spain in the American Hemisphere, to any other European Power'.⁵⁰

Memoirs, vol.6, pp.194-6.

⁴⁸ 22 November 1823, *ibid.*, pp.196-8.

⁴⁹ 24 November 1823, *ibid.*, p.199.

⁵⁰ 'Observations on the Communications recently received from the Minister of Russia', *Genesis*, pp.405-8.

In spite of Adams' disavowal of what he called 'propagandism'⁵¹, when the cabinet discussed Monroe's revised draft of his message and Adams' draft of his note to Tuyl on 25 and 26 November, Calhoun took exception to Adams' draft on the ground that it 'contained rather an ostentatious display of republican principles'. He expressed his fear that it 'would perhaps be offensive to the Emperor of Russia, and perhaps even to the British Government, which would by no means relish so much republicanism'. He suggested that it should be sufficient to communicate to Tuyl a copy of the relevant parts of the presidential message. At first glance, Calhoun's opinions were inconsistent. He had earlier supported earnestly Monroe's original draft of his message which was far more provocative than Adams' draft of his note. The secret was that Calhoun regarded the presidential message as 'a mere communication to our own people'. 'Foreign powers', he said, 'might not feel themselves bound to notice what was said in that.' In other words, Calhoun's opinion was that, while the President should sound the alarm to the nation against the danger of European invasion of the American continent and prepare the public mind for the danger, the Secretary of State should refrain from doing anything which might precipitate it.⁵² Calhoun's view on the nature of the presidential message was obviously shared by the President himself, who expressed his apprehension that 'the republicanism' of Adams' note might indispose Britain for any future concert between the two countries.⁵³ On the other hand, William Wirt, the Attorney General, questioned if the government should make any declaration at all, whether to its own citizens or to a foreign government. He asked whether the government was really prepared to oppose the Holy Allies by war if they should act in

⁵¹ 25 November 1823, Adams, *Memoirs*, vol.6, p.204.

⁵² 21, 25, 26 November 1823, *ibid.*, pp.194-6, 200, 201, 205-7.

direct hostility against the independent states of Spanish America. 'To menace without intending to strike', he said, 'was neither consistent with the honor nor the dignity of the country.'⁵⁴

Adams refuted these criticisms one by one. He asserted that, if the continental allies tried to invade Spanish America, Britain would undoubtedly stand in their way whether she liked his note or not. He declared to the cabinet: '. . . my reliance upon the co-operation of Great Britain rested not upon her principles, but her interest.' At the same time, however, Adams insisted that he did not have any fear that his note would offend the British government. He rightly pointed out that his 'whole paper was drawn up to come in conclusion precisely to the identical declaration of Mr. Canning himself'.⁵⁵ Overall, however, Adams' main argument was that there was no danger of European invasion of the American continent and, therefore, the United States could safely declare her opposition to it.⁵⁶ But, why did the United States need to declare her opposition to the armed intervention of the European powers in Spanish America when there was no danger of it? Adams gave the cabinet his answer to this question when he opposed Calhoun's opinion that the presidential message would be sufficient as an answer to Tuyl's communications. He insisted that his note to Tuyl was necessary for the very reason that the presidential message was essentially an internal communication. He declared to the cabinet: 'I thought it due to the honor and dignity of the nation that an explicit and direct answer should be given to the communications from the Russian Government.' National self-respect would not be satisfied if the government failed to

⁵³ 25 November 1823, *ibid.*, p.203.

⁵⁴ 25, 26 November 1823, *ibid.*, pp.202, 205.

⁵⁵ 25 November 1823, *ibid.*, pp.203-4.

⁵⁶ 25, 26 November 1823, *ibid.*, pp.201-2, 207.

answer the Russians 'face to face'.⁵⁷ His policy of an independent declaration was motivated not by his desire to obtain particular advantages from it but by his national pride. He was not concerned with the practical results of a declaration unless it led to a war with the European powers.

In the end, the President decided to adopt Adams' views in all essential points. On 27 November, Adams read his note to Tuyl and promised to send a written copy soon.⁵⁸ On 2 December, it was the President's turn. In print, what he said on the question of European interference in Spanish America in his message to Congress is divided into two paragraphs. At the beginning of the first paragraph, the President expressed his regret at the fall of free governments in Spain and Portugal. However, he stopped short of reproving France and her allies for their attack on the constitutional government in Spain. 'In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves', he declared, 'we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy so to do.' 'With the movements in this hemisphere', however, 'we are of necessity more immediately connected'

The political system of the allied powers [, he continued,] is essentially different in this respect from that of America. . . . We owe it . . . to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the Governments who have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United

⁵⁷ 25, 26 November 1823, *ibid.*, pp.201, 208-9.

⁵⁸ 27 November 1823, *ibid.*, pp.210-3; Two letters from Monroe to Adams, 27 November 1823, *Genesis*, p.409.

States.

Towards the end of the second paragraph, he made another declaration, which was even more striking than those in the first.

It is impossible that the allied powers should extend their political system to any portion of either [North or South American] continent, without endangering our peace and happiness; nor can anyone believe that our southern brethren, if left to themselves, would adopt it of their own accord. It is equally impossible, therefore, that we should behold such interposition in any form with indifference.⁵⁹

Adams approved the President's message because it was conformable to his 'system of policy', that is, the separation of the two spheres.⁶⁰ It should be noted, however, that there were marked differences between Monroe's declarations and those which Adams had advocated making and had actually made in his note to Tuyl. Adams' principle of 'National *Independence*', on which his note was founded, was in reality synonymous with Britain's principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. On 25 November, Adams himself told the cabinet: '. . . my paper came in conflict with no principle which she [Britain] would dare to maintain. We avowed republicanism, but we disclaimed propagandism; we asserted national independence, to which she was already fully pledged.'⁶¹ Like the British principle, the principle of national independence was ideologically neutral, under which the independence of the new states in Spanish America should be respected not because they were republics but simply because they were independent. His note to Tuyl justified the United States'

⁵⁹ Monroe's Message, 2 December 1823, James D. Richardson (ed.), *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897* (10 vols., Washington, 1896-9), vol.2, pp.217-9.

⁶⁰ 25 November 1823, Adams, *Memoirs*, vol.6, p.199.

⁶¹ 25 November 1823, *ibid.*, p.204.

special interest in Spanish America solely on the ground of geographical vicinity. It was essentially a declaration against 'the forcible interposition', whose aim might or might not be the establishment of monarchical governments in Spanish America. Monroe's declarations, on the other hand, were more ideological. His declaration in the second paragraph was nothing but a declaration against the establishment of monarchies in the New World itself. It was obviously a creation of the President's ideological sympathy with 'southern brethren', a term which cannot have been used by Adams who saw little similarity between the North and South American revolutions⁶² and preferred to call the new states 'our southern neighbors'.⁶³

It is often said that Monroe's message inflicted a diplomatic defeat on Canning. The originator of this view is Harold Temperley. Temperley argues that Canning's 'hasty' overture in the summer of 1823 taught Adams that Britain was committed to protect the new states from the attack of the continental allies, and enabled him, who was under no illusion as to the power of the United States to protect the new states herself, to 'blow a blast on the republican trumpet, while sheltered behind the shield of England'. C. K. Webster agrees with Temperley in thinking that Adams was the author of the doctrine of the separation of the two spheres by difference of political institutions. He maintains that Adams designed the doctrine to exclude Britain, a monarchy, from the New World and 'substitute the United States [for Britain] as the sole arbiter of the New World'. Webster, developing Temperley's view further, goes so far as to maintain that as early as October 1823 Canning realised his mistake of having prematurely revealed his hand

⁶² Adams to Everett, 29 December 1817, Adams, *Writings*, vol.6, pp.281-3; 9 March 1821, Adams, *Memoirs*, vol.5, pp.324-5; a suppressed paragraph of Adams' instructions of 27 May 1823 to Anderson, Adams, *Writings*, vol.7, pp.442-3.

⁶³ Adams to Anderson, 27 May 1823, *ibid.*, p.486.

to the Americans and 'in vain tried to avoid its consequences'.⁶⁴

Their views are quite unsatisfactory. To begin with, their understanding of the origins of the presidential message of 2 December, on which their criticism of Canning's 'hasty' diplomacy largely depends, is superficial. We have already seen that Adams was not the author of the doctrine of the separation of the two spheres by difference of political institutions. The doctrine came into existence by chance as the result of a compromise between Adams' principle of the separation of the two spheres by geography and Monroe's desire to associate his country with republicanism wherever it showed itself, whether in America or in Europe. True, both Monroe and Adams were aware that, if the United States accepted Canning's proposal for the joint declaration or did not make any declaration at all, Britain would obtain credit for protecting the new states.⁶⁵ There is, however, little evidence to show that this consideration played a major part in their decision to make a separate declaration. Adams' thoughts were filled so fully with his desire to satisfy his national pride that he hardly required other reasons to justify his policy of an independent declaration. Besides, he knew that, at least commercially, the United States could not compete with Britain in Spanish America.⁶⁶ Monroe, for his part, was fearful lest the 'republicanism' of Adams' note should exclude the possibility of any future Anglo-American concert on the question of Spanish America. His desire to leave the way open for future co-operation between the two countries being so strong, the President cannot have designed his message as a serious challenge to Britain's prestige in Latin America.

⁶⁴ Temperley, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, p.127; *BILA*, vol.1, pp.44-50. See also, Whitaker, *The United States and the Independence of Latin America*, pp.527-8; Bemis, *John Quincy Adams*, pp.401-2; Kaufmann, *British Policy*, pp.158-63; Bradford Perkins, *Castlereagh and Adams*, pp.340-3.

⁶⁵ 26 November 1823, Adams, *Memoirs*, vol.6, p.208; Monroe to Jefferson, December 1823, *Genesis*,

Temperley and Webster are also wrong in thinking that Canning played into Adams' hands by revealing Britain's determination to protect the new states from the attack of the continental allies. Adams derived his conviction that there was no danger of European invasion of Spanish America from his cool analysis of the 'interest' of each of the European allies including Britain. It is possible that Canning's proposal strengthened his conviction. But, even without it, he must have come to the same conviction. As to the other members of the cabinet, they could not get rid of their fear that 'Great Britain would in no event take a stand against the Holy Alliance on South American affairs unless sure of our co-operation'.⁶⁷

Next, if Webster's understanding of the origins of the presidential message is unsatisfactory, his explanation that Canning tried to prevent the Americans from making an independent declaration is totally wrong. As we have seen, as early as late August Canning not only predicted but also hoped that the American government would, in the event of the failure of his negotiations with Rush, issue a separate declaration against any European interference in Spanish America including the opening of an allied congress. His reaction to Addington's report of his interview of 1 November with Adams strongly suggests that even in early December he still hoped for the United States to make a separate declaration. In fact, Canning welcomed Monroe's message when it reached him in late December. He suspected that Monroe's declarations objected even to the attempt of Spain herself to recover her former colonies. If so, it would constitute an important difference between the views of the two governments, although in practice the American refusal to accept Spain's right to

p.412.

⁶⁶ 20 June 1822, Adams, *Memoirs*, vol.6, p.25.

interfere in the new states in Spanish America meant little since Monroe in his message declared the determination of the United States to continue her neutrality in the war between Spain and the new states unless other powers interfered in it.⁶⁸ However, except this point, Canning considered Monroe's declaration against European interference in the new states to be 'wholly consonant to' his own declarations in his conference with Polignac.⁶⁹ He expected that the combination of the Canning-Polignac memorandum and Monroe's message would have a similar effect on the continental allies to that which he had intended to produce by an Anglo-American joint declaration.⁷⁰

But, what did he think about Monroe's declaration that the United States would not tolerate any attempt by the European powers to extend their 'political system' to the American continent? The following part of his private letter of 30 December to à Court gives us a clue to the solution of this question.

I have no objection to monarchy in Mexico—quite otherwise. . . . Monarchy in Mexico, & monarchy in Brazil, would cure the evil of universal democracy, & prevent the drawing of the line of demarcation which I most dread, America versus Europe. The U[nited]. St[at]es]. naturally enough aim at this division, and cherish the democracy which leads to it. But I do not much apprehend their influence, even if I believed (which I do not altogether) in all the reports of their activity in America. Mexico & they are too neighbourly to be friends. . . . I send you some Copies of the [Canning-Polignac] Memorandum: which you may use as your discretion suggests. It must not be published: but, short of that, it cannot be too generally known. It's [*sic*] date is most important: both in reference to the state of things which then existed; & in reference to the American Speech which it so long preceded.

Canning certainly regarded Monroe's declaration against the extension by the European

⁶⁷ 7, 26 November 1823, *ibid.*, pp.181, 205-6.

⁶⁸ Canning to Stuart, no.2, 9 January 1824, *BILA*, vol.2, p.133.

⁶⁹ Canning to à Court, no.77, 29 December 1823, *ibid.*, p.410.

powers of their 'political system' as an expression of the American desire to see republican governments established in as many parts of the American continent as possible and put herself at the head of the league of American republics. He thought that the success of such a plan would be injurious to Britain's interests. On the other hand, however, Canning did not think that the Americans would succeed in materialising their desire, nor did he believe the reports that they had been making a systematic effort to materialise it. He was certain that he would be able to neutralise the effect which Monroe's declaration would have on the South Americans by the memorandum of his conference with Polignac. His fear of the expansion of the influence of the United States in the American continent was certainly not so strong as some historians, Webster in particular, believe.⁷¹ In fact, far from being troubled by the fear that the Spanish American republics might fall under the influence of the United States, Canning even welcomed Monroe's extravagant declaration. He expected that it might strike a blow at the French plan for allied diplomatic intervention in Spanish America to establish monarchies in the new states, and facilitate his effort to evade a Spanish American conference without offending the eastern allies. The following famous statement of Canning does not make sense but in this context. On 22 January 1824, he wrote to Bagot: 'The effect of the ultra-liberalism of our Yankee co-operators, on the ultra-despotism of our Aix la Chapelle allies, gives me just the balance that I wanted.'⁷² Let the United States and the continental allies fight the ideological war of words if they pleased. Their extravagant doctrines would cancel each other. Britain would stay out of their futile dispute and keep her freedom of action without

⁷⁰ Canning to Granville, private and confidential, 28 December 1823, Granville Papers, PRO 30/29/8/6.

⁷¹ Canning to à Court, private, 30 December 1823, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41544.

antagonising either of them.

In his official despatch of 29 December and private letter of 30 December to à Court, Canning expressed his conviction that a Spanish American congress or conference would never be formally proposed. Canning had not known yet the reaction of the Russian government to the Canning-Polignac memorandum. But, 'Russia can hardly act alone for the re-establishment of Spanish supremacy in the Colonies'. 'France has repeatedly and distinctly disclaimed any intention of engaging in such an enterprize', and 'Austria and Prussia have severally declared their opinion that a Congress upon South American affairs would, in any case, have been a matter of very doubtful policy, and that it is one which it would be idle to think of when Great Britain declines being a party to it'.⁷³ 'The Congress was', therefore, 'broken in all it's [*sic*] limbs before'. But, Monroe's message gave it 'the *coup de grace*'.

Laissez faire—& laissez venir. Pozzo may bustle—& Ferdinand may swear—but sooner or later, if we are only quiet, & give no hold against us, things must go pretty much as we wish, or at least as we allow. The S[panish]. American question is, essentially, settled. There will be no Congress upon it: and things will take their own course, on that Continent; which cannot be otherwise than favourable to us.

Canning did not intend immediate recognition. On the contrary, he decided to remain 'quiet' for a while. It would be some time before the commissioners and the consuls returned any conclusive reports on the state of the new states.⁷⁴ Moreover, as he wrote in another private letter of 30 December to à Court, he had not abandoned his hope that Spain might get 'reconciled to the inevitable fate of the S. American question' and

⁷² Canning to Bagot, private and confidential, 22 January 1824, *GCHF*, vol.2, pp.217-8.

⁷³ Canning to à Court, no.77, 29 December 1823, *BILA*, vol.2, p.410.

⁷⁴ Canning to à Court, private, 30 December 1823, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41544.

begin to think that 'we alone can help to mitigate the blow' by mediating an amicable separation between her and her former colonies.⁷⁵ Spain might still continue to refuse to accept the inevitable. But, if Britain made some more efforts to bring her to reason, the continental allies would no longer criticise her when she finally recognised the independence of the new states.

On 30 December 1823, Canning, of course, did not know that the day before in Madrid à Court had received a note, dated 26 December, from Count Ofalia, the Spanish foreign minister *ad interim* who was to replace the Marquis of Casa Irujo, the successor to Sáez, in the middle of January 1824 as foreign minister and head of the ministry because of the latter's death, inviting the allies to establish in Paris a conference on Spanish America. Rejecting Chateaubriand's demand that Spain should simply request the mediation of the allied powers without attaching any conditions⁷⁶, the Spanish note expressed hopes that at the proposed conference the allied powers would assist Ferdinand 'in accomplishing the worthy object of upholding the principles of order and legitimacy'. On the other hand, the note did not demand of the allies their material assistance and conceded the necessity of conciliating Ferdinand's sovereignty over his colonies with the interests of states who had formed commercial relations with them.⁷⁷ Chateaubriand hoped that Canning might at least allow Stuart to attend the proposed conference as an observer especially if Talaru obtained a decree for the liberty of commerce.⁷⁸ In late January he sent Marcellus, the former chargé d'affaires in

⁷⁵ Canning to à Court, private, 30 December 1823, *ibid.*

⁷⁶ Chateaubriand to Talaru, 6 December 1823, *Chateaubriand*, vol.5, pp.86-9.

⁷⁷ À Court to Canning, no.166, 30 December 1823, FO 72/273; Ofalia to à Court, 26 December 1823, *BFSP*, vol.11, pp.54-5; Ofalia to the Spanish ambassador at Paris and ministers at St. Petersburg and Vienna, *ibid.*, pp.55-7.

⁷⁸ Chateaubriand to Polignac, 4 January 1824, *Chateaubriand*, vol.5, pp.113-5; Chateaubriand to Schwebel, 12 January 1824, *ibid.*, pp.132-4; Chateaubriand to Talaru, 17 January 1824, *CV*, p.411.

London, to Madrid on a special mission with instructions to get Ferdinand to sign the treaty of occupation and to publish an act of amnesty and a decree for the liberty of commerce. If the King refused the demands, Talara should return to Paris and Marcellus should remain in Madrid merely as chargé d'affaires.⁷⁹

Canning received à Court's despatch which enclosed the Spanish note on 14 January. Ever overestimating the danger of American predominance in the New World and Canning's fear of it, Webster maintains that Canning saw in the Spanish invitation an excellent opportunity to stand as the real champion of Spanish American independence by refusing it.⁸⁰ Temperley also suggests that Canning was happy to receive the invitation because it enabled him to expose the impotence of the Congress System outside the European continent by refusing it.⁸¹ We can safely conclude from what we have seen that these views are totally false. Canning desired to avoid receiving an invitation to an allied congress or conference, Britain's refusal of which, he feared, would deepen her isolation in Europe. His fear of Britain's diplomatic isolation in Europe was much greater than Temperley and Webster believe, and was certainly greater than that of American predominance in the New World.

There is in fact nothing to support these historians' view in Canning's reaction to the Spanish note of 26 December 1823. On receiving the note, Canning immediately drew a draft of his answer to it, which was firm but conciliatory. The draft contained two reasons for Britain's refusal of the proposed conference. First, the Spanish note demanded of the allies their co-operation for the reestablishment of Spain's sovereignty

⁷⁹ Chateaubriand to Talara, 24, 29 January 1824, *ibid.*, pp.414, 416-7.

⁸⁰ *BILA*, vol.1, pp.21-2.

⁸¹ Temperley, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, p.154. See also Kaufmann, *British Policy*, pp.150, 157, 167-72; Schroeder, *Transformation*, pp.633-4.

over her colonies, but Britain was convinced, as she had repeatedly declared, that 'the only practicable basis' of any negotiation between them would be Spain's acknowledgement of the independence of the colonies. Second, having repeatedly declared her views on the affairs of Spanish America, Britain had nothing to explain at the proposed conference. If its purpose was to alter her views, it would be not only useless but also dangerous to open it. 'Where opinions among powers in amity with each other are so essentially different, it is surely far more desirable to avoid than to seek occasions of controversy.'⁸² Although Wellington recommended, as he always did in such occasions, some alterations which were calculated to make Canning's answer less offensive to the continental allies, he agreed with Canning and Liverpool that the government should decline to become a party to the proposed conference.⁸³

Meanwhile, on 18 January Canning received from Bagot in St. Petersburg a 'most satisfactory' despatch. On 24 December, Alexander told Bagot that he had received Lieven's reports on his several conversations with Canning on Spanish America with 'the greatest satisfaction'.⁸⁴ Lieven's conduct in London appeared to verify Bagot's report. On 19 January Canning had an interview with Lieven and Neumann. The interview convinced Canning that he could 'satisfy them [Russia and Austria] . . . without a conference' if he accompanied Britain's rejection of it with a direct offer of her single-handed mediation between Spain and her former colonies on the basis of the independence of the latter. This would not satisfy France. 'But France wants the

⁸² Canning's draft of his answer to Ofalia's note, *Wellington*, vol.2, pp.188-9.

⁸³ Canning to Wellington, 17 January 1824, *ibid.*, p.188; Wellington to Canning, 19 January 1824 (enclosing 'Memorandum of proposed note of Mr. Canning to the Conde d'Ofalia', 19 January 1824), *ibid.*, pp.189-91.

⁸⁴ Bagot to Canning, no.64, 29 December 1823, FO 65/139; Canning to Liverpool, private, 18 January 1824, Canning Papers, 71.

conference for objects of her own.⁸⁵ The only means by which she could make the eastern allies press Britain to take part in the conference would be to make an appeal to their principle of legitimacy. But, her aim in the proposed conference being inconsistent with the principle, France would never make such an appeal. At the end of January, Canning sent off his answer to the Spanish note in the form of his despatch to à Court, dated 30 January. He inserted in the despatch an offer of Britain's single-handed mediation on the basis of Spain's acknowledgement of the independence of her former colonies. Except this point, his despatch was generally in line with the draft.⁸⁶ He was still confident that, satisfied with Britain's offer of mediation, 'the Allies, Vienna & Berlin certainly, would gladly get out of the difficulty of the proposed Conference'.⁸⁷

On 2 February, Canning communicated his despatch of 30 January to the representatives of the allied powers in London. The French ministers immediately decided that they should prevent the opening of the Paris conference.⁸⁸ They knew very well that a Spanish American conference without Britain was not only useless but also dangerous for France. Such a conference would restrain France's freedom of action while leaving Britain free to do whatever she wanted.⁸⁹ It was a great relief for the French ministers that the speeches of George IV, Liverpool and Canning at the opening of Parliament on 3 February had clearly ruled out the possibility of Britain's immediate recognition of the independence of Spain's former colonies. Canning declared in the Commons that it would be 'unkind, unjust, unfair, and . . . ungenerous' not to give Spain 'a pause . . . during which she might have the advantage of learning the

⁸⁵ Canning to Liverpool, 19 January 1824, *GCSOC*, vol.1, p.135.

⁸⁶ Canning to à Court, no.4, 30 January 1824, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.412-6.

⁸⁷ Canning to à Court, private, 2 February 1824, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41545.

⁸⁸ Stuart to Canning, no.71, 6 February 1824, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.145-6.

sentiments of the different powers of Europe' and decide to acknowledge the independence of her former colonies.⁹⁰ Chateaubriand was also encouraged by the success of the special mission of Marcellus to Madrid. On 9 February, Ferdinand not only signed the treaty of occupation, which stipulated that the French occupation of Spain would end on 1 July 1824 unless both parties later agreed to prolong the term, but also issued a decree opening the commerce of Spanish America to all nations, although the opposition of the ultra-royalists and the clericals deterred Ferdinand and Ofalia from publishing an act of amnesty. Now that the commercial ground for recognition was removed, Chateaubriand calculated, Britain could not recognise the independence of the new states without admitting that her policy was politically motivated. He did not expect Canning to run the risk of being blamed for supporting the revolutionaries.⁹¹

Ferdinand's decree, however, did not cause any change in Canning's policy. As Canning wrote to à Court on 1 March, the decree was 'absolutely inoperative' unless Spain re-established her control over her former colonies.⁹² On the other hand, Ofalia's calm reception of the despatch of 30 January seems to have impressed Canning with the Spanish minister's moderation and to have raised his hope that the Spanish government might accept Britain's single-handed mediation.⁹³ In early March, Liverpool and Canning laid before the Houses of Lords and Commons respectively an extract of the

⁸⁹ Chateaubriand to Polignac, 29 March 1824, *Chateaubriand*, vol.5, p.200.

⁹⁰ *Hansard*, vol.10, The King's Speech, 3 February 1824, col.3, House of Lords, 3 February 1824, cols.27-8, House of Commons, 3 February 1824, cols.72-6; Chateaubriand to Polignac, 5 February 1824, *Chateaubriand*, vol.5, pp.163-4; Stuart to Canning, no.71, 6 February 1824, *BILA*, vol.2, p.145; same to same, no.81, 10 February 1824, FO 27/306.

⁹¹ Convention between France and Spain, 9 February 1824, *BFSP*, vol.11, pp.322-40; Decree of the King of Spain, 9 February 1824, *ibid.*, pp.864-5; Chateaubriand to Rayneval, 17 February 1824, *CV*, pp.418-9.

⁹² Canning to à Court, no.9, 20 February 1824, FO 185/95; same to same, no.10, 1 March 1824, *BILA*, vol.2, p.420.

⁹³ à Court to Canning, no.29, 17 February 1824, *ibid.*, pp.417-9; Canning to à Court, no.10, 1 March 1824, *ibid.*, pp.419-20.

Canning-Polignac memorandum of 9 October 1823, Ofalia's note of 26 December 1823, and Canning's despatch of 30 January 1824.⁹⁴ Canning expected that this 'Exposition of our views' would for the time being satisfy Parliament and enable him to 'give Spain a little time'. But, the government certainly could not wait long before taking a decision, for it expected the first intelligence from the commissioners in Mexico in the course of the month of April. A report from Mexico might 'oblige us to take a step in advance'. Canning instructed à Court to urge Ofalia to accept Britain's single-handed mediation without delay.⁹⁵

To Canning's surprise, on 20 March, Henry Ward, one of the commissioners to Mexico, arrived in London bearing a report of Lionel Hervey, the chief of the commissioners. Written shortly after the commissioners' arrival in Mexico, the report was far from satisfactory, especially in its description of the internal state of the country.⁹⁶ It was impossible for the British government to judge from the report if Mexico was now fit for recognition. Nevertheless, the report strengthened Canning's impression that neither arms nor negotiation were likely to win the Mexicans back to allegiance to Ferdinand VII. Besides, Ward brought him the news that the Mexican government would shortly send an agent to London furnished with credentials. Canning decided to renew the offer of Britain's mediation to Spain for the last time. In his despatch of 31 March, he instructed à Court to urge Ofalia to accept immediately Britain's mediation between Spain and Mexico and warn that the British government would consider Spain's refusal to avail herself of Britain's mediation or good offices in

⁹⁴ *Hansard*, vol.10, House of Lords, 4 March 1824, col.705, House of Commons, 4 March 1824, cols.708-19.

⁹⁵ Canning to à Court, private, 3 March 1824, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41545.

⁹⁶ Hervey to Canning, 18 January 1824, *BILA*, vol.1, pp.442-5. See also, Hervey to Canning, no.2, 15

her dispute with Mexico 'as discharging us from the obligation of any further reference to Madrid' on the question of the recognition of the new states in Spanish America.⁹⁷ At the same time, in his despatches of 2 and 3 April, Canning instructed à Court to accompany the offer of mediation with an offer to enter into a formal engagement with Spain to employ Britain's maritime power to defend Cuba for Spain against any external aggression, provided Spain agreed to Britain's mediation or good offices.⁹⁸

In the early spring of 1824, Canning seems to have expected that his despatch of 30 January had put an end to the plan to open an allied conference on Spanish America. However, unknown to him, Alexander was keen that the allied powers should hold a congress or a conference. In a despatch of 7 December 1823, Nesselrode instructed Pozzo di Borgo to communicate to the French government the Tsar's approval of its proposal to establish an allied conference in Paris and his opinion that the continental allies should not recognise Spanish American independence without Ferdinand's consent even if Britain did so.⁹⁹ Then, on 21 January 1824, Nesselrode instructed Lieven that, if Spain requested the joint mediation of the allied powers, he should urge Canning to accept the request.¹⁰⁰ It was only natural that Alexander reacted unfavourably to Canning's despatch of 30 January. In a despatch of 29 March to Lieven, Nesselrode instructed the ambassador to communicate to Canning the Tsar's regret at Britain's decision not to take part in the proposed conference.¹⁰¹ In another despatch of

December 1823, nos.3 and 4, 22 December 1823, FO 50/4.

⁹⁷ Canning to à Court, no.13, 31 March 1824, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.421-3.

⁹⁸ Canning to à Court, no.14, secret, 2 April 1824, *ibid.*, pp.423-4; same to same, no.15, 3 April 1824, FO 185/95.

⁹⁹ Nesselrode to Pozzo di Borgo, 7 December 1823, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.262-5. See also, Alexander I to Ferdinand VII, 18 January 1824, *ibid.*, pp.296-7.

¹⁰⁰ Nesselrode to Lieven, 21 January 1824, *ibid.*, pp.303-6.

¹⁰¹ Bagot to Canning, no.19, 29 March 1824, FO 65/142; Nesselrode to Lieven, 29 March 1824, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.397-400.

the same date to Pozzo di Borgo, which was communicated to Austria and Prussia as well as France, Nesselrode denounced Canning's despatch of 30 January as an attempt to encourage the revolutions and break up the anti-revolutionary union of the continental powers by dragging Spain into an isolated negotiation with Britain. Nesselrode demanded that the continental allies should communicate to the British government their regret at its refusal of the allied conference. He also demanded that the continental allies should open the Paris ambassadorial conference without delay, and proposed that they should help Spain to find a loan for her expeditions to those colonies where the Spanish authorities maintained their resistance to the rebels.¹⁰² Interestingly, however, while pressing vigorously France, Austria and Prussia to protest against Britain's refusal of the proposed allied conference, the Russian government was half-hearted in its own communication to Britain of its regret at her decision. For instance, when in May the Russian government renewed its request for Britain's participation in the Paris conference, Nesselrode explained to Bagot that it decided to renew the request simply to 'acquit themselves of what was considered by them to be a duty towards the King of Spain'.¹⁰³ It is obvious that Russia's diplomatic offensive was aimed not at attacking Britain's interests in the New World or upholding the principle of legitimacy but at driving a wedge between Britain and the other members of the Alliance.

Since the spring of 1822 Russia had persistently tried to get her continental allies to follow the Troppau principles in western Europe as faithfully as they could without causing a European war. Russia pursued this policy not only on the affairs of Spain and

¹⁰² Nesselrode to Pozzo di Borgo, 29 March 1824, *ibid.*, pp.380-5.

¹⁰³ Bagot to Canning, no.29, 15 May 1824, FO 65/143.

Spanish America but also—as we will see in the next chapter—on those of Portugal and Brazil. The Russians apparently did not expect any material advantages from the success of this policy. But, this does not mean that this policy had its origin only in the Tsar's fear of revolutions and his vague desire that the Alliance should take up all problems concerning European states. There were more practical, power-political considerations behind it. After 1815, it appeared that Austria and France were unlikely to enter into close co-operation in European politics because of their mutual distrust which originated in their ideological differences and political rivalry in central Europe. The Russians obviously calculated that by separating Austria and France from Britain they could make these two powers compete against each other for Russia's favour and secure themselves the position of an arbiter between them. Russia's persistent effort to uphold the influence of Chateaubriand, an advocate of Franco-Russian co-operation over the question of European Spain, in the French ministry against that of the anti-Russian Villèle was just a part of this policy. During the Franco-Spanish war, Alexander expressed to La Ferronnays, the French ambassador and himself an advocate of Franco-Russian co-operation, his mistrust of Villèle and repeatedly told the ambassador that his confidence in France depended on Chateaubriand's continuance in the ministry.¹⁰⁴ Chateaubriand's pursuit of Russian co-operation in his struggle against France's two rivals in the west—Britain and Austria—perfectly fitted Russia's policy to keep her allies separated and make each of them seek her co-operation. It is also clear that Russia's moderate stance on the question of Spain's political regime, which was not as liberal as that of France, but not as reactionary as that of Austria, was calculated to maximise her influence both over France and Austria. By showing to Metternich that

¹⁰⁴ La Ferronnays to Chateaubriand, 4 September, 30 November 1823, *CV*, pp.318-20, 403-4.

Russia could choose France as her partner in European politics, the Tsar could frustrate the Austrian chancellor's effort to control Russia within the framework of the conservative alignment of the three eastern powers. If, on the other hand, French policy became too independent or too liberal, he could at any time fall back on his conservative allies and with them bring France back into line. However, from late 1823 to early 1824, as the question of Spanish America came to the fore of European diplomacy, it appeared to the Russians that Anglo-Austrian and Anglo-French rapprochement were possible. Russia could never allow France to join with Britain in recognising Spanish American independence with the tacit approval of Austria. The future of Spanish America was not the real issue, but Russia's position in European diplomacy was. The Russians feared that the restoration of Anglo-Austrian entente or the emergence of Anglo-French liberal co-operation would lead to the significant decline of Russian influence in European great-power politics.

It is clear that the ultimate aim of Russia's western policy was to obtain from each of her allies the greatest possible co-operation in the east. As we will see later, for two years since the Tsar had accepted Metternich's proposal for the settlement of the Russo-Turkish dispute in the spring of 1822, the allied powers had not done almost anything at all to materialise his desire to put an end to the bloody war in Greece. In instructing Lieven on 21 January to urge Canning to accept Spain's request for the joint mediation of the allied powers, Nesselrode directed the ambassador to point out to Canning the 'sacrifice' which Alexander had made to 'the maxims of the alliance' on the eastern question. In requesting Britain's participation in the proposed allied conference on Spanish America, he wrote, the Tsar demanded 'only an act of simple

reciprocity'.¹⁰⁵ Implicit in this demand was the suggestion that the Tsar was forced to turn his attention to the Spanish American question because of allied inaction in the east and he might turn his attention away from it if Britain showed more interest in the sufferings of the Greeks. However, while the Tsar's dissatisfaction with the failure of the allied powers to assist him in the east drove him to interfere with British diplomacy in Iberian affairs, his desire to obtain British co-operation in the east certainly laid restraint on his anti-British diplomacy in the west. Alexander, Nesselrode and Lieven knew very well that Britain would never retract her decision on Spanish America, and also that it would be imprudent for them to alienate her on the question of Spanish America in which they had little interest, when they needed her co-operation in the east where Russia's vital interest was at stake. This consideration induced the Russians, as we have seen, to try not to offend Canning in communicating to him their regret at Britain's refusal of the proposed conference on Spanish America. Canning was certainly not troubled by the communication. He answered that the British government had declined the invitation to a Spanish America conference precisely because it feared that the proposed conference would only exacerbate the allied controversy over Spanish America and it might have an unfavourable effect on their co-operation on the question of Greece.¹⁰⁶

The Austrians and the French, however, were not so lucky. They could not ignore the Tsar's call for the unity of the continental allies despite their reluctance to alienate Britain. True, Metternich desired to control French policy on the affairs of Spain within the framework of the anti-revolutionary union of the four continental allies and was

¹⁰⁵ Nesselrode to Lieven, 21 January 1824, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.305-6.

¹⁰⁶ Canning to Bagot, no.20, 24 April 1824, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.298-300.

even more eager than the Tsar for the ambassadorial conference of the continental allies to be established in Paris. In late January 1824, he appealed to Russia and Prussia to join with Austria in pressing France to agree to the establishment of an ambassadorial conference in Paris. He even communicated to the Russian government Austria's strong disapproval of the conduct of Pozzo di Borgo, who had been tolerating Chateaubriand frustrating Vincent's effort to establish a four-power ambassadorial conference in Paris.¹⁰⁷ However, after Britain's refusal of the proposed conference on Spanish America, Metternich objected to the establishment of a conference to deal '*ad hoc*' with the question of Spanish America, for fear lest the establishment of such a conference should only irritate Canning.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, in his effort to avoid being forced to choose between Britain and Russia, he wrote confidential letters to Wellington, asking him to use his influence to prevent the British government from taking 'a system of complete isolation'. The Duke, however, refused Metternich's request, complaining bitterly that Britain's isolation had been forced on her by the continental allies.¹⁰⁹ Meanwhile, Alexander disapproved his conciliatory attitude towards Britain, and insisted that the continental allies should make the British government clearly understand their disapproval of its principles on colonial affairs.¹¹⁰

While Russia and Austria differed in their opinions as to what attitude they should take towards Britain, they at least agreed that they should prevent France from breaking away from the union of the continental powers. On 21 March, the representatives of the

¹⁰⁷ De Sauvigny, *Metternich et la France*, vol.2, pp.868-70; Metternich's letter and despatch to Lebzelttern, 7 February 1824, *Lebzelttern*, pp.270-2, 374-5.

¹⁰⁸ Lebzelttern to Metternich, 17 April 1824, *ibid.*, pp.136-7.

¹⁰⁹ Wellesley to Wellington, 10 February 1824, *Wellington*, vol.2, pp.205-6; Metternich to Wellington, 11 February, 15 April 1824, *ibid.*, pp.207-8, 249-50; Wellington to Wellesley, 24 February 1824, *ibid.*, p.221; Wellington to Metternich, 24 February, 4 May 1824, *ibid.*, pp.221-6, 260-1.

¹¹⁰ Nesselrode to Tatishchev, 17 April 1824, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.424-6; Lebzelttern to Metternich, 17 April

eastern allies in Paris finally dragged Chateaubriand to a conference with them and demanded not only that he should discuss the affairs of European Spain and Spanish America with them in regular conferences, but also that he should declare his government's resolution not to recognise the independence of Spain's colonies. This placed France, who was in Chateaubriand's words 'squeezed between England and Russia', in a very difficult position. While agreeing to discuss the affairs of Spain in general with the representatives of the eastern allies in regular conferences, the French foreign minister refused to establish 'conferences *ad hoc* on the affairs of colonies'.¹¹¹ But, pressed by Russia, by the end of March Chateaubriand reached the conclusion that France could not get out of her difficulties but by obtaining Britain's consent to participate in the allied conference or by making Spain voluntarily acknowledge the independence of her colonies. He suggested to Polignac that he should enquire of Canning whether the British government would take part in the conference if its location was changed from Paris to the Hague.¹¹² At the same time, he thought about getting the Spanish government to open secret negotiations with Spanish American agents in London.¹¹³

Ofalia had already suggested to à Court in early March that the Spanish government might send an agent to London to open communication with the agents of the new states in London.¹¹⁴ However, nothing came out of the plan because of the opposition of his internal enemies. Ofalia's ministry had been faced with the formidable opposition of the ultra-royalists, the clericals, the Papal nuncio, and the Russian and Prussian

1824, *Lebzeltern*, pp.136-7.

¹¹¹ Chateaubriand to Polignac, 22 March 1824, *Chateaubriand*, vol.5, pp.193-5.

¹¹² Chateaubriand to Polignac, 1 April 1824, *ibid.*, pp.202-3.

¹¹³ Chateaubriand to Polignac, 29 March 1824, *ibid.*, pp.200-1.

chargés d'affaires since its formation. While after the conclusion of the treaty of occupation and the publication of the decree for the liberty of commerce Chateaubriand came to think better of Ofalia and instructed Talaru to support him, the ultra-royalists and the clericals regarded him as too liberal and too susceptible to French influence. They resented the presence of the French forces, which stood in the way of their persecution of the liberals, and became increasingly disillusioned with Ferdinand, whose desire for the continued presence of the French forces made him to some extent susceptible to French advice. They were determined to prevent the King and his first minister from complying with the French demand for the publication of an amnesty. In the provinces, royalist volunteers defied the government's order for their dissolution. Some declared an intention to massacre all the liberals on the appearance of an amnesty.¹¹⁵ Ofalia's internal enemies made use of his idea to open communication with the Spanish American agents in London to discredit him. No sooner had Ofalia proposed the idea than they build on it an accusation of betraying Spain's interests to Britain. This forced Ofalia to give up his idea.¹¹⁶

Ofalia's plan was also opposed by the Russians. Pozzo di Borgo directed Count Bulgari, the Russian chargé d'affaires in Madrid, to prevent the Spanish government from accepting Britain's offer of her mediation and indeed from taking any measure without consulting the continental allies. In the end, the fate of Canning's offer was sealed when Nesselrode's despatch of 29 March reached Madrid through Paris. In early

¹¹⁴ À Court to Canning, no.44, 6 March 1824, FO 72/285.

¹¹⁵ Royer to Bernstorff, 16 December 1823, *Lebzeltern*, pp.259-64; Chateaubriand to Talaru, 19 February 1824, *CV*, p.420; À Court to Canning, no.9, 12 January 1824, no.19, 2 February 1824, no.28, 15 February 1824, no.33, 19 February 1824, no.34, 20 February 1824, no.35, 22 February 1824, no.42, 1 March 1824, FO 72/285; same to same, private, 18 February 1824, Canning Papers, 118.

¹¹⁶ À Court to Canning, no.49, 15 March 1824, FO 72/285; same to same, private, 28 March 1824, Canning Papers, 118.

May Ofalia finally delivered a note, dated 30 April, to à Court declining Britain's offer and renewing the invitation to the proposed allied conference. According to à Court, the note was the result of 'constant conference' between Ofalia and the representatives of the continental allies in Madrid, in other words, 'the joint production of the Allied Ministers and the Spanish Government'.¹¹⁷ Canning did not return an official answer to Ofalia's note. 'The result of it', he wrote to à Court on 17 May, 'is simply that His Majesty reserves to himself the right of taking, at his own time, such steps as His Majesty may think proper in respect to the several States of Spanish America without further reference to the Court of Madrid.'¹¹⁸

Spain's answer to Britain left Chateaubriand no other way out of his difficulties than obtaining Britain's participation in the allied conference. Chateaubriand tried to obtain Britain's participation in the conference on condition that its location should be changed to some town alongside the Rhine.¹¹⁹

Metternich, for his part, still tried to resist Russia's demand for remonstrance against the British government by arguing that silence on the part of the continental allies would be the best way to tell Canning their disapproval of his policy, but to no avail. Pressed by Russia, in the middle of June Metternich instructed Neumann to request of Canning Britain's participation in the conference.¹²⁰ Meanwhile, Metternich became convinced that, as long as Canning was in charge of Britain's foreign policy, he would never be able to restore Anglo-Austrian concert and, consequently, would never be able

¹¹⁷ Pozzo di Borgo to Bulgari, 17 March 1824, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.356-7; À Court to Canning, no.78, 3 May 1824, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.424-6; Ofalia to à Court, 30 April 1824 (Translation), *BFSP*, vol.12, pp.958-62.

¹¹⁸ Canning to à Court, no.18, 17 May 1824, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.426-7.

¹¹⁹ Chateaubriand to Polignac, 10, 13 May 1824, *Chateaubriand*, vol.5, pp.216, 217-9; Stuart to Canning, no.264, 27 May 1824, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.154-5.

¹²⁰ Nesselrode to Tatishchev, 13 May 1824, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.437-42; Lebzeltern to Metternich, 16 May 1824, *Lebzeltern*, pp.145-9; Tatishchev to Nesselrode, 22 June 1824, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.480-2.

to free his country from diplomatic subordination to Russia. In Metternich's view, the problem of Canning's Spanish American policy was not that it was liberal but that it did not show sufficient consideration for Austria's difficult position on the question. Canning forced Austria to choose between Russia and Britain by his refusal of the proposed allied conference. In the early summer of 1824, it appeared to Metternich that there was a good chance of Canning's downfall. Since early 1824, the British government had been facing the possibility of Liverpool's imminent retirement because of his ill health. George IV let everyone know his desire to appoint Wellington as Liverpool's successor in the event of his retirement. It was hardly expected that Canning would serve under Wellington, not least because of their differences on the question of Spanish America. In June, Metternich decided to work on George IV and Wellington to expel Canning from the government in the event of Liverpool's retirement, and gave instructions to Neumann and Esterhazy for this purpose.¹²¹

In the early summer of 1824, however, Canning was still ignorant of Metternich's intrigue. Fully aware that the representations of France and Austria on Britain's participation in the Paris conference on the affairs of Spanish America were merely the result of Russia's diplomatic offensive, he was not troubled by them. On 29 May, he wrote to Bagot:

The answer from Spain [Ofalia's note of 30 April] *closes* my correspondence upon Spanish America. It is evidently not of Spanish origin. The Count d'Ofalia, I *know*, hesitated very much to adopt the course suggested (or rather prescribed to him), seeing as clearly as we do that it sets us entirely free. Austria, so far from being bent upon Conferences, confesses them to be folly without us. And France, so far from being pledged to them, has given us to understand that her supposed concurrence is greatly overstated by M. Ofalia. That concurrence is only conditional. Whence then

¹²¹ Tatischev to Nesselrode, 22 June, 14 July 1824, *ibid.*, pp.482-3, 542-3.

comes the Spanish Answer? 'Ask—where's the North?' The voice is the voice of Ofalia, but the hand is the hand of Pozzo¹²²

And, he knew that even the Russians did not want to alienate Britain on the question.

Thus, by the summer of 1824, the Spanish American question as a European question was essentially settled. In other words, Canning had succeeded in preventing the question of Spanish America from becoming a European question. He achieved the most important aim of his Spanish American policy since his assumption of office, that is, the maintenance of Britain's free hand. This certainly was not a great achievement. Britain's maritime supremacy was so great that she did not need to use diplomacy to maintain her free hand in the affairs of Spanish America. Canning certainly knew this simple fact. In fact, while the most important aim of his Spanish American policy was to maintain Britain's free hand, the principal object of his diplomacy on the matter was to prevent this isolationist policy from causing damage to Britain's relations with the continental powers so severely that they could no longer co-operate in face of real threats to the European international system. His principal aim in his proposal for an Anglo-American joint declaration in August 1823 and his conference with Polignac of 9 October 1823 was to deter France from proposing an allied congress or conference, Britain's refusal of which, he feared, would deepen her isolation in Europe. He continued his effort to make Britain's isolationist policy acceptable to the other members of the Alliance until the spring of 1824, expressing repeatedly his preference for monarchies to republics in Spanish America and trying hard to get Spain to open negotiations with her former colonies. Even when he refused Britain's participation in the proposed allied conference, he argued that the decision was calculated to preserve

¹²² Canning to Bagot, private, 29 May 1824, *GCHF*, vol.2, pp.239-40.

the Alliance. In a despatch of 24 April 1824 to Bagot, which was written in answer to Lieven's communication of his government's regret at Britain's refusal of the proposed conference, he wrote:

. . . in doing so [refusing the conference], the British Cabinet flatters itself that it took the best chance of avoiding contest and of preventing complications which might have put to hazard on one separate question that general harmony and confidence, which happily prevail between His Majesty and his Allies on so many subjects of vital interest, and which it is His Majesty's earnest desire to cultivate and maintain.¹²³

It is impossible to accept Temperley's view that Canning's Spanish American diplomacy was part of his grand attack on the European Alliance, and was motivated especially by his desire to revenge himself on the continental allies for his diplomatic defeat on the question of European Spain. It is also impossible to accept Webster's view that Canning sought to widen the gulf between Britain and the continental allies as much as possible with a view to appearing as the sole patron of Spanish American independence and increasing her prestige in the region at the expense of that of the United States.¹²⁴ The success or failure of Canning's Spanish American diplomacy should therefore be judged not by whether he succeeded in exposing to the world the impotence of the Alliance outside the European continent or by whether he succeeded in defeating the supposed design of the United States to lead a league of republics in the western hemisphere, but by whether he succeeded in preventing his isolationist policy on the question from deepening Britain's isolation in Europe and jeopardising her co-operation with her allies for the preservation of the European international system.

¹²³ Canning to Bagot, no.20, 24 April 1824, *BILA*, vol.2, p.300.

¹²⁴ Temperley, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, pp.154, 454-5; *BILA*, vol.1, pp.17-22. See also, Kaufmann,

Obviously, the best way to answer this question is to see the effects of his Spanish American diplomacy on the allied concert on the eastern question, which continued to menace the 1815 European international order despite the success of the allied diplomacy in 1821-2 to avert the danger of a Russo-Turkish war. We will return to this question later after examining Canning's eastern diplomacy.

In the summer of 1824, while the future of Spain's former colonies in the New World appeared to have been all but decided, Spain's political future looked far from clear. In early July, the ultra-royalists finally ousted Ofalia from power. What sealed Ofalia's fate was King John VI of Portugal's decree of 5 June proclaiming his intention to assemble the ancient Cortes, which greatly alarmed Ferdinand. He was easily persuaded by the ultras of the danger of Ofalia's moderate policy and into getting rid of his 'liberal' minister. The ultra-royalists also endeavoured to persuade the King that the presence of the French forces was no longer necessary. However, Ferdinand was not prepared to accept this advice. He requested France to prolong her military occupation of Spain beyond 1 July 1824. The French government was reluctant to comply with the request, but was unable to reject it when it was evident that the withdrawal of the French forces would plunge Spain into complete anarchy. It agreed to prolong the occupation for six months until 1 January 1825.¹²⁵

In the first half of 1824, Canning continued his policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of Spain. In fact, for seven months since late December 1823 Canning's last instructions to a Court on Spain's domestic affairs remained those of 29 December

British Policy, pp.136-75; Schroeder, *Transformation*, pp.633-4.

¹²⁵ A Court to Canning, no.104, 15 June 1824, no.106, 16 June 1824, no.113, 28 June 1824, FO 72/286; same to same, no.117, 5 July 1824, no.119, secret, 8 July 1824, FO 72/287; Stuart to Canning, no.219, 27 April 1824, FO 27/308; Convention between France and Spain, for prolonging the Stay of the French

1823, in which he directed the minister to refrain from giving the Spanish government even friendly advice on its internal affairs. On the other hand, he tolerated France continuing her military occupation of Spain. In late January 1824, shortly before the opening of Parliament, Chateaubriand assured Canning that the sole aim of the occupation was the maintenance of order in Spain.¹²⁶ On 4 February, Canning in the House of Commons defended the temporary occupation of Spain by the French forces, praising their efforts to prevent reprisals against those who had supported the constitutional regime. 'If he were asked', he said, 'Ought the French army to evacuate Spain tomorrow?—as a friend to humanity, he must say no.'¹²⁷ In early March, Canning demanded of Chateaubriand yet another assurance that France would not force Ferdinand to demand the continuance of the occupation. At the same time, he suggested to the French government that he would not object to the prolongation of the occupation beyond 1 July 1824, if the continuance of Spain's internal instability required it. Chateaubriand immediately gave Canning the desired assurance.¹²⁸ Armed with Chateaubriand's assurance, Canning on 18 March again defended the French occupation of Spain in the House of Commons. He said that, although he still could not say how long the French forces would stay in Spain, he was convinced that 'whenever the time came that Spain might be left to herself with safety, France would be as much pleased in the prospect of withdrawing her troops as England could possibly be at seeing her evacuate the country'.¹²⁹ When the deadline for the termination of the

Army in Spain, Signed at Madrid, 30th June, 1824, *BFSP*, vol.11, pp.340-4.

¹²⁶ Stuart to Canning, no.57, 27 January 1824 (enclosing Chateaubriand to Polignac, 26 January 1824), FO 27/305.

¹²⁷ *Hansard*, vol.10, House of Commons, 4 February 1824, cols.91-2.

¹²⁸ Canning to Stuart, no.20, 2 March 1824, no.21, 3 March 1824, FO 146/62; Stuart to Canning, no.131, 7 March 1824 (enclosing Chateaubriand to Polignac, 7 March 1824), FO 27/307.

¹²⁹ *Hansard*, vol.10, House of Commons, 18 March 1824, col.1270.

occupation came, Canning turned a blind eye to its extension. After the end of the Franco-Spanish war, Spain's internal situation certainly had never looked worse than in the early summer of 1824.

IV

Portugal and Brazil,

September 1822-July 1824

Canning's involvement with Portugal dated back to 1807 when he occupied the post of foreign secretary in the Portland government. In August 1807, Napoleon issued an ultimatum to Dom John, the Prince Regent of Portugal acting on behalf of his mad mother, Queen Maria, demanding that Portugal must declare war on her ancient ally and bring herself into the Continental System, or face the consequence of a French invasion. In reply, Canning urged Dom John to withdraw to his transatlantic colony of Brazil. The Prince Regent's attempts to satisfy Napoleon by adopting some anti-British measures without totally antagonising Britain eventuated in the French invasion of Portugal. In late November, Portuguese ships with the entire court and the entire government on board set out for Brazil, escorted by four British warships. As Canning had anticipated, the transfer of the Portuguese court to Brazil resulted in the establishment of Britain's predominance over the government in Rio de Janeiro, which depended entirely on British troops in the war to defeat the French in Portugal and on the British navy for the defence of its overseas empire. In January 1808, indeed within a week of his arrival in Brazil, Dom John issued a royal edict ending Portugal's 300-year-old monopoly of her colonial trade and opening the ports of Brazil to the trade of all friendly nations, which in practice meant British trade. Then, by a Treaty of Navigation and Commerce of 19 February 1810, Britain obtained various preferential rights.

After the end of the war in Europe, contrary to general expectations, the Prince Regent decided to stay in Brazil. In December 1815, he raised Brazil to the status of co-kingdom with Portugal. Three months later, on the death of his mother, he became King John VI of Portugal, Brazil and Algarves. Meanwhile, however, the Portuguese deeply resented John's indifference to their interests, especially his abolition of their monopoly of the colonial trade and his commercial concessions to Britain. Marshall William Carr Beresford, the commander-in-chief of the Portuguese army since 1809, had long been aware that Portugal needed John's residence in Lisbon as a focal point around which to rally a disaffected people. In April 1820, he sailed for Brazil to effect John's return, but to no avail. On 13 August, he again set sail for Lisbon. He had been 11 days at sea when a military revolt broke out in Oporto. He arrived at Lisbon on 10 October only to find that it was under the control of a revolutionary junta, which refused to let him land. The Portuguese liberals scheduled elections for December to choose delegates to a Cortes which was to produce a constitution, and demanded the King's immediate return to Lisbon.

The constitutional revolution in Portugal was at first favourably received in Brazil. In the early months of 1821, a number of revolutionary juntas sprang up in Brazil declaring themselves in favour of the revolution in Portugal. Those who rose against royal absolutism were mostly Portuguese, but the revolution was supported also by many Brazilians who saw it as a liberal movement which would give them an opportunity to express their own interests in the Lisbon Cortes. When in late February Portuguese troops in Rio de Janeiro rose in revolt, the King was forced to approve in advance whatever constitution the Lisbon Cortes was going to produce, call for the election of Brazilian representatives to the Cortes, and agree, much against his will, to

return to Lisbon. On 26 April, John and around 4,000 Portuguese set sail for Lisbon, leaving his eldest son, Dom Pedro, behind in Rio as Prince Regent. But, it soon became clear that the Portuguese liberals intended to reduce Brazil to its former colonial status. Long before the majority of the Brazilian deputies had taken their seats, the Cortes in Lisbon had made decisive moves in this regard, making the provinces of Brazil directly subordinate to Lisbon, abolishing all government institutions established in Rio since 1808, and ordering Dom Pedro to leave Brazil. In reply, the Brazilians urged Dom Pedro to defy the Cortes and stay in Brazil, warning that his departure and the destruction of the central government in Rio would result in the disintegration of Brazil into a number of republics. Pedro had no alternative but to follow their advice or lose Brazil. On 9 January 1822 he announced his decision to stay in Brazil. This announcement was immediately followed by the appointment of José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva, a prominent member of the Brazilian party and a staunch monarchist, as his minister for home and foreign affairs. They thereafter took successive measures which furthered the cause of Brazilian independence.¹

Meanwhile, King John arrived in Lisbon in July 1821 and immediately accepted the new constitutional regime. However, alarmed by the hostility of the eastern powers and the growing likelihood of French invasion of Spain, the Portuguese liberals repeatedly

¹ My account of the development of events in Brazil and Portugal and their relations from 1807 to the middle of 1822 is drawn mainly from Alan K. Manchester, *British Preëminence in Brazil, Its Rise and Decline: A Study in European Expansion* (Reprint, New York, 1964), pp.59-108, and 'The Transfer of the Portuguese Court to Rio de Janeiro', in Henry H. Keith and S. F. Edwards (eds.), *Conflict & Continuity in Brazilian Society* (Columbia, S.C., 1969), pp.148-83; Emilia Viotti da Costa, 'The Political Emancipation of Brazil', in A. J. R. Russell-Wood (ed.), *From Colony to Nation: Essays on the Independence of Brazil* (Baltimore, Md., 1975), pp.43-88; Emilia Viotti da Costa, *The Brazilian Empire: myths and histories* (Chicago, 1985), ch.1; Neill Macaulay, *Dom Pedro: The Struggle for Liberty in Brazil and Portugal, 1798-1834* (Durham, N.C., 1986), pp.9-121; Leslie Bethell, 'The Independence of Brazil' in Bethell (ed.), *Cambridge History of Latin America*, vol.3, pp.157-96; Roderick J. Barman, *Brazil: The Forging of a Nation, 1798-1852* (Stanford, Calif., 1988), chs.2-3.

demanded of the British government a new engagement that it would protect Portugal against the attacks of any power or combination of powers which might desire to overthrow her independence.² Soon after Canning's assumption of office, on 25 September, the Portuguese government demanded of the British government 'an immediate and formal declaration' to guarantee Portugal against any foreign attack or invasion. Sarmiento, the Portuguese chargé d'affaires in London, warned that, if Britain refused the declaration, Portugal would make a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance with Spain.³ Canning naturally desired to keep Portugal out of the Franco-Spanish dispute. From late 1822 to early 1823, Canning repeatedly warned the Portuguese government that, although the British government would be always ready to fulfil its ancient treaty obligation to protect Portugal from any external attack, she was entitled to claim Britain's assistance only in the event of an unprovoked attack on her territory, and clearly told that Britain's guarantee would never be extended to political institutions of Portugal.⁴ In the end, the negotiations between Portugal and Spain for an alliance came to nothing. On 27 February 1823, Sampaio, the Portuguese chargé d'affaires in Paris, delivered a note to Chateaubriand, declaring that, in the event of a French invasion of Spain, Portugal would break off diplomatic relations with France, but would remain neutral unless she was attacked by France. Chateaubriand replied to the note with a written assurance that France had no intention to attack Portugal unless

² Webster, *Castlereagh 1815-1822*, pp.253-5.

³ Note Verbale, read to Canning on 25 September 1822, by Sarmiento, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.305-7.

⁴ Canning to Sarmiento, 1 October 1822, *ibid.*, pp.335-6; Canning to Wellington, 29 October 1822, *ibid.*, pp.461-2; Canning to Sarmiento, 9 December 1822, enclosed in Canning to Ward, no.17, 13 December 1822, FO 179/22; Canning to Sarmiento, 17 January 1823, FO 63/272.

she supported Spain.⁵ In the spring of 1823, therefore, Canning was satisfied that there was little danger of Portugal's involvement in the war in Spain.

However, the prevention of Portugal's involvement in the war in Spain was not Canning's only preoccupation concerning Portugal during his first seven months in office. In June 1822, Andrada e Silva told Henry Chamberlain, the British consul-general in Rio, Pedro's intention to send an agent to London as Brazilian consul-general and chargé d'affaires, and declared that Pedro would shortly address a manifesto to all the powers declaring Brazilian independence.⁶ Chamberlain's report of this conversation reached London in late August. Canning was pleased at the likelihood of Brazil's declaration of independence, for he expected that it would lead to the abolition of the Brazilian slave trade. By the time Canning assumed the post of foreign secretary for the second time, largely thanks to Castlereagh's efforts, almost all the leading maritime countries had abolished the slave trade, although this was a hollow victory because prohibition was by no means synonymous with suppression. The only exception was Portugal. In April 1807, within three weeks of Britain's own abolition of the slave trade, in deference to the wishes of Parliament and public opinion for the general abolition of the trade, Canning appealed to Portugal to follow her lead. Not surprisingly, Portugal, whose plantation economy in Brazil depended entirely on slavery, turned a deaf ear to his appeal. Yielding to persistent pressure from Britain, Portugal by Anglo-Portuguese treaties of 1810 and 1815 and by a convention of 1817 agreed to put restrictions on her slave trade. But, when Canning returned to the Foreign Office, Portugal still retained a right to transport slaves from her territories in Africa south of

⁵ Sampaio to Chateaubriand, 27 February 1823, Chateaubriand to Sampaio, 3 March 1823, and memorandum by Marcellus of communication between France and Portugal, FO 27/300.

the equator to Brazil.⁷ Canning expected that he would be able to obtain the abolition of the Brazilian slave trade in return for Britain's recognition of Brazilian independence.⁸

On 12 October, Canning received Dom Pedro's manifesto of 1 August to the Brazilians declaring Brazil's independence from Portugal.⁹ He welcomed the news, still confident that the declaration would 'put Brazil at our mercy as to the continuance of the slave trade'.¹⁰ But, he became less certain on 23 October, when he received Pedro's manifesto of 6 August to foreign nations. In the manifesto, Pedro severely criticised the Lisbon Cortes for its attempts to re-colonise Brazil and invited foreign powers to enter into diplomatic relations with his government, although he still clearly expressed his desire to maintain Brazil under John VI's sovereignty and his intention to return his authority in Brazil to his father in the event of the fall of the revolutionary regime in Lisbon. At the end of the manifesto, Pedro stated that the ports of Brazil should 'continue to be open to all pacifick [*sic*] and friendly Nations'.¹¹ This statement forced Canning to consider what he should do if Brazil demanded of Britain her recognition of Brazilian independence in return for the confirmation of Britain's commercial rights in Brazil which had been established by the treaty of 1810, but without the abolition of the Brazilian slave trade. His thoughts on the question are recorded in his correspondence with William Wilberforce. In his letters of 24 and 31

⁶ Chamberlain to Castlereagh, secret, 18 June 1822, FO 63/246.

⁷ Manchester, *British Preëminence in Brazil*, ch.3; Bethell, *Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade*, ch.1.

⁸ Canning to Wellington, 30 September 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, p.329.

⁹ Chamberlain to Castlereagh, no.28, 10 August 1822, FO 63/246; Pedro's manifesto, 1 August 1822 (Translation), *BFSP*, vol.9, pp.727-34.

¹⁰ Canning to Wellington, 15 October 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, p.355.

¹¹ Manifesto of the Prince Regent of Brazil to Friendly Governments and Nations, relative to the Independence of Brazil, 6 August 1822 (Translation), *BFSP*, vol.9, pp.736-47.

October, Canning told Wilberforce his intention to make the abolition of the slave trade 'a *sine qua non* condition' of Britain's acknowledgement of Brazilian independence. However, he did not forget to remind him that the government should satisfy 'the commercial as well as the moral feelings of the country', and confined himself to promising Wilberforce that the government would not acknowledge the independence of Brazil unless the latter agreed, at least, to accept the restrictions imposed on the Brazilian slave trade by the Anglo-Portuguese agreements.¹²

Canning soon had an opportunity to sound out the intention of the Brazilians on the question of the Brazilian slave trade. At the beginning of November, Canning was approached by General Felisberto Caldeira Brant Pontes, who had received from Pedro credentials as his representative in London and instructions to deliver them to the British government if he was certain that they would be accepted.¹³ They arranged an unofficial meeting for 8 November.¹⁴ At the meeting, Brant emphasised the mutual benefits to be derived from early recognition by Britain of Brazil's independence. Canning in reply told Brant that one of the obstacles to recognition was the Brazilian slave trade. Brant had not received instructions on this point, but stated as his own opinion that neither Pedro nor Andrada e Silva wished to see the slave trade continue and they might well be prepared to abolish it entirely in return for recognition. Canning asked Brant to put his request for recognition in writing immediately.¹⁵ We have already seen that about 15 November Canning circulated among his cabinet colleagues

¹² Canning to Wilberforce, 24 October 1822, R. I. and S. Wilberforce (ed.), *The Correspondence of William Wilberforce* (2 vols., London, 1840), vol.2, p.466; same to same, 31 October 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, p.474.

¹³ Chamberlain to Castlereagh, 19 August 1822, *ibid.*, pp.433-4.

¹⁴ Brant to Canning, 2 November 1822, FO 63/256; Canning to Brant, 3 November 1822, *ibid.*

¹⁵ Bethell, *Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade*, pp.32-3.

a memorandum on the need for British recognition of certain states in Spanish America. In the memorandum, he also proposed that Britain should immediately enter into a negotiation with Brazil for the conclusion of a treaty on the bases of Britain's recognition of Brazilian independence and the total abolishment of the Brazilian slave trade. He attached to the memorandum an extract from Brant's note of 14 November in which the Brazilian agent pointed out a strong probability that, if Britain recognised Brazil's independence, the latter would abolish the slave trade 'from motives of gratitude towards his Britannic Majesty'.¹⁶ Soon after the circulation of the memorandum, Brant for the first time told Canning that he had credentials and full powers to sign a treaty by which Britain would recognise Brazil. Canning did not give an assurance that Britain would recognise Brazil in return for abolition, but promised that the subject would be considered 'as fully & as speedily as possible' by the cabinet.¹⁷ Brant's lack of authority to guarantee the abolition of the Brazilian slave trade was an obstacle to the conclusion of an agreement. But, at the meeting of 19 November, in which Liverpool also joined, the prime minister apparently invited Brant to sign a provisional agreement *sub spe rati*.¹⁸

Canning and Liverpool, however, failed to obtain the cabinet's consent to the immediate opening of a negotiation with the Brazilian government. Probably at the insistence of the ultra-Tory members, the cabinet decided to defer the question until after Canning warned the Portuguese government of the possibility of Britain's recognition of Brazil and saw its reaction. On 21 November, Canning instructed

¹⁶ Canning's memorandum for the cabinet, 15 November 1822, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.396-8; Brant to Canning, 14 November 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.573-5.

¹⁷ Canning to Liverpool, private, 18 November 1822, Canning Papers, 70.

¹⁸ Bethell, *Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade*, pp.35-6.

Edward Ward, the British chargé d'affaires in Lisbon, to communicate a note to the Portuguese government. The note contained an assurance that Britain would abstain from any interference in the dispute between Portugal and Brazil and maintain the most exact neutrality in the event of a war between them, but clearly hinted that this policy might not prevent her from recognising the independence of Brazil.¹⁹ Brant in his letters of 25 and 29 November demanded an interview with Canning in order to hear the decision of the British cabinet, but Canning merely answered that he was waiting for a response to his recent despatch to Lisbon.²⁰ Then, at the end of November, Canning received Chamberlain's despatch of 24 September reporting that Dom Pedro would be acclaimed as emperor of Brazil on his birthday, 12 October. He decided to take a 'pause' in his discussions with Brant until he learnt the real intention and meaning of this sudden change of Dom Pedro's title and its effect on the internal situation in Brazil.²¹

But, Canning was soon satisfied that the new order in Brazil was supported by the majority of the people.²² On the other hand, the Portuguese government appeared to persist in its unrealistic determination to re-colonise Brazil.²³ In early February 1823, Canning decided to resume discussions with the Brazilian government. Canning had not yet obtained the consent of the cabinet to recognise Brazilian independence. But, he

¹⁹ Canning to Ward, no.14, 21 November 1822 (enclosing 'Note to be presented by Mr. Ward to the Portuguese Government'), *BILA*, vol.2, pp.235-6.

²⁰ Brant to Canning, 25, 29 November 1822, FO 63/256; Bethell, *Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade*, p.36.

²¹ Chamberlain to Castlereagh, no.45, 24 September 1822, FO 63/246; Canning to Chamberlain, no.5, secret, 15 February 1823, *BILA*, vol.1, p.220.

²² Chamberlain to Castlereagh, no.55, 14 October 1822, FO 63/247; Chamberlain to Clanwilliam, 2 November 1822, *ibid.*; Chamberlain to Canning, no.5, 13 December 1822, *ibid.*

²³ Ward to Canning, no.64, 14 December 1822, FO 63/252; same to same, nos.12 and 13, 25 January 1823, FO 63/267.

seems to have been confident that he would be able to obtain it. The opposition of the ultra-Tories to recognition was apparently much weaker in the case of Brazil than in that of Spanish America. Wellington certainly did not oppose it. It is clear that his stance on the question was influenced by his discussions with the allied plenipotentiaries at Verona. In late November 1822, a Brazilian agent, Manuel Rodrigues Gameiro Pessôa, arrived in Verona with the aim of obtaining allied recognition of the independence of Brazil and their mediation between Portugal and Brazil. On 29 November, Metternich read to the allied plenipotentiaries a letter he had received from the agent, and proposed that the question should be considered in a conference to be assembled in London. The Russians and Prussians appeared disposed to accept the proposal, while the French avoided a clear answer. Wellington judged that he should not give his consent to the measure which might restrict his government's free hand. He opposed the proposal, and the allied plenipotentiaries unanimously agreed to drop the matter. On the other hand, the reactions of the allied plenipotentiaries to Gameiro Pessôa's representation led the Duke to believe that Austria, whose emperor was Pedro's father-in-law, was willing to recognise Brazil, and Russia and Prussia were prepared to acquiesce in her decision.²⁴

On 15 February, having found that Brant had not received an authority from his government to enter into an engagement to abolish the Brazilian slave trade, Canning instructed Chamberlain to state confidentially to Andrada e Silva that, if Dom Pedro desired Britain's recognition of his new empire, he might 'best find his way to it

²⁴ Wellington to Canning, 29 November, 10 December 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.616-7, 641-3.

through an offer on the part of Brazil to consent to a renunciation of the Slave Trade'.²⁵ Besides, on 28 February, he instructed Lord Amherst, who was proceeding to India to take up the post of governor-general via Rio de Janeiro, to urge on the Brazilian government to send full powers to Brant to enter into an engagement to abolish the slave trade. He directed Amherst to tell the Brazilian government that, by immediate abolition, it would acquire not only Britain's 'friendship' but also her good offices 'to effect a reconciliation between Portugal and Brazil on the basis of Brazilian independence, and to procure the concurrence, first of Austria and with the aid of Austria that of other Powers, in this act of reconciliation and recognition'.²⁶

While Canning was anxiously waiting for communications from Rio on the question of the slave trade, he received from Lisbon the news of a counterrevolution. In late May, part of the army in Lisbon declared against the constitution, and Dom Miguel, the second son of the King, immediately joined the insurgents. The revolt frightened the King into withdrawing the constitution and dissolving the Cortes. However, the counterrevolution did not result in complete reaction. While Miguel assumed the command of the army, the King proclaimed to grant another constitution and appointed a ministry which was composed of moderate liberals.²⁷ Canning welcomed the news of the counterrevolution. He had a very low opinion of the Portuguese liberals of 1820, and had never believed that the Portuguese constitution, which was similar to its Spanish counterpart, would give stability to Portugal. Unless the Portuguese set their

²⁵ Canning to Chamberlain, no.5, secret, 15 February 1823, *BILA*, vol.1, pp.220-1.

²⁶ Canning to Liverpool, secret, 17 February 1823, Canning Papers, 70; Canning to Amherst, no.1, secret and confidential, 28 February 1823, FO 84/24.

²⁷ Ward to Canning, no.55, 28 May 1823, no.56, 29 May 1823, no.57, 30 May 1823, no.58, 31 May 1823, no.60, 7 June 1823, FO 63/268; Ward to Planta, private, 1 June 1823, *ibid.*; John VI's

house in order, they would continue their attempt to involve Britain in their struggle against their external and internal enemies. Canning expected that the establishment of a moderately liberal regime in Lisbon would pave the way for the emergence of internally stable and pro-British but independent Portugal. He was particularly satisfied with the appointment of Count Palmella, the moderately liberal and pro-British former Portuguese minister in London, as foreign minister, calling him 'the very best of Portuguese'.²⁸

In the middle of July Canning started his effort to encourage John VI and Palmella to establish a moderately liberal regime in Lisbon. He decided not only to comply with King John's personal request that Sir Edward Thornton, the former British minister in Rio during John's residence there, should be sent to Lisbon as new British minister, but also to assign him a mission to invest the King with the Garter, obviously with the aim of showing the Portuguese Britain's support to the King's intention to grant a moderate constitution to them.²⁹ Britain's encouragement to the King was necessary especially because the eastern allies appeared to be determined to prevent the reestablishment of a constitution in Portugal. In fact, Russia and Austria communicated to the new government in Lisbon their objection to John VI's proclamation to grant another constitution.³⁰ On the other hand, Canning judged that France would not join in their remonstrance and would recommend the Portuguese government to introduce a

proclamations of 31 May and 3 June 1823 (Translation), *BFSP*, vol.10, pp.1029-31; John VI's decree, 18 June 1823 (Translation), *BFSP*, vol.11, pp.852-3.

²⁸ Canning to Bagot, private, 14 July 1823, *GCHF*, vol.2, p.183.

²⁹ Canning to Beresford, private and confidential, 15 July 1823, *Canning Papers*, 98b.

³⁰ Nesselrode to Borel, 14 August 1823, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.170-2; Nesselrode to Pozzo di Borgo, 14 August 1823, *ibid.*, pp.175-7; Wellesley to Canning, no.9, secret and confidential, 30 July 1823, FO 7/179.

French-style constitution.³¹ His judgement was not wide of the mark. In early July, the French council of ministers decided that France should prevent the establishment of absolutism in Portugal as well as in Spain.³² Nevertheless, Chateaubriand told the Marquis of Marialva, the new Portuguese ambassador, that the Portuguese government should be cautious about introducing new institutions and delay deciding them until the allies decided those of Spain, for fear lest the introduction of a constitution in Portugal should encourage the Cadiz government to persist in its resistance to the French force.³³ The French government also pressed the new government in Lisbon to provide material assistance to the French force in Spain, especially naval assistance in the blockade of Cadiz.³⁴ While Canning was ignorant of the French opposition to John's proclamation, he was informed that the French government was pressing Portugal to participate in the war in Spain.³⁵ Equally disturbing was Ward's report that there was an opinion in the Portuguese government that it should request the French government to send troops to Portugal to prevent another domestic disturbance. In Portugal, the absolutist party, which was led by Queen Carlota, the sister of Ferdinand VII of Spain, and Dom Miguel, was determined to prevent the promulgation of another constitution, while the extreme liberals did not abandon the hope of another revolution. Under the circumstances, it was only natural that someone like Count Suberra, who had fought the Peninsula War on the side of Napoleon and now held the posts of minister of war and that of marine

³¹ Canning to Thornton, no.2, 5 August 1823, FO 179/23.

³² Villèle to Angoulême, 4 July 1823, *Villèle*, vol.4, p.190.

³³ Chateaubriand to La Ferronnays, 12 July 1823, *Chateaubriand*, vol.4, pp.323-4.

³⁴ Chateaubriand to Talaru, 23 July 1823, *CV*, pp.293-4; Viscountess de Bardonnnet (ed.), *Mémoires et souvenirs du baron Hyde de Neuville* (3 vols., Paris, 1888-92), vol.3, pp.83-6.

³⁵ Canning to Thornton, no.2, 5 August 1823, FO 179/23.

concurrently, desired assistance from France.³⁶ Canning in his general instructions directed Thornton to recommend the King to defy the opposition of the eastern powers and keep his promise to grant his subjects a moderate constitution. As to the external policy of the Portuguese government, Thornton should dissuade it from abandoning its neutrality in the war in Spain, and tell Palmella that Britain could not 'view without jealousy the admission of a French force into Portugal'.³⁷

But, soon after he had finished drawing the general instructions to Thornton, on 28 July he was informed of Palmella's intention to request the despatch of British troops to Lisbon. Canning immediately wrote to Liverpool informing him of Palmella's intention. 'My notion on the instant', he wrote, 'is Naval force, but Troops out of the Question.'³⁸ Liverpool in his letter of the same date agreed with Canning's opinion. 'If We had troops', he wrote, 'I shall perhaps *hesitate*, but I believe smarter & safer opinion is not to send them.' Once Britain sent them, she could never be sure 'how far we might be led'.³⁹ On the morning of 30 July, Guerreiro, the Portuguese chargé d'affaires in London, delivered Canning Palmella's letter of 15 July formally requesting that Britain should send her troops to Lisbon to enable John VI, first, to dissolve his army and create a new reliable army and, second, to promulgate a moderately liberal constitution without the fear of a revolt by the absolutists or by the extreme liberals. Palmella warned that, if Britain refused the request, the King might, in case of emergency, request the assistance of French troops in Spain. But, by the time Canning received

³⁶ Ward to Planta, 15 July 1823, FO 63/268; Ward to Canning, no.61, 9 June 1823, no.74, 15 July 1823, *ibid.*

³⁷ Canning to Thornton, no.2, 5 August 1823, FO 179/23. This document is dated 5 August, but was written in late July. Canning to Thornton, no.3, secret, 5 August 1823, *ibid.*

³⁸ Canning to Liverpool, secret, 28 July 1823, Canning Papers, 104.

³⁹ Liverpool to Canning, most secret, 28 July 1823, Canning Papers, 70.

Palmella's letter, he and Liverpool had already decided to decline the request but send a naval force to the Tagus. Canning communicated the decision to Guerreiro. He recommended George IV to send a naval force to the Tagus 'to keep in check by its presence the ill-disposed of all parties, to preclude the necessity, real or pretended, of calling in *any* French assistance, and in any real extremity to protect the King & Royal Family'. The King immediately approved the recommendation.⁴⁰

It was only after he had written to the King that Canning informed Wellington of Portugal's request and the decision to refuse it.⁴¹ In his letter of 31 July to Canning, Wellington expressed his strong dissatisfaction with the decision. The Duke doubted if the presence of a squadron in the Tagus would prevent the outbreak of a revolt in Lisbon. The presence of troops in Lisbon would certainly do. The Duke knew very well that Liverpool and Canning desired to avoid Britain's interference in Portugal's internal affairs. But, if so, why did they think that Britain could send a naval force to the Tagus? Liverpool and Canning certainly desired that the presence of a squadron in the Tagus would by its moral effect prevent a revolt in Lisbon. This meant that they were essentially prepared to involve Britain in the internal affairs of Portugal. If Britain in any case could not avoid involving herself in Portugal's internal affairs, why did not she choose the most effective way of doing so? The Duke, moreover, insisted that the presence of British troops in Lisbon would never result in her interference in the internal affairs of Portugal although it would 'involve' her in them. Britain would use her occupation of Lisbon not to force particular political institutions on Portugal but to

⁴⁰ Palmella to Canning, 15 July 1823, and Canning to Palmella, 6 August 1823, enclosed in Canning to Thornton, no.3, secret, 5 August 1823, FO 179/23; Canning to George IV, 30 July 1823, Canning Papers, 100; George IV to Canning, 30 July 1823, *Wellington*, vol.2, p.116.

⁴¹ Canning to Wellington, secret, 30 July 1823, Canning Papers, 104.

enable John VI and his ministers to choose them themselves without the fear of a domestic disturbance. 'The sending troops is', the Duke conceded, 'certainly liable to misrepresentation, both in the newspapers and in Parliament, to a greater degree than sending only a squadron.' But, 'it will be the misrepresentation of a day'.⁴²

When Canning received Wellington's letter, he decided to delay Thornton's departure for Lisbon and sent the letter to Liverpool asking for his opinions.⁴³ In his letter of 1 August, Liverpool argued that, even if the government had had troops at hand, it could not send them to Portugal without calling Parliament which had been adjourned just two weeks before. If the government called Parliament, it would incur 'all the inconvenience of alarm, connected with armament and eventual war'. Moreover, they would be sent 'not to guard against an *external*, but an internal danger'. Britain should take '*ostensibly* the first step in interfering in the internal affairs of another country'. Such a step would never be received favourably by the British public. Liverpool completely ignored Wellington's argument that 'in principle' the presence of troops in Lisbon would not involve Britain in Portugal's internal affairs in a greater degree than that of a naval force in the Tagus. He was solely concerned with the reaction of Parliament to the government's decision. As Wellington had himself admitted, there would be a great difference in this regard between the two measures. The government could send a naval force to the Tagus without calling Parliament.⁴⁴

On 2 August, Canning sent Liverpool's letter to Wellington telling him that he was 'inclined very much to agree' to the prime minister's 'reasoning' against sending

⁴² Wellington to Canning, 31 July 1823, *Wellington*, vol.2, pp.110-2.

⁴³ Canning to Liverpool, secret, 1 August 1823, Canning Papers, 104.

⁴⁴ Liverpool to Canning, 1 August 1823, *Wellington*, vol.2, pp.112-3.

troops.⁴⁵ But, Liverpool's letter did not satisfy the Duke. In his letter of 3 August, he still insisted that he did not regard the occupation of Lisbon by British troops as 'an interference' in Portugal's internal affairs, and criticised the despatch of a naval force as 'a half measure'.⁴⁶ Canning decided to ask opinions of other members of the cabinet⁴⁷, but was certain that he and Liverpool would be able to obtain the consent of the cabinet to their decision. On 5 August he wrote an additional instruction to Thornton directing him to explain to Palmella why the British government had decided to refuse his request for troops, and the next day wrote a letter to Palmella himself.⁴⁸ The decision to refuse the Portuguese appeal for troops was approved by the cabinet on 7 August. Among the members of the cabinet who were out of town, Peel wrote to Canning clearly opposing military intervention in Portugal, although Bathurst inclined to support Wellington's view.⁴⁹

In his official instructions of 5 August and private letter of 7 August to Thornton, Canning directed the new minister to tell Palmella that Britain had decided to decline the request for troops because she 'could not be prevailed upon to mix in the struggles of a civil War'. Moreover, the despatch of British troops would be counterproductive because the British government could not send troops without summoning Parliament, and a debate in the House of Commons would clearly show the Portuguese the reluctance of the British public to support the King and his ministers against their internal enemies. Britain would, however, despatch to the Tagus a naval force whose

⁴⁵ Canning to Wellington, 2 August 1823, *ibid.*, p.112.

⁴⁶ Wellington to Canning, 3 August 1823, *ibid.*, pp.113-5.

⁴⁷ Canning to Wellington, 4 August 1823, *ibid.*, p.115.

⁴⁸ Canning to Thornton, no.3, secret, 5 August 1823 (enclosing Canning to Palmella, 6 August 1823), FO 179/23.

presence would have 'a powerful effect in preserving the Peace of that Capital' and would afford in the last extremity shelter and security to the King. Britain was also prepared to garrison the castles in the Tagus by her marines. But, she would do this only if she was certain that Portugal would never introduce a French force. Thornton should warn Palmella against requesting French assistance. 'Our difficulty, in case of a French advance, would be not to send troops, but to keep them at home.'⁵⁰

In the summer of 1823, however, there seemed to be little danger that Britain's refusal of the Portuguese request would result in French occupation of Portugal. Canning could, therefore, safely refuse the request. In fact, the French government soon disclaimed any intention to send a military force into Portugal in return for Canning's assurance that the British squadron was not destined for Cadiz. Chateaubriand did not fear that Britain would send it to Cadiz, but desired to obtain the assurance in order to prevent its presence in the Tagus from giving encouragement to the Spanish liberals in Cadiz.⁵¹

But, there still remained a danger that the revolutionary or absolutist party would overthrow the government of moderate liberals by a military revolt. Liverpool contemplated sending British officers to assist John to reorganise his army.⁵² Meanwhile, in Lisbon, John VI desired that Marshall Beresford, who now held the post of Lieutenant-General of the Ordnance, would return to Lisbon and assist him to reorganise his army. Beresford, for his part, was eager to comply with John's wish, and

⁴⁹ 8 August 1823, *Mrs. Arbuthnot*, vol.1, pp.250-1; Peel to Canning, private, 6 August 1823, Canning Papers, 73; Bathurst to Canning, 5 August 1823, Canning Papers, 106.

⁵⁰ Canning to Thornton, no.3, secret, 5 August 1823, private, 7 August 1823, FO 179/23.

⁵¹ Chateaubriand to Polignac, 11, 18 August 1823, *Chateaubriand*, vol.4, pp.363-4, 368-9; Canning to Stuart, no.65, 15 August 1823, FO 146/56.

⁵² Liverpool to Canning, most secret, 28 July 1823, Canning Papers, 70.

on 10 July requested Canning that he should appoint him as a mission to invest John VI with the Garter. The ostensible aim of his visit to Lisbon was to settle his private affairs in Portugal. In fact, there were several outstanding pecuniary disputes between the Portuguese government on one side and Beresford and British officers who had served under him in Portugal on the other. Beresford was also involved in a dispute with a Portuguese count over the ownership of a palace in Lisbon. There is no doubt, however, that Beresford hoped not only that the mission would help him to obtain from the Portuguese government a satisfactory settlement of his personal claims but also that it would smooth the way to his reinstatement as commander-in-chief of the Portuguese army.⁵³

However, Canning, Liverpool and Wellington agreed that the government should not assign any public mission in Portugal to a person who was involved in private disputes with the Portuguese government and one of the most prominent families in Portugal. They judged, moreover, that their argument against Beresford's appointment to the mission was equally applicable to his private visit to Lisbon. The state of affairs in Lisbon was so delicate that the Portuguese would never believe that the aim of his visit was purely personal. They would suspect him of being secretly charged with a public mission and of turning it to the advantage of his personal interests. This would arouse their ill-feeling towards the British government. The problem was that, while the British government could technically deny any responsibility for Beresford's conduct in a private capacity, in Portugal his name was associated with the British government so

⁵³ Beresford to Canning, 11 July, 6 August 1823, Canning Papers, 98b. For the claims of Beresford and the British officers and his dispute with the Count of Ega, see enclosures of Canning to Ward, no.15, 27 November 1822, FO 179/22, and Canning to Thornton, no.7, 15 August 1823, FO 179/23.

closely that the Portuguese saw little difference between the two.⁵⁴ Besides, Canning seems to have thought that, if Beresford proceeded to Lisbon before the King offered the post, he would inevitably get involved in the power struggle in Portugal and damage his authority and reputation. This might ruin his chance of reinstatement. If, on the other hand, Beresford declined John's request to proceed to Lisbon immediately, the King would sooner or later order his government to satisfy his personal claims and invite him formally to take the post of commander-in-chief.⁵⁵

Beresford, however, persisted in his determination to go to Lisbon.⁵⁶ The government had no power to stop his private visit. All that Canning could do was to make Palmella understand that Beresford's visit to Lisbon was purely private and the British government had no intention to demand of the Portuguese government the settlement of his private claims as the price of his service.⁵⁷ At the same time, however, he gave Thornton verbal instructions to give unofficial support to Beresford's restoration to the post of commander-in-chief.⁵⁸ The advantage of Beresford's assumption of the post was obvious. If Beresford successfully reorganised the Portuguese army, the King would be able to introduce a constitution without the fear of internal disturbances and would never find himself under the necessity of requesting

⁵⁴ Canning to Beresford, private and confidential, 6 August 1823, 9 August 1823, Canning Papers, 98b; Canning to George IV, private, 10 August 1823, Canning Papers, 100.

⁵⁵ Later in September 1824, Canning wrote to à Court: 'Had he remained here, I have no doubt that his services would have been asked by the K[ing]. of P[ortugal]. of the K[ing]. of E[ngland]. as a great favour.' Canning to à Court, private and confidential, 9 September 1824, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41547.

⁵⁶ Beresford to Canning, 7, 9, 11, 18 August 1823, Canning Papers, 98b.

⁵⁷ Guerreiro to Canning, private and confidential, 10 August 1823, FO 63/272; Canning to Thornton, no.7, 15 August 1823, no.17, 25 September 1823, FO 179/23; same to same, private, 25 September 1823, Canning Papers, 119.

⁵⁸ Thornton's private letter of 6 September clearly shows that Canning gave the new minister verbal instructions to support Beresford's reinstatement to his former post. Thornton to Canning, private and confidential, 6 September 1823, FO 63/270.

foreign, whether British or French, assistance against his internal enemies. This could be achieved without any overt interference on the part of the British government in the internal affairs of Portugal. Beresford's connection with the British government was still obvious to everyone, and Liverpool was averse to the idea of Beresford's reinstatement in the command of the Portuguese army. But, he promised not to oppose it 'if fairly and honourably proposed'.⁵⁹

Canning also gave Thornton instructions on the question of Brazil, which were considerably more pro-Portuguese, if not anti-Brazilian, than any of his previous despatches on the subject. Canning changed his tone for the following four reasons. First, by the summer of 1823, it became clear that the Brazilian government was not prepared to abolish the slave trade immediately. Chamberlain executed Canning's instructions of 15 February in his conference with Andrada e Silva on 15 April. The Brazilian minister told Chamberlain that, although he desired the termination of the trade, the majority of the Brazilians were not prepared to accept immediate abolition and the measure would endanger the very existence of the new regime in Brazil. The Brazilian council of state soon decided not to consent to an immediate renunciation of the trade in return for recognition.⁶⁰ Amherst's representations in the middle of May met a similar response from the Brazilian minister.⁶¹ Brant left London for Rio in early August, and Canning still hoped that he would return to London with full powers to sign an agreement to abolish the Brazilian slave trade.⁶² But, immediate recognition of Brazil was now out of the question. Second, the Brazilian government raised no doubts

⁵⁹ Liverpool to Canning, private, 3 November 1823, Canning Papers, 70.

⁶⁰ Chamberlain to Canning, no.55, secret, 26 April 1823, FO 63/259.

⁶¹ Amherst to Canning, secret, 17 May 1823, FO 84/24.

about the validity of the Anglo-Portuguese commercial treaty of 1810.⁶³ There was therefore commercially no necessity to hasten Britain's recognition of Brazilian independence. Third, the new government in Lisbon showed itself more discreet than its predecessor in its policy on the question of Brazil. In early July, Guerreiro communicated to Canning Palmella's despatch of 16 June to him on the subject. In the despatch, Palmella expressed his hope that, Dom Pedro having repeatedly declared his readiness to return Brazil to his father after the King recovered his authority in Portugal, reconciliation between Portugal and Brazil was possible now after the fall of the revolutionary regime in Portugal. He explained that to facilitate reconciliation the Portuguese government had decided to send two commissioners to Rio charged with a letter from the King to his son. Palmella concluded the despatch by expressing his hope that the British government would make use of its strong influence over the Rio de Janeiro government to restore Brazil under John's rule.⁶⁴ Palmella's hopes were still too optimistic. But, to send commissioners to Rio was obviously better than to send troops as the old revolutionary government had done. Fourth, Canning obviously desired to avoid recognising the independence of Brazil in total disregard of the wishes of the new government in Lisbon whose authority he wished to preserve. For these four reasons, Canning in late July 1823 decided to try whether he could mediate between Portugal and Brazil. He instructed Thornton to suggest to Palmella that the British government might assist Portugal in her effort to maintain her 'Connection' with Brazil if she agreed to acknowledge Brazil's political independence. Canning did not clearly

⁶² Canning to Chamberlain, no.10, 5 August 1823, FO 128/1.

⁶³ Chamberlain to Bathurst, no.5, 18 November 1822, FO 63/247.

⁶⁴ Guerreiro's memorandum, 5 July 1823, FO 63/272.

explain whether Brazil should maintain political independence under the sovereignty of Pedro I or that of John VI, for he did not want to throw cold water on Palmella's hope that the news of the counterrevolution in Portugal might facilitate the submission of the Brazilians to John VI's sovereignty.⁶⁵ But, Canning certainly did not share Palmella's hope. In his despatch of 5 August to Chamberlain, he instructed the consul-general to suggest to Andrada e Silva a project for reconciliation between Portugal and Brazil. According to the project, Portugal was to recognise the independence of Brazil and Pedro's imperial title. At the same time, John VI and Pedro I should agree, first, that on the death of John VI the two crowns should be united in Pedro I who should send his heir to Portugal as viceroy and, second, that on the death of Pedro I the two crowns should descend to the viceroy of Portugal who should continue to reside in Portugal and send his heir to Brazil as viceroy. Canning observed that, by this alternation in the succession and residence of the sovereigns, the two countries would remain independent each other and maintain a perfect equality between them, while preserving their union under the same sovereign.⁶⁶

In the middle of August, Canning also responded favourably to an approach from Austria who had a deep interest in Brazil's future because of Dom Pedro's marriage to a daughter of Emperor Francis I. Metternich's policy on the question was in fact almost identical to that of Canning. Fearful lest the Brazilians should respond to any further attempt to subjugate them under John VI's sovereignty by deposing Pedro, Metternich desired to recognise Brazil's independence under Pedro's sovereignty. In the spring of 1823, he communicated his views to the Russian government in the hope that the

⁶⁵ Canning to Thornton, no.2, 5 August 1823, FO 179/23.

continuance of the Braganza monarchy in the newly independent Brazil would induce Alexander I to approve his pro-Pedro Brazilian policy. The Tsar, however, insisted that the allies should not recognise Pedro's imperial title without the consent of John VI or they should at least defer doing so until the settlement of the question of Spanish America lest their recognition of Brazil should make any compromise between Spain and her colonies impossible. He proposed that after the termination of the war in Spain the allied powers should hold a conference in Madrid to discuss the questions of Spanish America and Brazil.⁶⁷ Alexander's insistence on the principle of legitimacy forced Metternich to disclaim any intention to recognise Brazilian independence without John VI's consent. On the other hand, however, Metternich ignored the Tsar's request that Austria should try to obtain Britain's consent to his proposal for an allied conference, and sought a separate understanding with the British government. In late July, he told Henry Wellesley his belief that the subjugation of Brazil by Portugal was now 'next to impossible' and 'a middle line' should be taken 'between subjection and complete separation' by keeping the two countries under rule of the House of Braganza. He expressed to the British ambassador his desire that 'Great Britain and Austria might come to some understanding as to the line which it would be proper to pursue'.⁶⁸ Canning in his despatch of 19 August to Wellesley expressed his agreement with Metternich's views on the matter and his readiness to act in concert with the Austrian government. He placed special emphasis on the importance of the preservation of monarchy in the New World, and suggested that Britain and Austria should assist its

⁶⁶ Canning to Chamberlain, no.11, secret, 5 August 1823, FO 128/1.

⁶⁷ Nesselrode to Tatishchev, 19 May 1823, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.102-5.

⁶⁸ Wellesley to Canning, no.8, 30 July 1823, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.12-3.

preservation in Brazil by recognising Pedro's imperial title.⁶⁹ In early September, Metternich in his reply expressed his entire approval of Britain's policy.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, in Lisbon, Palmella gradually receded from his initial pro-British and liberal stance and leaned increasingly towards the continental allies. To begin with, in July, the Portuguese government broke off diplomatic relations with the Spanish constitutional government, and soon opened diplomatic relations with the royalist provisional government in Madrid.⁷¹ In August, Palmella communicated to the Russians and the Austrians his determination not to establish a liberal constitution.⁷² The Portuguese government also offered France not only to send a naval force to Cadiz but also to capture Badajoz, which was situated near the border between Portugal and Spain, by its troops from the Spanish force and hand it over to the French force. Although France declined the offer of military assistance against Badajoz for fear of entangling herself with Britain, a Portuguese naval force actually took part in the blockade of Cadiz. Palmella could not afford to antagonise the continental allies whose assistance might be indispensable for the survival of John's throne, when he was by no means certain whether Britain would come to its rescue in the event of internal insurrection. Moreover, he expected that the French occupation of Badajoz would have a powerful effect in stabilising Portugal's internal situation.⁷³ Palmella's desire to obtain the assistance of the continental allies on the question of Brazil was another

⁶⁹ Canning to Wellesley, no.7, 19 August 1823, *ibid.*, pp.13-4.

⁷⁰ Wellesley to Canning, no.19, 4 September 1823, *ibid.*, p.15.

⁷¹ Palmella to Ward, 10 July 1823, enclosed in Ward to Canning, no.74, 15 July 1823, FO 63/268; Palmella to Ward, 8 August 1823, enclosed in Ward to Canning, no.84, 9 August 1823, *ibid.*

⁷² Pozzo di Borgo to Borel, 10 September 1823, *VPR*, vol.5, p.208; Wellesley to Canning, no.16, 27 August 1823, FO 7/179.

⁷³ Hyde de Neuville, *Mémoires*, vol.3, pp.92-4; Stuart to Canning, no.415, 28 August 1823, FO 27/293; same to same, no.493, 6 October 1823, FO 27/295.

reason why he accepted their demand on the question of Portugal's internal institutions. In fact, in July, Palmella expressed to Borel, the Russian consul-general in Lisbon, his desire to avail himself of allied assistance to retain Brazil under John's sovereignty. On receiving Borel's report of this conversation, Pozzo di Borgo instructed Borel to assure Palmella that, if John VI removed the only obstacle to the co-operation between him and the allied sovereigns, that is, his promise to grant a constitution to his subjects, they would certainly afford him every assistance in their power to maintain Brazil under his sovereignty.⁷⁴

Under the circumstances, it does not come as a surprise that Thornton on his arrival in Lisbon at the end of August found his task almost impossible. Soon after his arrival in Lisbon, Thornton had several conferences with Palmella. In these conferences, the Portuguese foreign minister complained that the defensive alliance with Britain did not guarantee John VI's throne against his internal enemies. Without Britain's guarantee of Portugal's internal institutions, he asserted, the King could neither promise that he would not request French assistance in the event of internal insurrection, nor introduce a constitution which should alienate the continental allies whose assistance might be indispensable against his internal enemies. On the night of 5 September, Palmella visited Thornton and told the British minister that the Portuguese government would act under Britain's guidance in almost all internal and external questions if she entered into 'an express Engagement with this Country to support by military aid the modified Order of things under a constitutional System of limited Monarchy, *in the case* of an attempt of internal Faction to subvert it, & with it the Monarchy altogether', in other

⁷⁴ Pozzo di Borgo to Borel, 12 August 1823, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.166-8.

words, 'a sort of *defensive* Guarantee against internal Enemies'.⁷⁵ From the middle of September to the middle of October, he repeatedly expressed to Thornton his desire to obtain Britain's guarantee of Portugal's internal institutions and warned that Britain's refusal would drive the Portuguese government into participating in the war in Spain and requesting French occupation of Portugal in the event of internal insurrection.⁷⁶

There was, moreover, one question on which the Portuguese government was not prepared to follow Britain's advice, even if she agreed to guarantee Portugal's internal institutions. The question was that of Brazil. On 23 September, sixteen days before his conference with Polignac on Spanish America, Canning had a conference on the question of Brazil with Count Villa Real, the new Portuguese minister in London, a memorandum of which was later drawn up by the Portuguese minister and recognised by Canning. In the conference, Villa Real attempted to obtain Britain's mediation between Portugal and Brazil on condition that the British government should at the same time make a declaration that it would not recognise Brazilian independence without John VI's consent. Canning answered that the British government would accept Portugal's request for its mediation when it was made, but would never make the proposed declaration. Villa Real tried to make Canning change his mind, arguing that the reestablishment of John VI's authority would prevent the dissolution of Brazil into several independent republics and threatening that, if Britain refused the declaration, Portugal would request the mediation of the continental allies. But, Canning told the Portuguese minister that he 'would not recognise in the allied powers the right to interfere in the affairs of colonies', and warned that, if Portugal requested the mediation

⁷⁵ Thornton to Canning, no.2, 6 September 1823, FO 63/270.

of the allied powers, the British government would no longer take her wishes into consideration in taking decisions on the question of Brazilian independence. Villa Real then suggested the joint mediation of Austria and Russia. But, Canning replied that he would never admit the utility or the necessity of the mediation of Russia who had no interest in Brazil. On the other hand, he admitted that the position of Austria was completely different from that of Russia, and said that the British government would not oppose Austria's single mediation. Canning also took exception to Villa Real's argument that the restoration of John VI's sovereignty would contribute to the maintenance of monarchical institutions in Brazil. When he received from Villa Real the memorandum of their conference, he requested the Portuguese minister to add to it his opinion that Portugal's insistence on the reduction of Brazil to the pre-October 1822 status would only push Brazil into the hands of 'the demagogic Party', and that she should instead propose to Brazil the union of the two countries under one sovereign and the alternation in residence of successive sovereigns.⁷⁷ In his despatch of 2 October, Canning instructed Thornton to communicate to Palmella his opinion that Portugal should recognise Dom Pedro's imperial title.⁷⁸

But, Palmella persisted in his demand that Britain should follow the example of her allies in declaring not to recognise Brazil without John's consent, and warned that her refusal to do so would induce Portugal to 'incline' rather towards the continental allies than towards Britain.⁷⁹ Beresford's arrival in Lisbon on 10 October provided Palmella

⁷⁶ Thornton to Canning, no.10, 14 September 1823, no.15, 27 September 1823, no.23, 20 October 1823, *ibid.*

⁷⁷ Villa Real's memorandum of his conference with Canning of 23 September 1823, with corrections of Canning of 25 September 1823, enclosed in Canning to Thornton, no.21, 2 October 1823, FO 179/23.

⁷⁸ Canning to Thornton, no.21, 2 October 1823, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.236-7.

⁷⁹ Thornton to Canning, no.18, 13 October 1823, *ibid.*, pp.237-9.

with a chance to put further forward his demand on the question of Brazil. In Portugal, there were two obstacles to Beresford's restoration to the post of commander-in-chief. First, the post was occupied by Dom Miguel, and the government could not remove him from it. The second was Beresford's deep antipathy towards Suberra, his enemy during the Peninsula War. Because of his past, Suberra was very unpopular in Portugal. But, he stood by the King during Miguel's coup and won his confidence. Palmella suggested that the King might dismiss Suberra from the ministry and appoint Beresford as war minister, but insisted that he could not recommend the King the dismissal of his favourite unless he obtained from Britain 'decided advantages'. These 'advantages' were, first, Britain's guarantee of Portugal's internal institutions and, second, an engagement that she would not recognise the independence of Brazil unless Portugal recognised it.⁸⁰

When Canning was informed of Palmella's two conditions of Beresford's entry into the Portuguese cabinet, he wrote to Liverpool: '. . . I confess he [Palmella] has rather disappointed me in his mode of dealing with both: & I think I see rather more of Portuguese cunning & suspiciousness in his conduct than I was prepared to expect. However his situation is *very* difficult, that is the truth of it.' Canning clearly knew that Palmella's fear of internal insurrection had driven him to play a double game between Britain and the continental allies. But, he was not prepared to accept Palmella's two conditions.⁸¹ Liverpool and Wellington also thought that the government should refuse

⁸⁰ Thornton to Canning, private and confidential, 6 September 1823, no.24, secret and confidential, 20 October 1823, FO 63/270; Beresford to Canning, private, 20 October 1823, Canning Papers, 98b.

⁸¹ Canning to Liverpool, private, 30 October 1823, Canning Papers, 70.

them.⁸² Canning in his despatch of 5 November told Thornton that the British government could not engage itself to guarantee Portugal's political institutions. Nevertheless, Canning could not ignore a danger that a flat refusal of Palmella's demands would severely discourage him and make him completely turn his back on Britain. He directed Thornton to try to avoid having a discussion with Palmella on the question of Britain's guarantee of Portugal's internal institutions. If he could not avoid it, he should imply that in case of emergency Britain might come to the King's rescue even without a specific engagement, although without clearly saying so. 'The best guarantee for the internal safety of Portugal', Canning wrote, 'will be that sense of security in the Government which will grow up from the gradual restoration of it's [*sic*] intimate connection with England, a connection which has in itself a force more operative than any written stipulations.'⁸³

From late October to early November, however, Canning had little reason to fear that Britain's refusal of Palmella's demands would drive Portugal into the hands of the continental allies. While Austria appeared unlikely to join with other allied powers to support Portugal's effort to maintain John VI's sovereignty over Brazil, the French ministers had repeatedly assured Canning of their determination to avoid entangling themselves with Britain over Portugal.⁸⁴ But, Canning soon received an alarming report from Lisbon. According to Thornton, on 27 October, Baron Hyde de Neuville, the French ambassador in Lisbon, personally delivered John VI letters from Dona Maria Teresa, John's daughter and the widow of a Spanish prince, which had been written at

⁸² Liverpool to Canning, private, 3 November 1823, *ibid.*; Wellington to Beresford, 3 November 1823, *Wellington*, vol.2, pp.164-6.

⁸³ Canning to Thornton, no.24, 5 November 1823, FO 179/23.

the instigation of Bulgari and Brunetti, the Russian chargés d'affaires and the Austrian minister in Spain. In the letters, the princess urged her father not to make any innovation on the ancient institutions of his kingdom, and accused Britain of having all times encouraged revolutionary doctrines in all countries and Palmella of being a proponent of revolutionary and democratic measures. More importantly, the French ambassador made a proposition to the King of entering into an alliance with France and the other continental allies, promising that, if he abandoned his pledge to grant a constitution, the continental allies would not only guarantee his throne against his internal enemies but also exert all the means in their power to bring Brazil into proper dependence on Portugal. Thornton judged that Canning's Portuguese diplomacy had led him to a dead end. He recommended Canning to agree to guarantee Portugal's internal institutions, and warned that Britain's refusal would 'inevitably sooner or later, by Stratagem or by Force, entangle them [the Portuguese] in a continental alliance'.⁸⁵

In London, Wellington dismissed Hyde de Neuville's offer of 'the Continental Guarantee' as 'miserable intrigues'. He did not believe that the French ambassador had been authorised by his government to make such an offer.⁸⁶ But, Canning was badly shaken by the news. He feared that Britain's refusal to guarantee John's throne and Hyde de Neuville's offer to do so would enable Suberra to prevail on Palmella and John VI to enter into an alliance with the continental powers. He suggested to Liverpool to offer Palmella a new engagement reassuring Britain's obligation to assist Portugal in case of foreign invasion and promising the continued presence of a British naval force

⁸⁴ Stuart to Canning, no.415, 28 August 1823, FO 27/293; same to same, no.493, 6 October 1823, FO 27/295.

⁸⁵ Thornton to Canning, no.31, secret and confidential, 31 October 1823, no.35, secret and confidential, 8 November 1823, FO 63/270.

in the Tagus. This would not satisfy the desire of John and Palmella to obtain Britain's guarantee against their internal enemies, but would at least allay their fear that the establishment of liberal institutions would invite an armed attack from Spain and the continental allies.⁸⁷

Canning recovered his nerve when he received the French government's disavowal of Hyde de Neuville's proposition to John VI. On 9 November, Canning instructed Stuart to demand of the French ministers an explanation of the conduct of their ambassador in Lisbon.⁸⁸ Suspecting that Canning was keeping close watch on French activities in Europe and America to find a pretext for the immediate recognition of the independence of the new states in Spanish America, Chateaubriand on 14 November asserted that he could not believe Thornton's report on Hyde de Neuville's conduct. However, he said that, if it proved to be true, he should not hesitate to recall Hyde de Neuville from Lisbon. Villèle, for his part, went so far as to admit his suspicion that the ambassador had violated his instructions. In reality, Chateaubriand knew from 'a long private letter of Hyde' that 'he almost said [to John VI] what the English accuse him that he said', and had clearly told the ambassador that the French government had no intention to guarantee Portugal's internal institutions.⁸⁹ He also turned down the ambassador's proposal that the French government should authorise him to order the

⁸⁶ Wellington to Beresford, 12 November 1823, *Wellington*, vol.2, p.177.

⁸⁷ Canning to à Court, private and confidential, 15 December 1823, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41544; Canning to Liverpool, private, 10 November 1823, Canning Papers, 70.

⁸⁸ Canning to Stuart, no.85, 9 November 1823, FO 146/56.

⁸⁹ Stuart to Canning, no.588, 15 November 1823, no.591, 17 November 1823, FO 27/296; Chateaubriand to Polignac, 17 November 1823, *Chateaubriand*, vol.5, pp.72-4; Hyde de Neuville, *Mémoires*, vol.3, p.111.

French troops in Badajoz to enter Portugal at the request of John VI.⁹⁰ In fact, Hyde de Neuville's attempt to replace Britain's predominance in Lisbon with that of France by preventing the establishment of liberal institutions in Portugal and supporting John VI's claim on his sovereignty over Brazil was out of step with the policy of his government. After the termination of the war in Spain, the French government withdrew its objection to John's promise to grant another constitution.⁹¹ As to the question of Brazil, its policy was essentially the same as that on the question of Spanish America. The French ministers desired to submit the question of Brazilian independence to the allied conference which they were endeavouring to open in Paris to discuss the question of Spanish America, and bring about European recognition of Brazil's independence. They naturally attached great importance to the preservation of monarchical institutions in Brazil. They expected that it would weaken the objection of Portugal and the eastern allies to the recognition of Brazilian independence, which would in its turn facilitate the allied recognition of the new states in Spanish America, and desired to restrain Portugal from making futile attempts at the recovery of John VI's sovereignty over Brazil.⁹² The French ministers' disavowal of Hyde de Neuville's conduct dispelled Canning's fear that the French force in Spain might enter Portugal. Spain and the eastern allies would still be 'willing to employ, or rather to allow their Agents to employ (without authority perhaps but without disavowal) those means of preventing the changes which they

⁹⁰ Chateaubriand to Hyde de Neuville, 16 December 1823, Marie-Jeanne Durry (ed.), *Chateaubriand et Hyde de Neuville ou trente ans d'amitié, correspondance inédite* (Paris, 1929), pp.35-6.

⁹¹ Hyde de Neuville, *Mémoires*, vol.3, pp.126-7.

⁹² Villèle to Polignac, 1 November 1823, *Villèle*, vol.4, p.489; Stuart to Canning, no.564, 3 November 1823, no.573, 6 November 1823, no.588, 15 November 1823, no.591, 17 November 1823, FO 27/296; Canning to Stuart, no.85, 9 November 1823, FO 146/56; Hyde de Neuville, *Mémoires*, vol.3, pp.129-30; Chateaubriand to Polignac, 8 January 1824, *Chateaubriand*, vol.5, pp.123-4; Robertson, *France and Latin-American Independence*, pp.411-8.

deprecate'. 'But I confess I have no fear, now, of their ever attempting to realize those intimations.'⁹³ Thus, the French ministers' disavowal of Hyde de Neuville's conduct enabled Canning to assure the Portuguese ministers that they could now carry out John's promise to grant a constitution without the fear of foreign attack.⁹⁴

But, the fact remained that Britain could not offer anything positive to allay their fear of internal insurrection. From late 1823 to early 1824, ignoring Chateaubriand's disavowal of his conduct, Hyde de Neuville continued to assure John VI that France and the eastern allies were prepared to give him every assistance in their power against his internal enemies. It appeared to John that the continental allies were more likely to protect him from internal insurrection than Britain was. Without Britain's guarantee of his throne, the King did not dare to grant a constitution or dismiss Subserra whose continuance in office the French ambassador strongly supported. Under the circumstances, in early 1824, Subserra consolidated his ascendancy within the government. Thornton tried to counteract his influence by threatening that, if the King refused Subserra's dismissal and Beresford's entry into the ministry, he should order the departure of the British squadron from the Tagus, but to no avail. In March 1824, the King finally decided to refuse Beresford's demand for Subserra's dismissal. Meanwhile, the Portuguese council of state agreed that the King should break his pledge of a constitution and instead issue a decree announcing his intention to assemble the ancient Cortes.⁹⁵ Canning came to regard the situation in Lisbon as 'almost

⁹³ Canning to Beresford, private, 15 December 1823, Canning Papers, 98b.

⁹⁴ Canning to Pavao, extract, private and confidential, 14 December 1823, enclosed in Canning to à Court, private and confidential, 15 December 1823, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41544.

⁹⁵ Thornton to Canning, no.2, 5 January 1824, no.4, 12 January 1824, no.6, confidential, 13 January 1824, no.7, 19 January 1824, separate, secret and confidential, 14 February 1824, no.16, 21 February

hopeless'.⁹⁶ Beresford's defeat in his contest with Subserra was a severe setback for Britain's prestige, 'for say what we might, the French Gov[ernmen]t—the Austrian—the Russian—in short all equally believed that the English Gov[ernmen]t was fighting Lord B[eresford]'s battle; & that the whole aim of our policy was to force him into the Ministry'.⁹⁷

British influence in Portugal, however, did not become completely extinct, largely thanks to the fact that she held a key to the future of Brazil. Towards the end of 1823, the development of events in Brazil verified Canning's judgement that the Brazilians would never submit to John VI's sovereignty again. In Brazil, Andrada e Silva resigned from office in July 1823. The direct cause of his resignation was not the opposition of the republicans to his effort to uphold the emperor's authority, but the emperor's disavowal of his excessively repressive measures against his internal enemies including liberals and the Portuguese. Nevertheless, his resignation turned the political situation in Brazil to the advantage of the republicans who in fact redoubled their attack on the emperor's authority after his resignation.⁹⁸ It was in the midst of this political confusion in Brazil that in September Portuguese commissioners arrived in Rio. According to Chamberlain, Pedro's popularity had 'never received so severe a Shock' as it had done by the arrival of the Portuguese commissioners with a personal message from John VI to his son and without powers to treat with the Brazilian government for the acknowledgement of its independence. Their arrival fuelled a suspicion that some

1824, separate, confidential, 28 February 1824, no.24, 22 March 1824, no.26, 27 March 1824, FO 63/285.

⁹⁶ Canning to Thornton, no.13, 17 April 1824, FO 179/26.

⁹⁷ Canning to Wellington, 19 April 1824, Canning Papers, 104.

⁹⁸ Chamberlain to Canning, no.86, 19 July 1823, FO 63/259; same to same, no.100, 5 August 1823, FO 63/260.

secret understanding continued to exist between the father and the son. Under the circumstances, Pedro had no alternative but to refuse any communication with them. He returned the commissioners John VI's letter to him unopened, confiscated their ship, and sent them back to Lisbon ignominiously in a packet boat.⁹⁹

Chamberlain's despatch of 20 September which reported the arrival of the commissioners and the Brazilian government's decision to refuse their landing reached Canning in the middle of November. Then, in early December, he was informed by Villa Real that the Portuguese commissioners had been instructed to demand of the Brazilians their subordination to John VI previous to the start of any negotiation for the settlement of their differences.¹⁰⁰ Canning finally decided that the time had come for him to take the question into his own hands to work out reconciliation between the two parties. It was in fact evident that without Britain's intervention their dispute would result in their complete separation. In this case, the British government would have no alternative but to recognise the independence of Brazil in total disregard of the wishes of Portugal and consequently lose all its influence in Lisbon.

Canning took the first step in this direction in his despatch of 8 December to Chamberlain, in which he instructed the consul-general to communicate to the Brazilian government the British government's readiness to act as an intermediary or a mediator between Portugal and Brazil if the Brazilian government was disposed to come to 'any understanding' with Portugal.¹⁰¹ Then, on 20 December, an important despatch reached

⁹⁹ Chamberlain to Canning, no.115, 20 September 1823, no.118, 27 September 1823, *ibid.*; same to same, no.123, confidential, 13 October 1823, FO 63/261.

¹⁰⁰ 'Bases sur lesquelles les Commissaires Portugais ont été autorisés de traiter avec le Gouvernement du Brésil pour un rapprochement entre les deux Pays, s'ils le trouvaient disposé d'entrer en Négociation avec eux', enclosed in Canning to Chamberlain, no.17, 8 December 1823, FO 128/1.

¹⁰¹ Canning to Chamberlain, no.17, 8 December 1823, *BILA*, vol.1, pp.227-30.

him from Rio. According to Chamberlain, José Joaquim Carneiro de Campos, Andrada e Silva's successor, told him on 20 October that there were 'insuperable Objections' to the project for reconciliation between Portugal and Brazil contained in Canning's despatch of 5 August, 'inasmuch as the Brazilians would never consent to be ruled by a Sovereign residing in Portugal'. However, he made his own suggestion that the Portuguese and Brazilian branches of the House of Braganza should be distinctly separated and a member of one of the two branches should cross the Atlantic only if the other line died out, and promised that an agent whom he was about to send to London would be authorised to enter into a negotiation with the Portuguese government on this condition.¹⁰² Immediately on the receipt of this despatch, Canning sent instructions to Chamberlain to assure Carneiro de Campos that he would omit no endeavour to bring the Portuguese government to treat with the agent whom the Brazilian minister had promised to send to London.¹⁰³

Meanwhile, Canning in his despatches of 17 and 23 December instructed Thornton to urge the Portuguese government to 'open their eyes to the real state of the question now pending at Rio de Janeiro' and recommend that, in the event of the arrival of the Brazilian agent in London, the Portuguese government should request Britain's mediation and enter into a negotiation with him.¹⁰⁴ Palmella hardly required Canning's advice to grasp the significance of the depressing news from Rio de Janeiro. Even before Canning's despatches reached Lisbon, Palmella had shown every sign that he would sooner or later back down. On 17 December, Hyde de Neuville sent a

¹⁰² Chamberlain to Canning, no.134, secret, 21 October 1823, FO 63/261.

¹⁰³ Canning to Chamberlain, no.22, 22 December 1823, *BILA*, vol.1, pp.230-2.

¹⁰⁴ Canning to Thornton, no.28, 17 December 1823, FO 179/23; same to same, no.29, 23 December 1823, *BILA*, vol.2, pp.242-3.

memorandum to Palmella inviting the Portuguese government to send a plenipotentiary to the Paris conference on the affairs of South America. Palmella immediately declined the invitation on the pretext that he had requested Austria's single-handed mediation and had not received her answer to the request. The true reason for his refusal of the French invitation was his conviction that Britain was the only power that could decide the question. According to Hyde de Neuville, Palmella told a member of the diplomatic corps in Lisbon: 'Only the English can get us out of this!'¹⁰⁵ In fact, Palmella told Thornton that, although he could not request Britain's mediation until he received Austria's answer, he would do so when he received it whether it was positive or negative.¹⁰⁶ Then, in early February 1824, the Portuguese government tacitly withdrew its demand that Brazil should submit to John's authority prior to any negotiation.¹⁰⁷ In late February, Metternich declined Portugal's request for Austria's mediation, on the ground that nothing short of the acknowledgement by Portugal of Brazil's independence and Pedro's imperial title would be practicable as the basis of any negotiation.¹⁰⁸

The promised agent from Rio de Janeiro, General Brant, finally arrived in London in the middle of April with instructions to unite with Manuel Rodrigues Gameiro Pessôa as the Brazilian commissioners to negotiate with Canning and a Portuguese plenipotentiary for the recognition of Brazil's independence by Britain and Portugal. The Brazilian commissioners were not instructed to solicit the mediation of the British

¹⁰⁵ Thornton to Canning, no.57, 20 December 1823, *ibid.*, pp.241-2; Hyde de Neuville, *Mémoires*, vol.3, pp.115-6.

¹⁰⁶ Thornton to Canning, no.56, 20 December 1823, FO 63/270.

¹⁰⁷ Note Verbale présentée par le Comte de Villa Real à son Excellence Mr. Canning, 6 February 1824, *Wellington*, vol.2, pp.194-7.

government, but were authorised to ask and listen to its advice as well as that of the Austrian representatives in London. Their first task was to send a letter to Palmella proposing a negotiation for the arrangement of the differences between Portugal and Brazil. In late April their letter was sent to Lisbon through Neumann after he and Canning had persuaded them into revising the parts which appeared to be highly offensive to Portugal.¹⁰⁹

But, when the letter arrived in Lisbon, the Portuguese government was not in a state to answer it. On 30 April, Dom Miguel rose in revolt again and threw Lisbon into total confusion for the next ten days. On that day, Miguel placed Lisbon under his military control, made a number of arrests, and confined the King to a palace, on the pretext of forestalling a plot to assassinate himself, the queen and John. All the European representatives in Lisbon hastened to the palace and forced their way into John VI's apartment. Encouraged by their presence, the King summoned Miguel to the palace. Miguel declared to the diplomatic corps that he would obey his father's orders, and accepted their demand for the restoration of the King's personal liberty. But, Miguel soon recovered his nerve and continued to make arbitrary arrests. On 2 May, Thornton, finding the King too anxious about his personal safety to command Miguel to obey him, urged him that he should immediately go on board the British flagship, the *Windsor Castle*. But, the King could not overcome his fear that, once he left Lisbon, the queen should pronounce him to be out of his kingdom and declare herself regent. Meanwhile, Hyde de Neuville boasted that the whole or any part of the French army in Spain would

¹⁰⁸ Thornton to Canning, no.25, 23 March 1824, FO 63/285; Wellesley to Canning, no.31, secret and confidential, 19 March 1824, FO 7/182.

¹⁰⁹ Canning to Thornton, no.14, 17 April 1824, FO 179/26; Canning to Wellesley, no.11, 24 April 1824, FO 120/63.

be at the disposal of John VI if he demanded its assistance. He sent one of his secretaries to Cadiz to accelerate the arrival of a French squadron in the hope that he might be able to induce the King to take refuge on board a French ship. He meaningfully said to the diplomatic corps that the courier would go to Cadiz via Badajoz, implying that he was a bearer of an order to the French commander in Badajoz to march his troops into Portugal. But, both Thornton and Beresford did not believe that he had actually sent such an order. On 3 May, John VI issued a decree admitting the existence of a conspiracy against the royal family and virtually sanctioning Miguel's arbitrary persecution of those whom he alleged to have participated in it. Seeing John VI's growing weakness, Hyde de Neuville gave up his idea to have John VI go on board a French ship and joined with Thornton in his effort to prevail on the King to take refuge immediately on board the *Windsor Castle*. But, their effort was fruitless, not least because of Beresford's advice to the King to the contrary. Beresford's aim was to obtain the post of minister of war and act as a guardian for the young prince who should retain the post of commander-in-chief. In fact, soon after the start of Miguel's revolt, he declined the King's request that he should assume the post of commander-in-chief, and tried to prevent John VI's embarkation which would certainly result in Miguel's dismissal. But, on 8 May Thornton and Hyde de Neuville finally persuaded John VI to go on board the *Windsor Castle* the following day. On 9 May, true to his word, John VI went on board the *Windsor Castle* and immediately issued an order to dismiss Miguel from the command of the army and ordered him on board. Miguel obeyed the order and agreed that he should travel abroad. It was agreed that he should sail in a Portuguese

frigate escorted by a British frigate and a French corvette to Brest and whence proceed to Paris.¹¹⁰ At the end of Miguel's revolt, it seemed certain that the King would change his government. During the crisis, Subserra had initially taken refuge in the French ambassador's house, but on 4 May asked for asylum on board a British ship. Thornton allowed Subserra to go on board the *Lively*, where the British minister told him that his continuance in the ministry should not be of service to John VI because of his unpopularity among the Portuguese, and Subserra admitted the truth of his opinion.¹¹¹ The King, for his part, appeared to have decided to change his ministry, dismissing both Palmella and Subserra or at least the latter.¹¹²

Canning first learnt the outbreak of the revolt in Lisbon on 16 May when he received Thornton's despatch of 1 May. Three days later, Thornton's despatches of 5 May reached London. Thornton in one of his despatches advised Canning the despatch of 'a Corps of Five or Six Thousand Troops' as the only way to maintain Britain's influence in Portugal and save her from a continental alliance. Canning cannot have attached importance to the advice, for Thornton omitted to inform Canning that John VI and Palmella had actually expressed their desire to obtain Britain's military assistance.¹¹³ But, the question of Britain's military assistance to Portugal certainly became a matter of great importance when Villa Real told Canning that in early May Hyde de Neuville had actually ordered the French commander in Badajoz to march his troops into

¹¹⁰ Thornton to Canning, no.38, 1 May 1824, no.39, 5 May 1824, separate, 5 May 1824, no.42, 14 May 1824, separate no.1, secret and confidential, 15 May 1824, no.57, 11 June 1824, FO 63/286; same to same, private, 13 June 1824, Thornton Papers, FO 933/90; Beresford to Thornton, 2 May 1824, Canning Papers, 119; Thornton to Beresford, 2 May 1824, Thornton Papers, FO 933/91; Hyde de Neuville, *Mémoires*, vol.3, pp.150-89.

¹¹¹ Thornton to Canning, private and secret, 5 May 1824, Thornton Papers, FO 933/89; same to same, no.49, 24 May 1824, FO 63/286.

¹¹² Thornton to Canning, no.44, 15 May 1824, *ibid.*

Portugal.¹¹⁴ Like six months before, Canning immediately sought an assurance from the French government, and obtained the most positive assurances not only that it had no intention to send troops to Portugal but also that the French commanders in Spain were 'too well apprized of the sentiments of their Government to be in danger of being led astray by the summons of M. Hyde de Neuville'. On 27 May, Canning instructed Thornton to refrain from taking any action which might encourage the Portuguese government to request the British government military assistance, and to communicate to Palmella and the diplomatic corps in Lisbon the French government's assurance. Besides, Canning directed Thornton to communicate to Palmella and Beresford the opinion, if not the request, of the British government that John VI should again offer Beresford the post of commander-in-chief and the latter should accept the offer. Canning still considered that Beresford's assumption of the command of the army would be the best means to restore stability in Portugal without foreign assistance.¹¹⁵

Meanwhile, however, the situation in Lisbon did not develop as Canning desired. Soon after the end of Miguel's revolt, it became clear that Beresford had fallen into disfavour with John VI as the result of his persistent effort during the crisis to force the King to keep Dom Miguel in the post of commander-in-chief. Moreover, many in Lisbon suspected him of having been involved in the plot of the queen and Dom Miguel.¹¹⁶ Worse still, it soon became obvious that the King was not prepared to part with Suberra whose continuance in the ministry the French ambassador supported,

¹¹³ Thornton to Canning, no.41, 5 May 1824, no.58, 12 June 1824, *ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Extract from Palmella's despatch to Villa Real of 13 June 1824, enclosed in Canning to Thornton, no.24, 12 July 1824, FO 179/26.

¹¹⁵ Canning to Thornton, no.18, 27 May 1824, *ibid.*; Canning to Granville, 11 June 1824, Canning Papers, 111.

unless Britain agreed to give him military assistance. It appeared to Thornton that he could maintain what little influence he had over the King only by realising his wish for Britain's military assistance. Instead of discouraging John VI's hope, Thornton earnestly recommended Canning to comply with his wish.¹¹⁷ When on 9 June he received Canning's despatch of 27 May, he committed a blunder. Reluctant to tell John VI and Palmella that the British government would not comply with their wish, Thornton told them that the British government seemed to have chosen not to explain its policy on such an important question except to the Portuguese minister in London.¹¹⁸ It was only natural that this statement drove Palmella to make a request for military assistance to the British government through his minister in London. Palmella in his despatch of 13 June instructed Villa Real to request the British government to send four to six thousand British or Hanoverian troops to Lisbon and keep them there for five or six months to enable John VI and his ministers to restore political stability by the convocation of the ancient Cortes, which the King had in early June proclaimed, and the reorganisation of the army. Palmella directed Villa Real that he should 'above all point out how it would be against reason as well as against natural right for any government to insist on preventing its ally from seeking in case of danger assistance which she would be able to obtain easily while it itself refuses the assistance which she earnestly demands of it'. Following the instructions, Villa Real at the end of June delivered to Canning a note, dated 29 June, officially requesting the assistance of

¹¹⁶ Thornton to Canning, no.57, 11 June 1824, FO 63/286; same to same, private, 24 July 1824, FO 63/287.

¹¹⁷ Thornton to Canning, no.45, secret, 15 May 1824, nos.49 and 51, 24 May 1824, FO 63/286.

¹¹⁸ Thornton to Canning, no.58, 12 June 1824, *ibid*.

British or Hanoverian troops.¹¹⁹ The following day, the Portuguese minister communicated to Canning Palmella's further request that the British government should send her troops in secrecy and that it should particularly avoid any discussion in Parliament of the affairs of Portugal.¹²⁰

When Canning received the Portuguese demand for British or Hanoverian troops, he was alarmed by Palmella's threat that the Portuguese government would easily be able to obtain French assistance. As he admitted in private, Canning found it difficult to refute Palmella's argument that the British government had no right to prevent Portugal from accepting French assistance while refusing Portugal's request for its assistance. Long before he received the Portuguese request, on 11 June, he wrote to Granville, then the British ambassador in the Netherlands:

The question [of a Portuguese request for Britain's military assistance] would be a very nice one. The sending troops would be full of objection. But on the other hand to refuse them, if formally asked—& at the same time to prohibit (as at all Events we must) the use of any other foreign auxiliary force might seem harsh and unreasonable.¹²¹

He had no doubt that, if Britain refused the request, Hyde de Neuville and Subserra, if not Palmella, would try to take advantage of Britain's refusal to realise the entry of French troops into Portugal. In fact, Canning wrongly believed that Hyde de Neuville and Subserra had prevailed on Palmella to make the request in the hope that Britain's refusal of the request would enable them to induce John VI to make a similar request to

¹¹⁹ Villa Real's note to Canning, 29 June 1824 (enclosing extract from Palmella's despatch to Villa Real of 13 June 1824), enclosed in Canning to Thornton, no.24, 12 July 1824, FO 179/26; Decree of the King of Portugal, for Assembling the Ancient Constitutional Cortes, 4 June 1824, *BFSP*, vol.11, pp.855-9.

¹²⁰ Canning to Thornton, no.24, 12 July 1824, FO 179/26.

¹²¹ Canning to Granville, 11 June 1824, Canning Papers, 111.

the French government. True, one month had barely passed since he had obtained the French government's assurance not to send troops to Portugal. But, what if the French ministers judged the British government not so 'harsh' or 'unreasonable' as to oppose the entrance of French troops into Portugal at the request of John VI after its own refusal of his request for its military assistance? It seemed to Canning that it was too risky to refuse the Portuguese request. On the other hand, however, the despatch of British troops to Portugal would be equally problematical. First, as we have seen, the British ministers had little doubt that their decision to send a military force to Portugal would be unfavourably received, if not rejected, by Parliament when it would be sent not to protect Portugal from external aggression but to protect the Portuguese government from its internal enemies. Second, there was no doubt that the British occupation of Lisbon would produce considerable tension between Britain and France who maintained a substantial force in Spain. Britain might be able to lessen the danger of an Anglo-French confrontation across the Portuguese-Spanish border by obtaining the consent of France or the Alliance to her occupation of Lisbon before sending troops. But, in this case, she would get associated with the 'Schemes' of the continental allies and would become 'converts to the principles of the Holy Alliance'.¹²²

It seems that Canning, Liverpool and Wellington immediately agreed to recommend George IV to send Hanoverian troops to Lisbon. As early as 30 June, Wellington gave the King his advice on the composition of Hanoverian forces to be sent to Lisbon.¹²³

Liverpool preferred to refuse the Portuguese request altogether rather than send

¹²² Canning to Thornton, private, 10 July 1824, FO 179/26.

¹²³ Wellington to George IV, 1 July 1824, *Wellington*, vol.2, p.281.

Hanoverians, and showed 'hesitation' in agreeing to give any assistance to Portugal.¹²⁴ Wellington, on the other hand, seems to have preferred to send British troops rather than send Hanoverians. But, the premier's reluctance to risk the government's popularity and the Duke's strong sense of obligation to Britain's oldest ally found a handy compromise in the despatch of Hanoverian troops. Canning, for his part, 'acceded willingly' to the compromise.¹²⁵ Palmella's request that the British government should avoid a discussion in Parliament provided Canning with a good excuse to decline the request for British troops. The despatch of Hanoverian troops had obvious advantages over that of British troops. Hanover being a foreign country, the British government was under no obligation to answer for the decision of the Hanoverian government and Hanoverian troops could be sent without the approval of Parliament, although their occupation of Lisbon would still be regarded both at home and on the continent as an indirect intervention by Britain in Portugal's internal affairs. The cabinet approved the decision on 2 July.¹²⁶

The decision immediately leaked out. Villèle was appalled by the news. Fearful lest the arrival of Hanoverian troops in Lisbon should increase Anglo-French tension over the Peninsula, Villèle on 3 July instructed Polignac to prevent it.¹²⁷ On the morning of 6 July, Polignac assured Canning that the French government had not authorised Hyde de Neuville to make any offer of military assistance to Portugal and had no intention to comply with a request for military assistance from Portugal. He undertook to produce

¹²⁴ Tatishchev to Nesselrode, 14 July 1824, *VPR*, vol.5, p.539. Tatishchev seems to have obtained the information from Count Munster, George IV's Hanoverian advisor in London.

¹²⁵ 7, 13 July 1824, *Mrs. Arbuthnot*, vol.1, pp.325-6.

¹²⁶ Minute of the Cabinet, 2 July 1824, ½ past 4 p.m., A. Aspinall (ed.), *The Letters of King George IV 1812-1830* (3 vols., Cambridge, 1938), vol.3, pp.80-1.

¹²⁷ Villèle to Polignac, 3 July 1824, *Villèle*, vol.5, p.79.

from his government a confirmation of his statements and requested Canning to delay giving an official answer to the Portuguese request until he could receive it from Paris. Canning willingly consented to Polignac's request.¹²⁸ Meanwhile, George IV's intention to send his Hanoverian troops to Portugal met a favourable response from Metternich, who could have quashed the measure using his control of the German Confederation without whose approval Hanover could not send her troops out of Germany. Metternich was amused to see the British ministers compelled to violate their principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. More importantly, Metternich expected that the establishment of British predominance over the Portuguese government by the Hanoverian occupation of Lisbon would lead to a satisfactory settlement of the question of Brazil.¹²⁹ But, when on 12 July Canning received from Polignac a memorandum promising that the French government would not comply with Portugal's request for French military assistance, he decided that the Hanoverian occupation of Lisbon was no longer necessary. The memorandum went so far as to admit that Hyde de Neuville had ordered the Badajoz garrison to march on Lisbon and assure that the French government had disapproved his action.¹³⁰ Canning immediately sent Thornton instructions to inform Palmella of the assurances of the French government and urge him to retract his request for British or Hanoverian troops.¹³¹ Wellington still desired that the King should send the Hanoverians to Lisbon, but the cabinet recommended the King to cancel the despatch of Hanoverian troops to

¹²⁸ Canning to Stuart, no.45, 6 July 1824, FO 146/63; Polignac to Villèle, 6 July 1824, *Villèle*, vol.5, p.80.

¹²⁹ Tatishchev to Nesselrode, 14 July 1824, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.538-40; Metternich to Lebzeltern, 14 July 1824, *Lebzeltern*, p.384.

¹³⁰ Polignac's 'Memorandum pour S. E. Monsieur Canning', 12 July 1824, enclosed in Canning to Thornton, private or separate, 16 August 1824, FO 179/26.

Lisbon.¹³² In Lisbon, in late July Thornton communicated to Palmella the French government's assurances. Realising that Canning had spotted his threat of the entrance of French troops into Portugal as a bluff, Palmella withdrew his request.¹³³

The question which Canning faced in Portugal after September 1822—and especially after the summer of 1823—was how to maintain Britain's influence in Lisbon without breaking the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. We have seen in Introduction that in October 1818 he declared in a cabinet meeting his objection to the system of periodical great-power congresses. One of the reasons of his objection was that 'all other States must protest against such an attempt to place them under subjection'.¹³⁴ His experiences with Portugal after September 1822 soon taught Canning that he had been wrong. Far from resenting great-power interference in their domestic affairs, John's VI and Palmella tried to make the most of Portugal's special relations with Britain to obtain from her military assistance against their internal enemies, while Subsera desired to consolidate his position by introducing French troops into Portugal. Later in August 1825, Canning wrote to William à Court, whom he had transferred in the summer of 1824 from Madrid to Lisbon as his new ambassador to Portugal:

The truth is that the successive military occupations of Piedmont, Naples and Spain, have gradually and insensibly wrought a great change in the view of international rights and duties; and have led the greater Powers (for one reason) and the smaller (for another) to look upon the introduction of a foreign force into a Country as one of the ordinary resources of a weak Government and one of the natural good offices of

¹³¹ Canning to Thornton, nos.24 and 25, 12 July 1824, *ibid.*

¹³² 16 July 1824, *Mrs. Arbuthnot*, vol.1, pp.327-8; Madame Lieven to Metternich, 22 July 1824, *Princess Lieven*, p.264; Cabinet Minute, 15 July 1824, George IV, *Letters*, vol.3, pp.81-4.

¹³³ Thornton to Canning, no.77, 27 July 1824, FO 63/287.

¹³⁴ Bathurst to Castlereagh, 20 October 1818, Castlereagh, *Correspondence*, vol.12, p.56.

a powerful Neighbour, in cases of internal danger, or alarm.¹³⁵

The difficulty of this question was not perfectly understood by the other two British statesmen who played prominent parts in deciding the government's Portuguese policy in the period. While Canning struggled to maintain Britain's influence in Portugal without overt interference in the factional strife in Portugal, Liverpool accepted Britain's special relations with Portugal only with great reluctance and obviously wished that Britain had been able to get rid of them. In early August 1823, arguing against complying with Portugal's appeal for Britain's military assistance, he even wrote to Canning that he 'would rather incur the risk of' French occupation of Portugal 'than all the inconveniences of sending British troops to Portugal'.¹³⁶ Wellington, on the contrary, did not share Canning's fear that Britain's military intervention in Portugal would be unfavourably received by Parliament and would give the continental powers good excuse for continuing their interference in the internal affairs of Spain and Portugal. While Canning objected to Wellington's disregard for Parliament and public opinion, he was not as indifferent as Liverpool to Britain's prestige in Europe. Later in January 1825, he wrote to Granville that 'Portugal has been, and always *must* be English, so long as Europe and the world remain in anything like their present state'.¹³⁷ Canning obviously thought that it was desirable to make the continental powers feel the power and influence of Britain on the continent and show them that Britain had not lost her interest in the European balance of power.

The way Canning tried to solve this difficult problem was highly pragmatic. In fact,

¹³⁵ Canning to à Court, no.42, 23 August 1825, FO 179/29.

¹³⁶ Liverpool to Canning, 1 August 1823, *Wellington*, vol.2, p.113.

¹³⁷ Canning to Granville, 21 January 1825, *GCHT*, p.509.

he had to be pragmatic. He knew that, if the government allowed absolutism to triumph in Lisbon or France to occupy the country, the same British public that disliked Britain's interference in Portugal's domestic affairs would be outraged. There was also a difficult question of how to draw a line between what was interference and what was not. The British government had a treaty right to keep a squadron in the Tagus. However, as Wellington pointed out and Canning himself later admitted, the presence of a British squadron in the Tagus was 'in itself an interference' in Portugal's internal situation.¹³⁸ Indeed, theoretically it was difficult for Canning to explain how he could justify the presence of a British squadron in the Tagus while rejecting the military occupation of Lisbon for the reason that it would violate the principle of non-interference. However, Canning had a simple, practical answer to the question. While there was no danger that the maintenance of a British squadron in the Tagus would be attacked by the opposition in Parliament, there was a great danger that the despatch of British troops to Lisbon would be disapproved by a large number of MPs. After all, the principle of non-interference was not a religious dogma but a product of the practical workings of Britain's political institutions. The fact that Canning argued for the military occupation of Lisbon by Hanoverian troops, which was British occupation in all but by name, clearly shows his pragmatic or even cynical attitude towards the non-interference principle. It is sometimes said that Canning broke the principle of non-interference only after the summer of 1824, when he directed à Court to get John VI to dismiss Subsera.¹³⁹ This view, however, is not perfectly true. As early as January 1824, Thornton threatened John VI that, if the King refused Subsera's

¹³⁸ Canning to à Court, private no.4, 27 October 1824, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41547.

¹³⁹ Temperley, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, pp.205-8; Manchester, 'The Recognition of Brazilian

dismissal and Beresford's entry into the ministry, he should order the departure of the British squadron from the Tagus. Canning had not instructed Thornton to do so, but nor did he disapprove his action. It would be nearer to the truth to say that throughout the period between the summer of 1823 and early 1825, when a Court finally persuaded John into getting rid of Suberra, Canning had tried to muddle through the grey area between intervention and non-intervention. It should also be noted that Canning attached much greater importance to the establishment of liberal institutions in Portugal than the existing studies suggest. It is true that the principal aim of Canning's Portuguese diplomacy was not the introduction of liberal institutions in Portugal but the maintenance of Britain's influence. However, he recognised that a country's foreign policy was now largely decided by her political institutions. He was clearly aware that Portugal with a moderately liberal constitution was more likely to seek Britain's friendship than Portugal with a radical constitution or with no constitution at all.

The existing studies of Canning's Portuguese diplomacy are also unsatisfactory in ignoring completely the connection between his diplomacy on the question of European Portugal and that on the question of Brazilian independence. These two questions were in fact closely connected. John VI yielded to the eastern allies' demand that he should break his pledge to introduce a constitution partly because of his desire to obtain their assistance on the question of Brazil. John and Palmella also tried to obtain Britain's pledge not to recognise Brazil in return for Suberra's dismissal. Canning, for his part, rejected their attempt to connect these two questions. However, his fear that Britain's immediate and unilateral recognition of Brazilian independence would result in the total loss of her influence in Portugal was an important factor in his decision in the summer

Independence', p.93; Hinde, *George Canning*, pp.379-81.

of 1823 to defer taking further steps towards the recognition of Brazilian independence and to try, if he could, to work out an amicable separation between Portugal and Brazil. Historians have also overlooked another important connection between Canning's Brazilian policy and his European policy. We have already seen that Canning declared his preference for monarchies to republics in Spanish America largely because he desired to placate the eastern allies. It is clear that a similar consideration played a part in his effort to preserve monarchical institutions in Brazil. Historians have explained Canning's desire to preserve monarchical institutions in Brazil solely by his fear of the expansion of American influence in South America.¹⁴⁰ There is no doubt that Canning desired the preservation of monarchical institutions in Brazil—as he once famously wrote—to 'prevent the drawing of the line of demarcation which I most dread, America versus Europe'.¹⁴¹ However, this was not the only reason why he tried to preserve Pedro's imperial throne in Brazil. Canning knew that the Austrian emperor wanted to preserve Brazil under the rule of his son-in-law. It is clear that he desired to preserve an Anglo-Austrian concert on the question of Brazil as much as he desired to preserve a monarchy in Brazil. As he wrote in August 1824, he had 'gone slowly and cautiously to work in the affair [of Brazilian independence], . . . first and principally, because we were desirous above all things to carry not only the weight and authority, but the good-will of Austria along with us'.¹⁴² He thought that Anglo-Austrian co-operation over Brazil was a valuable asset in his European diplomacy, especially in his effort to avoid Britain's diplomatic isolation in Europe. This is another piece of evidence to show that Canning was not an isolationist who cared little about Europe. However, all

¹⁴⁰ Temperley, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, pp.216-7; *BILA*, vol.1, p.63.

¹⁴¹ Canning to à Court, private, 30 December 1823, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41544.

his efforts between the autumn of 1822 and the summer of 1824 to avoid Britain's isolation in Europe and keep her relations with the powers of the continent close enough to preserve the system of great-power co-operation would come to nothing if he failed to make proper use of the European Concert in dealing with the question which during these two years continued to be a menace to the survival of the 1815 European international order. Let us now turn to see how he dealt with this greatest menace to the peace of Europe, that is, the eastern question.

¹⁴² Canning to Wellesley, no.19, 13 August 1824, *BILA*, vol.2, p.31.

V

The Eastern Question, September 1822-July 1824

We have already seen that, when in May 1822 Alexander accepted Metternich's memorandum of 19 April, the danger of a Russo-Turkish war subsided. The Porte, for its part, promised Strangford, the British ambassador, to start the evacuation of the Principalities. During the summer of 1822, the Porte continued to withdraw its troops from the Principalities, although it did so only with agonising slowness. In July, the Porte also executed the other demand of Russia concerning the Principalities, that is, the appointment of new hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia, although it again violated treaties by breaking the time-honoured custom of choosing hospodars from among the Phanariot Greeks and appointing native Romanian boyars without proper consultation with the Russian government.¹ On the other hand, as Strangford had predicted, the Porte refused the two other demands contained in Metternich's memorandum concerning the co-operation of the allied powers in its effort for the pacification of Greece, although the Turkish ministers assured Strangford that they would treat the Greeks with moderation and forbearance.² Meanwhile, the Russian government added the Porte's obstruction of Russia's Black Sea commerce to its list of complaints against the Turks. The Porte had long permitted the vessels of those

¹ The Reis Effendi to Strangford, 16 July 1822 (Translation), *BFSP*, vol.9, pp.671-2.

² Memorandum of Strangford's conference with the Turkish ministers of 27 July 1822, and Précis of the conference of 27 August 1822 between Strangford and the Turkish ministers, *Prokesch-Osten*, vol.3, pp.374-90, 406-27; Strangford to Castlereagh, no.147, 3 September 1822, FO 78/110.

European states who had not acquired by treaties the right to pass the Bosphorus, such as the Netherlands, Denmark, Spain, Naples, and Sardinia, the passage through the Straits under the flags of those states who had the right to do so. However, in the spring of 1822, the Porte repressed this long established practice. In late July, the Russia government requested that the British and Austrian ambassadors at Constantinople should urge the Porte to revoke this interdict.³ These developments, however, did not discourage Metternich. Obviously encouraged by the news of Turkish military success in the Morea during the summer, on 29 August he told Charles Stewart his hope that at the forthcoming allied conference he would be able to prevail on the Tsar to send a minor diplomatic agent to Constantinople to finalise the settlement of his dispute with the Porte.⁴

The news of the Turkish success also induced Canning to write, at the beginning of his instructions to Wellington of 27 September on the affairs of Turkey, that Castlereagh's suggestion as to Britain's recognition of the Greeks as belligerents had become 'inapplicable to the present state of things'. Apart from this point, however, his instructions to Wellington did not substantially differ from those which Castlereagh had prepared for himself. He pointed out that the Porte had almost completely satisfied Russia's demands which were based on treaties, namely, the four points, and argued that Russia should not persist in demands which were not based on her treaty rights. If the Tsar still persisted in making on behalf of the Sultan's Greek subjects demands which were not based on treaties, consideration for the difficulty of his position in his

³ Nesselrode to Tatishchev, 25 July 1822, *VPR*, vol.4, pp.544-5; Strangford to Castlereagh, no.145, 3 September 1822 (enclosing Bagot to Strangford, 27 July 1822), FO 78/110.

⁴ Stewart's minute of his conversation with Metternich, 29 August 1822, enclosed in Stewart to Bathurst, separate, secret and confidential, 4 September 1822, FO 7/172.

own country and the importance of preventing war in any quarter of Europe would induce Britain to undertake the task of friendly mediation and recommend the Porte to accept them. However, Britain's principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states would prohibit her from forcing them on the Porte. She would never join in a collective diplomatic action of the allied powers at Constantinople to extort from the Porte by the threat of war concessions which treaties did not entitle Russia to demand. The same consideration, he continued, would prohibit Britain from interfering in the struggle between the Turks and the Greeks. She would certainly employ her utmost endeavours to induce the Porte, in view of its own interests, to govern its Christian subjects in a mild and equitable way. However, she did not have any right to interfere in the internal concerns of Turkey in any other character than as a friend of the Porte. Nor was she prepared to guarantee any arrangement in Greece at the risk of being involved in hostilities. Canning thus directed Wellington, first, to demand that Russia should restore her diplomatic relations with the Porte when the latter completed the execution of the four points and, second, to refuse to enter into any engagement committing Britain to abandon the position of a neutral mediator between Russia and the Porte or to assume the responsibility of guaranteeing a settlement of the civil war in Turkey.⁵

Meanwhile in Vienna, despite the Porte's refusal of any interference of the allied powers in its effort to pacify the Greek revolt, Alexander agreed to content himself with the Porte's assurance to treat the Greeks with moderation and justice. He approved Metternich's recommendation that, if the Porte followed up the assurance by acts and invited him to renew diplomatic relations with it, he should accept the invitation. On the other hand, Alexander was indignant at Turkish charges against Russian agents of

⁵ Canning to Wellington, 27 September 1822, *Wellington*, vol.2, pp.369-73..

their complicity in the Greek revolt, which the Turkish ministers had made in their conference of 27 August with Strangford, and at the British ambassador's failure to refute them.⁶ In a note of 26 September to the allied plenipotentiaries, the Tsar expressed his dissatisfaction with the conduct of the Turkish ministers and Strangford in the conference. However, the note essentially accepted Metternich's recommendation on the conditions for the reestablishment of Russo-Turkish diplomatic relations. The Tsar's conditions were: 1. The Porte should either enter into direct negotiations with Russia and her allies to agree on guarantees which the Greeks should receive when they returned to their former allegiance, or prove '*by a series of deeds*' that it respected the Greek religion and was trying to re-establish tranquillity in Greece on such bases as to give Russia the expectation of a durable peace and the satisfaction of seeing the Greeks obtaining true securities of their happiness and safety; 2. The Porte should notify the complete evacuation of the Principalities and the appointment of hospodars by a direct communication to Russia, which would be followed by the return to the Principalities of Russian agents who should verify that the measures taken by the Porte conformed to the stipulations of treaties; 3. The Porte should revoke all the measures which it had taken against the commerce and free navigation of the Black Sea, either by permitting Spanish, Portuguese, Sicilian and other vessels the passage through the Straits under their own flags, or by permitting them again to sail under the Russian flag.⁷ Metternich in his note of 30 September promised Austria's support for the Russian demands.⁸ He told Strangford, who had arrived at Vienna on 24 September, that the Russo-Turkish

⁶ Stewart to Bathurst, separate, most secret and confidential, 24 September 1822, FO 7/172.

⁷ Note to the Austrian, French, English and Prussian plenipotentiaries, 26 September 1822, *VPR*, vol.4, pp.581-3.

⁸ Metternich to Nesselrode, 30 September 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.332-3.

dispute might now be considered as terminated.⁹

Neither Wellington nor Strangford, however, shared Metternich's optimism. Strangford was furious at Alexander's public disapproval of his conduct. He angrily wrote to Canning on 5 October that everyone at Constantinople shared his conviction that 'scarcely one of the Greco-Russian Agents in the Turkish Empire, has abstained from taking a part, more or less active, in originally instigating, and in subsequently supporting the Greek Revolt'.¹⁰ Wellington, on his arrival at Vienna on 29 September, agreed with Strangford that the Tsar's attack on him was totally unfair. It convinced him that Alexander had 'wished to lay the grounds for breaking off with the Turks eventually, by stating his dissatisfaction with what had been done'. This was far from the truth. The best explanation for the Tsar's displeasure was given by Charles Bagot. When he received the Russian note, he wrote to Canning from St. Petersburg: 'In this note I clearly trace The Emperor. He is sensitive upon the subject of being supposed to have excited the Greek troubles to a degree which you can scarcely conceive.' However, we should not forget that in early October Wellington still believed that 'the result of the Conferences at Verona will be an unanimous decision to leave the Spaniards to themselves'. The Tsar's answer to the clamours of his subjects for supporting the Greeks had been that 'it is necessary for his Imperial Majesty to attend to the progress of the Jacobins and revolutionary parties in the west of Europe, and particularly in Spain . . .'. If the Congress rejected Alexander's plan for an allied armed intervention in Spain, he would no longer be able to contain the dissatisfaction of his subjects. Wellington strongly suspected that Alexander was aware of this possibility and desired

⁹ Strangford to Canning, no.151, 5 October 1822, FO 78/110.

¹⁰ Strangford to Canning, no.152, 5 October 1822, *ibid*.

to keep the option of a war against Turkey open.¹¹

Wellington's fear of a Russo-Turkish war, which he thought would 'eventually involve all Europe', induced him to recommend Canning, in his despatch of 4 October, to support Russia's new demand on Black Sea navigation and instruct Strangford to urge the Porte to grant the right to pass the Straits to those states who had not obtained it. The Duke accepted Russia's claim that the Porte had tried and succeeded in destroying her Black Sea commerce by its prohibition of the use of false flags, and thought that she had 'good grounds', if not a right under treaties, of complaint against the Porte.¹² Strangford's opinion, however, was considerably different from that of Wellington. The ambassador had already written to his government on the subject from Constantinople on 3 September, recommending that it should refuse to support Russia's demand for the restoration of the former practice of allowing ships to pass the Straits under false flags. He pointed out not only that the Porte's new regulation had not violated any treaty, but also that the Porte's prohibition of the use of false flags had profited the British shipping interests by excluding their rivals from Black Sea commerce. To support the Russian demand would be to support the commercial interests of other states against those of Britain.¹³ In his despatch of 5 October, Strangford went further and asserted that the Porte's prohibition of the use of false flags had not done any harm to Russian commerce. Its only effect on Black Sea commerce had been that, while it had formerly been carried on mainly by the Spanish, Sardinian and Neapolitan vessels, it was now carried on by those of other nations, particularly

¹¹ Wellington to Nesselrode, 2 October 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.337-9; Wellington to Canning, 4 October 1822 (2 despatches), *ibid.*, pp.347-8, 350-2; Bagot to Canning, secret and confidential, 18 November 1822, Canning Papers, 107.

¹² Wellington to Canning, 4 October 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.352-4.

Britain, the Ionian Islands, a British protectorate since 1815, and Austria. Furthermore, the ambassador asserted that, contrary to her declaration of 26 September that she would be satisfied if the Porte permitted Spanish, Portuguese, Sicilian and other vessels the passage through the Straits under their own flags, Russia would persist in her demand for the restoration of the former practice of allowing ships to pass the Straits under false flags. Still indignant at the Tsar's public disapproval of his conduct, he wrongly accused the Tsar of attempting to protect the Greek commercial marine by securing it the right of sailing under the Russian flag.¹⁴ Wellington must have suppressed this last part, if he had seen the despatch. However, Strangford did not show it to Wellington until after his arrival in Verona in the middle of October.

In London, Canning attached greater weight to Strangford's opinion than to that of Wellington. Having received Strangford's despatch of 3 September and Wellington's of 4 October, Canning on 23 October wrote to Liverpool that the Turks were 'clearly in the right' on the question of Black Sea commerce, and also that it was in Britain's 'interest' to support the Porte's position. Liverpool initially desired Canning to adopt Wellington's recommendation. But, his opinion changed when, on 24 October, Strangford's despatch of 5 October reached London. Canning now wrote to Liverpool that it would be 'unjust to our own plain interests' to support the Russian demand. 'If you are upon the whole of opinion . . . that we had better not interfere in favour of Russia . . .', Liverpool answered, 'I see sufficiently now all the difficulties to which such interference may expose us with our own subjects to concur in your opinion.' Liverpool thought that Britain's refusal would probably result in a Russo-Turkish war,

¹³ Strangford to Castlereagh, no.145, 3 September 1822, FO 78/110.

¹⁴ Strangford to Canning, no.151, 5 October 1822, *ibid.*

and made no doubt of Russia's success in it. However, this did not deter him from approving Canning's opinion that Britain should refuse the Russian demand, for he did not expect that Russian victory would severely damage Britain's interest in the Levant, although he thought that 'it will open an entire new scene and create entirely new interests, and indirectly may operate unfavourably at this time upon other continental interests'.¹⁵ On 25 October, Canning sent a despatch to Strangford instructing him not to support at Constantinople Russia's new demand. He wrote to Wellington that the demand was 'a preposterous one', which was 'obviously an afterthought'. He told the Duke that he had been 'perplexed . . . by the apparent leaning of your opinion as compared with Lord Strangford's, and I confess my own', although he authorised Wellington to suspend his instruction to Strangford if there were any 'forcible' reasons for doing so. Believing Strangford's account of the state of Black Sea commerce, Canning obviously thought that Russia would not dare to start a war on such an 'inferior' and 'unjustifiable' pretext as her alleged grievance against the Porte's obstruction of her commerce.¹⁶

Meanwhile, in Verona Strangford had finally shown his despatch of 5 October to Wellington. The Duke was surprised by Strangford's assertion that Russia's object was to secure the Greeks the right of sailing under the Russian flag. He enquired from Metternich Russia's real intentions, and obtained an assurance that, if the Porte granted the right to pass the Straits to the states who had not obtained it yet, the Tsar would

¹⁵ Canning to Liverpool, 23 October 1822, secret, 24 October 1822, 2 p.m., Canning Papers, 70; Liverpool to Canning, private, 21 October 1822, secret and confidential, 24 October 1822, Charles Duke Yonge (ed.), *The Life and Administration of Robert Banks, Second Earl of Liverpool, K.G.* (3 vols., London, 1868), vol.3, pp.246-8; same to same, 24 October 1822, ¾ p. 11 p.m., *Wellington*, vol.1, p.432.

¹⁶ Canning to Wellington, 25 October 1822 (a private letter and a despatch), *ibid.*, pp.431, 432-3.

certainly be satisfied.¹⁷ When Wellington received Canning's despatch of 25 October to Strangford, judging that it had been 'written under the erroneous impression conveyed by that of Lord Strangford', he decided to detain it until he received Canning's further instruction. In his despatch of 5 November, Wellington again recommended Canning to agree to exert Britain's good offices at Constantinople to facilitate negotiations between the Porte and the Kings of Sardinia, Spain, Naples and Denmark for commercial agreements which should permit the vessels of these states the passage through the Straits under their own flags. The Duke pointed out that Castlereagh had already instructed Strangford to give his good offices on behalf of the King of Sardinia.¹⁸

Canning in his despatch of 15 November approved the Duke's decision to detain his despatch to Strangford of 25 October, and ordered him to return it to London. In his despatch to Strangford of the same date, Canning reprimanded Strangford for having sent such an important despatch as that of 5 October without previously apprising Wellington of its contents. He instructed the ambassador to pursue the negotiation which he had already opened with the Porte for the admission of the Sardinian flag to the privilege of navigation in the Black Sea. However, accepting Strangford's advice that it would be unwise to multiply negotiations, he decided that Strangford should at first concentrate on the negotiation on behalf of Sardinia.¹⁹

Meanwhile, in Verona the affairs of Spain chiefly occupied the allied sovereigns and their ministers. On 3 November, having realised that Metternich's policy on the subject

¹⁷ Wellington to Canning, 28 October 1822, *ibid.*, p.454.

¹⁸ Wellington to Canning, 5 November 1822, *ibid.*, pp.489-90.

¹⁹ Canning to Wellington, 15 November 1822, *ibid.*, pp.535-6; Canning to Strangford, no.5, 15 November 1822, FO 78/105.

had been strongly influenced by his fear of a Russo-Turkish war, Wellington suggested to the Austrian chancellor 'the expediency of his putting in activity the Turkish negotiation, in order that, if possible, we may bring that to a conclusion . . . before we come to extremities upon the Spanish question, as a measure which will tend to put the German courts more at their ease, and render them more independent in their views and actions on the Spanish question'.²⁰ Metternich, however, knew better than this. Once Alexander turned his back on the Alliance, he would no longer be bound by mere protocols of allied conferences. Metternich brought the continental allies to agree to his project to make a demonstration of their moral solidarity against the Spanish revolution.

Their decision on the question of Spain satisfied Alexander and facilitated allied agreements on the affairs of Turkey. On 9 November, Metternich, Tatishchev, Wellington, Caraman, and Prince Hatzfeldt, the Prussian minister at Vienna, held a conference to discuss the question of Turkey. Tatishchev opened the conference by reading a declaration which reproduced Russia's three conditions of 26 September for the reestablishment of Russo-Turkish diplomatic relations. While Metternich responded to the Russian declaration by a declaration of his own which praised Alexander's moderation and promised support for his demands in general terms, Caraman and Hatzfeldt verbally declared 'their entire adherence' to Metternich's declaration. Wellington, who had not yet received Canning's answer to his despatch of 5 November, confined himself to promising to answer the Russian declaration at a future conference.²¹ When Wellington finally received Canning's despatch of 15 November, the allied negotiation on Turkish affairs was swiftly concluded. At a conference of 26

²⁰ Wellington to Canning, 5 November 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.494-6.

²¹ Wellington to Canning, 12 November 1822 (enclosing Précis of the conference of 9 November 1822,

November, Caraman, Hatzfeldt, and Wellington replied to the Russian note of 9 November. The French and Prussian declarations wholeheartedly approved Russia's three conditions and promised their support at Constantinople to prevail on the Porte to satisfy them. Wellington in his declaration pointed out that the object of the allied powers had been to induce the Porte to fulfil the stipulations of its treaties with Russia. He asserted that this object had virtually been obtained, and therefore Russia should not delay restoring diplomatic relations with the Porte. However, he promised that his government would use its 'good offices' to bring the Porte to make an official communication to Russia of its fulfilment of her demands concerning the Principalities and to grant the privilege of the passage through the Bosphorus to those European states who had not yet obtained it. The allied negotiation on the affairs of Turkey was concluded on the next day when Tatishchev read another declaration conveying the Tsar's thanks for the allied support to the Russian declaration.²² Meanwhile, Strangford had been restored to Alexander's favour. It was agreed that the British ambassador should take the lead in future negotiations at Constantinople.²³

At Verona, the Greek cause was almost completely ignored by the allies. Envoys of the Greek provisional government were confined at the Papal port of Ancona at Metternich's request and were refused passports to proceed to Verona.²⁴ All that the allies agreed to do on behalf of the Greeks was to support the first of Russia's three conditions, in other words, to urge the Porte to fulfil '*by a series of deeds*' its promise

and the Russian and Austrian declarations of 9 November 1822), *ibid.*, pp.523-9.

²² Procès-Verbal of the conference of 26 November 1822, and Procès-Verbal of the conference of 27 November 1822, *ibid.*, pp.599-602.

²³ Strangford to Canning, no.163, 26 November 1822, FO 78/110; Wellington's 'Memorandum for Lord Strangford' and 'Separate Memorandum', 28 November 1822, *Wellington*, vol.1, pp.602-4.

²⁴ Jean Phillippe Paul Jourdain, *Mémoires historiques et militaires sur les événements de la Grèce, depuis 1822, jusqu'au combat de Navarin* (2 vols., Paris, 1828), vol.1, pp.144-6.

to treat the Greeks with moderation and justice. Alexander in the meantime appeared to have decided that he should 'withhold for the moment any demonstration of a direct interest in the fate of the Greeks'.²⁵ However, he obviously did not lose all his interest in Greek affairs. What he said to Strangford on the subject in their interview of 22 November is highly interesting. The Tsar opened the conversation by telling the British ambassador that, although he felt 'a direct and most lively interest in the prosperity and political well-being of His *Corréligionnaires* [*sic*]', 'their notorious connection with the revolutionary party in other Countries' deterred him from taking 'the *initiative* in any project for amending the future political condition of Greeks'. The Tsar continued:

He should be perfectly satisfied with whatever England might think proper to do upon that subject . . . He was convinced that sooner or later, the force of public opinion in England, would induce the British Ministry to take the state of Greece into consideration, and to make some efforts for it's [*sic*] improvement . . . England was not so directly committed in conflict with those [revolutionary] principles, by the connection between which and the Greek Revolt His Imperial Majesty must be precluded from avowing any wish for the success of the latter . . . He therefore preferred waiting with full Confidence for any measures which we [Britain] might institute, (as soon as the Greek Question becomes in England, like that of the Slave Trade, one of strong national feeling, which He believed would one day be the case,) to taking the lead in proposing to the Allies any plan for improving the political state of Greece. The Emperor added that the idea of Greek Independence was an absolute chimera, and that the utmost extent of His wishes was, that the Greeks should be placed in the same relations to the Porte as the Inhabitants of Servia [*sic*], or if it could be effected, as those of Wallachia and Moldavia . . .²⁶

There is no record of how Canning received Strangford's report of this conversation.

The report, however, certainly taught him that Alexander had not lost his desire to effect a change in the political status of the Greeks within the Ottoman Empire. Contrary to Canning's expectation, the Turkish forces had failed to capitalise on their

²⁵ Strangford to Canning, no.162, 26 November 1822, FO 78/110.

earlier success in the Morea, and the campaign of 1822 had ended in a failure. As long as the war in Greece continued, there would always be a danger of Russian intervention. In his despatch of 14 February 1823 to Strangford, Canning directed the ambassador to tell the Turkish ministers that Britain 'as a Christian State' had a grave interest in the civil war in Turkey as a humanitarian question.

Every Well-wisher to The Porte [, he wrote,] must desire to see the Renewal of Her amicable Relations with Russia, but every Friend of Humanity must with equal anxiety expect some satisfactory arrangement between The Porte and Her Christian Subjects. . . . Your Excellency will not hesitate to make known to them, that if they value the Friendship of their *antient* [*sic*] *Ally*, Gt. Britain, it is high time they should now fulfil those Promises for the Welfare of their Christian Subjects

Canning hoped that Strangford's 'friendly arguments & Advice' would have all the desired effect. However, if they were ignored by the Porte, Strangford should declare that 'it would be impossible for H[is]. M[ajesty] to continue his Relations with The Porte upon that footing of unreserved Confidence & Friendship upon which they have hitherto so happily been maintained'. What is really interesting about this despatch, however, is not the strength of his tone but the fact that this was the first time Canning suggested the necessity of a change in the political status of the Greeks. It is unlikely that by 'some satisfactory arrangement between The Porte and Her Christian Subjects' he merely meant an amnesty or some other minor legislative or administrative measures. His principal instruction to the ambassador was merely to urge the Porte to 'fulfil those Promises for the Welfare of their Christian Subjects' which it had already made. But, he obviously came to think that the Turks would not be able to put an end to the Greek revolt without giving the Greeks a new political status, and desired that Strangford

²⁶ Strangford to Canning, no.163, 26 November 1822, *ibid.*

should suggest the idea to the Turks if he could safely do so.²⁷

The continuance of the war in Greece also induced the British government in late April to decide to recognise Greek blockades.²⁸ In thus recognising the Greeks as belligerents, however, the British government merely followed a practice which had already been applied to the wars of Spanish American independence and whose principal aim was the protection of lawful British trade. The Greeks ships had been carrying out raids on Turkish coastal traffic, and they attacked not only vessels flying the Turkish flag but also ships of European nations. It was expected that, if the British government acknowledged the Greeks as legitimate belligerents, their ships might behave less like pirates. As Canning wrote later in December 1824 to Wellesley, the British government recognised the Greeks as belligerents 'not out of any partiality to the Greeks, but because we think it for the interest of humanity to compel *all* belligerents to observe the usages, by which the spirit of civilization has mitigated the practice of war'.²⁹

About the same time as the British government decided to recognise the Greeks as belligerents, there occurred in Greece an incident which appeared to indicate a change in its attitude towards the Greeks. Soon after Strangford had returned to Constantinople in late January 1823, he was informed that the Divan had approved a plan to grant the Greeks new privileges like those granted to the Wallachians, Moldavians and Serbs and place the new arrangements under Britain's guarantee on condition that the first overtures should come from the Greeks themselves. In early February, Strangford

²⁷ Canning to Strangford, no.1, 14 February 1823, FO 78/113.

²⁸ Conyngham to the secretary of the Levant Company, 29 April 1823, CO 136/21; Croker to Moore, 30 April 1823, Adm. 2/1693.

²⁹ Canning to Wellesley, no.34, 31 December 1824, FO 120/67.

communicated this important information not only to Canning but also to Sir Thomas Maitland, the Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands. Maitland on his own responsibility instructed Captain Hamilton of the frigate *Cambrian* to explain the situation to Greek leaders although without making any promise. Following the instructions, Hamilton met Greek delegates and held out to them the possibility of British mediation for a status like that of the Danubian Principalities, but refused to put the suggestion in writing. The Greek delegates refused to give any answer, and the provisional government later approved their action.³⁰ Nothing, therefore, came out of the communication. Canning clearly disavowed Maitland's unauthorised action, when Lieven and Prince Esterhazy, the Austrian ambassador in London, inquired about the matter. He wrote to Strangford on 9 May that 'it w[oul]d. by no means suit the Policy of H[is]. M[ajest]y's Gov[ernmen]t. under any Circumstances to take upon Itself a positive Guarantee for the fulfilment of any Arrangements entered into between the Turks and Greeks . . .'. On the other hand, Canning did not deny the possibility that Britain might co-operate with other allied powers, if they came up with a feasible plan to put an end to the war in Greece by placing a new political arrangement in Greece under their joint guarantee, although without becoming a guarantor herself.³¹

In the spring of 1823, Canning thus gradually came to think that Britain and other European allies should play a more positive role in bringing about the termination of the war in Greece, although he was still determined that they should maintain the policy of neutrality and non-interference in the war. This change in Canning's view did not

³⁰ Strangford to Canning, no.8, 10 February 1823, FO 78/114; Maitland to Bathurst, 26 March 1823 (enclosing Extract of Strangford's confidential despatch to Maitland of 1 February 1823, and Maitland to Hamilton, private and confidential, 8 March 1823), CO 136/1090; Constantinos Metaxas, *Souvenirs de la guerre de l'indépendance de la Grèce*, trans. Jules Blancard (Paris, 1887), pp.114-20.

escape Alexander. Canning's own ambassador at Constantinople was partly responsible for creating an impression that British policy on Greek affairs was undergoing a substantial change. On his return to Constantinople in late January, Strangford initially concentrated on the second of Russia's three conditions, that is, the demand that the Porte should directly communicate to the Russian government the evacuation of the Principalities and the appointment of the hospodars. By a letter of 25 February, written by the Reis Effendi (the Turkish foreign minister) and addressed to Nesselrode, the Porte fulfilled this condition. The Reis Effendi requested Strangford to transmit the letter to the Russian government. The Porte also appeared to be persevering in a moderate line of conduct towards the Greeks. However, the Reis Effendi in his letter to Nesselrode unwisely expressed the Porte's expectation that, as it had faithfully executed its treaty obligations, Russia would also execute hers. In his notes to Strangford and Baron Ottenfels, the new Internuncio, the Reis Effendi explained that the Porte's demands were the extradition of the insurgent chiefs and the restoration of the Asiatic fortresses. Strangford naturally feared that the Reis Effendi's letter to Nesselrode would not be favourably received at St. Petersburg. He decided to place the letter at Metternich's disposal. At the same time, however, he was personally convinced of the justice of the Porte's view, and in his letter to Metternich of 28 February expressed his opinion that Russia should answer the Reis Effendi's letter by sending a chargé d'affaires immediately to Constantinople.³² When, in the middle of March, the Reis Effendi's letter to Nesselrode and his notes to Strangford and Ottenfels reached Vienna,

³¹ Canning to Strangford, no.3, 9 May 1823, FO 78/113.

³² Strangford to Canning, nos.1 and 2, 25 January 1823, no.3, 10 February 1823, no.10, 28 February 1823 (enclosing translation of the Reis Effendi's letter to Nesselrode of 25 February 1823, and Strangford's letter to Nesselrode of 28 February 1823), no.11, confidential, 28 February 1823 (enclosing

Metternich decided to transmit them to the Russian government, together with Strangford's letter to him.³³

Meanwhile, the news of Britain's recognition of Greek blockades naturally alarmed the Turks. According to Strangford, the Turkish ministers manifested their ill humour on the subject of the recognition of Greek blockades 'upon all occasions'. They also complained of the supposed partiality of the British naval officers towards the Greek rebels and the protection which the Ionian authorities were alleged to have afforded to the Greek insurgents in the Morea by allowing them to take refuge in the Ionian Islands and even to return to the Morea afterwards. Strangford reported to Canning that the Porte's confidence in Britain had 'of late been considerably shaken' by its growing suspicion that there had been 'a decided change' in the policy of the British government.³⁴ It was when Strangford thus started to feel the decline of his influence over the Turks because of their suspicion of Britain's partiality for the Greeks that he received Canning's despatch of 14 February which directed him to make strong representations to the Turkish ministers to fulfil their promises 'for the Welfare of their Christian Subjects'. Strangford did not overlook the significance of the phrase 'some satisfactory arrangement between The Porte and Her Christian Subjects' in Canning's despatch. The ambassador replied to Canning that he was unwilling to urge the Porte 'to improve the political condition' of the Greeks or 'to re-model altogether the relations between the Sultan and His Christian Subjects'. He asserted that he had perfectly fulfilled his duty to induce the Porte to treat the Greeks with moderation and

Strangford's letter to Metternich of 28 February 1823), no.13, 28 February 1823 (enclosing translation of the Reis Effendi's note to Strangford of 25 February 1823), FO 78/114.

³³ Tatishchev to Nesselrode, 6 April 1823, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.79-81.

³⁴ Strangford to Canning, nos.38, 39 and 40, 10 April 1823, no.47, 25 April 1823, FO 78/114.

justice, and he had nothing further to do on the question of Greece.³⁵ His anger against Canning was such that he wrote to Metternich complaining that his government's Greek policy had changed entirely and hinting that he might resign the post of ambassador if he was forced to execute what he thought to be his government's new policy. He also criticised Maitland's overtures to the Greeks. Metternich communicated this letter to Tatishchev with the aim of inspiring him with a suspicion that Canning was trying to establish British 'patronage' over the Greeks. This conversation had the desired effect on Tatishchev, who on 5 May reported to Nesselrode that Britain was trying to make the insurgents accept her protection in place of that of Russia. At the same time, however, Strangford's letter strengthened his impression that Britain's attitude towards the Greeks, which had formerly been 'severe and rigorous', had lately become 'moderate and also benevolent', whether the aim of this new attitude was anti-Russian or not.³⁶ This was the situation which Alexander had been waiting for. His disapproval of Maitland's overtures was certainly very moderate and polite. He readily accepted Canning's disavowal of Maitland's action and instructed Lieven to tell Canning that 'we will always consent . . . to share the protection of Greece and the guarantee of privileges which she will obtain from the Porte, *with all* the allied powers, but that it will be impossible for us to permit the Morea and the islands of the Archipelago to be placed under the *exclusive* protection of one of the powers'.³⁷

On the other hand, the Russian government rejected Strangford's suggestion that it should send a diplomatic mission to Constantinople. Nesselrode in his letter of 19 May to Strangford listed Russia's complaints against the Porte, which included: 1. The Porte

³⁵ Strangford to Canning, no.46, 25 April 1823, *ibid*.

³⁶ Tatishchev to Nesselrode, 10 May 1823, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.92-3.

had attempted to connect its longstanding claim on the question of the Asiatic fortresses with the present negotiations for the settlement of the Russo-Turkish differences which had grown out of the Greek revolt, a connection which was wholly inadmissible to Russia; 2. Contrary to its assertion, the Porte had not completed the evacuation of the Principalities; 3. The Porte had issued a new firman in April granting preferences to Turkish merchants in the Black Sea navigation. Nesselrode also did not forget to remind the British ambassador that the Porte's compliance with Russia's demand for the just treatment of the Greeks was 'an indispensable preliminary to a complete reconciliation'.³⁸

When Nesselrode's letter reached Vienna, Metternich refused to support the demand for the complete evacuation of the Principalities, arguing that, since public tranquillity in the Principalities had not been completely restored, the presence of a small number of Turkish troops was necessary. He also argued that Russia should no longer persist in her demand for the just treatment of the Greeks. He pointed out that, while the Porte had already proved itself determined to reject all intervention of foreign powers in its effort to pacify its Christian provinces, the Greeks appeared to be far from willing to lay down arms until they obtained their entire freedom. 'The insurrection of the Greeks is', he asserted, 'so to speak, entirely outside the domain of diplomacy: it became a question of fact, a problem which only Providence will be able to solve in the depth of its wisdom.' On the other hand, Metternich in his despatch of 21 June instructed Ottenfels to get the Porte to revoke the new firman on the Black Sea navigation and to give up its effort to obtain the restoration of the Asiatic fortresses in return for its

³⁷ Nesselrode to Lieven, 22 June 1823, *ibid.*, pp.139-40.

³⁸ Nesselrode to Strangford, 19 May 1823, *BFSP*, vol.10, pp.851-7.

fulfilment of the Russian demands.³⁹

Meanwhile, in St. Petersburg, Bagot came to have 'some uncomfortable feelings' about Alexander's intentions. In his letter of 14 June, Bagot told Canning his impression that 'both Prince Metternich and Strangford are too much persuaded that, since Verona, they have The Emperor completely in hand'. Bagot reported that Alexander was particularly indignant at the Porte's new firman on the Black Sea navigation. One reason of Bagot's anxiety was the rapid success of the French army in Spain. He wrote: '. . . if the war in Spain terminates quickly & successfully . . . He [Alexander] has nothing elsewhere to occupy either His attention or His arms' Bagot reported that Lebzeltern feared the possibility of a Russo-Turkish war for the same reason. He suspected, however, that there was another reason for the Austrian minister's apprehension.

. . . I think it also possible [, Bagot reported,] that . . . he is not without a notion that we are disposed to give much more encouragement to the Greek cause than we at first were; and that that consideration may make The Emperor feel His hands so free, that, unless His differences are speedily adjusted, it may be impossible to keep Him within bounds.⁴⁰

This letter had a great influence on Canning, who in his reply of 14 July wrote: 'Strangford has certainly been fancying that he had the game more in his hands than he really has, and that he was at least secure against any sudden change of counsel on the part of the Emperor.' Canning 'fashioned' his new instructions to Strangford 'very much after' Bagot's view that the Porte's intransigence on the questions of Black Sea

³⁹ 'Observations de Metternich sur la lettre de Nesselrode à lord Strangford, à Constantinople, Saint-Petersbourg, le 7 mai 1823', and Metternich to Ottenfels, 21 June 1823, *Metternich*, vol.4, pp.62-77.

commerce and the Asiatic fortresses might drive the Tsar to take up arms against the Turks.⁴¹ In one of his despatches to Strangford of 12 July, Canning instructed the ambassador to get the Porte to satisfy Russia's demands on the navigation of the Black Sea and to refrain from insisting that the restoration by Russia of the Asiatic fortresses should be made part of a final settlement of the present negotiations for the restoration of their diplomatic relations. On the question of the Black Sea navigation, Canning asserted that it was 'quite idle' for the Porte to argue that 'the abstract Right' was on its side, when the 'practical effect' of its regulations had been to throw impediments in the way of Russian commerce, to drive the traders and cultivators of Russia to join in the clamours for war, and consequently to increase 'the difficulty of the task which His Imp[erial]. M[ajest]y has imposed upon Himself of resisting the Disposition to War which prevails among so large a Portion of His Subjects'. As for the question of the Asiatic fortresses, Canning pointed out that Russia would never agree to any intervention of her allies in the dispute, and declared that Britain would never try to mediate it.⁴²

As he wrote in his private letter of 15 July to Strangford, Canning's principal object in July 1823 was to bring the prolonged negotiation for the reestablishment of Russo-Turkish diplomatic relations to conclusion as soon as possible. Canning explained that there were three reasons why he desired that Russia and the Porte should immediately settle their differences and restore their diplomatic relations. The first was his desire to prevent a Russo-Turkish war. Canning feared that, as the war in Spain approached its termination, it was becoming more and more difficult for Alexander to

⁴⁰ Bagot to Canning, private, 14 June 1823, *Canning Papers*, 107.

⁴¹ Canning to Bagot, private, 14 July 1823, *GCHF*, vol.2, pp.180-1.

remain inactive in the east. The Porte should lose no time in settling its differences with Russia which, if remained unsettled, she might use as pretexts for war. The second was Canning's desire that 'if War is not to be avoided, . . . the rupture should not take place while the negotiation in [*sic*] in *your* [Strangford's] hands'. The third was his desire to relieve Strangford of the onus of dealing almost single-handedly with the question of Greece at Constantinople. 'The Greek question is', he wrote, 'a most difficult one to manage, in *our* hands. Either War or Peace would throw it in a great measure into the hands of Russia: but in the present unsettled and ambiguous state of things, *we* have all the Responsibility for whatever is done wrong on both sides; without commensurate influence, either with Turks or Greeks, to prevent wrong-doing.' In fact, it was clearly beyond Strangford's power to prevail single-handedly on the Porte to come to terms with its rebel subjects in Greece. Canning obviously desired that the allied representatives at Constantinople including that of Russia should collectively press the settlement of the Greek question on the Porte after the reestablishment of Russo-Turkish diplomatic relations.⁴³ Canning in fact decided to allow Strangford to defer urging on the Porte the necessity of coming to terms with the Greek rebels. It is true that Canning in one of his despatches of 12 July refuted Strangford's criticism of his despatch of 14 February, and warned the ambassador that the Porte might not have much time to lose in putting an end to the Greek revolt. The effect of this warning, however, was weakened by his assurance in his private letter of 15 July that he understood the difficulty of the ambassador's situation at Constantinople. It is clear that Canning did not desire Strangford to press the matter at the risk of the loss of his

⁴² Canning to Strangford, no.6, 12 July 1823, FO 78/113.

⁴³ Canning to Strangford, private and confidential, 15 July 1823, Canning Papers, 124.

influence over the Turkish ministers and the breakdown of the negotiation for the reestablishment of Russo-Turkish diplomatic relations.⁴⁴

Canning in fact tried to assist Strangford in his effort to preserve his influence over the Porte by enabling him to refute a Turkish charge against Britain of her partiality towards the Greeks. In a despatch of 12 July 1823 he directed Strangford to declare to the Porte that the instructions to the British naval officers were framed 'on the principle of strict impartiality'. It was true, he admitted, that the naval officers were at the same time authorised 'to obey the impulses of humanity' and give protection to those who were threatened with excessive and cruel vengeance. But, they were authorised to do so only 'in cases where those impulses may be obeyed without influencing the operations of war'.⁴⁵ Canning also anticipated that the Porte would sooner or later remonstrate against the growing activities of British philhellenes since the spring of 1823, when a Greek committee was established in London and started its efforts to generate publicity and collect subscriptions for the Greek cause. The British government had just decided not to take any measures against British subjects who engaged in subscriptions for the support of one belligerent against the other regardless of the government's neutrality between them. It was subscriptions in favour of the Spanish constitutionalists rather than those in favour of the Greeks that caused the British government to consider the matter in June 1823. Wellington desired that the government should take measures against the Spanish subscriptions before the French government remonstrated that they were inconsistent with Britain's neutrality. He demanded that the government should

⁴⁴ Canning to Strangford, no.8, 12 July 1823, FO 78/113; same to same, private and confidential, 15 July 1823, Canning Papers, 124.

⁴⁵ Canning to Strangford, no.8, 12 July 1823, FO 78/113.

seek the opinions of the law officers on the matter.⁴⁶ The law officers answered Canning's inquiries by their reports of 17 and 21 June. They were of opinion that subscriptions entered into by the subjects of a neutral power for the support of one belligerent against the other were inconsistent with the neutrality declared by their government and contrary to the law of nations. However, the law officers reported that any prosecution against British subjects who engaged in such subscriptions was unlikely to be successful, for subscriptions of a similar nature to those for the use of the Spanish constitutionalists—most notably those raised in 1792-3 in favour of the people of Poland who had engaged in resistance to the annexation by Russia—had formerly been entered into without any notice having been taken of them by the public authorities.⁴⁷ In a despatch of 8 July to Charles Stuart, Canning summarised the reports of the law officers. This despatch was aimed at forestalling the French government's complaint against the Spanish subscriptions. However, it could be used also as an answer to the Porte's remonstrance against the Greek subscriptions. In a despatch of 12 July to Strangford, he instructed the ambassador to communicate it to the Porte if it remonstrated against the 'ebullitions of publick [*sic*] feeling' in Britain in favour of the Greeks.⁴⁸

Canning also did not overlook Bagot's report that the Austrian minister in St. Petersburg appeared fearful lest the change in Britain's attitude towards the Greeks should 'make the Emperor feel his hands . . . free'. Canning in his reply directed Bagot not to 'go too far in saying how entirely our vote is at the Emperor's disposal' on the

⁴⁶ Wellington to Liverpool, 15 June 1823, *Wellington*, vol.2, p.99.

⁴⁷ Reports of His Majesty's law officers, 17, 23 June 1823, *ibid.*, pp.100-1.

⁴⁸ Canning to Stuart, no.54, 8 July 1823, FO 146/56; Canning to Strangford, no.8, 12 July 1823, FO 78/113.

question of Greece. 'I need hardly assure you', he wrote, 'that you are not to believe anything that you hear of supposed encouragement from us to the Greeks—not one word. . . . our neutrality in this quarrel is as strict and sincere as in that of Spain'⁴⁹ However, while Canning thought that there was a danger of war, he apparently did not believe that Alexander would use the question of Greece as a pretext. It appeared that the Tsar intended to refrain from bringing forward fresh demands on behalf of the Greeks as his conditions for the restoration of diplomatic relations with the Porte. Bagot himself had reported that for the moment the question of the Black Sea navigation was more urgent than that of Greece.

However, on 10 August Canning received from Henry Wellesley a disturbing report in this regard. According to Wellesley, on 29 July Tatishchev had told him that 'until the affairs of Greece were settled the Emperor would certainly not resume his diplomatic relations with the Porte'. Wellesley did not believe that Tatishchev's statement had been authorised by his government. However, Canning was greatly alarmed by it.⁵⁰ Then, in late August, he received from Stuart a report which was even more disturbing than that of Wellesley. According to Stuart, Chateaubriand had informed him that he had received letters reporting the intention of the Russian and Austrian governments to convoke a meeting of the allied powers to discuss Turkish affairs.

Although His Majesty's Government will be invited to take a part in the deliberations, [Stuart reported,] in case Great Britain should not coincide in the opinions of the other Courts or should manifest the intention to pursue a distinct

⁴⁹ Canning to Bagot, private, 14 July 1823, *GCHF*, vol.2, p.181.

⁵⁰ Wellesley to Canning, private, 30 July 1823, Canning Papers, 110; Canning to Bagot, private and confidential, 20 August 1823, *GCHF*, vol.2, pp.196-7.

course, if the reports in circulation are to be trusted, they will carry the resolutions of the meeting into effect without attention to a determination tending to deprive them of the advantages likely to result from the formation of small independent Governments [in Greece]⁵¹

On 26 August, Canning wrote to Liverpool, informing him of 'the approach of another diplomatick [*sic*] crisis'. He wrote:

. . . a new Congress can not assemble in Europe, without bringing upon us the necessity of carefully reconsidering the position in which we stand towards the Alliance; and framing systematically, some decision as to the part which we will, or will not, take in these periodical sessions of legislation for the world; and as to the degree in which supposing that we take no part in them, we will either allow ourselves to be bound by their acts, or protest beforehand against such obligation.

Assuming that Stuart's report was true, he wrote that he was 'strongly persuaded that a third exhibition of the species of assessorship with which we contented ourselves first at Laybach [*sic*], and afterwards at Verona, will not do'. However, he could not help admitting that the question was a 'fearful' one. He obviously feared that, if Britain refused to take part in an allied meeting, she would be completely isolated in Europe without any means to control Russia.⁵² This was the prospect which Liverpool was desirous to avoid. Liverpool was of opinion that the dissolution or the reduction of the Ottoman Empire in Europe was a matter only of time. In his letter of 30 August, he argued that the future of the '*Debris*' of the Ottoman dominions in Europe was 'a very material Question for us'.

As Europe now is, [he wrote,] I care very little what becomes of the Provinces on the Black Sea, but we could not look with Indifference to the fate of Greece, and of

⁵¹ Stuart to Canning, no.400, 21 August 1823, FO 27/293.

⁵² Canning to Liverpool, secret, 26 August 1823, Canning Papers, 70.

Egypt. Recollect that Egypt was *the object* of the French before the Revolution, If we withdraw from the Discussions, We should very much weaken our Right eventually & perhaps even our Power, to oppose the Division of the Spoils.

He acknowledged that he felt strongly all the objection to sending a cabinet minister or any other person from London to attend allied conferences, but suggested that the same objection would not apply to the attendance of a British ambassador on the spot.⁵³

The rumour of the opening of an allied meeting on Greece soon turned out to be false. The truth was that in June 1823 the Russian and Austrian emperors had secretly agreed to hold their own meeting in the autumn.⁵⁴ During the summer of 1823, Metternich continued his effort to get Russia to normalise her diplomatic relations with the Porte and obtain the Tsar's pledge to defer the question of Greece until the restoration of Russo-Turkish diplomatic relations. However, the Russian government evaded all his efforts, asserting that it would not even restore its agents in the Principalities before the complete withdrawal of Turkish troops and complaining that since the Congress of Verona none of the allied representatives at Constantinople had tried to discover whether 'the most menacing demonstrations' could defeat the Porte's obstinacies on the question of Greece. Nesselrode expressed his regret at Strangford's failure to execute Canning's despatch of 14 February which in his opinion had provided the British ambassador with 'new means of negotiation' in authorising him to employ 'menacing measures' against the Porte.⁵⁵

Meanwhile in Constantinople, as Canning had predicted, in July 1823 the activities of the British philhellenes began to produce 'a most unfavourable impression' on the

⁵³ Liverpool to Canning, private and confidential, 30 August 1823, *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Metternich to Lebzeltern, 28 June 1823, *Lebzeltern*, pp.250-1.

⁵⁵ Observations du cabinet de Russie, 2 August 1823, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.155-8; Nesselrode to Tatishchev, 2,

mind of the Sultan and his ministers. The Turkish ministers manifested their ill humour so unequivocally as to force Strangford to give pause to the negotiation on behalf of Russia.⁵⁶ However, on receiving Canning's despatches of 12 July and private letter of 15 July, Strangford decided to restart his effort to get the Porte to accept the Russian demands. Now that the Turks appeared to have lost confidence in Britain's friendship, he decided to appeal to their fear of antagonising Britain. At a conference of 30 August with the Turkish ministers, he even told them that, if the Porte by its own obstinacy plunged into a war with Russia, Britain and other European powers would be compelled to indemnify themselves for territory which Russia would acquire as the result of such a war by participating in the partition of Turkey. His threat was so effective that by the middle of September he had obtained the formal accession of the Porte to all the demands of Russia concerning Black Sea commerce.⁵⁷ Strangford in his letter of 22 September reported his success to Nesselrode. On the other hand, he wrote that it was beyond his power to obtain the adjustment of the affairs of Greece and the total evacuation of the Principalities. Russia should not, he suggested, make the previous settlement of the Greek question a condition of the reestablishment of her diplomatic relations with the Porte. Russia could, he also wrote, easily ascertain if the presence of a small number of Turkish troops in the Principalities was really necessary for the maintenance of order by sending her agents back to the Principalities.⁵⁸

Metternich left Vienna for Czernowitz, where the two emperors were to meet, in the

30 August 1823, *ibid.*, pp.161-3, 193; Wellesley to Canning, no.11, 7 August 1823, FO 7/179.

⁵⁶ Strangford to Canning, no.91, confidential, 16 July 1823, no.96, 25 July 1823, FO 78/115.

⁵⁷ Strangford to Canning, no.105, 11 August 1823, nos.114 and 118, 7 September 1823, nos.129 and 130, 11 September 1823, no.131, 22 September 1823, FO 78/116; Strangford's note to the Reis Effendi of 11 August 1823, the Reis Effendi's official message to Strangford of 10 September 1823, and Wood's report to Strangford of 16 September 1823, *Prokesch-Osten*, vol.4, pp.36-45; Strangford to Canning, private, 7 September 1823, Canning Papers, 124.

middle of September. However, on his way to Czernowitz he fell ill. He was detained at Lemberg and could not reach Czernowitz.⁵⁹ When the two emperors met at Czernowitz in early October, however, his absence was largely compensated for by the arrival of Strangford's letter of 22 September. On receiving the letter, Alexander decided to send Matvei Iakovlevich Minciaky to Constantinople as his commercial agent with instructions to watch over Russia's commercial interests. Nesselrode in his letter of 10 October to Strangford declared that the Tsar would nominate his minister to Constantinople on his return to St. Petersburg, and would send him to Constantinople when the Porte completed the evacuation of the Principalities. Alexander, therefore, refrained from demanding that the settlement of the Greek question should precede the reestablishment of his diplomatic relations with the Porte. On the other hand, Nesselrode asserted that 'the time has come to take up this matter [of Greece] with the Ottoman ministry and to make it admit as a starting point that tranquillity would not be re-established in Greece but by the collective intervention of the allied powers'. Nesselrode in fact informed Strangford that the Tsar had ordered him to proceed to Lemberg to concert with Metternich a plan for the pacification of Greece.⁶⁰ Alexander left Czernowitz on 11 October. Metternich, Nesselrode and Tatishchev held several conferences at Lemberg between 13 and 20 October. Metternich willingly accepted Nesselrode's letter of 10 October to Strangford as the base of future negotiations with the Porte. In his despatch of 16 October, he instructed Ottenfels to urge the Porte to

⁵⁸ Strangford to Nesselrode, 22 September 1823, *Prokesch-Osten*, vol.4, pp.45-57.

⁵⁹ Metternich to his wife, Lemberg, 28, 29 September, 2, 10 October 1823, *Metternich*, vol.4, pp.16-8.

⁶⁰ Nesselrode to Strangford with an annex, 10 October 1823, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.221-7. See also, Nesselrode to the Reis Effendi, 17 October 1823, *ibid.*, p.232; Nesselrode to Minciaky, 20 October 1823, *ibid.*, pp.236-9.

accept the Russian demand for the complete evacuation of the Principalities.⁶¹ As for the Greek question, Metternich and the Russians agreed that the Russian government and the allied representatives at St. Petersburg should establish a conference on the matter. Metternich was confident that nothing would come out of it. His intention was to push all the responsibility of producing a feasible plan for the pacification of Greece off onto the Russian government. He calculated that this would greatly embarrass the Russians for not only the Turks but also the Greeks appeared to be determined to reject any compromise. Later in January 1824, he wrote to Lebzeltern: 'Continue to display the greatest zeal, but always return the ball to the Russian cabinet.'⁶² Nesselrode left Lemberg on 21 October to rejoin the Tsar who was travelling the southern provinces of his empire. Soon after he had been reunited with the Tsar, Nesselrode in his circular despatch of 2 November proposed that the allied governments should authorise their representatives at St. Petersburg to enter into discussions with the Russian government on the affairs of Greece. He proposed that the decisions of their conference at St. Petersburg should be directly sent to the allied representatives at Constantinople and should be executed by them.⁶³

It was not until the middle of September that the news of the forthcoming Russo-Austrian meeting at Czernowitz reached Canning.⁶⁴ The news does not seem to have alarmed Canning. Bagot reported that during the summer Alexander's impatience had been 'gradually fermenting', while his government had been 'getting piqued at the endless "expeditions" of P. Metternich'. However, according to Bagot, the Tsar's mood

⁶¹ Metternich to his wife, 13, 21 October 1823, *Metternich*, vol.4, pp.18, 20-1; Metternich to Ottenfels, 16 October 1823, *ibid.*, pp.80-4.

⁶² Metternich to Lebzeltern, 19 January 1824, *Lebzeltern*, p.266.

⁶³ Nesselrode to Tatishchev, Pozzo di Borgo, Lieven and Alopeus, 2 November 1823, *VPR*, vol.5,

had dramatically improved since he had communicated to the Russian government Canning's instructions to Strangford of 12 July. Nesselrode had in fact told the British ambassador that 'amongst all the various Papers, which have emanated from The different Allied Cabinets since the commencement of the discussion between Russia and The Porte, the last instructions given to Lord Strangford must be considered as the only Paper, which has spoken clearly to the Points at issue, or has held with sufficient energy the only language, which it is contended will now produce a real effect upon The Turkish Councils'. Bagot reported that the Tsar had left St. Petersburg in good humour, and the danger of war was now much smaller than a month ago.⁶⁵

However, Canning was 'not without some share of the apprehension . . . that the object of the Russian Government is rather to keep the negotiation [*sic*] pending, with a view to possible openings of advantage, than to close it by a renewal of direct diplomattick [*sic*] relations with The Porte'. Adding to Tatishchev's declaration to Wellesley, he was troubled by Lieven's suggestion that the Tsar would not send a diplomatic mission to Constantinople unless the Porte evacuated the Principalities completely. Canning in his despatch of 11 October instructed Wellesley to declare to Metternich the British government's opinion that, if the concessions which Strangford had obtained from the Porte were realised, Russia should no longer delay restoring her diplomatic relations with the Porte. He asserted that Britain 'cannot be expected to make that Embassy [at Constantinople] permanently and indefinitely the mere Substitute for Russian Diplomacy'. If Russia failed to implement Strangford's

pp.248-9.

⁶⁴ Wellesley to Canning, nos.17 and 18, 4 September 1823, FO 7/179.

⁶⁵ Bagot to Canning, private, 31 August 1823, Canning Papers, 107; same to same, no.37, 31 August 1823, FO 65/139.

assurance to the Turks that she would send a minister to Constantinople on the Porte's execution of those demands which had already been brought forward, 'it is not to be expected that he will then be authorized to resume a Task at once so thankless and so fruitless, that he will be instructed to urge new Demands with diminished influence to the forfeiture of the station which he now holds, and with no other probable result (I trust not with the intention on any side) that the negotiation [*sic*] may be protracted till the War Party in Russia gains the ascendancy, and may then be broken off in our hands'.⁶⁶

It was only natural that Canning was disappointed that Metternich had promised allied support to Russia's demand for the complete evacuation of the Principalities. 'I think', he wrote to Liverpool on 7 November, 'that after having been authorized to promise the Turks a renewal of Russian Intercourse on certain conditions, it is very awkward to have a *new* condition *sine qua non* to bring forward. It must lower us with the Porte and after all if the Emperor of Russia's present counsellors are determined that he shall have war, he *will* have it.' However, Canning admitted that 'the question is a very difficult one'.⁶⁷ After some considerations, Canning decided to wait and see if Strangford could get the Porte to accept the demand. He hoped that 'the Mission of M. Miniacky [*sic*], tho' an imperfect fulfilment of the promise by which Your Excellency [Strangford] was in some degree committed to the Porte, may have been nevertheless accepted by the Porte as an acquittal of it'.⁶⁸

More important than the demand for the complete evacuation of the Principalities was that for the opening of an allied conference on Greece at St. Petersburg, which

⁶⁶ Canning to Wellesley, no.15, 11 October 1823, FO 120/59.

⁶⁷ Canning to Liverpool, private, 7 November 1823, Canning Papers, 70.

reached London in late November. Canning and Liverpool immediately agreed that 'it would not at all do, that we should be committed as to any *Project* respecting Greece without having had the opportunity of *considering it—here*'.⁶⁹ This, however, was not Canning's only objection to the Russian proposal. He thought that the allies powers should postpone the opening of the proposed conference until the arrival of a Russian minister in Constantinople lest its immediate opening should alarm the Turks and prompt them to refuse the evacuation of the Principalities or even to retract their engagements to execute Russia's other demands. He deferred giving a definite answer to the Russian proposal in the hope that he might soon receive from Constantinople the news of the complete withdrawal by the Porte of its troops from the Principalities. However, instead of the news of the evacuation of the Principalities, Canning on 21 December received from Strangford a report that Nesselrode's letter to him of 19 May, in which the Russian minister had suggested that the pacification of Greece was an indispensable condition for the reestablishment of Russo-Turkish diplomatic relations, had been published in public journals, and this intelligence had 'startled and alarmed the Sultan, His Ministers, and the Divan, to the greatest degree'.⁷⁰ Canning told Lieven unofficially that the British government could not agree to the opening of the proposed conference before the reestablishment of Russo-Turkish diplomatic relations.⁷¹

In the middle of January 1824, Canning finally drew up his answer to the Russian proposal. At the beginning of his despatch to Bagot of 15 January, he asserted that it was utterly impossible for the British government to agree to the proposal that its

⁶⁸ Canning to Strangford, no.18, 29 November 1823, FO 78/113.

⁶⁹ Liverpool to Canning, 24 November 1823, Canning Papers, 70.

⁷⁰ Strangford to Canning, no.156, 4 November 1823, FO 78/117.

⁷¹ Lieven to Nesselrode, 14 January 1824, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.289-92.

ambassador at St. Petersburg should be empowered to come to a common decision with the Russian government and the representatives of the other allied powers without referring it to his government, and to send instructions to the British embassy at Constantinople on his own responsibility. On the other hand, Canning declared that, once a Russian diplomatic mission arrived in Constantinople, the British government would authorise Bagot to take part in the proposed conference to report to his government the opinions of other allied governments. He pointed out the danger that 'the entering upon a Conference with Respect to the Affairs of Greece, while the Russian Mission is yet in abeyance . . . might be a Signal with the Turks, not only for an obstinate adherence to the point, which yet remains to be conceded by them; but even for the retraction of Concessions already made'. Canning also pointed out the danger that Britain's participation in the proposed conference before the arrival of a Russian diplomatic mission in Constantinople would result in 'the total loss of that peculiar influence [of Britain] with the Divan, which has enabled us to bring so many difficult and almost hopeless Questions in this Negotiation [*sic*] to a favourable issue'. In other words, Canning questioned whether there was any possibility that the allied powers would still be able to make their voice heard at Constantinople on the affairs of Greece in the event of the destruction of Britain's influence over the Turks. He pointed out that the Russo-Turkish treaties authorised Russia to make representations on behalf of the Sultan's Christian subjects only as a friendly power and only through her minister resident at Constantinople. 'A short postponement of the proposed Conferences', he argued, 'would probably make this difference; and would enable her to speak, in Common with her Allies, the language of amicable Advice; instead of that which so long as She has no Mission at Constantinople, will be considered by the Porte, as the

language of menace, and dictation.’ Canning suggested that the arrival of a Russian minister in Constantinople would not only weaken the Porte’s repugnance against Russia’s interference in its internal affairs but also enable the allied powers to give their representations to the Porte a truly European character.

In short, [he wrote,] a mediation between the Porte and it’s [*sic*] revolted Subjects, after the reestablishment of the Russian Mission, will be felt by the Porte as the joint measure of all the European Powers; and will be viewed by that Government with the more Seriousness, as possibly involving the risk of a rupture with them all. Whereas a demand in favour of the Greeks, while the friendly relations of Russia are still suspended, might and probably will be considered (however mistakenly) by the Porte, as an additional Russian Claim, brought forward as a last Pretext for long meditated Russian hostility.

This sentence strongly suggests that on the question of Greece Canning was prepared to depart from the principle of non-interference. It is clear that, when Canning wrote this sentence, he was thinking of accompanying the offer of allied mediation with an implicit or explicit threat to withdraw their diplomatic missions from Constantinople in the event of the Porte’s refusal of it. Canning declared that, when a Russian minister arrived at Constantinople, the British government would be ready to ‘confer with Russia and her other Allies, for the purpose of making up a common opinion, and of concerting a common course of Action, upon this momentous and interesting Subject’. Moreover, the British government was in the meantime anxious to receive from Russia ‘the Disclosure of her Plans of Pacification for Greece’ and was ready to ‘communicate without Reserve any observations, that may occur to us upon them’. Canning concluded the despatch by proposing that the proposed conference should be established ‘more conveniently, as well as more unexceptionably, at Vienna than at St. Petersburg’. He thought that the Porte’s objection to the allied discussion of the affairs of Greece would

be weaker if it was centred on Vienna rather than on St. Petersburg.⁷²

A few days later, when he was on the point of sending off this despatch to St. Petersburg, he received from Bagot the 'most important & most satisfactory' despatches on the affairs of Turkey.⁷³ On 10 December 1823, Bagot received from Strangford copies of his despatches to Canning, in which he had expressed his expectation that he would be able to prevail on the Porte to withdraw its remaining troops from the Principalities, if he could formally assure it that the evacuation would be immediately followed by the arrival of a Russian minister at Constantinople. Bagot requested that the Tsar should authorise Strangford to give the Porte this assurance, and the Tsar complied with the request. Bagot suspected that Canning's despatch of 11 October to Wellesley had come to the knowledge of the Russians through Vienna and had made them fear that 'England might very possibly slip through their fingers unless they brought matters to a speedy conclusion'. Bagot also reported that the Russian government seemed to regret having prematurely proposed a Greek conference without having a feasible plan for the pacification of Greece.

I know not, [he wrote,] whether we [the British government] have yet given any answer upon the subject, but other Powers have asked for the views of Russia upon the question, and as She either has none, or will not tell them, She is a good deal perplexed, and, if I am not very much mistaken, will continue, if possible, to let the matter die quickly, or at all events, if it is not too late, find means of presenting the conferences to the Porte in some other and less-offensive light than they must now appear to Her.⁷⁴

⁷² Canning to Bagot, no.1, 15 January 1824, FO 181/58.

⁷³ Canning to Liverpool, private, 18 January 1824, Canning Papers, 71.

⁷⁴ Strangford to Canning, no.152, 4 November 1823, no.155, secret, 4 November 1823, no.158, 14 November 1823, FO 78/117; Bagot to Canning, no.62, 29 December 1823 (enclosing Bagot to Strangford, 26 December 1823, and Nesselrode's note to Bagot of 26 December 1823), FO 65/139; Bagot to Canning, private, 29 December 1823 (enclosing Bagot to Strangford, private, 26 December

Bagot's report raised Canning's hope that the Russian government would receive his despatch to Bagot of 15 January 'without any feeling of disappointment'. He authorised Bagot to 'assure the Emperor of Russia that . . . when he has sent his Mission to Constantinople, [I] will talk Greek with him if he pleases'.⁷⁵

Meanwhile in St. Petersburg, contrary to Bagot's expectation, the Russian government proposed the establishment of three autonomous Greek principalities in a memoir of 21 January 1824. The memoir proposed that political arrangements between the Porte and the new principalities should be similar to those between the Porte and the Danubian Principalities, and should be placed under the guarantee of all the allied powers. The memoir asserted that the allied powers should agree on, if not execute, a plan to restore peace in Greece before the reestablishment of Russo-Turkish diplomatic relations. It also demanded that at the proposed conference allied plenipotentiaries should approve the Russian plan and send the allied representatives at Constantinople instructions to get the Porte to accept it.⁷⁶ By the time the Russian government drew up this memoir, the Austrian, Prussian, and French governments had authorised their representatives at St. Petersburg to take part in the proposed conference on Greece. In a despatch of the same date, Nesselrode instructed Lieven to request that the British government should follow their example and authorise Bagot to participate in the conference.⁷⁷

Canning received favourably the Russian proposal that three autonomous principalities should be organised in Greece. In sending the Russian memoir to

1823), Canning Papers, 107.

⁷⁵ Canning to Bagot, no.7, 23 January 1824, FO 181/58; same to same, private and confidential, 22 January 1824, *GCHF*, vol.2, pp.214-5, 218.

⁷⁶ Memoir to the Austrian, British, Prussian and French governments on the pacification of Greece, 21

Wellington, he wrote: 'The Russian mission once established, I see nothing in the practical part of the enclosed paper which may not be made ground of fair and useful deliberation.'⁷⁸ In fact, there is no evidence to support the view that the British ministers did not favour the Russian proposal because they saw in it a thinly veiled attempt of Russia to create her satellites in Greece.⁷⁹ While Liverpool thought that the Russian plan was 'perfectly just & Reasonable', Wellington wrote to Canning that, except the scheme for the allied guarantee of a new arrangement in Greece and some other minor points, 'there would not be much objection' to it. But, did the British ministers expect that the allied powers would be able to prevail on the Turks and the Greeks to accept the Russian plan or some other settlement similar to it? Wellington thought that both the Turks and the Greeks were unwilling to accept any compromise, and 'the *force morale* of the Alliance' would not be sufficient to get the two parties to accept its mediation. He warned Canning that the allied powers would sooner or later have to consider if they should force their plan on the contending parties and, if they decided to do so, which of them should be 'the instrument of action'. On the other hand, Liverpool seems to have expected that it would be difficult but not impossible for the allies to mediate between the Turks and the Greeks. He wrote to the Marquise of Hastings in April:

I have long been inclined to believe that the subjugation of the Country [Greece] by the Turks would be found impracticable, & I cannot but entertain a hope that through the interference of the other Powers of Europe, an Arrangement may be

January 1824, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.308-14.

⁷⁷ Nesselrode to Lieven, 21 January 1824, *ibid.*, pp.319-21.

⁷⁸ Canning to Wellington, 9 February 1824, *Wellington*, vol.2, pp.197-8.

⁷⁹ Temperley, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, p.330; M. S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923: A Study in International Relations* (London, 1966), p.62; Dakin, *Greek Struggle for Independence*, p.154.

accomplished which may release the Greeks from Turkish oppression & secure to them the practical Government of their own Country at the price of a Reasonable Tribute & the Acknowledgement of a Nominal Dependence upon the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t.

Canning, for his part, 'entirely' agreed with Wellington about 'the difficulties of allied interference between Turks and Greeks'.⁸⁰ However, it is unlikely that Canning was as pessimistic as the Duke about the result of allied mediation. As his despatch to Bagot of 15 January clearly shows, the plan to put an end to the war in Greece through allied mediation was now in the centre of his policy on the question of Greece. On 24 February, Canning in fact instructed Strangford to communicate to the Turkish ministers his despatch to Bagot of 15 January and thus apprise the Porte of the intention of the European allies to interfere in the question of Greece after the restoration of Russo-Turkish diplomatic relations. Canning in his despatches asserted that the interest which the allied powers had in the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire in Europe entitled them to interfere in the Greek question, and directed Strangford to sound out the 'the views & Sentiments' of the Porte 'not only as to the general Question of a Mediation, to be undertaken by the Allies, between the Porte and it's [*sic*] Greek Subjects; but as to the Modes of Settlement to which the Porte would be disposed to give it's [*sic*] concurrence'.⁸¹

Canning complied with the request of Metternich, whose main concern was to gain time in the hope that the Turks would in the meantime suppress the Greek revolt, that he should delay answering the Russian memoir until he received Austria's answer to

⁸⁰ Liverpool to Hastings, 11 April 1824, Liverpool Papers, BL Add. MSS 38298; Wellington to Canning, 10 February 1824, *Wellington*, vol.2, pp.203-5; Canning to Wellington, 10 February 1824, *ibid.*, p.205.

⁸¹ Canning to Strangford, nos.7 and 8, 24 February 1824, FO 78/120.

it.⁸² However, on 15 March, he gave a provisional answer to the memoir in his letter to Lieven, declaring that the document appeared to him and some of his cabinet colleagues 'to offer . . . sufficient grounds at least for amicable discussion of the most useful and interesting nature, and, I trust, for a satisfactory result', once Russia restored her diplomatic relations with the Porte.⁸³ The Russian government received both Canning's despatch of 15 January to Bagot and his letter to Lieven with satisfaction. Nesselrode still instructed Lieven to insist on the immediate opening of an allied conference at St. Petersburg. However, the Tsar was apparently more pleased at Britain's promise of future co-operation than discontented with her refusal of the immediate opening of a conference. There is no doubt that Austria's half-hearted approval of the Russian memoir made Britain's favourable reception of his Greek project look even better in the eyes of the Tsar. Metternich's answer to the Russian memoir, dated 17 April, approved the bases of the Russian plan in general terms, but avoided discussing it in detail. After pointing out that both the Turks and the Greeks appeared determined to reject any compromise, Metternich argued that only a perfect accord among the allied powers could surmount this obstacle. The Austrian chancellor, however, did not explain how he thought the allied powers should achieve this accord. He confined himself to pointing out that it would never be achieved unless Russia restored her diplomatic relations with the Porte. The Russians were clearly aware that Metternich was merely trying to gain time. 'Nesselrode thinks, and has told Count Lebzelter', reported Bagot, 'that there is nothing in it [Austria's answer] which might

⁸² Wellesley to Canning, private and confidential, 11 February 1824, Canning Papers, 110; Canning to Wellesley, private, 24 February 1824, Cowley Papers, FO 519/290.

⁸³ Canning to Lieven, 15 March 1824, FO 65/145.

not equally have been said two months ago.’⁸⁴ In the meantime, Canning in his despatch of 24 April to Bagot took a further measure to please Alexander instructing Bagot to inform Nesselrode of the decision of the British government to withdraw its proposal to change the location of the proposed conference to Vienna.⁸⁵

In the spring of 1824, therefore, it appeared that everything depended on the Porte’s decision on the subject of the evacuation of the Principalities. Strangford was not sanguine about the result of his negotiation with the Turkish ministers on the subject. In early 1824, in face of the British philhellenes’ growing financial and military assistance to the Greeks and the failure of the British government and the Ionian authorities to suppress their activities, the Turks again started to complain of the supposed partiality of Britain towards the Greeks.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, on 27 April, Strangford obtained the Porte’s assurance that the final evacuation of the Principalities would take place without the least delay, although the Porte still refused to specify the precise period at which it would take place.⁸⁷

On the receipt of the news of Strangford’s success, Canning in late May promised Lieven to send Bagot instructions for the proposed conference on Greece very shortly. On the other hand, Canning in his despatch of 29 May instructed Bagot not to take any step until he received them.⁸⁸ However, before this despatch reached St. Petersburg,

⁸⁴ Nesselrode to Lieven, 10 March, 17 April 1824, *VPR*, vol.5, pp.345-7, 428; Bagot to Canning, no.15, 10 March 1824, no.24, 7 April 1824, FO 65/142; Metternich to Lebzelter, 17 April 1824, *Prokesch-Osten*, vol.4, pp.73-81; Bagot to Canning, private, 1 May 1824, Canning Papers, 107.

⁸⁵ Canning to Bagot, no.19, 24 April 1824, FO 181/59. Metternich told Wellesley that he preferred opening the allied conference at St. Petersburg, where the allied representatives would have constant access to the Tsar, rather than changing its location to Vienna. Wellesley to Canning, no.19, 11 February 1824, FO 7/182.

⁸⁶ Strangford to Canning, no.14, 2 February 1824, no.21, 25 February 1824, FO 78/121; same to same, nos.42 and 43, 17 April 1824, FO 78/122.

⁸⁷ Strangford to Canning, no.49, 27 April 1824, *ibid*.

⁸⁸ Canning to Bagot, no.22, 29 May 1824 (enclosing Canning to Lieven, 29 May 1824), FO 181/59.

Bagot had made a blunder. The news of the Porte's admission of Russia's demand for the evacuation of the Principalities reached St. Petersburg on 20 May. Nesselrode authorised Strangford to state to the Porte that the Tsar had designated Alexander Ivanovich Ribeaupierre to fill the office of Russian minister at Constantinople as soon as the Porte completed the evacuation.⁸⁹ At the same time, Nesselrode pressed Bagot for the immediate opening of a Greek conference. It had been decided that Bagot should soon return to London. Nesselrode insisted that he and the allied representatives should immediately open their conference on Greece, so that they would be able to conclude their deliberations before Bagot's departure. Pressed by Nesselrode, in the middle of June Bagot agreed to take part in a conference, in the hope that Canning would regard the public designation of Ribeaupierre as virtually fulfilling his condition for Britain's participation in the proposed Greek conference. Nesselrode and the allied representatives held their first conference on 17 June, at which the allied representatives including Bagot declared that their governments approved generally of the bases of the Russian plan. However, none of them were furnished with precise instructions to discuss the details of the Russian plan. At the second meeting of 2 July, Nesselrode read a 'declaration', in which he proposed that the allied powers should get the two belligerents to suspend hostilities and make use of their truce to decide the details of a new arrangement in Greece and get the Turks and the Greeks to accept it. The Russian declaration also proposed that the allied powers should transfer their conference from St. Petersburg to Constantinople, obviously with the aim of speeding up allied negotiations and actions. Anticipating Britain's objection that the allied representatives at Constantinople should not take any action on the question of Greece before the arrival

⁸⁹ Bagot to Canning, no.30, 5 June 1824, FO 65/143.

of a Russian minister, Nesselrode declared that the Russian government would authorise Minciaky, who had arrived at Constantinople in late January, to act as its plenipotentiary on the affairs of Greece until Ribeaupierre's arrival in Constantinople. Bagot and the other allied representatives received the Russian declaration without discussion for reference to their respective governments.⁹⁰

Meanwhile in London, Canning was alarmed by the publication of the text of the Russian plan for the pacification of Greece in the Paris newspaper *Constitutionnel* on 31 May. He feared that, when the Russian plan came to the knowledge of the Turks, they would retract the promise to evacuate the Principalities. He decided that he should not take any further steps towards the opening of the conference on Greece until he ascertained Turkish reaction to the publication. In a despatch of 29 June, he told Bagot his decision to defer giving him the promised instructions.⁹¹ Soon after Canning had written this despatch, he received Bagot's report on the conference of 17 June. It was only natural that Canning disapproved Bagot's unauthorised action, which he feared might result in 'the greatest inconvenience—perhaps even the extinction of Lord Strangford's influence'.⁹² After receiving Bagot's report on the conference of 2 July, Canning on 23 July instructed Strangford to lose no time in apprising Minciaky that the British government had always considered the establishment of a Russian diplomatic mission at Constantinople as 'a sine qua non condition of the Attendance of a British Minister at any Conference to be held at St. Petersburg on the Subject of Greece'. If Minciaky nevertheless persisted in bringing forward the Russian proposal contained in

⁹⁰ Bagot to Canning, private, 23 June 1824, Canning Papers, 107; same to same, no.33, 6 July 1824, FO 65/143; Protocol of the conference of 17 June 1824, and 'Déclaration' by Nesselrode of 2 July 1824, *Prokesch-Osten*, vol.4, pp.85-90.

⁹¹ Canning to Bagot, no.24, 29 June 1824, FO 181/59.

the declaration of 2 July as a measure agreed to by the allies, Strangford should apprise the Porte that the British government was no party to it.⁹³

Meanwhile, in Constantinople Strangford on 19 June finally received from the Porte an official communication of its accession to the Russian demand for the evacuation of the Principalities. The substance of this communication was perfectly satisfactory, but the terms in which it was conveyed were somewhat vague as the final act of the prolonged negotiations. This problem was settled at a conference of 23 June, at which the Turkish ministers requested Strangford to communicate officially to the Russian government the Porte's decision to withdraw its troops from the Principalities 'immediately'. Strangford wrote to Nesselrode on 29 June, announcing the conclusion of the long and arduous negotiations.⁹⁴

Strangford's despatch reporting the final success of his negotiations reached Canning on 29 July. He naturally judged that the time was approaching when the allied powers should finally take up the question of Greece. Canning in fact displayed his willingness to tackle the question as soon as he received Strangford's report. On the same day that he received the report, he instructed Bagot to urge the Russian government to satisfy immediately Britain's condition of her participation in the proposed conference on Greece, that is, Ribeaupierre's arrival in Constantinople.⁹⁵ More important was his plan to send his cousin Stratford to St. Petersburg on a special mission to take part in the proposed allied conference. Canning intended that, after the conclusion of the conference at St. Petersburg, Stratford should proceed directly to Constantinople with

⁹² Canning to Bagot, no.25, 12 July 1824, *ibid.*

⁹³ Canning to Strangford, no.28, 23 July 1824, FO 78/120.

⁹⁴ Strangford to Canning, no.75, 29 June 1824, FO 78/122; Strangford to Nesselrode, 29 June 1824, *Prokesch-Osten*, vol.4, pp.105-14.

the result of allied deliberations and take up the post of ambassador there, while he designated Strangford as new ambassador at St. Petersburg. Canning had already granted Strangford a leave of absence on condition that he concluded his negotiations at Constantinople first. His intention was to send Strangford to St. Petersburg in the next spring after the conclusion of Stratford's special mission. Canning directed Bagot to ascertain whether this arrangement would be agreeable to Alexander and Nesselrode.⁹⁶

At the heart of this plan was Canning's decision to put the question of Greece entirely into Stratford's hands. It was in fact obvious that Strangford was not the best man for the task. As we have seen, he had already expressed to Canning his unwillingness to press the Porte 'to remodel altogether the relations between the Sultan and His Christian Subjects'. In the summer of 1824, it appeared that his opinion on the matter was unchangeable.⁹⁷ Stratford's view was totally different from that of Strangford. As early as September 1821, he wrote to his cousin George that 'as a matter of humanity' he wished the Greeks 'put in possession of their whole patrimony' and the Turks 'driven, bag and baggage, into the heart of Asia'. However, he admitted that the Greeks would not be able to recover their freedom without the aid of Russia, and Russia's military intervention to liberate the Greeks would lead to her aggrandisement, 'the very result most certain to be deprecated'. His ideas about solving this dilemma were inconclusive, but he seems to have thought that the best solution would be the collective diplomatic intervention of the four allied powers to force the Porte to give the Greeks a better political status than they had enjoyed before 1821. 'If Russia takes up

⁹⁵ Canning to Bagot, no.30, 29 July 1824, FO 181/59.

⁹⁶ Canning to Bagot, private, 29 July 1824, *GCHF*, vol.2, pp.267-8.

⁹⁷ Strangford to Canning, private, 29 June 1824, Canning Papers, 124; Strangford to Metternich, 1 July 1824, *Prokesch-Osten*, vol.4, pp.101-5.

the cudgels for them [the Greeks]', wrote he, 'can the Porte be mad enough to refuse such terms as the principal Powers of Europe, unfavourable to Russian aggrandizement, would consider reasonable?' Stratford also suggested that the allied powers should not go so far as to demand of the Porte the complete independence of the Greeks, 'which could be never wrung from the Porte without a war'. The settlement he had in mind was in all probability Greek autonomy under the Sultan's suzerainty.⁹⁸ Canning had a good reason to count on his younger cousin to exert himself to get the Porte to come to terms with its Greek subjects.

It is, however, beyond the scope of this study to discuss the consequences of Canning's plan on the question of Greece. Our concern in this chapter is to examine Canning's eastern policy from September 1822 to the summer of 1824. It is for the moment suffice to say that Canning had a clear plan on the question of Greece. The essence of his plan was to settle the question through the joint mediation of the allied powers. Canning would certainly have been more than happy if—as Metternich always hoped—the Turks had quickly suppressed the Greek revolt. However, in 1823 and in the first half of 1824 there was little sign that they would succeed in doing so. Canning strongly suspected that Stratford and Metternich were wrong in believing that the allied powers could simply reject or evade the Tsar's demand for allied co-operation to put an end to the war in Greece without driving him into independent military intervention. Canning's basic policy was to support the Tsar's blueprint for a new arrangement in Greece, which he considered to be reasonable, but control the way in which Russia and her allies should implement it. In other words, his policy was to settle

⁹⁸ Stratford Canning to Canning, 29 September 1821, Lane-Poole, *Life of Stratford Canning*, vol.1, p.307.

the question by persuading the Turks and the Greeks into accepting the Tsar's plan or some other arrangement similar to it while restraining the Tsar from coercing them into accepting it by force. Canning thought that the best way to get the Turks and the Greeks to settle for a compromise would be to offer them the joint mediation of the allied powers after the restoration of Russo-Turkish diplomatic relations. He had little doubt that neither the Turks nor the Greeks would accept any offer of mediation unless Russia restored her diplomatic relations with the Porte. The Greeks would not lay down their arms so long as there seemed to be a good chance that Russia would be drawn into war with the Turks.⁹⁹ The Turks, for their part, would regard any demand made by Russia on behalf of the Greeks while Russo-Turkish diplomatic relations remained severed as accompanied by the implicit threat of war. The Turks were apparently too proud to accept such a demand. At the same time, however, the Turks would not lend an ear to any representation of European powers recommending them to come to a compromise with the Greek rebels unless they were persuaded that their intransigence would lead to grave consequences. Canning calculated that he would be able to bring the maximum pressure to bear on the Porte to accept a European plan for a new settlement in Greece if he could demonstrate that the members of the European Alliance unanimously supported it. He even considered threatening the Porte that its refusal of allied mediation would result in the withdrawal of the allied diplomatic missions from Constantinople. Canning obviously believed that the European Alliance as a guardian of the Sultan's European domains had a right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire as long as they were likely to have serious repercussions on the stability of the European international system. In February 1824, in instructing

⁹⁹ Canning to Strangford, no.7, 24 February 1824, FO 78/120.

Strangford to apprise the Turkish ministers of the intention of the allied powers to interfere in the question of Greece after the arrival of a Russian diplomatic mission in Constantinople, he wrote:

. . . the pacification of Greece by Turkish Counsels alone, is evidently so hopeless and the continuance of that War is not only so disastrous in itself, but so obviously pregnant with the danger of extended hostilities, that it must become a question with the European Powers and most particularly and most anxiously with those of them whose disposition towards the Porte is the most friendly how long they can look on unconcerned upon Scenes of Sanguinary Conflict alike destructive of the internal peace of the Turkish Empire and hazardous to its external security seems, which if continued for a much longer Period must not only desolate the Country in which they take place, but in their Consequences be pernicious to Europe.¹⁰⁰

It is by no means unimportant to find that Canning had a clear plan on the question of Greece, for many historians maintain that he did not have any plan for the settlement of the Greek question at all in his first few years after his assumption of office in 1822. British Historians who studied the subject in the first half of the last century, such as Harold Temperley and C. W. Crawley, paid little attention to Canning's Greek policy in its early stage. Both Temperley and Crawley discuss the subject primarily in its relations to Canning's opposition to the 'Congress System', and suggest that, although Canning thought that an allied congress or conference might be the best means of averting a Russo-Turkish war, his hatred of allied meetings led him to try to avoid it as far as he safely could. On the other hand, these historians do not discuss almost any of Canning's official or private correspondence with Strangford in 1822-4, and are inevitably vague about how Canning intended to settle the question of Greece, whether with or without an allied conference. On the whole, the impression which we get from

¹⁰⁰ Canning to Strangford, no.7, 24 February 1824, *ibid.*

their studies is that Canning had no clear plan as to how to put an end to the war in Greece.¹⁰¹ Édouard Driault, on the other hand, paid greater attention than Temperley to Canning's Greek policy in its early stage in his study of the Greek war of independence which was published in 1925, quoting some of Canning's despatches to Strangford. Driault argues that Canning right from the start contemplated creating an independent Greek state, placing her under British influence, and using her as a barrier against Russia. The very documents that Driault quotes do not support this view.¹⁰² Nevertheless, his view was later in 1973 taken up and developed further by Douglas Dakin. Dakin argues that Canning was determined to break free from the European Alliance, and was not concerned whether the destruction of the allied concert on the eastern question would result in a Russo-Turkish war. According to Dakin, what really mattered to Canning was that that 'if the Greeks succeeded in gaining their independence they should look towards Great Britain, and not exclusively either to France or Russia'. Dakin holds that Canning knew that 'the Greeks would probably survive' the war against the Turks and would someday seek Britain's assistance. In Dakin's view, Canning from the outset intended to establish British influence over the Greeks by assisting them to achieve independence. However, 'until he was ready for some master-stroke he had to pay at least lip service to the European concert and to work within the limits it imposed'. Canning therefore 'played a waiting game' from 1822 to 1825, 'patiently watching the growth of the English interest in Greece'.¹⁰³ A

¹⁰¹ Temperley, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, pp.319-33; Crawley, *The Question of Greek Independence*, pp.26-36.

¹⁰² Édouard Driault, *Histoire diplomatique de la Grèce de 1821 à nos jours. Tome premier: L'insurrection et l'indépendance (1821-1830)* (Paris, 1925), pp.199-204, 230-2.

¹⁰³ Dakin, *Greek Struggle for Independence*, pp.148-55. Dakin first suggested this view, although more hesitatingly, in his *British Intelligence of Events in Greece, 1824-1827: A Documentary Collection* (Athens, 1959), pp.5-11.

more recent account of Canning's Greek diplomacy by Steven Schwartzberg agrees with Dakin's view that Canning was in favour of Greek independence and had little interest in the preservation of peace in the east. However, while Dakin attributes Canning's supposed pro-Greek policy to his concern for Britain's national interest, Schwartzberg attributes it to 'his sympathy for the Greek nationalist cause'. His explanation for Canning's early inactivity is simple. He argues that, due primarily to 'his unconsolidated position within British politics', his sympathy for the Greeks had been 'held in check' until the middle of 1825.¹⁰⁴ However, not all recent studies of the subject accept the view that Canning had played a waiting game in his first few years in office watching for a chance to assist the Greeks in their struggle for independence. Allan Cunningham, for example, maintains that Canning was 'without a preconsidered Greek "policy" '. According to Cunningham, concentrating his attention on 'some of those side-issues, as he went along, most particularly the isolation of Austria, the humiliation of Metternich, and the dissolution of congress diplomacy', Canning had remained indifferent to Greek affairs until the middle of 1825.¹⁰⁵ Paul Schroeder and Loyal Cowles take a similar view. Schroeder, for example, argues that in 1822-4 Canning was preoccupied with other issues than the question of Greece, such as the affairs of Latin America, Spain and Portugal and his position within the British cabinet, and 'had little or no interest in solving the Greek question or the Russo-Turkish quarrel at this time, or even in preventing a Russo-Turkish war, so long as it did not harm particular British interests'.¹⁰⁶

We can conclude from what we have seen in this chapter that these existing

¹⁰⁴ Schwartzberg, 'The Lion and the Phoenix', pp.150-7.

¹⁰⁵ Cunningham, 'The Philhellenes, Canning and Greek Independence', pp.167-77.

explanations of Canning's Greek diplomacy are all wrong. First, there is no evidence whatever to show that in 1823 and in 1824 Canning played 'a waiting game' while watching for a chance to assist the Greeks in their struggle for independence. His policy was always to get the Turks and the Greeks to come to a compromise. Second and more important, there is no truth in the view—which is more or less shared by all these scholars—that Canning's Greek policy was greatly influenced by his dislike of European congresses and conferences or his determination to break up the European Concert. True, in late August 1823, Canning suggested to Liverpool that, if the rumour of the opening of a European congress on the question of Greece turned out to be true, the British government should refuse to take part in it. However, he made this suggestion on the assumption that the aim of the rumoured congress would be to give sanction to Russia's military intervention. As long as the aim of allied co-operation was to mediate between the Turks and the Greeks, he was fully prepared to take part in it. What is more, apart from Tsar Alexander, Canning was the most eager among the allied statesmen for allied co-operation on the Greek question. The severest attack on Canning's supposedly anti-European Greek policy comes from Paul Schroeder, who attributes the ultimate failure of Metternich's Greek policy to it.

So far as the Greek question was concerned, [Schroeder writes,] Canning was simply determined not to co-operate with Metternich, whom he hated, or with France, whose victory in Spain he still resented, especially in any policy not initiated and clearly led by Britain. More important still, . . . Canning considered the [European] concert an intrinsically bad instrument of the Holy Alliance and wanted to break it up, restoring the old European politics of normal everyday rivalries, to the benefit of Britain's interests and prestige and his own.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Loyal Cowles, 'The Failure to Restrain Russia', pp.688-97; Schroeder, *Transformation*, pp.637-40.

However, the truth was not that, as Schroeder believes, anti-European Canning 'deliberately spurned' Metternich's effort to control Russia within the framework of the European Concert¹⁰⁸, but that the two statesmen had different ideas about the allied concert on the question of Greece. While Metternich regarded the concert essentially as an instrument for procrastination and inaction, Canning desired to use it as an instrument for more positive action.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.639-40.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.661.

Conclusion

We have seen Canning's diplomacy for nearly two years after his appointment as foreign secretary in September 1822. Canning was to remain in the post until April 1827, when he became prime minister, and continued to be in control of the government's foreign policy until his death in August 1827. We are therefore still not in a position to grasp the entire picture of his diplomacy after September 1822. However, it is perhaps right to say that enough has been done in this study to understand the system of his diplomacy and some basic principles which guided it.

One of the important conclusions to be derived from the examination of Canning's diplomacy between September 1822 and July 1824 is that it is not entirely proper to call the British government's foreign policy in this period Canning's foreign policy. During these twenty-two months, Canning, Liverpool and Wellington formed a sort of informal cabinet committee for foreign affairs. Liverpool had, as prime minister, an unquestionable right to take part in the government's decision-making on foreign policy. Besides, his position as the spokesman of the government's policies in the House of Lords required him to be acquainted with the details of Canning's work at the Foreign Office. Wellington, on the other hand, owed his place in the triumvirate not to his post but to his experience in European diplomacy between 1814 and 1818 and his mission to Verona, where he discussed virtually all international questions of some importance with the leaders of the continental allies. The government's important decisions on foreign policy were made almost always as the result of discussions between these three statesmen, although from the end of the Congress of Verona to early 1824 Canning did

not consult with Wellington on the eastern question.

Of these three British statesmen, Wellington was the most European in his outlook. This undoubtedly came partly from the fact that he did not fully comprehend the peculiarity of Britain's political institutions. His attitude towards his country's representative institution was in fact unusual. In November 1818, he accepted the offer of a seat in the cabinet only on condition that, if the Tory government fell from power, he should be allowed not to join his colleagues in opposing a new government. 'The experience which I have acquired during my long service abroad has convinced me', he wrote in his letter of acceptance, 'that a factious opposition to the government is highly injurious to the interests of the country.'¹ He believed that government should stand above Parliament and defy public opinion when what he believed to be the true interest of the country required it to do so. His definition of Britain's true interest was very simple. It was the preservation of great-power peace in Europe. He believed that the allied powers could maintain the peace of Europe only by keeping themselves closely united. Wellington's belief that Britain should maintain close unity with the continental allies was even stronger than that of Castlereagh. His political creed was similar to that of conservative continental statesmen. He shared with them the fear that European revolutions—especially a revolution in France—would trigger a European war, and in principle approved counterrevolutionary interventions. His authoritarian nature naturally led him to associate himself with the so-called High Tories, the conservative wing of the Tory party which represented the landed interests. It is not surprising that he did not share the desire of Canning and Liverpool to promote the interests of Britain's

¹ Wellington to Liverpool, 1 November 1818, The 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Despatches, Correspondence, and Memoranda of Field Marshal Duke of Wellington* (12 vols.,

manufacturing and commercial class. Besides, having a strong cavalier sense of honour, he felt ashamed when the government acted in such a way as to substantiate a common continental view of Britain that she was a country of shopkeepers.

Liverpool's ideas on Britain's foreign policy were almost completely incompatible with those of Wellington. In late December 1822, when Charles Arbuthnot, who played an important part in the British politics as a liaison between the leaders of the Tory party for the much of the 1810s and 1820s and was particularly close to Wellington, told him Wellington's dissatisfaction with the government's policy on the question of Spain, the prime minister answered: '. . . the truth is, he [Wellington] is rather *more continental* than we either are or ought to be *permanently*. I say *permanently*, because from circumstances we were brought into a course which was quite right at the time, but to which (with our different prejudices and form of Gov[ernmen]t.) we never could expect to adhere indefinitely.'² Again in early 1824, when Wellington objected to Canning's and Liverpool's proposal to make mention of Britain's possible acknowledgement of Spanish American independence in the near future in the King's speech at the opening of Parliament, the prime minister bitterly complained to Arbuthnot that Wellington 'carried too far his desire to keep up a strict alliance with the Continental Powers'.³ In fact, Temperley's depiction of Canning as a traditional British isolationist fits Liverpool more comfortably than it does Canning himself. Liverpool was strongly convinced that Britain's continental commitments should be strictly limited. He was clearly more non-interventionist than his foreign minister. After all, it

London, 1858-65), vol.12, pp.812-3.

² Liverpool to Arbuthnot, 29 December 1822, A. Aspinall (ed.), *The Correspondence of Charles Arbuthnot*, Royal Historical Society, Camden Third Series, vol.65 (1941), p.42.

³ 3 February 1824, *Mrs. Arbuthnot*, vol.1, p.285.

was Liverpool and not Canning who was really responsible for the much celebrated 'come what may' instruction. The prime minister clearly desired that the government should concentrate on consolidating Britain's commercial and maritime predominance unfettered by continental commitments. His aversion to any difficulties in Parliament also strengthened his insular outlook. Liverpool's earlier views on the eastern question—he was resigned to the inevitability of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in Europe and was greatly concerned with the resultant 'Division of the Spoils' and especially with the future of Egypt—also suggest that, in face of the real European crisis which Wellington feared might result in the outbreak of a European war which in its turn would trigger European revolutions, he was concerned more with the protection of the route to India than with the preservation of the European territorial order.

Canning's position was somewhere between these two extremes. He agreed with Liverpool and disagreed with Wellington in regarding his country essentially as a maritime and commercial power. Unlike Wellington, he had a profound pride in his country's representative institutions. He believed that Britain's present political institutions gave her stability and strength, and willingly accepted the restrictions which they put on the government's foreign policy. On the other hand, he was not as indifferent as Liverpool to Britain's prestige in Europe. In July 1824, reprimanding Thornton's failure to re-establish Britain's ascendancy in Lisbon, he wrote:

. . . there cannot be a doubt that, both within Portugal and without, the name of *Pamplona* [Subserra] is inseparably associated with *France*: and his rise or fall is looked to as the indication of the ascendancy of British or French influence in Portugal. . . . In question of influence, appearance goes more than half-way towards settling the impression of mankind; and such impression in a struggle for power goes

more than half-way towards the reality.⁴

Canning also differed from Liverpool in accepting unhesitatingly that Britain had a deep interest in the preservation of the European international system.

There were thus important differences between Canning's ideas on foreign policy and those of Liverpool. However, they were certainly smaller than differences between Canning's ideas and those of Wellington. There was also an important factor which laid restraint on Liverpool's isolationist instinct. Britain's commercial success required peace in Europe, and this simple fact led Liverpool to accept, at least to a certain extent, Britain's commitment to Europe. His desire for the preservation of general peace in Europe, for instance, led him to support Canning's eastern policy. In April 1824, he wrote:

The Power & even the Existence of the Turks in Europe may not be of long Duration, but after all Europe has suffered in the course of the last Thirty Years, Repose must be our first Object, & it is impossible not to look with apprehension to the Consequences which must arise from the dismemberment of an Empire so Vast in Its Extent & containing within it many of the finest & most fertile Provinces of the World.⁵

Liverpool also acquiesced in Canning's Portuguese diplomacy, for it was sensible enough to keep the government from any serious trouble in Parliament. Canning and Liverpool in fact rarely differed on practical questions.

The unity of their views enabled Canning to prevail easily on the cabinet to accept his views on foreign policy. True, he still faced the opposition of Wellington and other High Tories, who were the majority in the cabinet, on many diplomatic questions.

⁴ Canning to Thornton, private, 10 July 1824, FO 179/26.

However, Wellington could not turn the numerical superiority of his sympathisers in the cabinet to his advantage, for decisions on foreign affairs were normally made between Canning, Liverpool and Wellington himself. To his dismay, every time the triumvirate disagreed on the government's foreign policy, Wellington found himself in the minority. Moreover, even when their disagreements spilled out of their informal discussions into the cabinet table, those who sympathised with the Duke's views were hesitant in opposing the prime minister's opinions. The secret was that they were far from certain whether things would turn for the better if their opposition to what they called 'liberal' foreign policy of Canning and Liverpool resulted in the collapse of the Liverpool government. In the spring and summer of 1824, as we have seen, the government actually faced the probability of Liverpool's imminent retirement because of his ill health. While the King let everyone know his desire to appoint Wellington as Liverpool's successor, the opposition was in high hopes that it might finally join with liberal Tories in a government headed by Canning.⁶ Even Bathurst, one of the Duke's closest allies in the cabinet, thought that Canning had a better chance of success. He told Arbuthnot that 'the Duke would scarcely be able to make a government' if the present government collapsed.⁷ It should come as no surprise that Wellington and his friends tried to persuade Liverpool into withdrawing his support from Canning's policy instead of trying to dethrone him. Liverpool, however, uncompromisingly rejected their attempt.⁸ In fact, it is misleading even to say that Liverpool supported Canning's

⁵ Liverpool to Hastings, 11 April 1824, Liverpool Papers, BL Add. MSS 38298.

⁶ 7, 11 April, 26 May, 6, 10 June 1824, *Mrs. Arbuthnot*, vol.1, pp.299, 300, 314-5, 320, 321-2; Madame Lieven to Metternich, 9 May, 17 June 1824, *Princess Lieven*, pp.257-8, 259-61.

⁷ 19 July 1824, *Mrs. Arbuthnot*, vol.1, pp.328-9.

⁸ 4, 6, 12 October 1823, *ibid.*, pp.261-4; A draft of Arbuthnot's letter to Liverpool with Wellington's corrections, c. 7 October 1823, Arbuthnot, *Correspondence*, pp.46-57; Liverpool to Arbuthnot, 8 October 1823, *ibid.*, pp.57-8.

foreign policy. Liverpool had his own ideas on foreign policy, which were incompatible with Wellington's ideas even more than Canning's were with the Duke's. In the partnership which came to dominate Britain's foreign policy, it was often Liverpool who took the lead. Not only did he suggest to Canning to include the 'come what may' paragraph in his Verona instructions to Wellington, but he proposed that the government should send a commissioner to Mexico to report on the question of Britain's recognition of Mexican independence. It was also Liverpool who took the lead in opposing Wellington's opinion that Britain should comply with Portugal's appeal for military assistance.

From what has been said on the British government's decision-making on foreign policy, we can safely conclude that, although Canning did not single-handedly decide the government's foreign policy, the actual decisions which the government took as the result of his discussions with his cabinet colleagues and especially with Liverpool and Wellington were almost always in line with his own views. In this sense, he was the dominant figure in Britain's foreign policy. He did not personally dominate the government's decision-making on foreign policy, but his views and ideas dominated the government's foreign policy.

It is probably not at all surprising that his ideas came to dominate Britain's foreign policy. They were certainly more balanced than the simple isolationist policy, which Liverpool instinctively preferred, or Wellington's European policy. What Canning believed to be the essential elements of British foreign policy were more diverse, complex and comprehensive than those which Wellington or Liverpool thought the government should take into account in deciding its foreign policy. Some of them—Britain's maritime and commercial interests, liberal public opinion, and

isolationist public opinion—had their origins in Britain's unique geographical, political, and economic position. However, the others—Britain's prestige and influence in Europe, and her interest in the preservation of peace and the balance of power in Europe—were more European-oriented. Thus Canning's principal task as foreign secretary was to find a right balance between these diverse—and often conflicting—elements of his country's foreign policy. His true greatness lay in his superb skill with which he handled this difficult task.

Canning in fact proved himself capable of putting these various elements of British foreign policy into one coherent policy soon after his assumption of office. Once he realised that he could not prevent French intervention in Spain, he decided that every consideration except Britain's prestige—especially his countrymen's desire for peace and the necessity of avoiding triggering a European war which would endanger Britain's other continental interests—pointed to the policy of neutrality. At the same time, however, he showed his deference to public opinion by criticising openly the principles on which France based her right to intervene in Spain. He also took great care to prevent France from making use of her provable victory in Spain to destroy the European balance of power, to attack Britain's commercial and maritime interests, or to cause further damage to her prestige and influence in Europe, declaring that Britain would take up arms if France attempted to occupy Spain permanently, to invade Spain's former colonies, or to attack Portugal. It is not surprising that his policy of neutrality with these three conditions accompanied by his stern criticism of the doctrine of counterrevolutionary intervention was approved in the House of Commons by the resounding majority. His policy satisfied almost all essential elements of British foreign policy.

On the other hand, on many other diplomatic questions of the period, the conflicts among the various elements of British foreign policy were more apparent and more difficult to solve. On the question of Portugal, Canning's main task was to preserve Britain's influence in Portugal—and with it her prestige on the continent—without alienating public opinion and Parliament, both of which disliked the government's interference in another country's internal affairs. On the question of Spanish America, his task was to promote the interest of Britain's commercial class which demanded Britain's recognition of Spanish American independence—a policy which was also supported by liberal public opinion—without causing severe damage to her relations with the three autocratic members of the Alliance and destroying her co-operation with them for the preservation of the European international system. In dealing with the questions of Spanish American and Brazilian independence, Canning also faced the difficult question of how to reconcile Britain's interests in Europe with those outside Europe. Should she take naval action against the Spanish authorities in America or even recognise the independence of Spain's former colonies to protect her commercial interests and satisfy Parliament at the risk of causing severe damage to her relations with Spain when her mediation between Spain and France appeared to be the only means by which she could avert a Franco-Spanish war? Should she recognise Brazilian independence at the risk of driving Portugal into the arms of the continental allies? These were the questions that defied simple, clear solutions.

In dealing with these questions, Canning always tried to find a pragmatic, sensible compromise, and in this he was largely successful. In late 1822, he decided that he should concentrate his energy on preventing a Franco-Spanish war if Spain offered some '*eclatante*' compensation for the damages which British traders had suffered in

the hands of the Spanish authorities in America, which was the minimum requirement to placate the dissatisfaction of British merchantmen with the government's failure to protect them. He successfully secured the convention for that purpose before the start of the war without alienating the Spanish liberals. His effort to get the Spaniards to modify their constitution in the end failed. But, it was not because of his demands for the protection of British commerce in America. On the question of Portugal, in the summer of 1824 Canning had not yet succeeded in restoring the complete ascendancy of Britain's influence in Lisbon. However, during these two difficult years since his assumption of office, in spite of great adversity he managed to maintain Britain's influence in Portugal without overt interference in Portugal's internal affairs. On the question of Brazilian independence, in the summer of 1824 the consequences of Canning's effort to get John VI to recognise Brazilian independence were not yet clear. Much depended on the result of his effort to restore Britain's ascendancy in Lisbon. The government's failure to recognise Brazil, however, was far more acceptable to liberal public opinion and British manufacturers and traders than its failure to recognise the new states in Spanish America. First, the Rio de Janeiro government adamantly refused the immediate abolition of the slave trade—a cause which British public opinion strongly supported—in return for Britain's recognition of Brazilian independence. Second, the government's failure to recognise Brazilian independence had not seriously affected Anglo-Brazilian trade, because the Rio de Janeiro government continued to observe the Anglo-Portuguese commercial treaty of 1810 after its declaration of independence. It is true that time was running out for Canning, because the treaty of 1810 was coming up for revision in February 1825. Negotiations could not be delayed long with the Brazilian government for the conclusion of a new treaty or the renewal of

the existing treaty, the signing of either of which would constitute Britain's recognition of Brazilian independence. However, Canning still had some months to persuade the Portuguese to accept the inevitable. He was more successful in preserving Anglo-Austrian co-operation on the question of Brazilian independence, which helped him to avoid Britain's isolation in Europe. He was also successful in preventing Britain's isolationist policy on the question of Spanish America from causing severe damage to her relations with the continental allies and destroying their co-operation for the preservation of the European international system. From what we have seen in Chapter V, we can safely conclude that his refusal to discuss the question of Spanish America with the eastern allies at the proposed allied conference did not have any unfavourable effect on the allied concert on the eastern question. This was essentially because the Tsar was in any case anxious to obtain the co-operation of the allied powers—and that of Britain in particular—in achieving a Greek settlement. But, Canning's calm reaction to Russia's persistent interference with his Iberian and Latin American diplomacy undoubtedly contributed to the preservation of the allied concert in the east. In the meantime, the British public was satisfied with the government's gradual but steady advance towards the recognition of Spanish American independence. In the House of Commons, after Canning had published in March 1824 an extract of the memorandum of his conference with Polignac of October 1823 and his despatch of 30 January 1824 to à Court, seeing that the government would surely recognise the independence of the new states in the near future, the opposition decided not to introduce a motion in favour of Britain's recognition of their independence.⁹

Canning was thus largely successful in finding a practical compromise between the

⁹ *Hansard*, vol.10, House of Commons, 13 February, 4, 25 March 1824, cols.157, 708-19, 1393-4.

conflicting elements of British foreign policy. However, what is really remarkable about Canning's efforts in this regard was not his success but the fact that he attached as much importance to the European-oriented elements of British foreign policy as to more purely British considerations.¹⁰ Most importantly, quite contrary to the traditional account of his diplomacy, he took great care to make sure that Britain's pursuit of her particular interests should not strain her relations with other allied powers so severely that they would no longer be able to maintain their co-operation for the preservation of the European international system. Canning was from the outset clearly aware that there existed a question in Europe that might develop into a serious threat to the stability of the European international system. The question was the Russo-Turkish dispute over the execution and interpretation of their treaties and the future of Greece. Canning clearly recognised that Britain could not deal with this grave question single-handedly, and that it could only be safely dealt with by the close co-operation of the great powers,

¹⁰ Two historians of the so-called 'Great Game in Asia'—M. E. Yapp and Edward Ingram—have already pointed out that Canning subordinated Britain's worldwide imperial interests to her European interests in trying persistently to get rid of her connection with Persia, which she had entered into in 1809 to prevent French invasion of India, but had come to strain her relations with Russia after 1815. 'His European policy was', Yapp writes, 'based upon securing the co-operation of Russia in the settlement of the Greek question and he was not going to endanger that for the defence of India.' Ingram, for his part, argues that the years 1807-23, during which Canning and Castlereagh dominated British foreign policy except for three years between 1809 and 1812 when Lord Wellesley was at the Foreign Office, was 'an interruption' in the British tradition of paying greater attention to her worldwide imperial interests than to the European balance of power, although he later slightly modified his view in arguing that Canning's decision to get rid of Britain's connection with Persia did not signify his lack of interest in the Indian empire, for he hoped, although vainly, to restrain Russia in Persia by Anglo-Russian co-operation on Turkish affairs. However, while arguing that Castlereagh and Canning were alike in focusing attention on the European balance of power, Ingram accepts the orthodox view that they had 'different ideas about the European states system and Great Britain's relationship with it'. He argues that Canning was 'a nationalist in international relations' who 'relied on the adjustment, or balance, of power in preference to the consensus or equilibrium Castlereagh had sought'. He maintains that Canning wished to get rid of Britain's connection with Persia precisely because Britain could not protect Persia from Russia but by bringing her into the European states system and, once she did so, she would not be able to 'escape the restraints of the Concert of Europe'. M. E. Yapp, *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan, 1798-1850* (Oxford, 1980), pp.100-4; Edward Ingram, *In Defence of British India: Great Britain in the Middle East, 1775-1842* (London, 1984), pp.212-3, and *Britain's Persian Connection, 1798-1828*, pp.243-57.

especially of Russia, Austria and Britain.

Canning had never systematically stated his own idea about the system of great-power concert, at least during the period between September 1822 and the summer of 1824. However, it is not difficult to deduce it from what he wrote, said and did in the period. One of Canning's most interesting remarks on the matter was made in his famous speech of 30 April 1823 in the House of Commons on the question of the French invasion of Spain. In the speech, he clearly stated his opinion that it must have been totally useless for the British plenipotentiary at Verona to try to persuade the continental powers to drop their doctrine by his 'didactic reprehensions' against it.

In truth, [he said,] the principle of non-interference is one, on which we were already irrecoverably at variance in opinion with the allies;—it was no longer debatable ground. On the one hand, the alliance upholds the doctrine of an European police; this country, on the other hand, as appears from the memorandum already quoted [the State Paper of 5 May 1820], protests against that doctrine. The question is, in fact, settled,—as many questions are,—by each party retaining its own opinions; and the points reserved for debate are points only of practical application. To such a point it was that we directed our efforts at Verona.¹¹

In other words, Canning's aim was not to destroy the counterrevolutionary alignment of the autocratic powers. He thought that it was no business of his to combat their doctrine in their spheres of influence, that is, in central and eastern Europe. His aim was limited to rejecting their attempt at extending the operation of their doctrine beyond their spheres of influence. It is probably not too far from the truth to say that Canning's idea about the system of great-power co-operation was closely connected with informal spheres of influence agreements which tacitly existed among the victorious allies of the Napoleonic Wars, that is, all the European great powers except France, who resented

the fact that the European settlement of 1814-5 had excluded her from her traditional areas of influence such as the Low Countries, southern Germany, Italy and Spain.¹² Once he realised that Britain could not keep French influence excluded from at least one of these areas, that is, Spain, he desired to incorporate it into overall Anglo-French joint hegemony in the Iberian Peninsula, where the two powers had a common interest in the establishment of moderately liberal political institutions and the exclusion of the influence of the eastern allies. However, he was otherwise as much determined to exclude other powers from interference in Britain's spheres of influence as he was determined not to encroach on the spheres of influence of other powers. In Canning's view, the eastern powers were at liberty to act as they liked in central and eastern Europe, but should leave the Iberian Peninsula to the western powers and maritime and commercial questions to the maritime and commercial powers.

In fact, Canning's remarks and actions on various international questions of the period inevitably lead us to conclude that such was his idea. Simply speaking, he believed that, when a grave international question arose in Europe or outside Europe, only those powers whose vital interests were affected by it should establish a concert to reach an understanding about how they should deal with it. To put it the other way round, he believed that those powers whose vital interests were not involved in a particular international question should not interfere in it. For instance, throughout the period, he consistently opposed and tried hard to prevent the interference of France and the eastern powers in the internal affairs of Portugal. He regarded Portugal as Britain's legitimate sphere of influence, and was determined to reject any attempt of the

¹¹ *Hansard*, vol.8, House of Commons, 30 April 1823, cols.1484-5.

¹² Bullen, 'The Great Powers and the Iberian Peninsula', p.57.

continental powers to encroach on it. Canning took a similar attitude towards the eastern allies on the affairs of Spanish America and refused to discuss the question with them at an allied conference. However, he desired and tried to come to agreements with the two other major maritime and commercial powers in the world—France and the United States—on the future of Spanish America including Cuba, although his success was limited in this regard because France was unable to make a clear choice between Britain and the eastern allies, while the United States did not want to give up all chance of Cuba's adhesion to the Union. On the other hand, Britain's unrivalled political and commercial ascendancy in Brazil led Canning to regard the question of Brazilian independence essentially as an exclusively British affair. However, even here, he recognised that Austria had a great interest in the future of Brazil because of Dom Pedro's marriage to a Habsburg princess. He entered into a concert with Austria to work out an amicable separation of Brazil from Portugal under Pedro's sovereignty. Canning also desired, although in vain, that Britain and France should establish their condominium over the Iberian Peninsula, each helping the other's effort to stabilise the internal situation of her client state by introducing moderately liberal institutions. The most important example of his co-operation with other allied governments, however, was his eastern diplomacy. He regarded the eastern question as a real European question which might have a tremendous impact on the European international system as a whole and consequently affect the interests of all the great powers in Europe, and decided that Britain should join the other allied powers in their common effort to obtain its peaceful settlement.

Thus we now clearly see that Harold Temperley and many other historians are wrong in regarding Canning as an isolationist whose principal aim in foreign policy was the

destruction of the European Concert. True, he rejected the idea that every single diplomatic question should be dealt with within the framework of five-power concert. However, this was because he was clearly aware that this type of great-power concert would open the way for the powers to encroach on one another's spheres of vital interests—an action which he feared would strain their relations and might ultimately lead to the destruction of the European Concert. He firmly believed that, when a question of genuine European import arose, the five great powers should co-operate to prevent it from undermining or destroying the European international order. Besides, he thought that this system of five-power concert should be supplemented by the systems of regional, partial concert, within which two or three powers should co-operate to settle questions of their common concern.

To say that Canning had his own idea of great-power co-operation, however, is not to say that he succeeded in getting the other members of the Alliance to accept it, or to say that his idea was workable. His difficulties between September 1822 and July 1824 came largely from his failure to get the continental allies to accept his idea of great-power co-operation—and especially his failure to lure France into a separate understanding with Britain on Iberian affairs. From the autumn of 1822 to early 1824, the French ministers persistently tried to make use of Russia's power and influence in Europe in their attempts to challenge Britain's predominance in the Iberian Peninsula and control her policy in Latin America. This policy, however, only played into Russian hands, paving the way for Russian interference in Iberian affairs and her control of French policy. It is true that Russia's anti-British diplomacy in the west was not so much an attempt to challenge Britain's predominance in the Iberian Peninsula and in Latin America as a cry for British assistance in the east. In face of Austria's apparent

determination to frustrate any plan to bring about a political change in Greece, the Tsar was anxious to secure British support. The Tsar's lack of real interest in Iberian affairs, his anxiety to secure Britain's co-operation in the east, and above all his determination not to jeopardise the peace of Europe laid restraint on Russia's anti-British diplomacy in the west. Nevertheless, it caused Canning enough trouble—driving France into military intervention in Spain, pushing the Spaniards to decline Britain's offer of mediation between Spain and her former colonies, forcing the Portuguese to reject Britain's advice on their internal institutions, and encouraging John VI to resist British pressure to recognise Brazilian independence. Even more importantly, Russia's counterrevolutionary diplomacy in the west was highly successful in driving a wedge between Britain and her allies and enhancing the diplomatic dependence of France and Austria on Russia. By the spring of 1824, the French ministers had clearly realised that their policy had played into Russian hands. However, they did not dare to execute their original plan on the question of Spanish America that they should enter into a separate understanding with Britain if their attempt to control British policy within the framework of five-power concert failed, for fear of alienating Russia who could always count on Austria and Prussia to follow her lead in isolating France on the continent. In early June 1824 the long-running rivalry between Villèle and Chateaubriand within the French government ended in the latter's sudden dismissal. The removal of the exponent of the policy of Franco-Russian co-operation from the French foreign office led Canning to hope that Villèle would finally decide to enter into a close understanding with Britain. However, in the summer of 1824 there was still no clear sign that he would do so. It appeared to Canning that Villèle desired to lean towards Britain, but was unable to do so because of his fear of Russia and the French ultras. 'The French

are', he wrote to Bagot in late July, 'indeed, in a puzzle between the allies on one side and us on the other, and their whole policy is to keep every question from coming to an extremity, at which they may be forced to take their side with one or the other.'¹³

While in the Iberian Peninsula the continental allies totally ignored Canning's idea about great-power concert, at the opposite end of the European continent all the allied powers agreed with him that the eastern question was a question of their common concern and therefore should be dealt with within the framework of five-power concert. However, behind the façade of their co-operation, Austria, Britain and Russia had different ideas about how the allied powers should tackle this difficult question. Metternich was opposed to any political change in Greece, and it was doubtful if Austria would accept Canning's plan to get the Turks and the Greeks to come to a compromise on the basis of Greek autonomy under the Sultan's suzerainty. Canning and Metternich could maintain their co-operation in the east in 1823 and in the first half of 1824 merely because during this period the practical effect of Canning's policy—allied non-interference in the Greek question before the restoration of Russo-Turkish diplomatic relations—had been to postpone the question of Greece, and this fitted Metternich's policy of procrastination. The Russians, on the other hand, appeared to approve Canning's plan for the joint mediation of the allied powers. However, they obviously considered that mediation should be merely the first step which should be followed by coercion if the Porte refused it. In the summer of 1824, it was not at all clear if the Turks and the Greeks would accept allied mediation. If they refused an allied proposal for new arrangements in Greece and Russia persisted in her determination to coerce them into accepting it, Britain would face the difficult choice of

¹³ Canning to Bagot, 28 July 1824, *GCHF*, vol.2, p.257.

letting Russia single-handedly force it on them, joining Russia in doing so, or opposing Russian intervention. The question of whether Canning's Greek policy would succeed or not was all the more important because it was obvious that the success or failure of Anglo-Russian co-operation in the east would have a great effect on Iberian affairs. It was clear that successful co-operation between the two powers in the east would lead to the termination of Russia's anti-British diplomacy in the west.

In the summer of 1824, however, Canning refused to be discouraged by these existing and expected problems and redoubled his efforts to settle all the major international issues that concerned his country's vital interests. In the middle of July, he decided to recall Edward Thornton and transfer William à Court, the diplomat whom he trusted more than anyone else, from Madrid to Lisbon as new British ambassador in Portugal. He instructed à Court to get John VI to dismiss Suberra and to re-establish 'the influence of Great Britain . . . which has in itself an irresistible tendency to predominate in Portugal'.¹⁴ In the meantime, between the middle of July and the middle of August he chaired five conferences for the settlement of the Portuguese-Brazilian dispute, in which Neumann and Esterhazy also participated. Their discussions soon reached deadlock, but Canning sent to Lisbon his own project for a treaty of reconciliation and friendship between Portugal and Brazil, proposing that John VI should recognise Brazilian independence and Pedro's imperial title.¹⁵ In the middle of July, he also started his effort to obtain the cabinet's consent to the government's recognition of Spanish American independence. Canning and Liverpool proposed to the

¹⁴ Canning to à Court, private, 14 July 1824, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41546; same to same, private and confidential, 10 August 1824, private and confidential, 9 September 1824, Heytesbury Papers, BL Add. MSS 41547.

¹⁵ Protocols of the conferences of 12 and 19 July, and 9, 11, and 12 August 1824 between the Portuguese

cabinet that the government should make 'some immediate advance' towards entering into 'a more direct diplomatic relation' with the United Provinces of Rio de la Plata and Colombia.¹⁶ In the summer of 1824, he also made up his mind to make a move to lure France into a separate understanding with Britain on the questions of Spain, Portugal and Spanish America. During the summer of 1824, Louis XVIII's health deteriorated. No one expected that he would live long. Canning intended that, in the event of the French King's death, he should lead a mission of condolence to Paris 'for the purpose of coming to an understanding with Villèle'.¹⁷ He also showed his readiness to tackle the question of Greece, communicating to Russia, as we have seen, his plan to send his cousin Stratford to St. Petersburg on a special mission to take part in the proposed conference on the subject. It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the consequences of these efforts, decisions and intentions. However, at least we now clearly know that they were not aimed at the destruction of the Concert of Europe.

and Brazilian commissioners, and Canning's 'Hints for a treaty of Reconciliation & Friendship between Portugal & Brazil', are enclosed in Canning to Thornton, no.37, 16 August 1824, FO 179/26.

¹⁶ The minute of cabinet proceedings with respect to Spanish America, 23 July 1824, *GCHT*, p.399.

¹⁷ Canning to Liverpool, 18 September 1824, *GCSOC*, vol.1, pp.161-3.

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