

BardMUNC MMXVIII

The Congress of Vienna 1815: Europe After Bonaparte



Letter from the Chair:

Introduction:

The Napoleonic Wars have just come to their climactic close at Waterloo, ending with the exile of Napoleon to the island of St. Helena where he will live out the rest of his days. However, the dust has hardly settled in on the last battlefields of the Napoleonic Wars when Europe erupts into a political conflict that will define the next century. France seeks to defend her new territorial claims against expansionist major powers in order to protect its sovereignty. The German States have become the focus of a possible new international conflict between the Major Powers. And the fate of the small, but prosperous Duchy of Warsaw, claimed by multiple separate powers for centuries, is in the balance. All nations of the time recognized that Europe was on the path to a war that likely none of them would survive unscathed. For the first time in modern history, the great powers of Europe sat down at the negotiating table to organize a settlement which would prevent the outbreak of another decade of war. In history, the Congress of Vienna prevented war in Europe for over 40 years, which was a record for the naturally war-torn continent. Many historians have called this conference the first modern example of international cooperation to prevent future conflicts through negotiation rather than violence. Others have even referenced this conference as an inspiration for the creation of the United Nations, over a century after the conference ended. In this committee we seek to emulate their example, and perhaps come to similarly beneficial solutions to the age-old problems of international balance of power, recourse, and the creation of a lasting peace for all peoples.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE COMMITTEE

Due to the fact that so many different questions are going to be tackled by this committee, there will be three separate resolutions passed in committee with each committee focused on a different topic. The order of the topics will be as follows:

1. Curbing French Power and Influence
2. The Fate of the Germanic States
3. The Polish Question

Also, some nations on this committee will have multiple representatives in the form of historical figures, who will not fundamentally agree on policy. Try to play out your character to the best of your ability, rather than representing a general perspective.

PART ONE: The Problems Facing the Congress

Curbing French Power

France as a nation has been a necessary counterbalance in Europe to Britain as well as the eastern powers of Austria, Prussia, and to a lesser extent, Russia. As a people with a history spanning over a millennium, it is not a question as to whether the French nation will exist, but rather to what extent. During Napoleon's Rise, he was able to conquer territory in Italy, Spain, and parts of Germany, extending the borders of France far beyond their pre-revolutionary levels. Multiple nations with well established histories, such as Venice, Sardinia and Tuscany,

were simply wiped from the map, and fell under a puppet “King of Italy.” The same was done to the Kingdom of Spain, whose monarch was replaced with Napoleon’s brother. It is clear to see for all those in attendance that France’s high incomparable power over its sister nations needs to be checked, only the extent to which that is done is up for debate. Some nations believe France needs to be placed into a position where it can never arise again as a major power in Europe to not only provide security to other nations, but also to prevent the spreading of the Revolutionary philosophies which still have deep-set roots in the hearts of the French people. Others seek a softer approach, seeing France as a necessary counterbalance to the other major powers, thus protecting smaller states from expansionist powers. Also, in this question is the fate of the Spanish and Italian kingdoms. Will they be reorganized, or will the status quo be maintained?

The Fate of the Germanic States

Germany up until this point in history has not been a country, but rather been the name of the region that a number of small mercantile states. During Napoleon’s tenure as Emperor, he reorganized the Germanic States under the control of Hannover and Saxony as the Confederation of the Rhine. When Coalition forces retook Germany in the 6th Coalition War, the Confederation of the Rhine was dissolved, returning the German States to an independent status, each controlling relatively small portions of land compared to what they previously held. This causes a serious problem as you have a great number of states who are unable to defend themselves against the larger powers to the East and West. These States are considerably

wealthy with a plethora of natural resources and expansive markets within their borders, thus making them tempting war targets to any power-hungry nation. In order to preserve peace at the dawn of the Modern Era, what ought to be done with these states are of prime importance. Should their territory be organized into spheres of power, each under the protection of different powers? Perhaps they should be removed entirely, their natural borders becoming part of the larger powers. Or perhaps, even more radically still, there should be an independent German state, able to defend itself from the powers of the outside world.

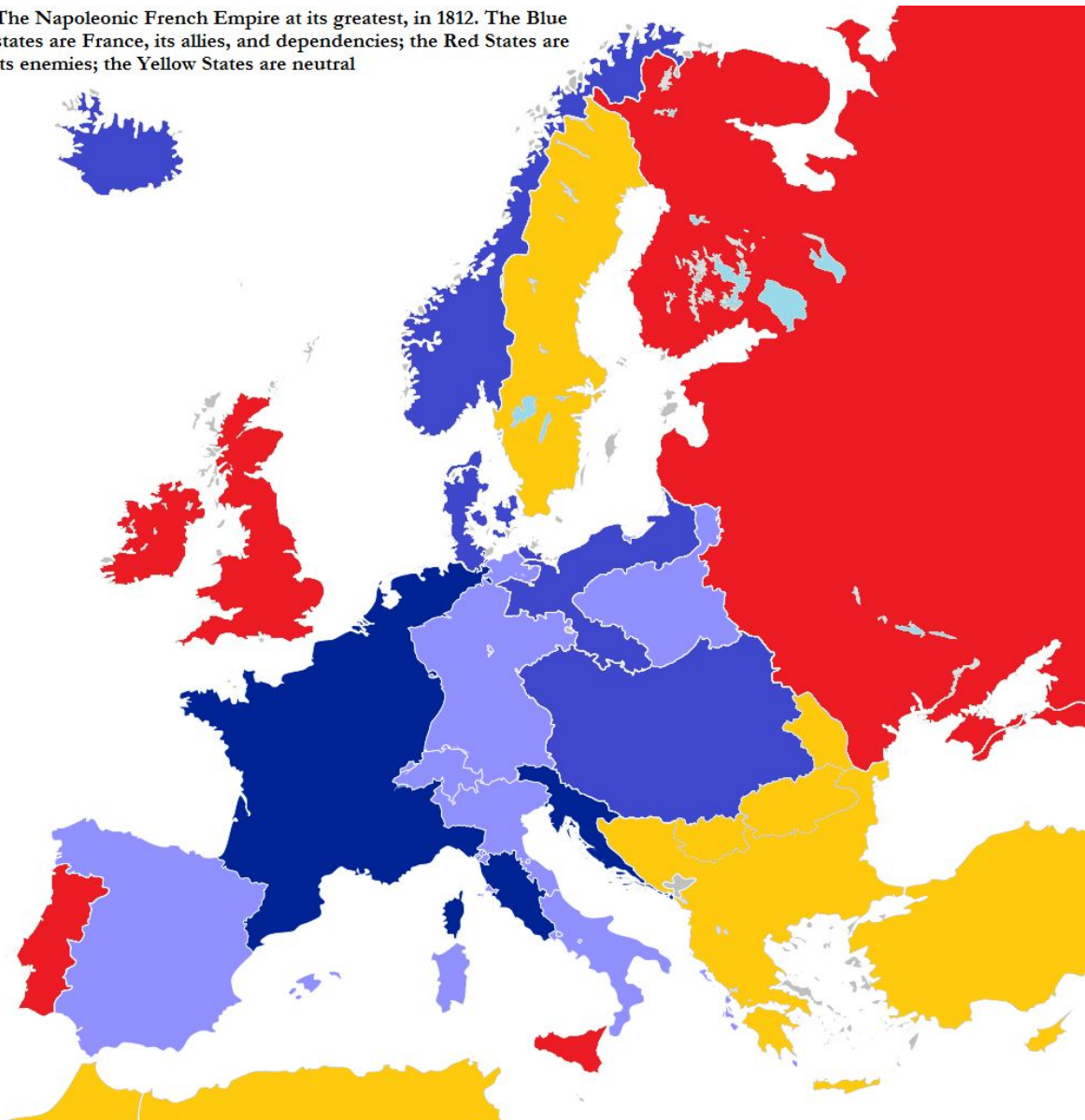
The Polish Question

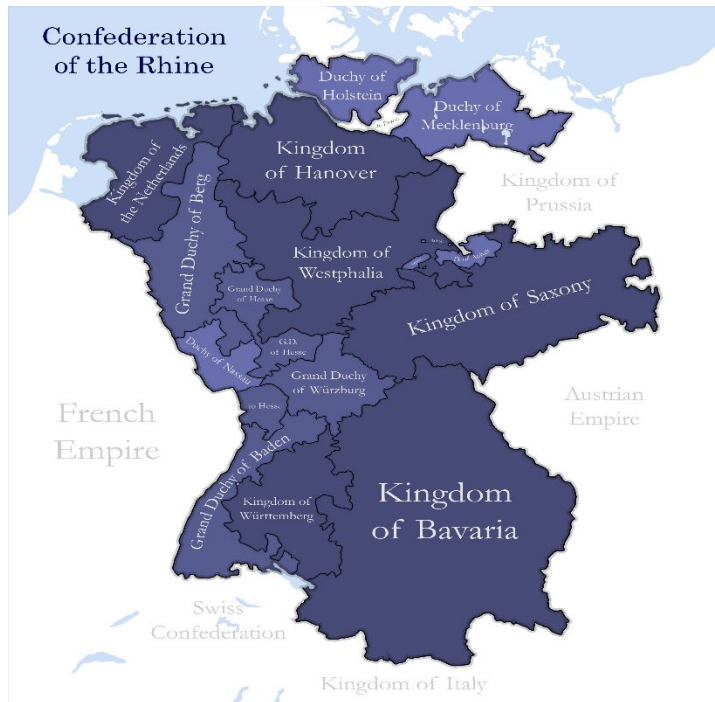
The Kingdom of Poland is currently in a prime location to spark another war between Russia, Austria, and Prussia. A relatively weak nation with a lot of natural resources, Poland has been claimed by all the great powers around its borders due to each of their nations having controlled it at one point or another. Poland has been a contentious region since the fall of Poland-Lithuania nearly four centuries before, ownership of the land shifting from empire to empire. Now, it managed to carve out some semblance of independence, but the wanting for this land could cause a war between all the powers of Europe. Poland then, presents an existential threat to the future of Europe, and it needs to be dealt with. The question before the committee then is: "What then ought to be done with Poland?" Should an Independent Polish State have the right to exist, even though it may have to defend itself from exterior powers? Should it become a protectorate of one of the Great Powers? Perhaps its territory should be divided up between the other powers, just as appeasement to prevent war. However keep in

mind that, the Polish people are fiercely nationalistic and they will not accept anything less than what they perceive to be independence.

PART TWO: Helpful Diagrams

The Napoleonic French Empire at its greatest, in 1812. The Blue states are France, its allies, and dependencies; the Red States are its enemies; the Yellow States are neutral





Poland, 1814. (Imperium Rosyjskie: Russia; Cesarstwo Austriackie, Austria; Krolestwo Prus,
Prussia)