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The Congress of Vienna and Vienna Treaty, 1814- 1815

Questions to ponder

1. Account for the Vienna congress 1814 -1815
2. Why did the leading statesmen of Europe gather at Vienna from 1814-1815?
3. What challenges that faced the congressmen at Vienna 1814-1815?
4. Examine the achievements of the Vienna Settlement of the 1815?
5. Assess the impact of the 1815 Vienna settlement on Europe
6. To what extent did the terms of the Congress provide solutions to the problems face by Europe?
7. How far was the 1815 Vienna Settlement responsible for political instabilities in Europe up to 1848?

Summary of the Vienna Congress and treaty, 1814-1815

The **Congress of Vienna** (1814-1815) was a major diplomatic conference held in Vienna, Austria, with the goal of reorganizing Europe after the Napoleonic Wars. Here are some key points:

1. **Participants:** Representatives from all European powers (except the Ottoman Empire) attended, including Austria, Prussia, Russia, and the United Kingdom.
2. **Chairman:** The Congress was chaired by **Klemens von Metternich**, the Austrian statesman.
3. **Objectives:** The main goal was to create a long-term peace plan for Europe by resolving issues arising from the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.
4. **Territorial Changes:** The Congress aimed to resize the main powers to balance each other and prevent future conflicts. France had to give up its recent conquests, while other powers like Prussia, Austria, and Russia made significant territorial gains.
5. **Outcome:** The Congress resulted in the **Final Act of the Congress of Vienna**, which was signed on June 9, 1815, just days before Napoleon's final defeat at the Battle of Waterloo.

Objectives of the Vienna Congress of 1814-1815

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The **Congress of Vienna** (1814-1815) had several key objectives:

1. **Restoring Balance of Power:** To create a balance of power in Europe to prevent any single country from becoming too dominant, this would help maintain peace and stability.
2. **Territorial Adjustments:** To redraw the map of Europe by resizing the main powers and redistributing territories to ensure a balance that would deter future conflicts.
3. **Restoring Monarchies:** To restore the old monarchies and conservative order that had been disrupted by the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.
4. **Suppressing Revolutionary Movements:** To restrain or eliminate republican, liberal, and revolutionary movements that threatened the traditional monarchical order.
5. **Establishing a New Political Order:** To create a new political framework for Europe that would ensure long-term peace and cooperation among the major powers.
6. **To safeguard against any future French military aggression**

Achievements of the Congress of Vienna (Vienna Settlement) 1814-1815

The **Congress of Vienna** (1814-1815) achieved several significant outcomes that reshaped Europe after the Napoleonic Wars:

1. **Peace was restored in Europe for nearly 40 years among great powers.** The congress succeeded at restoration of peace in Europe for nearly 40 years.
2. **Napoleon was finally defeated at the famous battle of Waterloo on June 18, 1815.** And later exiled to the rocky Island of St. Helenna.
3. **Restoration of Monarchies:** The Congress restored many of the old monarchies and conservative order that had been disrupted by Napoleon, reinforcing the principle of legitimacy.
4. **Territorial Adjustments:** The map of Europe was redrawn to balance power among the major nations. France was returned to its 1789 borders, while other powers like Prussia, Austria, and Russia gained significant territories.
5. **Formation of the German Confederation:** The German states were loosely united into a new German Confederation under Austrian influence, aiming to prevent future conflicts in the region.
6. **Creation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands:** The Kingdom of the Netherlands was established, combining the former Dutch Republic with the Austrian Netherlands (modern-day Belgium) to serve as a buffer state.
7. **Balance of Power:** The Congress aimed to create a balance of power that would prevent any single nation from becoming too dominant, promoting long-term peace and stability in Europe.

8. **Suppression of Revolutionary Movements:** The Congress sought to restrain or eliminate republican, liberal, and revolutionary movements that threatened the traditional monarchical order.
9. **Free navigation of all the international big waters was achieved.** These included Mediterranean Sea, Black sea, River Danube and R. Rhine which revived activities in the region.
10. **Restoration of Catholic Church Influence in continental Europe.** For instance Pope Pius VII was restored with spiritual powers and as temporary ruler of the Papal States.
11. **The 1814 Vienna Settlement contributed to the rise of new men to political scene in Europe.** These included Prince Metternich, Lord Stewart Castlereagh, Bishop Charles Maurine de Talleyrand and others.

Failures of the Congress of Vienna (Vienna Settlement) 1814-1815

While the **Congress of Vienna** (1814-1815) achieved many of its goals, it also had several notable failures:

1. **Rise of Nationalism:** The Congress largely ignored the growing sense of nationalism among various European peoples, such as the Germans, Italians, and Poles. This oversight eventually led to significant uprisings and movements for unification in the 19th century.
2. **Short-term Peace:** Although the Congress established a balance of power that maintained peace for nearly a century, it did not prevent future conflicts entirely. The Crimean War (1853-1856) and the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) are examples of conflicts that occurred despite the Congress's efforts.
3. **Suppression of Liberal Movements:** The Congress aimed to suppress revolutionary and liberal movements, but these ideas continued to spread and eventually led to major political changes, including the Revolutions of 1848.
4. **Imperial Ambitions:** The territorial adjustments made at the Congress did not fully address the imperial ambitions of certain powers, leading to tensions and conflicts in the following decades.
5. **Vienna Settlement restored some of the worst legitimate rulers in Europe.** These included Charles X in France who disregarded the 1814 constitutional charter and the Dictators Ferdinand I in Naples and Ferdinand VII in Spain. These were later ousted by the forces of democracy and liberalism.
6. Interests of small states were ignored.
7. **Lack of Representation:** Another weakness was the absence of representation for the majority of the population. The Congress was mainly attended by **diplomats** and **monarchs**, disregarding the voices of the common people. This lack of inclusivity and democratic participation hindered the long-term stability of the agreements made during the Congress.

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