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Unit 2: History of world affairs since 1789

Senior 5

Term 2

Topic 3: Restoration of Order and Stability in Europe (1814 – 1830)

Competency: The learner analyses the peace restoration efforts in Europe between 1814 and 1830 by examining selected peace agreements to appreciate the need for diplomacy in resolving political disputes.

3.1 Vienna Settlement

The **Vienna Settlement**, also known as the **Congress of Vienna**, was a landmark diplomatic gathering held from **September 1814 to June 1815** in Vienna, Austria. It was convened after the defeat of **Napoleon Bonaparte**, with the goal of **reorganizing Europe** and restoring stability following decades of revolutionary upheaval and war.

Purpose of the Vienna Settlement

- (i) **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.
- (ii) **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.
- (iii) **Restoring Monarchies:** To restore the old monarchies and conservative order that had been disrupted by the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.
- (iv) **Suppressing Revolutionary Movements:** To restrain or eliminate republican, liberal, and revolutionary movements that threatened the traditional monarchical order.
- (v) **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.
- (vi) **To safeguard against any future French military aggression**

Key Participants

- **Austria** – led by Prince **Klemens von Metternich**
- **Russia** – represented by **Tsar Alexander I**

- **Prussia** – led by **Karl von Hardenberg**
- **Britain** – represented by **Viscount Castlereagh**
- **France** – surprisingly included, represented by **Talleyrand**

Core Principles of the Settlement

| Principle | Description |
|-------------------------|--|
| Legitimacy | Restore rightful monarchs to their thrones |
| Compensation | Reward victorious powers with territorial gains |
| Balance of Power | Prevent any one nation from dominating Europe |
| Restoration | Reinstate pre-revolutionary political structures |

Major Territorial Changes

- **France** returned to its 1792 borders
- **Austria** gained control of northern Italy and parts of Eastern Europe
- **Prussia** acquired parts of Saxony and the Rhineland
- **Russia** gained most of Poland
- Creation of the **Kingdom of the Netherlands** as a buffer against France
- Formation of the **German Confederation** to replace the dissolved Holy Roman Empire

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. Helena.
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. **Favored monarchies and aristocracies over popular sovereignty:** 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.

Lessons that can be learnt from Vienna Settlement

The **Vienna Settlement (1814–1815)**, crafted after the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte, offers a rich set of **lessons for modern diplomacy, peace building, and international relations**. While its goal was to restore stability to Europe, its methods and outcomes reveal both successes and shortcomings that continue to shape global governance today.

Key Lessons from the Vienna Settlement

- (i) **Peace through Balance of Power:** The settlement aimed to prevent future wars by ensuring **no single nation could dominate Europe**.

Lesson: A balanced distribution of power among nations can promote long-term peace and discourage aggression.

- (ii) **Importance of Inclusive Diplomacy:** Major powers (Britain, Austria, Russia, Prussia, and France) negotiated the terms, but **smaller nations were largely excluded**.

Lesson: Sustainable peace requires **inclusive dialogue**, where all stakeholders—big and small—have a voice.

- (iii) **Restoration vs. Reform:** The Congress prioritized **restoring monarchies and old borders** over embracing revolutionary changes.

Lesson: Restoration can bring short-term stability, but ignoring **popular demands for reform** may lead to future unrest.

- (iv) **Avoiding Harsh Punishment:** Unlike the Treaty of Versailles (1919), the Vienna Settlement **did not harshly punish France**, allowing it to reintegrate into European politics.

Lesson: **Reconciliation and moderation** in peace treaties can prevent resentment and future conflict.

- (v) **Flexibility in Negotiation:** Despite deep disagreements (e.g., over Poland and Saxony), the powers **compromised** to avoid renewed war.

Lesson: Successful diplomacy requires **flexibility, pragmatism, and willingness to compromise**.

- (vi) **Suppressing Nationalism Has Consequences:** The settlement ignored rising **nationalist and liberal movements**, leading to revolutions across Europe in 1830 and 1848.

Lesson: Suppressing legitimate political aspirations can delay—but not prevent—calls for change.

- (vii) **Long-Term Peace Requires Structural Solutions:** The Vienna Settlement created a **Concert of Europe**, a system for resolving disputes diplomatically.

Lesson: Establishing **mechanisms for conflict resolution** is essential for maintaining peace beyond the treaty itself.

Summary

The Vienna Settlement teaches us that **peace is not just about ending war—it's about building systems that prevent it from returning**. Its successes in stabilizing Europe for nearly 40 years are impressive, but its failure to address deeper social and political currents reminds us that **lasting peace must be both strategic and just**.

3.2 Congress System

The **Congress System**, also known as the **Concert of Europe**, was a diplomatic framework established after the **Congress of Vienna** (1814-1815) to maintain the balance of power and prevent future conflicts in Europe. Here are some key points:

1. **Participants:** The system was dominated by the five great powers of Europe: **Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, and the United Kingdom**.
2. **Regular Congresses:** The great powers held regular congresses to resolve potential disputes and maintain stability. These congresses were held on an ad hoc basis and included meetings at **Aix-la-Chapelle (1818), Troppau (1820), Laibach (1821), and Verona (1822)**.
3. **Objectives:** The main goal was to preserve the territorial and political status quo established by the Congress of Vienna and to prevent revolutionary and liberal movements from disrupting the conservative order.
4. **Intervention:** The great powers used the system to intervene in the internal affairs of states threatened by internal rebellion, such as the uprisings in Italy and Spain.
5. **Decline:** The Congress System began to decline in the 1820s due to divergent aims among its members and the rise of nationalism and liberal movements.

Aims and Objectives of the Congress System

The **Congress System**, also known as the **Concert of Europe**, had several key aims and objectives:

1. **Maintain Balance of Power:** To preserve the balance of power established by the Congress of Vienna, ensuring that no single country could dominate Europe and thereby maintaining peace and stability.
2. **Prevent Future Conflicts:** To prevent the outbreak of future wars by resolving disputes through diplomacy and regular congresses among the great powers.
3. **Suppress Revolutionary Movements:** To restrain or eliminate revolutionary and nationalist movements that threatened the conservative order and the established monarchies.
4. **Support Legitimate Monarchies:** To uphold the principle of legitimacy by supporting existing monarchies and preventing the rise of republican and democratic regimes that could destabilize Europe.

5. **Foster Cooperation among Great Powers:** To promote cooperation and mutual trust among the leading European powers (Austria, Prussia, Russia, the United Kingdom, and later France) by addressing common concerns through dialogue and joint action.

The major congresses in Europe

Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle (1818)

The **Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle (1818)** was a pivotal diplomatic meeting held in **Aachen, Germany** (then known by its French name, Aix-la-Chapelle), marking the first major follow-up to the **Congress of Vienna (1815)**. It was convened by the **Quadruple Alliance—Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia**—with **France** now invited as a full participant, signaling its reintegration into European affairs after the Napoleonic Wars.

Main objectives

- **End the Allied military occupation of France** following Napoleon's defeat.
- **Reassess France's war indemnity payments** and financial obligations.
- **Restore France's status** as a major European power.
- Discuss broader issues like **slave trade suppression** and **Barbary piracy**, though no binding decisions were made on these.

Key Outcomes

- (i) **Evacuation of France:** France had fulfilled most of its financial obligations from the **Treaty of Paris (1815)**. The Allies agreed to **withdraw their troops** from French territory by **November 30, 1818**, ending the occupation.
- (ii) **France Joins the Concert of Europe:** France was officially admitted into the **Concert of Europe**, transforming the **Quadruple Alliance** into the **Quintuple Alliance**. This marked a **diplomatic rehabilitation** of France and a commitment to collective peacekeeping.
- (iii) **Secret Renewal of the Quadruple Alliance:** Despite France's inclusion, the original four powers **secretly renewed their alliance**, signaling lingering mistrust and a desire to hedge against future instability.

Historical Significance

- The Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle demonstrated the **power of diplomacy** in post-war Europe.
- It reinforced the **Congress System**, a framework for resolving disputes and maintaining balance of power.
- It showed a **shift from punitive measures to reconciliation**, helping stabilize Europe after decades of war.

Congress of Troppau (1820)

The **Congress of Troppau (1820)** was a significant diplomatic meeting held in **Troppau**, Austrian Silesia (modern-day Opava, Czech Republic), as part of the **Congress System** established after the fall of Napoleon. It was convened by the **Holy Alliance powers—Austria, Russia, and Prussia**—to address the growing wave of **liberal revolutions** in Europe, particularly the **Neapolitan uprising** in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

Purpose of the Congress

- To **suppress revolutionary movements** threatening monarchies and the conservative order established by the **Congress of Vienna (1815)**.
- To discuss **collective intervention** in states experiencing political upheaval.
- To reaffirm the principle of **legitimacy** and **monarchical authority**.

Key Outcome: The Troppau Protocol

- Signed on **November 19, 1820**, by Austria, Russia, and Prussia.

Declared that:

- These states would be **excluded from the alliance** until they restored legal order and stability.
- The protocol **authorized intervention** in such states to restore legitimate governments.

Reactions and Impact

Supporters: Austria, Russia, and Prussia embraced the protocol as a tool to **preserve conservative rule** and suppress liberalism.

Opponents: Britain and France opposed the protocol:

- Britain objected to **interventionist policies**, favoring non-interference.
- France was diplomatically cautious and did not fully endorse the protocol.

This division marked the beginning of a **split within the Quintuple Alliance**, weakening the Congress System's unity.

Historical Significance

- The Congress of Troppau set a precedent for **reactionary intervention** in European politics.
- It highlighted the tension between **conservatism and emerging liberal-nationalist movements**.
- It paved the way for further congresses, such as **Laibach (1821)** and **Verona (1822)**, which continued the suppression of revolutions.

Congress of Laibach 1821

The **Congress of Laibach (1821)** was a key diplomatic meeting held from **January 26 to May 12, 1821**, in **Laibach** (modern-day Ljubljana, Slovenia). It was part of the **Congress System**—a series of post-Napoleonic conferences aimed at preserving peace and suppressing revolutionary movements in Europe.

Purpose of the Congress

- To address the **liberal revolution in Naples** (Kingdom of the Two Sicilies) that erupted in July 1820.
- To determine whether the **Austrian Empire** should intervene militarily to restore the monarchy.
- To reaffirm the principles of the **Troppau Protocol**, which allowed intervention in states experiencing revolutionary change.

Key Participants

- **Austria** – Emperor Francis I and Prince Metternich
- **Russia** – Tsar Alexander I
- **Prussia** – Representatives of King Frederick William III
- **France** – Observers, cautious about intervention
- **Britain** – Represented by Lord Stewart, but did not fully endorse intervention
- **King Ferdinand I of the Two Sicilies** – Attended in person

Major Outcomes

- (i) Authorization of Austrian Intervention:** Austria was given the green light to **invade Naples** and **restore absolutist rule**, suppressing the liberal constitution adopted by Neapolitan revolutionaries.
- (ii) Reaffirmation of Conservative Principles:** The Congress reinforced the idea that **monarchs had the right to intervene** in other states to preserve order and legitimacy. It emphasized **opposition to liberalism and nationalism**, viewing them as threats to European stability.
- (iii) Growing Division Among Powers**
 - **Britain and France** opposed the interventionist stance, signaling a **fracture in the Concert of Europe**.
 - Britain argued that internal revolutions were **domestic matters**, not grounds for foreign interference.

Historical Significance

- The Congress of Laibach marked a **triumph for conservative diplomacy**, especially Austria's anti-liberal agenda.
- It demonstrated the **declining unity** of the Congress System, as ideological differences between powers became more pronounced.
- It set a precedent for future interventions, including Austria's suppression of a similar revolt in **Piedmont** later that year.

Congress of Verona (1822)

The **Congress of Verona (1822)** was the **last major diplomatic meeting** of the **Congress System**, held from **October 20 to December 14, 1822**, in **Verona, Italy**. It brought together the major European powers—**Austria, Russia, Prussia, Britain, and France**—to address rising revolutionary movements and maintain the conservative order established after the fall of Napoleon.

Purpose of the Congress

- To respond to the **liberal revolution in Spain (1820)**, which had forced King Ferdinand VII to accept a constitutional monarchy.
- To discuss the **revolts in Spanish America**, where colonies were fighting for independence.
- To reaffirm the principles of **monarchical legitimacy** and **intervention against revolution**.

Key Participants

- **Austria** – Prince Metternich
- **Russia** – Tsar Alexander I
- **Prussia** – Prince Hardenberg
- **France** – Chateaubriand and Montmorency
- **Britain** – Duke of Wellington (representing Foreign Secretary George Canning)

Major Decisions and Outcomes

- (i) Authorization of French Intervention in Spain:** France was given the go-ahead to **invade Spain** and restore King Ferdinand VII's absolute rule. In 1823, France launched the **Hundred Thousand Sons of Saint Louis** campaign, successfully crushing the liberal government.
- (ii) Disagreement Over Spanish America**
 - Britain opposed intervention in Spanish colonies, favoring **non-interference** and **free trade**.
 - The other powers wanted to help Spain regain control, but Britain's resistance **blocked collective action**.

Breakdown of the Congress System

- The **Congress of Verona exposed deep divisions** among the European powers:
 - Britain's liberal stance clashed with the conservative Holy Alliance (Austria, Russia, Prussia).
 - The failure to reach consensus on Spanish America and broader revolutionary issues **weakened the unity** of the alliance.
- It marked the **end of effective collective diplomacy** under the Congress System.

Historical Significance

The Congress of Verona was a **turning point** in 19th-century diplomacy:

- It showed the limits of conservative interventionism.
- It paved the way for **nationalist and liberal movements** to grow across Europe.
- It signaled the **decline of coordinated European diplomacy**, leading to more fragmented foreign policies.

Achievements of the Congress system

The **Congress System** (Concert of Europe) achieved several notable successes:

1. **Maintaining Peace:** The system helped maintain relative peace in Europe for nearly four decades, preventing major conflicts and wars among the great powers.
2. **Resolving Disputes Diplomatically:** Regular congresses allowed the great powers to resolve disputes through diplomacy rather than military confrontation.
3. **Restoring Stability:** The system played a key role in restoring stability and order in Europe after the upheaval of the Napoleonic Wars.
4. **Supporting Legitimate Monarchies:** The Congress System upheld the principle of legitimacy, supporting the restoration and maintenance of traditional monarchies.
5. **Foreshadowing Future International Organizations:** The cooperative framework of the Congress System foreshadowed later international peacekeeping efforts, such as the League of Nations and the United Nations.
6. **The inter-State political and economic cooperation.** Freedom of navigation on all big water bodies like Mediterranean Sea was assured.
7. **Congress made efforts to settle the debt problems between Sweden and Denmark** cleared its debt leading to reconciling of Sweden and Denmark.
8. **A new map of Europe was redrawn and maintained**
9. The congress system maintained and promoted constitutionalism in the continental Europe.

Failures and weaknesses of the Congress System

The **Congress System** (Concert of Europe) had several notable failures and weaknesses:

1. **Nationalism:** The system failed to address the rising tide of nationalism, which eventually led to significant uprisings and movements for unification in countries like Germany and Italy.
2. **Suppression of Liberal Movements:** While the Congress System aimed to suppress revolutionary and liberal movements, these ideas continued to spread and gain traction, leading to major political changes, including the Revolutions of 1848.
3. **Divergent Interests:** The great powers often had conflicting interests and priorities, which made it difficult to maintain a unified approach to European stability.
4. **Short-term Solutions:** Many of the agreements and interventions were short-term fixes that did not address underlying issues, leading to recurring conflicts and tensions.

5. **Decline of Influence:** Over time, the influence of the Congress System waned as new political and social forces emerged, and the system struggled to adapt to these changes.
6. **The congress failed to create a joint force that would enforce its resolutions.** It suggested by Tsar alexander of Russia but resisted by British foreign minister, Stewart Castlereagh.
7. **The congress system protected dictatorial leaders** such as Ferdinand I of Naples and Ferdinand VII of Spain.
8. The congress System sidelined weak states.
9. Congress System failed to eliminate slave trade

Reasons for the collapse of the Congress System

The **Congress System** (Concert of Europe) ultimately collapsed due to several key reasons:

1. **National Interests:** Once the common enemy (Napoleon) was defeated, the great powers began to prioritize their own national interests over collective European stability.
2. **Divergent Goals:** Conflicting goals and ambitions among the great powers, such as territorial disputes and power vacuums, led to tensions and disagreements.
3. **Rise of Nationalism:** The growing nationalist movements in various European countries challenged the conservative order established by the Congress System, leading to uprisings and demands for independence.
4. **Liberal Movements:** The spread of liberal and revolutionary ideas continued to undermine the conservative principles upheld by the Congress System, culminating in events like the Revolutions of 1848.
5. **Decline of Cooperation:** The great powers struggled to maintain cooperation and unity, with increasing divisions and rivalries emerging among them.
6. **Lack of experience leaders of the congress** led to its downfall.
7. **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 weakened the popularity of the congress system.

Lessons from the congress system

The **Congress System**, also known as the **Concert of Europe**, was a bold experiment in international diplomacy that emerged after the **Congress of Vienna (1815)**. It aimed to maintain peace and stability in Europe through regular meetings and collective decision-making among the great powers. Though it eventually declined, it left behind a legacy rich with **lessons for modern governance and diplomacy**.

Key Lessons from the Congress System

- (i) **Diplomacy can prevent war:** The Congress System showed that **dialogue and negotiation** among nations can resolve disputes peacefully. Regular congresses helped avoid large-scale wars in Europe for decades.

Modern Relevance: Institutions like the **United Nations** and **African Union** echo this principle by promoting diplomacy over conflict.

- (ii) **Balance of power is crucial:** The system aimed to prevent any one country from dominating Europe, preserving a **strategic equilibrium**. This balance discouraged unilateral aggression and maintained relative peace.

Modern Relevance: Regional blocs and alliances (e.g., EAC, AU, EU) use similar strategies to maintain stability.

- (iii) **Suppression of reform can backfire:** The Congress System focused on **preserving monarchies** and suppressing **liberal and nationalist movements**. This led to **revolutions in 1830 and 1848**, as people demanded rights and representation.

Modern Relevance: Governments must address **citizens' aspirations**—ignoring calls for reform can lead to unrest.

- (iv) **Unity Requires Shared Values:** The system collapsed partly because member states had **conflicting interests** (e.g., Britain's liberal stance vs. Austria's conservatism). Without shared principles, alliances weaken.

Modern Relevance: Successful international cooperation depends on **common goals and mutual respect**.

- (v) **Inclusivity Matters:** Smaller nations were excluded from decision-making, and the system was dominated by a few powers. This created resentment and undermined legitimacy.

Modern Relevance: Inclusive diplomacy—where all voices are heard—is essential for sustainable peace.

- (vi) **Adaptability Is Key:** The Congress System failed to adapt to changing political realities, especially the rise of nationalism and democracy. Its rigid conservatism made it obsolete.

Modern Relevance: Institutions must evolve with society—**flexibility and reform** are vital for long-term relevance.

Summary

The Congress System was a **visionary attempt at collective diplomacy**, and while it had flaws, it laid the groundwork for modern international cooperation. Its lessons remind us that **peace is not just the absence of war—it's the presence of justice, dialogue, and shared purpose**.

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