

# 1 Introduction

At the Congress of Vienna in 1815, representatives of the Great Powers agreed on a new order in post-war Europe. They created a new system of international relations to work together to prevent revolutions and preserve peace between European states. Over the subsequent years, this idea transformed, and by 1830, it had taken on an entirely different character. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston, was a key figure in this transformation. His actions and decisions were crucial in reshaping the international relations system. The British Isles' primary diplomatic interest in the 1830s was to promote their national and political objectives, which hindered general cooperation. Klemens Wenzel Nepomuk Lothar, Prince of Metternich-Winneburg zu Beilstein, represented Austria at the opposite end of the spectrum of opinions. He played a crucial role in creating the Congress of Vienna framework and was regarded as its principal advocate. He believed this arrangement was the only possible guarantee for general peace and order in Europe. While the new order established by the Congress of Vienna persisted, the interests of both men clashed in both ideological and foreign policy spheres.

This book aims to refute the still prevalent claim that Great Britain was a “champion” of European liberalism and that its foreign policy reflected this principle. In contrast, many view Austria as a conservative, “despotic” state that actively suppresses the rights of smaller states and imposes its worldview upon them. Nonetheless, considering international relations in the 1830s, this claim requires revision. Diplomacy during this period was not straightforward. Great Britain acted based on its national interests, selectively choosing which states to support and which to distance itself from. Austria, on the other hand, played a crucial role in maintaining the balance of power and peace in Europe. Its geopolitical role and economic and military situation demanded stable cooperation with states that shared similar interests. This cooperation ensured the stability of Europe, upon which Austria's existence and survival as a power depended.

The study examines Palmerston and Metternich's relations between 1830 and 1841, a period during which these two prominent figures of nineteenth-century European history were responsible for the foreign policies of Great Britain and Austria. The focus is on the period when Palmerston served as Britain's Foreign Secretary, with a brief interruption during his time in opposition. The main objective is to analyse the approach of both statesmen to resolving international problems and, in this regard, to review the generally accepted, and according to the author, one-sided view of Palmerston. From the perspective of traditional Anglo-Saxon historiography, the Foreign Secretary is considered a progressive figure

who acted not just in the interests of his own country but also in the interests of European liberalism. In contrast, Metternich is portrayed as Palmerston's antithesis: a reactionary who actively prevents the modernisation of European society. Nevertheless, this study aims to demonstrate that such a black-and-white perspective is untenable.

Both statesmen championed different concepts of the Concert of Europe and frequently clashed over their political principles and approaches to international issues. While both aimed to preserve peace and maintain Europe's balance of power, they pursued these goals through different methods. From 1830 to 1841, European history saw significant developments, including changes in the post-Vienna order, revolutions, restrictions on cooperation between Powers, and critical issues such as the Eastern Question and the future of the Ottoman Empire.

Metternich clearly endeavoured to secure cooperation with London throughout the period under investigation. However, Palmerston's perception of Austria as an unstable partner led to a logical shift in alliances, prompting the Ballhausplatz<sup>1</sup> to seek a new ally in Russia. For Britain's Foreign Secretary, France emerged as the primary ally, often pursuing its interests to the detriment of Austria. Palmerston's rejection of Britain's traditional cooperation with the Habsburg Monarchy caused a significant disruption in the Concert of Europe.

The author analyses this issue primarily from the British perspective, which mirrors Palmerston's positions and diplomacy through Metternich's opinions and policies. To some extent, it adopts British historian Sir Charles Kingsley Webster's approach, as seen in his pivotal monograph, *The Foreign Policy of Palmerston 1830–1841: Britain, The Liberal Movement, and the Eastern Question* (1951),<sup>2</sup> but with a different overall tenor. While Webster's comparison of the two statesmen gives a positive impression of the British Foreign Secretary, this assessment requires revision based on the primary and secondary sources examined, and Webster's apotheosis of Palmerston should be reconsidered. The relationship between both men and, thus, between the Powers whose interests they defended is placed within the broader context of international political developments during the period, particularly regarding the most significant crises in Europe and the Ottoman Empire. The domestic political limits of Palmerston's diplomacy are also logically considered, i.e., to what extent he was limited or spurred on in his actions by the British Parliament and public opinion.

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<sup>1</sup> The Ballhausplatz was the seat of the Austrian Chancellery.

<sup>2</sup> WEBSTER, Sir Charles Kingsley, *The Foreign Policy of Palmerston 1830–1841: Britain, the Liberal Movement, and the Eastern Question*, vol. I–II, London 1951.

The book is divided into seven chapters, which focus on key events and are set out based on merit and chronology. The author focuses on regions where the period's international crises and fundamental problems were examined and progressively played out. Matters regarding the United States of America, the slave trade, and the Far East are disregarded to focus on the matter investigated; these issues are only mentioned where they impacted Palmerston's European or Near East policies. The book focuses strictly on the international politics between Great Britain and Austria during the specified period. It avoids addressing other era-related issues, such as social matters, women's rights, or economic factors. It also does not introduce new theoretical perspectives on diplomatic frameworks, as historians like Paul Schroeder, Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, Glenda Sluga, and Matthias Schulz have explored. Nevertheless, the book considers their perspectives and findings. Instead, it provides deeper context and analysis of the examined issues, aiming to correct certain deeply ingrained myths and misconceptions about British and Austrian diplomacy. At the same time, the book does not glorify either statesman or adopt a revisionist stance. Instead, it places Palmerston's policies within a broader framework, drawing on recent insights from historians such as Miroslav Šedivý, Wolfram Siemann, and Wolf Dietrich Gruner.

The first section examines the July Revolution in France and its impact on Great Britain's foreign policy. The chapter also explores Metternich's stance on these events and the principles and objectives of Austrian diplomacy. Additionally, it delves into Britain's international interests and Palmerston's political ideas. Circumstances and relations with different rulers and key diplomats serving both states are also described. The revolution in France in 1830 had a fundamental impact on how the Concert of Europe operated, and it saw changes in the system of alliances that were then in place. London found its principal partner in Paris, while Vienna, following a period of cooling in relations with Britain, now turned its attention to St Petersburg. Palmerston welcomed Louis Philippe's accession to the French throne and hoped that liberalism would also spread to the east of the Rhine.

The second chapter analyses the Belgian Revolution as a direct consequence of the July events in France. This section includes discussions at the London Conference to decide on the fate of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, alongside all the machinations at the meeting of Powers. The Belgian Revolution is also linked to Britain's non-intervention policy. The diplomatic stalemate meant Great Britain and France were forced to intervene militarily against King William I of the Netherlands. The problem of Belgium's international position dragged on over the entire 1830s. Two military interventions and over nine years of negotiation were required to conclude the matter. Establishing an independent Belgium was Palmerston's first task as Foreign Secretary, and it is considered one of the

greatest successes of his diplomatic career. The drawback of his involvement in matters across the English Channel was that Palmerston's attention was turned away from the much more dangerous situation emerging at the time in the Near East. At the same time, the process of rapprochement with the government in Paris had begun, with London using France's military intervention to pursue its interests in Belgium. The desire to be aligned with France was dangerously reflected in Anglo-Austrian relationships, and efforts to preserve the partnership led Palmerston to support Paris, to the detriment of Vienna, in the Italian states.

In the subsequent section, the author looks at the revolution in Congress Poland and events in the German Confederation. Great Britain and Austria also found themselves in diametrically opposed positions. Metternich endeavoured to support Tsar Nicholas I in his efforts to defeat the revolutionaries in Poland as soon as possible, while Palmerston supported the Poles. The British Foreign Secretary encouraged opponents in their fight against Metternich within the German Confederation. Even though Palmerston's positions resonated with European liberals and across British society, his policy in these matters was markedly limited. He was responsive to the voices of public opinion and did not consider Austrian arguments. The revolutionary events in Congress Poland were a direct threat to Vienna, especially at a time of discontent in central parts of Italy, where the Danube Monarchy had its primary sphere of influence. The British government's engagement in Central and Eastern Europe was designed to impress potential voters in order to consolidate the party's current domestic political dominance.

The developments in the Italian states were a natural continuation of the events in Poland and the German Confederation. In his efforts to stabilise the regions impacted by the revolution, particularly the Papal States, Metternich faced France's ambitions to expand its influence in Italy. This rift between the two Powers led to France's occupation of Ancona and an international crisis. Palmerston's stance in this conflict was strictly anti-Austrian. While he urged moderation from France, he viewed Vienna's policy as ultraconservative and anti-reformist, despite this not being the case. Fearing the loss of the alliance with the Orléans regime, he refrained from publicly opposing the breach of international law in Ancona and withheld support for Metternich's efforts to resolve matters in central Italy. These efforts, including implementing reforms actively supported by Austria, aimed to pacify the majority of the population.

The Eastern Question was an essential issue within European politics throughout the 1830s, initially concerning discussions on creating an independent Greek state, and from 1831 because of the First Egyptian-Ottoman War. This part of the study analyses Palmerston's relations with Constantinople, his opinion on Egyptian ruler Muhammad Ali, and British fears of Russian policy towards the Ottoman Empire. One key aspect of this section is Metternich's approach to the

Middle East problem and his proposals for resolving the Ottoman-Egyptian crisis. The outcome of the first phase of dealing with the Eastern Question was the Treaty of Hünkâr Iskelesi, which was considered a political failure for Palmerston. For the remainder of his tenure as Foreign Secretary, he endeavoured to revise this treaty. His efforts resulted in a deterioration in relations with St Petersburg and anti-Russian sentiment beginning to resonate with the British public. This chapter also analyses the consolidation of relationships between the Eastern Powers, culminating in the Münchengrätz (Mnichovo Hradiště) treaty and, subsequently, the Berlin Convention as a direct consequence of British foreign policy.

Chapter Six examines the division of the civil war in Portugal, Spain, and Europe into two political camps: The Quadruple Alliance,<sup>3</sup> comprising Great Britain, France, Portugal, and Spain, was on one side, and the conservative grouping of Austria, Prussia, and Russia was on the other side. From 1832, Palmerston began to be considered the leading exponent of European liberalism and was convinced of the need to support Queen Regent Maria Christina of the Two Sicilies in Spain and Maria da Glória in Portugal. Support for the liberal regimes across the Pyrenees was a crucial aspect of London's international strategy. The Foreign Secretary followed this region from his appointment to the office, and by the mid-1830s, the future of both Iberian kingdoms became the most crucial piece of his agenda. In executing national policy, Palmerston was compelled to violate Britain's declared non-intervention doctrine and resort to military force once again. The primary motivation of the government in London remained to consolidate its influence on the Iberian Peninsula as a traditional political sphere of interest. Metternich attempted to exploit the problems in Madrid and Lisbon as a counterbalance to British engagement in Central Europe. For the Austrian Chancellor, the problem represented a Legitimist conflict, which contrasted naturally with London's policy. Vienna used its traditional historical influence on the Iberian Peninsula to reduce British influence while endeavouring to counterbalance Palmerston's diplomacy in Central and Southern Europe.

The final, seventh chapter looks at the second crisis in the Near East at the turn of the 1830s and 1840s, which overlaps with the final years of Palmerston's second term as Foreign Secretary. This crisis was much more severe than the first one because, besides the Ottoman Empire, it also impacted Europe through the Rhine Crisis. The conflict between Muhammad Ali and the Ottoman Sultan represented the final period of the dying Anglo-French *entente*. Throughout the conflict, differences

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<sup>3</sup> This alliance of four Powers shares its name with the Quadruple Alliance formed against Napoleon in 1813.

between the objectives of London and Paris deepened, leading Palmerston to seek a new political partner among the Eastern Powers, particularly focusing on Austria. Even though London and Vienna attempted to take the lead in resolving the crisis, an agreement was ultimately reached, and the desired outcome was achieved. This apparent Anglo-Austrian friendship stopped as soon as the crisis had ended. The Straits Convention is considered Palmerston's success, but in fact, Austrian diplomacy played a large part in it. Britain's Foreign Secretary did not change his distrustful attitude towards Metternich, so broader cooperation remained impossible. The outcome of this approach was also reflected in the subsequent period of the 1840s.

Relationships between Palmerston and Metternich are only peripherally looked at within global historiography. The only exception here is Webster's *Palmerston, Metternich and the European System 1830–1841* (1934),<sup>4</sup> which unfortunately bolstered the traditionally one-sided perception of the two men. The study has several areas for improvement. The first of these is its content. It is a study more than a monograph, and this is also reflected in Webster's tendency to come to general, unspecific conclusions. The second, more fundamental, shortcoming is its anti-Austrian attitude and excessive, almost biased, adoration of Palmerston's policies. Therefore, no specialist monograph still considers previously unstudied archival sources and the latest viewpoints that change our perspectives on the two politicians. Another exception is a 2020 study by Wolf D. Gruner, (*Metternich, Palmerston, the German Confederation, and Europe 1830–1834: Ideology and National Interest*)<sup>5</sup> which primarily focuses on the policies of both men within the German Confederation but also extends into other European issues of that period. New revisionist works looking at the figure of the Austrian Chancellor, such as Czech historian Miroslav Šedivý's *Metternich, the Great Powers and the Eastern Question* (2013)<sup>6</sup> and German historian Wolfram Siemann's *Metternich Strategie und Visionär. Eine Biografie* (2016),<sup>7</sup> have opened up space for a revisionist perspective of Anglo-Austrian relations in the 1830s. In his extensive work, Šedivý looks at relations between Austria and Great Britain regarding the Eastern Question. He confronts Webster's view of Metternich with the context of his policy in

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4 WEBSTER, Sir Charles Kingsley, *Palmerston, the Metternich and the European System 1830–1841*, London 1934.

5 GRUNER, Wolf, Dietrich, *Metternich, Palmerston, the German Confederation, and Europe – 1830–1834: Ideology and National Interest*. In: *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire/Romanian Journal of History* 1, 2022, 4, p. 13–56.

6 ŠEDIVÝ, Miroslav, *Metternich, the Great Powers and the Eastern Question*, Plzeň 2013.

7 SIEMANN, Wolfram, *Metternich. Strategie und Visionär. Eine Biografie*, München 2016.

the Ottoman Empire and notes its dangerous nature, which might, as a result, negatively impact the maintenance of peace in Europe.

This book heavily relies on research, primarily on analysing unpublished sources from *The National Archives* in London and the *Österreichisches Staatsarchiv* in Vienna. At these archives, the author has read through all written documents sent between the two capitals between 1830 and 1841, and also, for example, between London on the one side and Berlin, Paris, Lisbon, Madrid, Constantinople, and St Petersburg on the other. The British archives contain a vast number of sources which are indispensable for researching relations between Palmerston and Metternich. The author first focused on diplomatic correspondence between Vienna and London in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv section of the Austrian State Archives. Besides the mentioned written correspondence with the British capital, correspondence with Austrian diplomats in Paris, Constantinople, and St Petersburg was also used. In this regard, Vienna provides a significant and essential source of information for writing a work looking at Austria's international policy.

Of published sources related to British policy, the work of Henry Lytton Bulwer, who published some of Palmerston's correspondence with leading European politicians, is particularly relevant.<sup>8</sup> His book is also the first biographical work on the Viscount. Bulwer, who worked under Palmerston as a diplomat, loyally defends his Foreign Secretary's policies in his book. Another source is the *British and Foreign State Papers*, specifically volumes XVIII–XXII. This features many important documents, not just from Palmerston's pen but also written by other British politicians, alongside transcriptions of treaties and conventions in which Great Britain participated. The Duke of Wellington's son published some of the documents in his father's estate under the title *Despatches, Correspondence and Memoranda of the Duke of Wellington* (1878),<sup>9</sup> which is a crucial source telling of the opposing side of the British political spectrum. Correspondence between Charles Grey, Palmerston, and Princess Dorothea Lieven is also a valuable source of information for the period investigated.<sup>10</sup> Regarding the Eastern Question, the three-volume publication *Correspondence Relative to the Affairs of the Levant* proved vital. Of the published sources on Metternich, mention should be made of

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8 BULWER, Henry Lytton (ed.): *The Life of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston. With Selection from His Diaries and Correspondence*, vol. I–II, Leipzig 1871.

9 WELLINGTON, Arthur (ed.), *Despatches, Correspondence and Memoranda of the Duke of Wellington*, vol. I–VIII, London 1878.

10 STRANGE, Guy Le (ed.), *Correspondence of Princess Lieven and Earl Grey*, vol. I–II, London 1890.

a book by his son, Richard, entitled *Aus Metternich's Nachgelassenen Papieren* (translated into English as *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*).<sup>11</sup>

Another biographical work on Palmerston took shape shortly after his death. Evelyn Ashley completed Bulwer's work and published it in 1870.<sup>12</sup> Ten years later, another biography entitled *Lord Palmerston* (1880) was published, written by British novelist Anthony Trollope.<sup>13</sup> In this, Trollope portrays the British statesman, traditionally in the best light, as a figure fighting for the values of liberalism. Philip Guedalla provides the same picture in his 1926 book, *Palmerston 1784–1865*.<sup>14</sup> For a historian, both these works are highly subjective and set up the conventional historiographical image of the man. A revisionist perspective came in 1936 with Herbert C. F. Bell's work, *Lord Palmerston*.<sup>15</sup> This British historian's work describes Palmerston as a nationalist striving above all for the welfare of his own country. His book was published during a collapse in the international community and was meant to serve as a historical parallel to the rise of radical nationalist movements in Europe.

In 1951, Webster produced *The Foreign Policy of Palmerston 1830–1841*. The British professor of history focused above all on international relations in the first half of the nineteenth century and defended the idea of international conferences and congresses. His works were mainly produced in the 1930s and opposed the British policy of appeasement. Webster was also the first historian to make full use of unpublished sources at the University of Southampton. One unique feature of his research was the use of sources kept at the Austrian State Archives in Vienna, a resource that nobody had previously used to such an extent regarding Palmerston. This work is a pivotal and unsurpassed document that influenced subsequent historians. It does suffer from the ailment mentioned above of showing excessive admiration for Palmerston and being overly critical of Metternich.

In the 1960s, Donald Southgate published *The Most English Minister . . . The Policies and Politics of Palmerston* (1966).<sup>16</sup> He charted the life of the Foreign Secretary from 1826 until his death. His work is a fascinating book in which two schools of thought conflict: one critical of Palmerston and the other admiring

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11 METTERNICH-WINNEBURG, Richard (ed.), *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, vol. I–V, London 1882.

12 ASHLEY, Evelyn (ed.), *The Life and Correspondence of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston*, vol. I–II, London 1879.

13 TROLLOPE, Anthony, *Lord Palmerston*, London 1882.

14 GUEDALLA, Philip, *Palmerston*, London 1926.

15 BELL, Clifford Francis Herbert, *Lord Palmerston*, vol. I–II, London 1936.

16 SOUTHGATE, Donald, *The Most English Minister . . . The Policies and Politics of Palmerston*, London 1966.

him. According to Southgate, the Foreign Secretary was in firm control of Britain's diplomacy, running the office following public wishes. Jasper Godwin Ridley came to a similar conclusion in his publication, *Lord Palmerston* (1970); he believed that the British Foreign Office, headed by the Foreign Secretary, merely adapted its policies to international diplomacy, responding to outside stimuli. Shortly after this book, *Palmerston* by Denis Judd (1975) was published.<sup>17</sup> This work, in contrast, takes a more critical approach, siding with historians who considered Palmerston a nationalist. A significant milestone was the publication of the book *Palmerston: The Early Years 1784–1841* by Kenneth Bourne in 1982.<sup>18</sup> In his research, Bourne came across private correspondence not previously studied in Kew and uncovered details of Palmerston's politics that Trollope, Guedalla, and Webster had not incorporated into their works. In his view, the actions of the British Foreign Secretary were significantly constrained, and his intentions were never as noble as previous authors had portrayed. Much of this book looks at the domestic political situation in Great Britain and gives a somewhat chaotic impression from a chronological perspective. Following Bourne, Muriel Chamberlain wrote a short biography primarily based on his and Guedalla's ideas.<sup>19</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, several publications came out looking at the life of Viscount Palmerston, notable among which, for example, is 2004's *Palmerston: 'The People's Darling'* by James Chambers, which returns to the old clichés about Palmerston. Chambers admires his politics and presents him as a focused and crucial actor in British history.<sup>20</sup> Today, English historian David Brown is the leading expert on Palmerston's political career, having written 2010's *Palmerston: A Biography*.<sup>21</sup> This monograph is mainly based on already published works and archival collections previously investigated by Webster. His analysis of 1830s politics gives an overview rather than a detailed investigation. Brown is also the author of the study *Palmerston and Austria* (2010),<sup>22</sup> which summarises his findings in his biography of Palmerston. Despite persistent criticism of Metternich, both works are more critical in their conclusions, in which the British Foreign Secretary emerges as a political opportunist. For the submitted study, the core secondary sources were, in addition to Brown, especially the works of

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17 JUDD, Denis, *Palmerston*, London 1975.

18 BOURNE, Kenneth, *Palmerston: The Early Years 1784–1841*, New York 1982.

19 CHAMBERLAIN, Muriel Evelyn, *Lord Palmerston*, Cardiff 1987.

20 CHAMBERS, James, *Palmerston: 'The People's Darling'*, London 2004.

21 BROWN, David, *Palmerston: A Biography*, London 2010.

22 BROWN, David, *Palmerston and Austria*. In: HÖBELT, Lothar (ed.), *A Living Anachronism? European Diplomacy and the Habsburg Monarchy*, Festschrift für Francis Roy Bridge zum 70. Geburtstag, Wien 2010, p. 29–48.

Bell, Webster, Southgate, and Bourne. All the books mentioned give an overly simplified viewpoint of the Austrian Chancellor, portraying him as a negative figure in European history.

There are significant differences in opinions on the Danube Monarchy Chancellor's policies. An extensive study entitled *Metternich. Der Staatsmann und der Mensch* was written in 1925 by Heinrich Ritter von Srbik.<sup>23</sup> This is the most comprehensive biography yet produced, and many authors have used the book, with its opinions still often adopted. English historian Alan Sked came up with new ideas, first of all in his study *The Metternich System 1815–48* (1979),<sup>24</sup> and subsequently, in his book *Metternich and Austria: An Evaluation*<sup>25</sup> from 2007. This work gives new insight into the figure of Metternich and reassesses the deeply-rooted clichés and ideas represented by other historians. A significant work focused on the Chancellor's life is a new publication from the above-mentioned Wolfram Siemann, *Metternich. Stratege und Visionär* from 2016. In this book, the author uses unexploited sources to provide an extensive analysis of the structure of Metternich's politics, and he comes to entirely new conclusions. His arguments affirm historians who proclaim Metternich's desire for reforms both within and outside the Empire. As a result, the Austrian Chancellor is not evaluated as a regressive despot but rather as a European politician of the highest order. Šedivý comes to similar conclusions in the works mentioned above.

This work draws on essential historical works to provide a fresh perspective on the diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Austria during the specified period. Engaging with various analyses aims to correct long-held misconceptions about the nature of their diplomacy. For instance, recent research, particularly Wolfram Siemann's study, has shaped the exploration of British and Austrian foreign policies during the July Revolution. Insights into the limitations and advantages of Anglo-French cooperation and the diverging strategies of Palmerston and Metternich form a significant part of the narrative, challenging previously one-sided views of both figures.

One key element in this book is the evolving momentum of British foreign policy, primarily driven by Palmerston and his European ambassadors. It examines how these shifts impacted European stability and the balance of power, drawing on modern interpretations of non-intervention doctrines and their application to key international issues. The analysis of Belgium, Poland, and Russia

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23 SRBIK, Heinrich Ritter von, *Metternich. Der Staatsmann und der Mensch*, Band I–II, München 1925.

24 SKED, Alan, *The Metternich System 1815–48*. In: SKED, Alan (ed.), *Europe's Balance of Power 1815–1848*, London 1979, p. 98–121.

25 SKED, Alan, *Metternich and Austria. An Evaluation*, Basingstoke 2007.

during the 1830s, especially regarding the impact of Russian policy in Europe, provides a broader context for understanding Vienna's relations with other Powers and illustrates the dynamics of cooperation between Austria and St Petersburg.

The section on Italy delves deeper into the complexities of Metternich's policies, now seen as more reformist than previously thought. This re-evaluation presents Metternich as a more progressive force in Central Italy, working to restore order through reformist measures rather than reactionary ones. Recent findings also re-examine Palmerston's motivations, suggesting that he often prioritised British interests over broader European stability, particularly in his dealings with France.

The book addresses the Eastern Question and its significance in shaping British and Austrian diplomacy. It situates this issue within the broader European context, reconsidering the intentions and actions of both Metternich and Palmerston. The challenges of cooperation and competition among the Great Powers are explored, especially in relation to their approaches to the Ottoman Empire and their efforts to preserve peace in Europe. Recent studies have emphasised Metternich's commitment to consensus within the Concert of Europe and his focus on maintaining the stability of the Ottoman Empire. The book integrates this perspective into its analysis of diplomatic strategy and foreign policy decisions.

Ultimately, this work reinterprets the roles of Metternich and Palmerston, moving away from traditional views that depict one as a reactionary and the other as a mere opportunist. Instead, it offers a more nuanced understanding of their respective diplomatic strategies, supported by a broader analysis of nineteenth-century European politics. The book contributes significantly to ongoing debates by challenging deeply entrenched myths and offering a more balanced view of the period's international relations.

Finally, the author considers it essential to explain the use of specific terms or names. The book does not use the word Germany, with the term "German states" and the German Confederation used for this region. Similarly, Turkey is referred to as the Ottoman Empire. The author refers to Italy as the "Italian states" or the official names used at the time by the states in that space.

Here, it would be wise to thank my friends and colleagues, without whom this book would never have come to fruition. Specifically, I would like to thank Miroslav Šedivý, in particular, who read through the original Czech version of the text patiently multiple times. Also, Lukáš Novotný supported this work and thoroughly commented on various passages. I would further like to thank Martin Boček for his helpful, valuable, and steadfast advice.