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The end of the Second Egyptian-Ottoman War marked the conclusion of an entire decade of international relations, characterised by a bipolar division of Europe. A decade in which Palmerston played an essential role as Britain's Foreign Secretary. For Metternich, it was a period of unwelcome changes in which his influence within international politics waned. Although the Habsburg Monarchy was in a clearly weak position, it could still pursue its main diplomatic objectives: preserving general peace, securing a stable empire, and maintaining the traditional order in Europe. In contrast to Austria, Great Britain was a world Power in the true sense of the word. Its objectives were reflected in its economic and trading activities worldwide.

Palmerston's foreign policy was characterised by a series of contradictions throughout his tenure. While he often adhered to a policy of non-intervention, he was not afraid to use Britain's powerful navy to achieve political goals, even in the face of strong opposition from both Parliament and the government. He also held conflicting stances in relation to other Powers and surrounding states. By initiating the Quadruple Alliance, he aimed to create a coalition to counter the more unified and coherent cooperation of the three Eastern courts. Yet, the alliance of liberal states suffered from significant divisions from the very beginning. This was further complicated by the fact that two of the signatory states were in the midst of civil wars, leaving their domestic politics either unstable or deeply fractured. For Palmerston, this situation presented several opportunities: firstly, to assert British influence in individual states through a "protective policy" that supported political factions favourable to Britain; secondly, to control and manipulate French foreign policy and influence in the region. On the other hand, he sought to use this alliance to engage more directly with the union of conservative courts. In this context, Russia played a key role, particularly through the Eastern Question. British policy, which had failed in 1833, was to be compensated by a more forceful and aggressive approach in the late 1830s. This required Palmerston to appoint "hawks" to ambassadorial positions in Constantinople.

In this regard, it is essential to challenge historical narratives that attempt to portray the British Foreign Secretary as merely a puppet of his diplomats, absolving him of responsibility for his assertive, even aggressive, policies. For London, Russia was not only a threat to the balance of power but also the main rival in the struggle for dominance on the Continent. This conflict was not confined to the 1830s but was part of a long-term rivalry that ultimately culminated in the Crimean War. The difference lay in the political approaches of individual British Foreign Secretaries and governments towards St Petersburg. Palmerston viewed

Russia as a genuine threat to British interests and the only Power capable of challenging London.

Tensions between Great Britain and Austria had been growing since the 1830s. Palmerston did not see Austria as a suitable partner and believed their differences of opinion were insurmountable. The first signs of distrust surfaced during the Belgian Revolution when consensus among the Powers was necessary, without which the birth of a new state would have been impossible. The question of establishing an independent Belgium dominated Palmerston's politics during the first three years of his term. Discussions and conflicts at the London conference also influenced other European issues, such as the crisis in the Italian states, the November Uprising in Poland, and unrest within the German Confederation. These events worsened the international climate, eventually dividing Europe into liberal and conservative blocs.

This bipolarity stemmed from competition for influence on the Continent. Through his actions, Palmerston disrupted the Vienna Order, prioritising British interests over the stability of Europe. Great Britain abandoned its policy of international cooperation to secure France's assistance in Belgium. As a result, it was also willing to overlook breaches of international law on the Italian Peninsula. At the same time, rivalry with conservative Powers during negotiations in London pushed Palmerston to publicly support liberals in Eastern Europe.

Another determining factor of British foreign policy was public sentiment within Britain. During the first half of the 1830s, the Whig cabinet endeavoured to achieve maximum support from potential liberal voters and, as such, sought to meet their desires. The cabinet in London was in a permanent crisis, with the issue of electoral reform coming to the fore during this complicated period. From a British perspective, events abroad were a backdrop to domestic political problems. Pursuing constitutionalism on the European Continent served as a form of propaganda that garnered public support in Britain. The endeavour to support liberals in Britain and elsewhere in Europe along with geopolitical interests, simultaneously led Palmerston to cooperate with France and set up the Quadruple Alliance. Both these actions were primarily the pragmatic consequences of the Whig government's needs at home and abroad. At the same time, it is important to reject an exaggerated emphasis on Palmerston's ideological convictions as the primary source of his "liberal" politics during this period.

Austria, although geopolitically a suitable partner, was not considered an ideal candidate for cooperation with London from a political and pragmatic standpoint. This reality was evident during the Greek War of Independence and continued through the revolutions in the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, Germany, and Italy. The political essence of Metternich's and Palmerston's approaches differed fundamentally. Metternich advocated for firm and unchanging

principles based on the balance of power, the suppression of revolutions, and the preservation of a stable, conservative order, which he deemed essential for maintaining peace in Europe. These principles were crucial for Austria's prosperity and its position as a Great Power. Metternich's policy can, therefore, be seen as straightforward and protective, but with a noble political undercurrent. In contrast, Palmerston was unafraid to pursue a more pragmatic and realistic policy aimed at weakening the influence of individual Powers, with the goal of disrupting their positions across Europe and undermining their mutual cooperation. This approach was evident in matters such as the occupation of Ancona, the situation in Poland, and, most notably, the Eastern Question.

Initially, the Austrian Chancellor perceived the London Conference as the beginning of restoring the cooperation of 1815–1822. He changed his mind in 1832, expressing disappointment over its course. During this time, Palmerston began implementing his “liberal” politics, which resonated east of the Rhine. The result was Metternich's counteraction on the Iberian Peninsula and the help given to Dom Miguel and Don Carlos, fulfilling the idea of legitimacy from an ideological perspective. This period was also characterised by deepening cooperation between London and Paris, which affirmed the Ballhausplatz in its assumption that Great Britain was ignoring the legacy of 1815 in pursuing its interests. Münchengrätz was, then, also a natural response to the formation of a Western European bloc. The alliance of the three Eastern courts stood on much firmer foundations compared to the Quadruple Alliance. While differences in the ambitions of London and Paris were evident from the very outset of the treaty's existence and were demonstrated fully during the Second Eastern Crisis, Metternich trusted Nicholas I's policies. Despite certain disagreements, Prussia also stood firmly at Austria's side.

In this regard, it can be said that the deeper the disputes between Great Britain and France became, the more London leaned towards cooperation with Vienna. The main problem, though, was the British Foreign Secretary's distrust of Metternich and his hostility towards him, primarily based on their differing political approaches. Palmerston was well aware that Great Britain could not achieve dominance on the Continent by relying solely on its own power, isolated and without alliances with other continental Powers. Therefore, in the mid-1830s, during the initial deteriorating stage of cooperation between France and Great Britain, London sought to draw closer to Austria. The goal was not a genuine consolidation of relations, but rather the creation of a natural counterbalance to France, whose foreign policy objectives did not always align with Britain's.

During the deteriorating Anglo-Russian relations in the second half of the 1830s, this possibility was also discussed in London, but it once again faltered due to Palmerston's aversion to the Austrian Chancellor. On the other hand, Metter-

nich himself did not want to weaken Austrian-Russian cooperation. For him, it represented a guarantee of the existing order and firm political stances. These tendencies were particularly evident in the later phases of the Iberian question and, subsequently, during the Second Eastern Crisis. Metternich not only saw British policy as insincere but also as directly conflicting with his vision and a threat to the balance of power. His firm political stance was demonstrated by his participation in cooperation during the Second Ottoman-Egyptian War, as he recognised that this collaboration would yield the expected political results and contribute to maintaining peace in Europe. He was also aware that British diplomacy posed a greater threat than the traditionally feared Russia. In his eyes, the unpredictability of Palmerston's policies made Britain an unreliable partner. Even so, he was not opposed to mutual cooperation, provided that London could clearly declare its own goals that aligned with Austria's vision. Thus, his policy was shaped by addressing individual problems while keeping the long-term goal of maintaining peace and prosperity in Europe in mind.

From 1837, Britain's diplomatic interests again shifted from Western Europe to the Near East. London's oriental policy was typically marked by rivalry with St Petersburg over spheres of influence in Afghanistan, Persia, and the Caucasus. By the end of the 1830s, Great Britain was active in China, where it waged the First Opium War. The Ottoman Empire's existence was a guarantee for British trade and allowed the use of commercial routes for goods moving further east. General peace and the balance of power in Europe also depended on the continuation of the Sultan's empire. When Sultan's army was defeated during the First Eastern Crisis of 1831–1833, leading to the signing of the Treaty of Hünkâr Iskelesi, this signalled a weakening of Britain's position in the Bosphorus and beyond. From Metternich's point of view, there was nothing objectionable in the Russo-Ottoman alliance. If St Petersburg guaranteed Constantinople its empire's integrity and offered armed assistance to the Sultan, then this also meant the balance of power could be preserved in Europe. The Austrian Chancellor trusted St Petersburg and believed in its peaceful intentions. At the same time, the Foreign Secretary saw the Treaty of Hünkâr Iskelesi as a tool to ensure Russian control of the Straits and the establishment of a protectorate in the Ottoman Empire. The consequences of this first conflict between Muhammad Ali and Mahmud II were reflected in British society, igniting a wave of Russophobia, which had major political repercussions, influencing Great Britain's foreign policy.

The imminent second conflict between the Sultan and his Egyptian vassal allowed Palmerston to look again at the circumstances in the Near East. The British Foreign Secretary's most significant concern was the possibility of Franco-Russian cooperation, which would threaten London's international status. Muhammad Ali's Egyptian domain viewed Paris as a role model, and France's politicians wel-

came the opportunity to expand their influence in North Africa through Alexandria. Four years after the signing of the Quadruple Alliance, the Anglo-French *entente* definitely ended. London's representative in Vienna, Frederick Lamb, recommended to Palmerston that under the prevailing circumstances, he should reassess his position on Austria and begin active cooperation with the country. Despite this, his proposal fell on deaf ears and was rejected by the Foreign Secretary. Nor did his stance change during the unfolding crisis in 1839. Metternich attempted to convince the government in London of Austria's clear and firm foreign policy intentions. Besides the Ottoman Empire, the common denominator was concern over France and its pro-war pronouncements, which escalated during the Rhine Crisis. In hindsight, it turned out to be a brief instance of cooperation, which faded away again during 1841.

The rivalry between the two men was also reflected in their differing views on where the main centre of European diplomacy should be. Metternich considered Vienna a strategic venue for holding international talks. He wanted to turn the city on the Danube into a venue for holding conferences focused on the latest foreign problems of the period. The British Foreign Secretary was firmly convinced of London's fundamental role. The capital became a centre of discussions concerning Greece and Belgium. During Palmerston's period as Foreign Secretary, London played a crucial role in foreign policy matters, taking the notional baton from Vienna in this regard. This enabled Palmerston to control diplomatic events and influence diplomatic discussions. During this period, London became the epicentre of international politics, attracting both liberal and conservative leaders from across Europe. Even Metternich himself would later find refuge in the city on the Thames.

During the second phase of the Eastern crisis, Austria's Chancellor proposed that Vienna should be the centre of gravity for subsequent diplomatic negotiations. Despite the alliance with St Petersburg, Nicholas I did not support this plan, promoting London instead. This was a blow to Metternich's desire to restore the shine to the Austrian capital it had enjoyed in 1814–1815. Differences were also seen in the purpose behind the conference. The Foreign Secretary saw holding negotiations domestically as a tool to pursue Britain's national interests and, in particular, a means to control tense British-French relations. For the Austrian Chancellor, the objective of discussions was to find a true *entente* between the Powers, as he was aware that all members of the Concert of Europe had the same interests.

Another conflict between them played out in their differing interpretation of the law. For Metternich, international law was paramount, and it was what Austria's foreign policy was based upon. In contrast, Palmerston bent the law to his advantage. From this perspective, the disagreements between liberalism and con-

servatism played a secondary role. One way these arguments were reflected was in relation to the King of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, William I, with Metternich unambiguously supporting him as the legitimate monarch fighting against revolutionaries. Similarly, this was the case in the Sultan's struggle with his governor and in the civil wars in Spain and Portugal. In all of these cases, the Austrian Chancellor stood on the side of the law as the basis for battling chaos and revolution. In contrast, the Foreign Secretary adapted international law to fit Great Britain's national policy and, on principle, opportunistically ignored the legal principles of Europe's state system. Examples include the occupation of Ancona discussed previously and the Russo-Ottoman treaty of 1833. In this way, Palmerston sacrificed the diplomatic legacy of 1815 to British foreign policy profits.

For Palmerston, the Habsburg Monarchy was a potential partner and rival. Several factors led Palmerston to consider Metternich, his opponent in the political climate of the 1830s. According to the Foreign Secretary, Vienna would be a much better partner for London if its conservative government transformed itself and took on a liberal system similar to Britain's. There were several good opportunities for establishing Anglo-Austrian cooperation during Palmerston's era, such as the necessity of containing France and cooperation regarding the Near East. Still, there was a fundamental difference in ideological opinion, and in the Foreign Secretary's eyes, this made Vienna an unreliable partner. From 1815, Metternich did not waver from his ideals, which he considered correct and beneficial for Austria and outside of Austria. He could not grasp why Palmerston did not want to understand his positions based on Austria's international position and on which its very existence was dependent. Of prime importance was maintaining a balance of power and general peace, which could guarantee prosperity for Austria and the whole of Europe.