

Q Explain the role of Congress of Vienna in shaping post Napoleonic Europe and maintaining balance of power.

### I- Introduction:

The Congress of Vienna was a diplomatic gathering which was hosted by the Chancellor of Austria, Metternich by making alliance with Russia, Prussia, Great Britain, Austria and France. It was held to ensure the peace in Europe and remark the territories as they were before Napoleonic era. The purpose was to make sure the balance of power so that one state should not control all Europe, and to suppress the revolutionary ideologies and promote monarch system. The future of France was decided by these states to make the balance of power certain in these states rather than one dominated state.

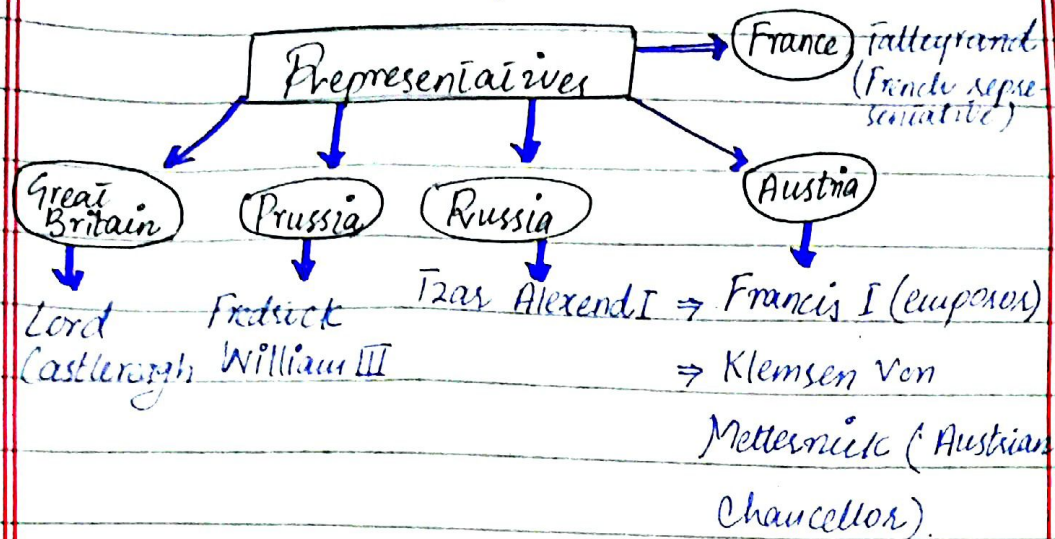
### II- Objectives of Congress of Vienna:

There are following objectives of Congress of Vienna.

#### (i) Restoration of monarchy in France:

The main purpose of the Congress was to revive monarchy or Bourbon restoration in France. Louis XVIII was given the rule

### III. Personalities at Congress:



### Basic Principles of Settlement:

- Principle of legitimacy (to restore the absolute monarchy)
- Principle of balance of power
- Suppression of Revolutionary and Republican Sentiments

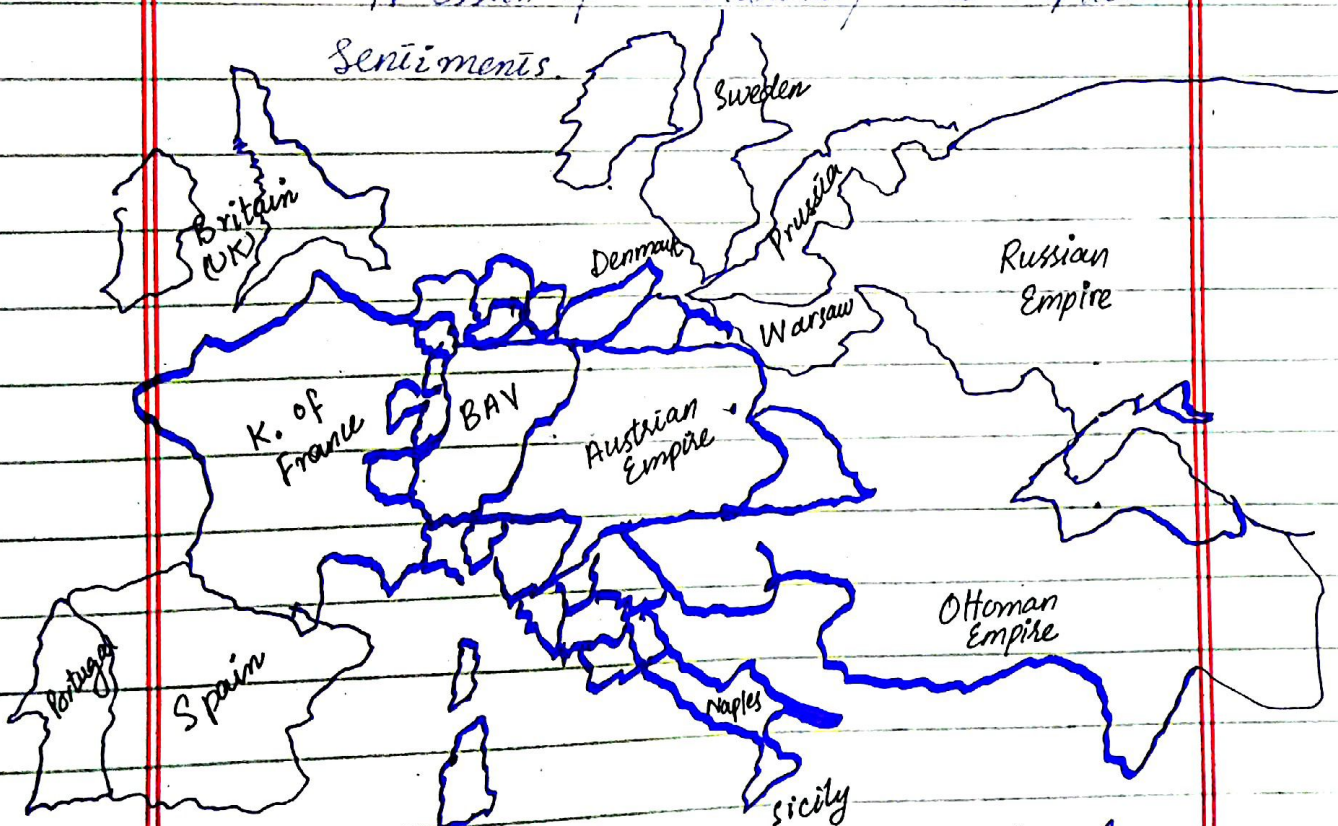


Fig: European balance, peace and Restoration, Congress of Vienna

## Dispute over territorial Settlement:

On the division of territories, states started arguing and claimed bigger part for itself. Russia was offended over the division of Poland between Austria and Prussia. On the other hand, Russia's lion share in Saxony made Austria and Prussia offended. Therefore, the dispute got severe and there was a question of division of disputed territories.

### (i) Role of Talleyrand as a diplomat:

Talleyrand was representative of France and a supporter of monarchy cause in front to resolve the dispute over the division of territories. As a mediator, he divided Poland and Saxony among Austria, Russia and Prussia as follows:

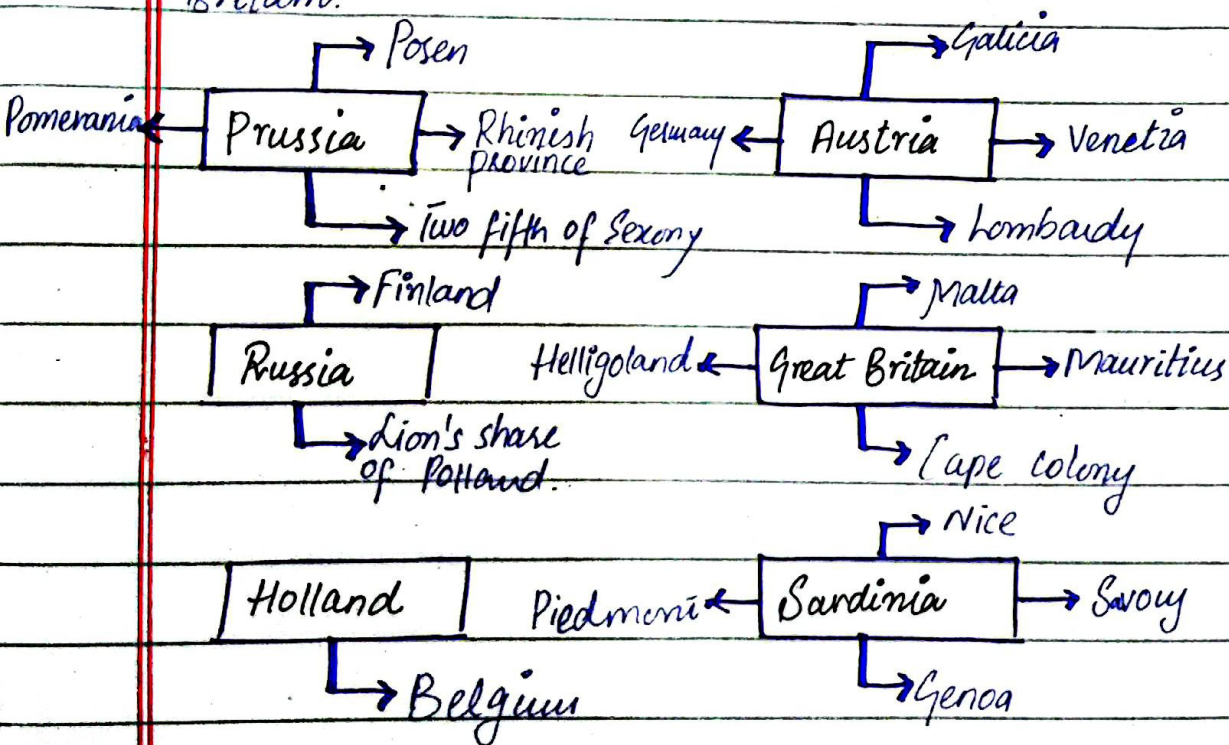
| Poland                 | Saxony                 |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| → Galicia: Austria     | → two fifth of Saxony; |
| → Posen: Prussia       | Prussia got two        |
| → Lion's share: Russia | fifth of Saxony.       |

"Legitimacy is the only principle that can restore order in Europe"

(Talleyrand)

### (ii) Territorial Conflict and Settlement Mechanism:

Primarily, the territory of France was reduced to 1790 territory and boundaries were restored. Belgium was revived by Holland and Prussia got Posen, Rhinish provinces, Pomerania and two fifth of Saxony. Galicia, Lombardy, Venetia and Confederation of Germany belonged to Austria. Russia handed on the lion's share of Poland and Finland. Piedmont, Savoy, Nice and Genoa were revived by Sardinia. Malta, Mauritius, Heligoland and Cape Colony became part of Great Britain.



### V. Significance of Congress of Vienna:

Congress of Vienna was a multilateral

body, which was hosted by Austrian's Chancellor Metternick in order to lessen the dissemination of the revolutionary or republic sentiments.

"When France sneezes, Europe catches cold"

(Klemen Von Metternick)

This statement of Metternick showed the fear of spread of the revolutionary ideas because he was against it and great supporter of monarchy.

(i) Maintenance of Peace:

Prevented the major wars till the world war I for almost a century.

(ii) Model of Diplomacy:

This was 'multilateral platform', leaders of different states came together to consult over the peace of Europe and other matters which needed to be resolved.

(iii) Suppression of Revolutionary sentiments:

The revolutionary sentiments were suppressed but just for time being, although they resurfaced in 1848.

(iv) Preservation of the status quo:

The status quo of state was preserved in a way of preserving monarchy and

and ensured the dominance of conservative elite, by promoting the concept of ~~lib~~ conservatism and suppress the liberal nationalists.

## VII. Criticism on Vienna Convention:

### (i) Violation of Principle of legitimacy:

Principle of legitimacy was violated when the Confederation of Germany merged with Austria and threatened its identity, liberty and followed the theory of Realism, state centric power was prioritized over individual ideology.

### (ii) Domination of Conservative powers:

Conservative bias was dominated over democratic French revolution. Monarchy was prioritized over the nationalism as Germany which had its national identity became part of Austria.

### (iii) Future of France and strong powers:

Future of France was decided by strong powers like Great Britain, Russia, Prussia, Austria by ignoring the small powers that were part of Congress of Vienna. Moreover, the future of France was decided without the advice of representative of France Talleyrand.

of France.

(ii) Reinforcement of Pre Napoleonic Order:

To reinforce the territory of France as before of Napoleonic era or 1792. Its territory had lessened, and brought back to its original space.

(iii) To bring peace in Europe:

Congress of Vienna was conducted in order to disseminate the peace in Europe. So, the power was given to the big powers including Russia, Prussia, Austria, Great Britain and France and some small states were also included.

(iv) To discuss the future of France:

The aim of Congress of Vienna was to discuss the future of France and the dynamics which would involve in running its affairs.

(v) Establishment of Buffer states:

To surround the France with the ring of strong countries making buffer states, including Netherlands, Piedmont and Prussia.

Prussia

Piedmont

FRANCE

Netherlands

(iv) Bring peace but for a short time:  
The Congress of Vienna brought peace but that was temporary as it vanished in world war I because the deep rooted tensions were not resolved like the conflict of nationalism and inequality. Therefore, the revolutionary ideas resurfaced again and again in Europe's history.

### VII- Conclusion:

The Congress of Vienna succeeded in maintaining the temporary peace and balance of power but the revolutionary sentiments could not be curbed for a longer span. It could not push back the concept of modern nationalism and democracy with the equality in the society. Therefore, congress of Vienna was a multilateral platform which became a source of restoration of monarchy and dissemination of peace but for a short period. In longer run, the feelings of republic and decentralization of power prevailed.

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