

QUESTION NO. 2

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

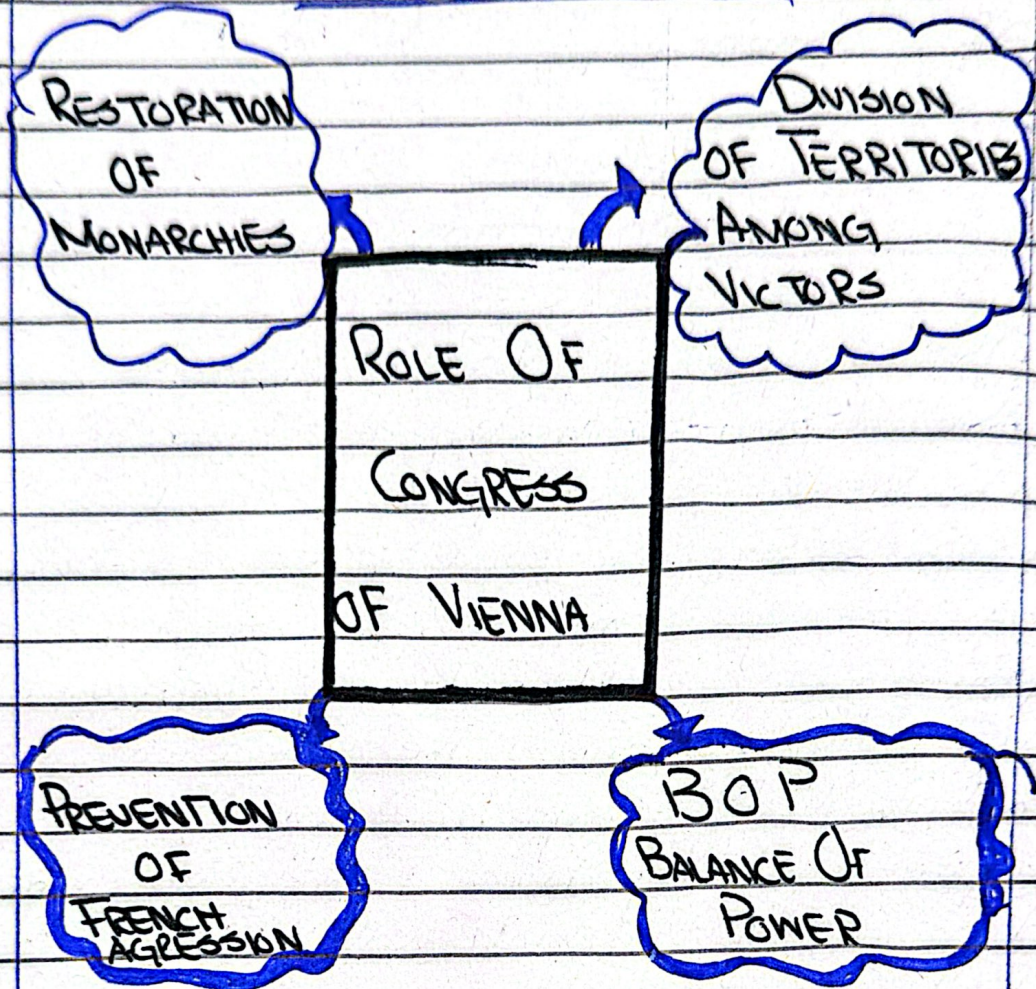
1

INTRODUCTION.

The Congress of Vienna refers to the diplomatic meeting that was held at Vienna, from Sep 1814 to June 1815. All European Countries were invited by among them all, four major powers i.e Britain, Russia, Prussia and Austria were the decision makers. At the Congress Austria was represented by Francis I and Metternich, Prussia by Frederick William III, Britain by Castlereagh - her foreign Secretary and France by Talleyrand. Russia was represented by Tsar Alexander I and pope by Cardinal Salvi. The main problems facing Congress were the restoration of old Monarchs under the principle of legitimacy, how to stop and insure further aggression from France, division of territories and balance of power in Europe.

(2)

ROLE OF CONGRESS OF VIENNA IN SHAPING POST NAPOLEONIC EUROPE



1 - RESTORATION UNDER PRINCIPLE OF LEGITIMACY

Metternich and the French delegates were strong supporters of restoration. In fact there was very little alternative to dynastic rulers. The few examples of republic were not encouraging. Principle of legitimacy was applied to France.

Spain, Italy, Piedmont, Tuscany and Papal states.

2 - PREVENTION OF AGGRESSION BY FRANCE

Main purpose behind Congress was prevention of French aggression. For that they established kingdom of Netherlands in North eastern side of France. Idea of Barner against France can also be seen in the final settlement of northern Italy. The Congress statesmen had similar defensive motive in agreeing to Prussia taking over the Rhine province.

Belgium + Holland.

kingdom of Netherlands
with
on eastern side of
Spain.

King of Piedmont
restored + free republic
of Genoa was added
to strengthen it

Prussia taking
over the Rhine
province

3. DIVISION OF TERRITORIES AMONG VICTORS.

There was a dispute among Russia and Prussia over the territories of Poland and Saxony. But this dispute was resolved by other three powers. The final steps toward division of territories among them was as under.

RUSSIA → FINLAND + BASSARABIA + Greater part of POLAND.

RUSSIA → 40 percent of SAXONY + Duchy of WESTPHALIA + SWEDISH POMERANIA + RHINE LAND

AUSTRIA → LOMBARDY + VENETIA + ILLYRIA + DALMATIA

BRITAIN → NO. of potential naval bases
HOLLIGOLAND, Malta + Ionian Island
Cape Colony.

In some instances victors had not got exactly what they wanted. This was due to existence of third objective at Vienna, the maintenance of European peace.

4- BALANCE OF POWER

This was really a principle of eighteenth-century diplomacy designed to prevent any one state gaining a dominant position in Europe. When there was danger of the balance not being maintained new leagues and alliances had been formed. At Vienna the idea was still very much alive.

→ Demand of Alexander for Duchy of Warsaw had produced alliance of Austria, England and France against Russia and Prussia.

→ Metternich was anxious to limit Russian power, as already in Balkan Russia had gained Bessarabia. Metternich had sought to reestablished balance of power by giving provinces in Balkan for Austria.

→ Toward Russia Castlereagh and Metternich had same policy - to keep Russia out of Balkans and to prevent her breaking of Turkish empire

→ Austrians new provinces of Lombardy and Venetia were more than compensation for the loss of

Belgium, they were rich territories closer to Vienna and enabled Austria to dominate Italy for next forty years.

Thus we see where Prussia gained in the north, Austria gained in the south and where Russia gained in the north and in the Balkans, Austria gained in the west in the Italy and in Germany, while England power was growing in such a way that she could take a decisive part in world politics.

Through working of the principle of Balance of power all major power emerged more stronger than before, without anyone being able to exert complete dominance.

CONCLUSION

All major powers met at Vienna, the purpose was to figure out a new policy to prevent any such aggressive action in the future and to maintain peace in Europe. Issues that were to be looked upon were the restoration of monarchies, preventing French aggression, division of territories among victors and most importantly balancing of power in Europe. Many initiatives were taken place

including forceful amalgamation of Holland and Belgium to make it a stronger front against France, applied principle of legitimacy to restore monarchs as that was in the interest of allied powers, division of territories in such a way that no one is completely able to dominate the other. But this balance of power was defective as it was for the four big powers at the expense of the smaller powers. Balance of power was a myth but not a reality.