

[STATE PAPERS
Relative to the late Negotiation between
France and England.

[CONTINUED.]

No. VI.

Paris, 26th April, 1806.

Sir, I have just received the orders of his majesty the emperor and king, before whom I had hastened to lay the dispatch which your excellency did me the honor to write me the 8th of April.

It appears to his majesty, that in admitting, as you do, the principle of equality, you persisted, however, in demanding a form of negotiation which cannot agree with that principle. When between two equal powers one of them claims the intervention of a third, it is evident that she tends to break that equilibrium so favorable to the just and free discussion of their interests. It is manifest that she is not willing to content herself with the advantages and rights of equality. I dare believe, sir, that upon returning for the last time to this discussion, I shall be able to persuade your excellency that upon no title and for no motive, should Russia be called into the negotiation proposed between France and England.

When war broke out between the two states, Russia was at peace with France.—This war made no alteration in the relations which existed between her and us.—She at first proposed her mediation, and afterwards, from circumstances foreign to the war which divides us, a coolness having taken place between the two cabinets of St. Petersburg and the Tuilleries, the emperor Alexander judged proper to suspend his political relations with France, but at the same time declared, in the most positive manner that it was his intention to remain a stranger to the contest subsisting between us and England.

This treaty was a part of participation in a war of a different nature, more extensive and more general than the former.—It is from this war that arose the third coalition, in which Austria was the principal power & Russia an auxiliary.—England participated in this war only in projects; we have never had to fight her forces united to those of her allies.—Russia showed herself in it only secondarily.—No declaration addressed to France came to inform us that she was at war with us, and it was only on the field of battle where the third coalition was destroyed, that we were officially informed that Russia made a part of it.

When his Britannic majesty declared war against France, he had an aim which he made known by his manifestoes. This constitutes the nature of the war. When, eighteen months after, his Britannic majesty allied himself with Austria, Russia, and Sweden, he had other objects in view. This was a new war, the motives of which are to be collected from the state papers which were published by the different powers. In these motives, there is never any mention of the direct interests of England. These two wars, then, have no relation together. England did not actually participate in the one which is terminated. Russia never took a part either directly or indirectly, in the one which is still going on. There is then no reason why England should not terminate alone the war which she made alone with us.

If his majesty the emperor adopted the principle of negotiating now with England, united with her new allies, he would implicitly admit, that the third coalition still exists, that the war of Germany is not finished—that this war is the same as the one which France is supporting against England. He would implicitly accept for the basis of the negotiation the conditions of count Novotzoff, which excited the astonishment of Europe, and provoked the French character, and from vanquisher of the coalition, the emperor would willingly place himself in the position of the vanquished.

At this day, the emperor has nothing more to contend for with the coalition; he has a right to disavow the relations you have had with it, and in treating with you, there can be no question but of the objects and the interests of the war undertaken previous to your alliances, and which has survived them.

Although it is but six months since the veil which covered the secret combinations of the war, was rent, it is however true, that the continent is at peace. The chief of your allies, Austria, has made her separate peace. Prussia, whose armies were for some time on the footing of war, has made a treaty of alliance offensive and defensive with us. Sweden is not worth mentioning—as to Russia, there exists between her and us direct propositions of negotiations. From her power, she does not stand in need of the protection of any one, and she cannot claim the intervention of any court to terminate the differences which divide us. From her distance, she is so far out of our reach, as of all means of hurting, that the state of peace produces in our respective relations, only more diplomatic charges. If in such a situation, the emperor accepted to negotiate jointly with England and Russia, would he not suppose the existence of a war which he has gloriously put an end to? Would he not in fine abandon between himself and England the principle of an equality already agreed upon between us? If sir, you will please to examine with the discernment peculiar to you, the considerations which I have now attempted to state, you will allow that such a negotiation would be much more prejudicial to us than war, and even than a congress.

In fact, in a congress, if England, Sweden and Russia, contended to make the principles prevail, which served as the foundation of the third coalition, Prussia, Denmark and the Porte, Persia and America would remonstrate against these principles, and demand equal laws of navigation and a just share in the dominion of the sea. No doubt, in this discussion, the diminution of the power of France would often be voted for, but the diminution of the power of England would also be often voted for.—Some powers would claim the equilibrium of the South of Europe, but others would also claim the equilibrium of the North.—A great number would be for the equilibrium of Asia—all would interest themselves on the equilibrium of the seas; and if amidst so many stormy and complicated discussions, it be possible to hope that a result would proceed, this result would be just, because it would be complete; and certainly, if his majesty has declared it upon all occasions, he will have no reluctance to making sacrifices for public tranquillity, when England, Russia and all the great powers, will each be dis-

posed to acknowledge the established rights, to protect the feeble states, and to adopt principles of justice, moderation and equality—but the emperor is too well acquainted with men to let himself be seduced by chimæras, and he perceives that it would be going astray, to seek for peace in the labyrinth of ten years of debates, which during that time, would perpetuate the war. It would render its terms more uncertain and more difficult to be attained. It would then be necessary to change the route and do as was done at Utrecht, to let the allies spend themselves in endless and useless debates, to treat each separately, to discuss, as was then done, the interests of both powers and those of their respective allies—to make in fine peace for one's self, and make it sufficiently equitable and sufficiently honorable for it not to fail being accepted by all the powers interested. It is thus that it becomes, not in ten years, but at the present day two powers such as England and France to terminate the differences which divide them, and to establish at the same time the rule of their rights and that of the interests of their friends.

To sum up, sir, what I have said, I see in the proposed negotiation only three possible forms of discussion. Negotiation with England and the allies she acquired at the formation of the third coalition—negotiation with all the powers of Europe, joining to it the Americans—negotiation with England alone. The first of these forms is inadmissible, because it would submit the emperor to the influence of the third coalition, which no longer exists. The emperor would have negotiated thus had he been beaten. The second form of negotiation would eternise the war, if the inevitable incidents which it would multiply every moment, and the passions which it would let loose without measure, did not make the discussion break off in some noisy manner, a few years after its being established.—The third is then the only one which those must desire who really wish for peace. His majesty is persuaded that the just and moderate dispositions which he loves to recognize in the tone and language of his Britannic majesty's minister, seconding as he could wish, the pacific sentiments of which he is more than ever determined to give proofs to his friends and even to his enemies, the nations exhausted by the efforts of a war, the interest of which it is as difficult to feel as it is hard to know its true object, will at length behold from the proposed negotiation, a peace which is called for by all their wants and by all their wishes.

Accept, sir, &c.

(Signed) CH. M. TALLEYRAND,
Prince of Benevento.

No. VII.

Downing-street, April, 1806.

Sir,

I received ere yesterday your excellency's dispatch of the 26th instant.

After perusing and re-perusing it with all possible attention, I find in it no argument sufficient to induce our government to change the opinion it has already emitted, viz. that all negotiation in which Russia should not be comprised as a party, is absolutely inadmissible.

We wish for peace—but we can wish for nothing that could be derogatory to the dignity of our sovereign, or to the honour or interests of the nation.

Now if we treated without Russia, considering the close ties which unite us to that power, we should think ourselves exposed to the reproach of having been wanting to that scrupulous fidelity in our engagements, which we pride ourselves upon; whereas on the other hand, and persisting in our demand that Russia be admitted, we think we do nothing contrary to the principle of equality which we both claim.

When the three plenipotentiaries shall be together, how can it be thought that any thing could be carried by the plurality of votes? or even that such an assembly bore any resemblance to a general congress? There would really exist only two parties: on one side, France; on the other, the two allied powers.

Moreover, if so many advantages be seen in an affair of this nature in being two against one, there would be no objection to any of your allies intervening whom you might judge proper.

Sincerely desiring to avoid useless disputes, I do not chuse to enter into the discussion of the consequences which your excellency draws from the events of the last campaign.

I shall only observe by the bye that I do not see for reason an alliance is to be looked upon as null with regard to the powers who hold it, because one of those who compose it was detached from it by the misfortunes of war.

As to the overture which Russia has made to you, we know nothing about it; but whatever be its nature, we are persuaded that that court will never behave so as to compromise the known loyalty of its character, or to waken the ties of friendship and confidence which subsist between it and England.

To return to the point, your excellency says that in the proposed negotiation, you see only three possible forms of discussion, the first appears inadmissible to you.

From what I have had the honour of writing to you, you must judge, sir, that the third is incompatible both with our fundamental ideas of justice and honour, and with our perception of the interest of our country. The second is perhaps not bad in its principle; but besides the delays it would occasion, it would hardly be practicable in the present conjuncture.

It is then with great regret that I must freely declare to your excellency, that I see no hope of peace at this moment, unless on your side of the water they be disposed to treat in the form which we have proposed. I think it necessary to add, that this form is essential to us not only from the reasons which I have had the honor to set forth to your excellency, but inasmuch as any other might give rise to suspicions that you really entertained the chimerical project with

which you are reproached (wrongfully as I love to believe) of excluding us from all relation with the powers of the continent of Europe; and even as such an idea is less revolting for us than it ought to be, and that it is in reality. It is not to a minister so enlightened as your excellency, that it can be necessary to declare that England can never consent to an exclusion which would degrade her from the rank she has hitherto held, and which she thinks she shall always be able to hold among the nations of the world.

The thing in fine is reduced to a single point: Will you treat conjointly with Russia? Yes. Will you have us treat separately? No.

Although we have not succeeded in the grand object which we proposed to ourselves, both governments have reason to congratulate themselves upon the politeness and frankness which have characterized the discussion of their differences; and I owe you upon my particular account, sir, thanks for the obliging manner in which you express yourself concerning me.

I beg you to accept the assurances of my most distinguished consideration.

I have the honor to be,

Your excellency's

Most humble and most-obt servant,
C. J. FOX.

No. VIII.

Paris, 2d June, 1806.

I have laid before the emperor the last letter which your excellency did me the honor to write to me. I cannot but repeat to you, by his orders, that to require of France to treat with you upon the principle of your alliance with Russia, is to wish to reduce us to a forced form of discussion, and to suppose us in such an abject state as we have never been in. No power must ever flatter herself to impose upon France either conditions of peace or mode of negotiation contrary to custom. To exact either of these points affects the French character, and I do not hesitate to assert, that to triumph in this respect over all our repugnance, it would not be too much for an English army to have invaded Belgium and to be on the eve of penetrating into Picardy by the mouths of the Somme.

I must again repeat to you, sir, that his majesty heartily wishes for peace, and why should I not add what we might have said, nay what we have really said at every period when the negotiations were broken off? that the prolongation of the war has never been prejudicial to French greatness, and that in time of peace a great state can make use of its strength only to maintain itself and to preserve such as they are, its relations with its neighbors.

France does not dispute your right of choosing and preserving your friends; in war, she has not the choice of her enemies, and she must fight them united or separate, according as it suits them to concert together for the purpose of accomplishing their wishes of aggression and resistance, and to form alliances so little conformable to the true policy of their country, that the first clause of these alliances has ever been to keep them secret.

Because we wish to follow in this circumstance the form of negotiation which has been in use at all times and in all countries, you thence conclude that we do not wish you to have connections upon the continent. I do not think we have ever given cause for such an induction. It does not depend upon us to prevent any government from connecting itself with you, and we cannot wish for either what is unjust, or what is absurd; but it is a different thing that you should form connections at your option, and that we should co-operate and assist you in contracting them. Now to consent, to treat upon the principles of your alliances and to admit them into the discussion of the direct and immediate interests which divide us, is more than to suffer and acknowledge them; it is in some measure consecrating and guaranteeing them. I have already observed to you, sir, that we cannot yield in this point, because principle is for us.

However, that no room may henceforth be left for any misapprehension, I think it my duty first to propose to you, 1st to negotiate in the same preliminary forms which were adopted under the ministry of the marquis of Rockingham in 1782, forms which were not so happily renewed for the negotiations of Lisle, but which were fully successful in the negotiation which preceded the treaty of Amiens; 2d, to establish for bases two fundamental principles, the first of which I draw from your letter of the 27th March, viz. "that the two states shall have for their object that the peace be honorable for them and their respective allies, at the same time that this peace shall be of a nature to secure, as much as in their power, the future repose of Europe." The second principle shall be an acknowledgment in favor of both powers of all right of intervention and guarantee for continental affairs and maritime affairs. Not only it is not repugnant to his majesty to make such an avowal, but he even loves to establish it as a principle, and in thus exposing to you his real intentions, I think I have given you a proof of his pacific disposition. His majesty persuades himself at the same time, that in preventing forever in this respect all subject of complaint, uneasiness and declamation, he has done, upon a point which essentially interests the good of humanity, his duty as a man and as a sovereign.

It would be, sir, with regret, that I should see a discussion ended which began under such good presages. I should however, have, upon losing a hope which is very dear to me, the consolation of thinking

that the wrong of having made it vanish cannot be imputed to France, since she only demands and wishes for what is just.

Accept, sir, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Signed, CH. M. TALLEYRAND,
Prince of Benevento.

No. IX.

Downing-Street, 18th June, 1806.

Sir,

I received, two days ago, your excellency's dispatch of the 2d of this month.

I cannot conceive how, in treating with Russia and us conjointly, you have to acknowledge the principle of the alliances between her and us. At most you only acknowledge the fact.

Still less can I divine how this manner of treating supposes you to be in any abject state whatever. We by no means pretend to impose upon France either the conditions of peace or a mode of negotiation contrary to custom. In 1782, a period which your excellency cites yourself in your dispatch, we did not think ourselves in an abject state; however, when Mr. D. Vergennes told us that for the honor of his court we must treat conjointly with France, Holland, and Spain, we adopted, without thinking we in any way degraded ourselves, the mode which that minister appeared to set such a value upon. Your government sincerely wishes for peace; here it is equally desired; and I might, however say of England what your excellency says of France, that the prolongation of the war has never been prejudicial to her glory or to her greatness; perhaps so indeed to her real permanent interests, but equally so to those of France.

As to the secret observed in our treaty of alliance with Russia, your excellency is too enlightened not to acknowledge that, for what concerned the propositions which we should have made to Prussia and Austria, secrecy was necessary. All that is past. To act in concert for the purpose of procuring in the first place repose to Europe and of preserving it to it after, is the principal. I might even say, the only object of our connections.

After the frank manner in which you disavow the intention which has been wrongfully imputed to you, with regard to what concerns our continental connections, there can no longer exist the least doubt upon this essential point, and it would be only the more grievous that difficulties with regard to form rather than the thing, should make a war continue, which both governments equally wish to put an end to.

Let us come to what your excellency proposes. The form which took place in the ministry of the marquis of Rockingham is the more present to my memory, as I then occupied the same post which his majesty has lately been graciously pleased to honor me with. Let France and England change their positions, and it is precisely the one which I propose. We then treated with France and her allies. Let France now treat with us and our allies.

The base offered in your second proposition are perfectly conformable to the wishes of our government; well understood that, when we mutually acknowledge our respective rights of intervention and guarantee for the affairs of Europe, we also mutually agree to refrain from all encroachments on each side on the states more or less powerful which compose it.

I should not less regret than your excellency that this discussion should end. Provided we can act so as not to be reproached with having been wanting in good faith towards an ally who is in every respect deserving of entire confidence on our part, we shall be contented; and the more so as we know that an honorable peace would not be less conformable to the wishes of Russia than to those of France and England.

I have the honor to be with the most distinguished consideration,

Your excellency's most humble

And obedient servant,

Signed, J. C. FOX.

No. X.

Sir,

I write you only two words to inform you how much I am satisfied with the desire you have testified for peace. Lord Yarmouth, moreover, possesses the whole of my confidence—you may believe all he will say to you, in the same manner as if it was I who said it to you. I am pressed for time.

Accept my homage.

C. J. FOX.

London, 14th June, 1806.

No. XI.

[The credentials furnished Lord Yarmouth, in latin, of no importance.]

No. XII. is a translation of the credentials.

No. XIII.

The undersigned plenipotentiary of his Britannic majesty, before entering into the negotiation now pending between his sovereign and the court of France, conceives it necessary briefly to retrace the circumstances which had led to it. At the same time he thinks it conformable to the character of frankness and sincerity, which, as plenipotentiary of his Britannic majesty, he is resolved constantly to maintain, to declare as the only basis on which he can consent to negotiate, the principle which France has herself set out with stating, as well as to decide the discussion into which he is ready to enter.

The strong & energetic language in which the French gov't expressed, some months since, its desire for peace, whilst it inspired his majesty with a confidence in the real sincerity of the desire of the French court, left

him only the regret, that the proposal for treating with her, or separately with her allies, appeared to hinder France and England from availing themselves of this happy disposition of their respective governments, at that time it was impossible for his Britannic majesty, conformably to the good faith which he has always manifested, to treat otherwise than conjointly with the ally the emperor of Russia.

From that time, when his majesty found that circumstances, which it is not necessary to detail in this place, permitted him to treat separately, it was with pleasure that he received the proposal of treating generally upon the basis of the *uti possidetis*, which ought scrupulously to be observed, except in the case of Hanover, which was proposed to be ceded wholly to his majesty.

It is true that this proposal was not made either directly or by the channel of an accredited minister; of its authenticity, however, not the slightest doubt could be entertained.

Independently of the authority it received from the character of the person employed to communicate it, it appeared that it was in perfect unison with what had been already stated. "The emperor desires nothing of what England possesses," (an avowal made at the beginning of the correspondence between the two courts,) was a natural prelude to such a proposal.

His majesty looked on the cession of Hanover as a testimony of the spirit of justice in which the proposal had been conceived; because this electorate, altho' occupied on a supposed identity of interests and measures, formed in fact, no part of the differences which brought on the present war; and he has seen, in the principle until then acknowledged as the general basis of negotiation (a basis particularly adapted to the relative situations of the two parties) what he judged to be a proof that France was in like manner sincerely disposed with G. Britain to put an end to an order of things equally prejudicial to the interests of the two countries.

In fact, it appeared to his majesty to be the only principle on which a negotiation could probably be brought to a happy conclusion. Of the nature of the interests of the parties who participated in it, there was but little hope that any satisfactory arrangement could be made by way of reciprocal restitution, by giving up their respective acquisitions; whilst on the other hand, the principle of the *uti possidetis* naturally presented itself as the way to put an end to the unfortunate hostilities between the two nations, both of which are in possession of extensive and important conquests, with regard to territory and influence; France on the continent of Europe, and Great-Britain in other parts of the world.

To his majesty this truth appeared still more striking on representing to himself, that both nations enjoyed in their respective acquisitions, a state of possession which could not suffer any important change by the continuation of the war; the superiority of the naval forces of G. Britain being according to all appearances not less firmly established by sea, than that of the armies of France on the continent of Europe.

It is under the impression which these ideas naturally produced, that his majesty without hesitating, accepted the proposal for treating on the principle of the *uti possidetis*, with the reserve due to the connection and concert, which subsisted with the emperor of Russia; and as a proof of his sincerity chose the person by whom this communication has been made, in order to announce the alacrity with which he has acceded to the basis produced for concluding a treaty.

The undersigned is not disposed to conceal the satisfaction his majesty felt at these happy prospects of quickly restoring the blessings of peace to his subjects upon just and equitable principles, and which are conformable to the honor of his crown, nor the regret he felt when, almost at the very moment when his majesty's accession to the principle offered to his acceptance, was announced, his principle was suddenly abandoned, by the demand of a evacuation and reduction of Sicily—a demand which hitherto has only been modified by schemes of indemnity for his Sicilian majesty, which appeared completely insufficient and inadmissible.

This demand, so incompatible with the avowed principles on which the two parties treat, was of itself sufficient to put an end to the negotiation—but the anxiety of his majesty the king of Great-Britain and Ireland to concur with his ally the emperor of Russia, and to secure to his subjects the blessings of peace, has persuaded him to receive any other new proposals that may be made, for procuring his Sicilian majesty, in exchange for Sicily, a real and satisfactory equivalent, which may obtain the consent of that sovereign.

No satisfactory proposal of this nature having yet been made, the undersigned declares that he cannot consent to treat otherwise than on the principle of the *uti possidetis*, as originally proposed to his sovereign by the court of France. At the same time he desires that it may be well understood, that the adoption of this principle will not prevent him listening to a just and satisfactory indemnity to his Sicilian majesty, for the cession of Sicily, nor accepting any proposal for the exchange of territory between the two contracting parties, upon just and equitable principles, and such as may tend to the reciprocal advantage of both countries.

The undersigned is well aware that since the *uti possidetis* has been proposed by the court of France peace has been concluded between France and the emperor of Russia, and consequently that the relative situation of the two countries is no longer the same; but, on the contrary, he must also observe, that since that time France has acquired new advantages by the extensive changes she has made in the constitution of the Germanic empire, an arrangement the scheme of which was submitted by her to the court of Great-Britain, as a powerful motive for the immediate conclusion of peace, on the basis of the *uti possidetis*. If then this principle appeared to be just and reasonable before, it cannot fail at present, according to her own views of the object, to be still more favorable to her interests than to those of the British empire.