
"The Congress of Vienna does not walk, but it dances". Elucidate the Quote.

1. Introduction:

The Congress of Vienna (1815) was a series of meetings held by European leaders to reestablish peace and stability in Europe following the Napoleonic Wars. **Charles Maurice de Talleyrand**, a French diplomat, said that ***the Congress of Vienna "does not walk, but it dances."*** ***This quote means that the negotiations at the Congress were complex and delicate, with different countries each trying to achieve their own goals.*** In this question, we will explore the meaning of this quote and what happened at the Congress of Vienna."

2. Background:

- The Congress of Vienna was called in the wake of the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte and the fall of his empire in 1815.
- The goal of the Congress was to restore the pre-Napoleonic political order in Europe and prevent the resurgence of French power.

3. References from European history books:

- According to historian **A.J.P. Taylor**, in his book **"The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918"**, ***Talleyrand was a master of the art of diplomacy and was known for his wit and cynicism.*** He is said to have made the comment about the Congress of Vienna ***"dancing" as a way of describing the complex and delicate nature of the negotiations.***
- Similarly, historian **Paul W. Schroeder** in his book **"The Transformation of European Politics 1763-1848"** describes the Congress of Vienna as a ***"diplomatic revolution" and notes that it was marked by a high degree of diplomatic skill and maneuvering among the various powers.***

4. Negotiations:

- The Congress was attended by representatives of the major European powers, including Great Britain, Russia, Prussia, Austria, and France.
- The negotiations were led by the Austrian statesman Klemens von Metternich and were marked by a high degree of diplomatic skill and maneuvering.
- The Congress resulted in the reestablishment of the balance of power in Europe and the creation of a system of alliances and guarantees to maintain the peace.

The quote reflects the idea that the negotiations at the Congress were not straightforward or simple, but rather a complex and delicate dance among the various powers involved. The congress was not a walk but a dance where each country had their own interest and agenda to pursue.

5. How the negotiations at the Congress were complex and delicate?

The negotiations at the Congress of Vienna were marked by a high degree of diplomatic skill and maneuvering among the various powers. Each country had their own interests and agenda to pursue, and the negotiations were often characterized by a give-and-take approach, with each power trying to gain as much as possible while giving up as little as possible. For example,

Great Britain:

- Great Britain was primarily focused on maintaining its naval supremacy and preventing the resurgence of French naval power.
- According to historian **J.M. Roberts** in his book "**The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern Europe**", *Great Britain's naval supremacy was seen as essential to its security and economic prosperity.*
- To achieve this goal, Great Britain supported Russia's expansion in Eastern Europe in exchange for Russian support for British naval supremacy.
- This is evident in the agreement reached at the Congress of Vienna known as the "**Anglo-Russian Agreement**" which recognized Russia's sphere of influence in Eastern Europe in exchange for Russian recognition of British naval supremacy in the Mediterranean.

Russia:

- Russia, on the other hand, was interested in expanding its territory and influence in Eastern Europe.
- According to historian **A.J.P. Taylor** in his book "**The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918**", *Russia's expansion in Eastern Europe was driven by a desire to increase its power and prestige in Europe.*
- They agreed to support Great Britain's naval supremacy in exchange for British support for Russian expansion in Eastern Europe.
- This is evident in the "**Anglo-Russian Agreement**" referred to above, where Russia recognized British naval supremacy in exchange for British recognition of Russian expansion in Eastern Europe.

Austria:

- Austria, as the host of the Congress, was looking to maintain its dominance in Central Europe.
- According to historian **Paul W. Schroeder** in his book "**The Transformation of European Politics 1763-1848**", *Austria's dominance in Central Europe was seen as essential to maintaining the balance of power in Europe.*
- They agreed to support France's return to the European community in exchange for French support for Austria's dominance in Central Europe.
- This is evident in the agreement reached at the Congress of Vienna known as the "**Final Act of the Congress of Vienna**" which recognized France's return to the European community in exchange for French recognition of Austria's dominance in Central Europe.

France:

- France was trying to restore its position as a major power in Europe and secure favorable terms for its return to the European community.
- According to historian **J.M. Roberts** in his book "**The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern Europe**", *France's goal was to regain its position as a major power in Europe and secure favorable terms for its return to the European community after the fall of Napoleon.*
- They agreed to support Austria's dominance in Central Europe in exchange for Austrian support for France's return to the European community.

- This is evident in the **"Final Act of the Congress of Vienna"** referred to above, where Austria recognized France's return to the European community in exchange for French recognition of Austria's dominance in Central Europe.

6. Why the negotiations at the Congress of Vienna were complex and delicate?

Owing to the following factors the negotiations the Congress of Vienna were complex and delicate.

- **Restoring the balance of power:**
 - The Congress of Vienna aimed to restore the balance of power in Europe after the Napoleonic Wars. This involved redistributing territories and reshaping borders in order to prevent any one country from becoming too powerful.
 - *For example*, the Congress of Vienna saw the return of the Bourbon monarchy to France, the unification of Italy and the creation of the German Confederation.
- **National interest vs. international stability:**
 - The representatives at the Congress of Vienna had to balance the national interests of their own countries with the need for international stability.
 - *For example*, the representative of Austria, Prince Metternich, wanted to maintain the status quo and prevent any major changes to the balance of power, while the representative of France, Talleyrand, sought to secure more territory and influence for his country.
- **Conflicting claims to territories:**
 - Many countries had claims to various territories, which led to negotiations and compromises.
 - *For example*, the Congress of Vienna saw the transfer of the Kingdom of Saxony from France to Prussia, and the transfer of the Duchy of Parma to Austria.
- **Managing the interests of smaller states:**
 - The Congress of Vienna also had to consider the interests of smaller states, who were often overlooked or ignored in negotiations.
 - *For example*, the Congress of Vienna saw the creation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which united the Dutch Republic and the Austrian Netherlands.
- **Cultural and religious differences:**
 - The Congress of Vienna also had to consider cultural and religious differences, as many countries had different languages, customs and religions.
 - *For example*, the Congress of Vienna saw the transfer of the Duchy of Warsaw to Russia, which led to the displacement of many Polish people and the suppression of their language and culture.

References:

- "The Congress of Vienna" by Michael Rapport
- "The Congress of Vienna: A Study in Allied Unity: 1812-1822" by Harold Nicolson

7. Conclusion:

In summary, the negotiations at the Congress of Vienna were complex and delicate due to the conflicting interests of the various powers and the high degree of diplomatic skill and maneuvering required to reach agreements. Each country had to make concessions and compromise on certain issues

in order to gain support for their own agenda. This delicate balancing of interests and agendas is what Talleyrand was referencing when he said that "The Congress of Vienna does not walk, but it dances." The negotiations at the Congress were not straightforward or simple, but rather a complex and delicate dance among the various powers involved.