



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Research Commons

<http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/>

Research Commons at the University of Waikato

Copyright Statement:

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

The thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of the thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from the thesis.

Liberalism in 19th Century Europe:
To What Extent Did Liberalism Influence the Concert of Europe?

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Social Sciences in Political Science

at

The University of Waikato

by

Quinn John Heron



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

2025

Abstract

The Concert of Europe (the Concert), that lasted from 1814 to 1914, was a system of international relations that was, in many respects, illiberal. Much of the scholarship of the Concert has accepted that realist concerns, such as the balance of power, played a dominant role in shaping the Concert. It might seem strange then to ask what role liberal ideas and principles played in a system so widely regarded as realist. Yet, that is the goal of this thesis; to ask the question ‘to what extent did liberalism influence the Concert of Europe?’ Traversing the fields of History and International Relations, this thesis utilizes both disciplines, combined with qualitative analysis, to identify liberalism within Concert rhetoric and the Concert’s actors while challenging the prominence of realist explanations. The Concert displayed prominent liberal characteristics in both the rhetoric used during several crises and the actions and beliefs of the actors within it. This thesis concludes that liberal ideas and principles influenced the Concert to a significant, and often overlooked extent, and draws lessons from its operation for understanding the emerging 21st century multipolar system.

Acknowledgements

First, I acknowledge and thank my supervisor, Dr. Reuben Steff, for guiding me through this project with his wisdom, knowledge, and sincere desire to see his students achieve success.

I also want to thank all my friends and family for their continued support of my academic goals.

In particular, thank you Quentin for your limitless love, support, and partnership throughout the best and worst of times.

Finally, my greatest thanks go to you, Mum. Without you this would not have been possible. You, more than anyone else, have enabled me to pursue my best self.

Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
Abbreviations.....	viii
Introduction.....	1
1. Chapter One - Framework and Literature Review.....	3
1.1 Introduction.....	3
1.2 Theoretical Framework.....	3
1.2.1 Defining Liberalism and its Features.....	3
1.2.2 History of Liberalism before the Concert of Europe.....	4
1.2.3 Realism.....	7
1.2.4 Offensive Realism.....	8
1.2.5 Defensive Realism.....	8
1.2.6 Balance of power.....	8
1.2.7 Political Equilibrium.....	9
1.3 Literature Review.....	10
1.3.1 Historical Scholarship.....	10
1.3.2 International Relations Scholarship.....	12
1.4 Analytical Framework.....	13

1.4.1 Layer One.....	13
1.4.2 Layer Two.....	13
1.4.3 Layer Three.....	14
1.4.4 Layer Four.....	14
1.5 Methodology.....	15
1.6 Conclusion.....	15
2. Chapter Two - Liberalism and the Concert: Rhetoric.....	17
2.1 Introduction.....	17
2.2 The Belgian Crisis.....	17
2.2.1. Morality and Responsibility.....	17
2.2.2 Rights and Law.....	19
2.2.3 Multilateralism and Collective security.....	19
2.2.4 Europe.....	20
2.2.5 Freedom of Trade and Navigation.....	21
2.3 The Greek Question.....	21
2.3.1 Morality and Responsibility.....	22
2.3.2 Rights and Law.....	23
2.3.3 Multilateralism and Collective Security.....	24
2.3.4 Europe.....	26
2.3.5 Freedom of Trade and Navigation.....	26

2.4 The Syrian Crisis.....	27
2.4.1 Morality and Responsibility.....	27
2.4.2 Rights and Law.....	29
2.4.3 Multilateralism and Collective Security.....	30
2.4.4 Europe.....	31
2.4.5 Freedom of Trade and Navigation.....	32
2.5 The Crimean War.....	32
2.5.1 Morality and Responsibility.....	33
2.5.2 Rights and Law.....	34
2.5.3 Multilateralism and Collective Security.....	37
2.5.4 Europe.....	39
2.5.5 Freedom of Trade and Navigation.....	40
2.6 Conclusion.....	41
3. Chapter Three - Liberalism and the Concert: The Great Powers.....	43
3.1 Introduction.....	43
3.2 Beginnings.....	43
3.3 The British.....	44
3.4 The Russians.....	46
3.5 The French.....	50
3.6 The Austrians.....	54

3.7 The Prussians.....	56
3.8 Conclusion.....	60
4. Chapter Four - Liberalism and the Concert: The Balance of Power.....	61
4.1 Introduction.....	61
4.2 The Polish-Saxon Crisis.....	61
4.3 The Greek Question.....	63
4.4 The Belgian Crisis.....	67
4.5 The Syrian Crisis.....	68
4.6 Conclusion.....	70
5. Conclusion.....	71
5.1 Introduction.....	71
5.2 Rhetoric.....	71
5.3 Actors.....	72
5.4 The Balance of Power.....	76
5.5 Implications.....	77
5.6 Conclusion.....	78
6. Bibliography.....	79

Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
DPT	Democratic Peace Theory
EU	European Union
IR	International Relations
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Introduction

The Concert of Europe (the Concert), that lasted from 1814 to 1914, was a system of international relations that was, in many respects, illiberal. It might seem strange then to ask what role liberal ideas and principles played in a system so widely regarded as realist. Yet, that is the goal of this thesis; to ask the question ‘to what extent did liberalism influence the Concert of Europe?’ The Concert was a system in which the Great Powers of Europe (Great Britain, France, Austria, Russia, and Prussia) acted through multilateral congresses and conferences to, among other things, maintain a balance of power to ensure peace on the European continent. A fixation on balancing power by what were mostly absolute monarchies, and crushing liberal movements throughout Europe (Nelson, 2022), suggests illiberalism held sway. Despite this, there were elements of the Concert that were very liberal. For example, the reliance on multilateral diplomacy through congresses and conferences to manage crises. There are also significant questions as to whether the balance of power, a realist concept, played as significant a role in the Concert as has often been believed. This thesis will analyse these issues to fully determine the role of liberalism in the Concert by analysing the rhetorical liberalism and/or illiberalism of the Concert, the liberalism and/or illiberalism evident in the behaviour of the Concert’s actors, the role of the balance of power, and whether there was any coherently liberal nature to the Concert or whether it truly was a realist system of power politics. The scope of the thesis will primarily be the period between 1815 and the end date of the Crimean War (1853-1856) in 1856 as that was the period in which the Concert was most liberal. There will also be limited analysis of the post-Crimean War Concert focusing on Louis Napoleon III and Otto von Bismarck as that period was decidedly less liberal and provides an excellent contrast to the Pre-Crimean War Concert system. Thus, this thesis sets out to provide a better understanding than presently exists of the extent of liberalism in the Concert between 1815 and 1856.

The Concert system emerged out the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815) in Europe. Having killed many millions of people and lasting for over two decades (Bandow, 2021), these wars led the Great Powers to determine not to allow such a conflict to arise again. It was the causes of the wars identified by the Great Powers that informed how the Concert was to

operate. Specifically, the revolutionary, nationalist ideals of the French revolution were considered to have been a major cause of the wars, especially by Austria, Prussia, and Russia, which caused the Great Powers to concert to oppose revolutionary and nationalist movements (Nelson, 2023). Another identifiable cause was the ability of one Great Power (specifically France) to become considerably more powerful than the others and thus able to launch a war of conquest. Hence, they determined that they would act in concert to ensure that no one state should become considerably more powerful than the rest. Simply, they endeavored to maintain a balance of power between them. Finally, the wars against the French had necessitated cooperation between the Great Powers in the form of several coalitions to defeat Napoleon (Broers, 2023), cooperation continued into the Concert as a core part of its ability to operate successfully. This cooperation took its most important form in formal congresses in which representatives, sometimes even the heads of state, met in person for multilateral dialogue to solve crises and conflicts. The first such congress was the Congress of Vienna which took place in 1814 and was the official birthplace of the Concert. Many subsequent congresses, and conferences (these were similar to a congress but had either fewer participants or less senior representatives (i.e. ambassadors instead of foreign ministers or heads of state)) took place to resolve crises over the next 100 years. *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Diplomacy* (2012) provides a good succinct summary of the role of congresses and conferences in the Concert: “Concert of Europe. The term used to describe the main historical model of great power management of a states system, that of nineteenth century Europe. It initially operated through the Congress System. However, with the exception of the peace congresses of 1856 (Paris) and 1878 (Berlin), after 1822 the concert found expression through conferences of ambassadors.” This distinction is one of the reasons that the end date of the concert is disputed. Some place the end of the Concert in 1822, others in 1856, 1878, or other dates in between. However, conferences played an integral part of diplomacy during the Concert no matter which date one attributes to its end. Given that the conferences and attempts at maintaining the balance of power continued until 1914, this research recognises 1914 as the end of the Concert and outlines the way the Concert changed and fell into crisis and disrepair over the course of its existence.

Understanding what the Concert was is necessary to any meaningful analysis of it. The above description is but a foundation for that understanding. By determining the theoretical basis for the Concert, this thesis will help to further develop our contemporary understanding of it.

1. Chapter One

Framework and Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

This Chapter covers the theoretical framework, the literature review, the analytical framework, and the methodology of this thesis. Each of these is explained in detail and often divided into subsections. For example, the literature review is divided into Historical scholarship and International Relations (IR) scholarship. All these come together to provide the framework for this analysis of liberalism and the Concert, allowing for a comprehensive analysis in later chapters. It should also be noted that this thesis sits within the fields of both History and IR. Therefore, methodologies, theories, and sources stem from these two fields. This will be evident throughout the thesis and is most evident in the literature review.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework first covers liberalism, the theory at the heart of this thesis, including its modern and historical variants. It then explores the IR theory of Realism, focusing on Offensive Realism, Defensive Realism, and the balance of power. The final part of the theoretical framework is political equilibrium, an alternative to the balance of power as a Concert mechanism.

1.2.1 Defining Liberalism and its Features

Liberalism (or liberal internationalism) in IR is a theory that maintains that interstate conduct should operate in alignment with a set of international laws and international institutions (such as the United Nations (UN) or the World Trade Organisation (WTO)) which should play an important role in cultivating good behaviour between states, preserving peace, democracy, free trade, sovereignty, and human rights (Ikenberry, 2020a; Popescu, 2025). Liberalism in IR also includes two complementary theories: the Democratic Peace Theory (Jaeger, 2025) (DPT) and economic interdependence. DPT proffers that established liberal democratic states do not go to

war with one another (Jaeger, 2025). The implication of this theory is that if all states were democracies, then there would be no interstate war. Economic interdependence in liberal internationalism alludes to the idea that economically interdependent states are less likely to go to war with one another. Therefore, the more economically interdependent the world becomes through free trade, free markets, and globalisation, the more peaceful it will become.

For the sake of this research, it is important to make a distinction between liberalism as a theory for domestic governance and liberalism in the conduct of international relations. Liberal internationalism has little to say on how states should operate domestically (with the exception of DPT). The great powers of the Concert were mostly illiberal states ranging from absolute monarchies to constitutional regimes (one notable exception to this is the French Republic). Therefore, DPT has little relevance to the operation and rhetoric of the Concert. It should also be noted that the Concert (and connected systems) were not institutions with a secretariat, a budget, etc, like major contemporary international institutions. Therefore, the importance of institutions as a liberal idea also has a limited role in this research.

There are nonetheless many features, concepts, and principles of liberalism that are relevant and potentially identifiable in the Concert and are the concepts and principles of liberalism used in this research. These include international law, human rights, free trade, economic interdependence, multilateralism, global/European governance, opposition to war, and state sovereignty/legitimacy. The extent to which these are relevant and liberal is explored in the analysis segment of this research. There is also the need to recognise that liberalism has evolved over the last two centuries. While ‘liberal internationalism’ did not exist as a theory in the 19th century, liberal ideas about international relations did exist prior to and during the Concert (Ikenberry, 2020b).

1.2.2 History of Liberalism before the Concert of Europe

Liberalism in international relations had already begun to develop before the Concert’s inception (Ikenberry, 2020a; Ikenberry, 2020b). Arising from the application of liberalism to domestic governance, several thinkers from Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) through to Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) began to prescribe liberal solutions to international relations (Martin, 1963, Ikenberry, 2020b).

The development of liberalism can be traced alongside the development of the state system (which underpins the 20th and 21st century rules-based order that arose after 1945) that is often credited with beginning with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 which established the principle of state sovereignty (Martin, 1963). This system was, and remains, anarchic. This is, according to John J. Mearsheimer (2014, p. 30), “an ordering principle, which says that the system comprises independent states that have no central authority above them”. It is this anarchic international system of states that modern liberalism still grapples with and seeks to regulate to this day. Between the 1600s and 1814, several thinkers such as John Locke (1632-1704) (Locke et al., 1952) and Thomas Paine (1737-1809) (Paine et al., 2003) developed liberal ideas about how a state's internal affairs should be conducted. This liberal thought was then extrapolated into international relations. Hugo Grotius is one such thinker that used the concept of natural law, used in liberal philosophies of domestic governance, to act as the foundation of international law (Martin, 1963). According to Kingsley Martin (1963), Grotius used natural law to argue that states have a moral obligation to uphold international treaties and to respect the rights of non-combatants. Martin (1963, p. 261) excellently summarised Grotius’ position saying that “International law, therefore, begins with Grotius as a system of rules which nations are morally bound to obey. It is concerned with laws of humanity and decency whose public recognition would mitigate somewhat the horrors of international anarchy.” The idea that regulation of the anarchic international system is best underpinned and advanced by a series of rules and laws survived well beyond Grotius. A century after Grotius, Immanuel Kant argued that men would one day reject the contemporary anarchic state of international relations as they also reject immorality in their private lives (Martin, 1963). As such, from the very beginning, liberal thought in international relations sought to manage and even end the pernicious effects of an anarchic international system.

During the enlightenment in the 18th century, a theory of natural harmony developed (Martin, 1963) as liberal thought also began to develop alongside the discipline of Economics, which was significantly advanced by Adam Smith in his book *The Wealth of Nations* (Smith, 1952). Smith and other liberals came to believe that free trade and economic interdependence combined with the rise of ‘rational’ thought would bring states to realise that war is not the greatest path to wealth (Martin, 1963). The theory of natural harmony posited that mutual self-interest, through free trade, would foster economic interdependence and eventually, international peace (Martin,

1963). It would simply be too costly and, therefore, irrational for states to wage war against one another. To this day, this idea remains a key part of liberalism in international relations.

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) also sought a better system of international relations upon liberal foundations. For example, he vehemently opposed the notion of ‘might makes right’ (Rousseau et al., 1952). However, Rousseau argued that as long as the anarchic international system existed, free trade would not cultivate unity and peace between states (Martin, 1963). Instead, he claimed that anarchy must first be ended by a “confederative form of government, which, uniting nations by bonds similar to those which unite individuals, submits them all equally to the authority of the laws” (Martin, 1963, p. 269). Specifically, Rousseau called for a “Confederation of Europe” (Martin, 1963, p. 270) that declared states that opposed it to be a common enemy. A united Europe was a signature goal of liberal international relations from Rousseau through the 19th century. According to Jean-Baptiste Duroselle et al. (2023), this idea gained traction in the 19th century with usage of the term “Europe” becoming considerably more common, especially in the first half of the century. Duroselle et al. (2023) points to the support for a united Europe among Romantics such as Buchez and Mazzini as evidence of the idea’s development. By 1848, the term the “United States of Europe” was becoming common among some thinkers with the Italian federalist Carlo Cattaneo stating that “We shall have peace when we have the United States of Europe” (Duroselle et al., 2023).

Rousseau had not only posited and promoted the idea of a united Europe as a means to peace but also argued that it was the bad governance of ambitious monarchs that prevented peace, which could only be guaranteed via democracy (Martin, 1963). From a modern vantage point, this is consistent with the ideas underpinning DPT. Kant, similarly, made the case for democracy in his “Essay on Perpetual Peace” where he asserted that it was a necessary condition for peace that all states have a republican form of government (Kant et al., 2016; Martin, 1963). This was not the only liberal idea that Rousseau and Kant shared as Kant is also among those who had called for a federation of states and an end to anarchy.

Evidently, some liberal internationalist ideas were well developed before the Concert’s inception. Understanding the roots of ideas such as respect for human rights, opposition to the anarchic nature of international relations, the moral necessity of international law, democratic

peace theory, free trade and economic interdependence, and united global or European governance is an important prerequisite to understanding the extent of the role of liberalism in the Concert. With this in mind, this research will use two terms to describe the presence of liberal ideas/beliefs and liberal actions in the Concert. The first is proto-liberal. This term is primarily designed to identify the ideas and beliefs that are identified in this research, either in treaty documents or personal letters etc., that are most closely aligned to the liberalism of the 19th and preceding centuries.

Liberal internationalism is the second term. This primarily describes actions (and occasionally ideas and beliefs) that are consistent with modern liberal IR theory. As they share some common points, the terms proto-liberal and liberal internationalist will at times be used interchangeably or they will collectively be referred to simply as 'liberal'. It is also important to note that the ideas, actions, and beliefs that are described as either proto-liberal or liberal internationalist in this piece do not necessarily depend on, or align with, the ideological identities of the actors. For example, conservative states and prominent individuals (such as Austria and Metternich) may behave according to proto-liberalism or liberal internationalism or espouse said beliefs, and vice versa.

Evidently, liberalism in international relations had undergone considerable development prior to the Concert. As a result, it is possible to take proto-liberal ideas and use them to better understand the concepts and principles that underpinned European thinking during the Concert.

1.2.3 Realism

Realism is an IR theory that seeks to explain and accept the world of power politics "as an ultimate fact of social life rather than condemned and restrained" (Morgenthau, 1949). Unlike liberalism, realism is more conservative - it does not present an optimistic plan for perpetual peace. Instead, realism asserts that states are the primary actors in the international system with Great Powers being the most important states, that the international system is anarchic (there is no effective international government), that hard power (military and economic power) is the most important tool available to states, and that external, not internal, factors shape a states behaviour (Mearsheimer, 2014). Throughout Chapter Two and Chapter Three, realism's basic principles are related to the functioning of the Concert, while in Chapter Four, which examines

the role of the balance of power in the Concert, the thesis utilises offensive realism and defensive realism, which are now outlined.

1.2.4 Offensive Realism

Offensive realism is a form of structural realism meaning that the structure of the international system defines states behaviour (Mearsheimer, 2014). John Mearsheimer (2014) proposed offensive realism in his book *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. Offensive realism asserts that the structure of the international system incentivises states to be expansionist in order to ensure their own security. Therefore, states, Great Powers especially, are less concerned about maintaining the balance of power and are more interested in achieving hegemony, making them inherently aggressive and opportunistic (Mearsheimer, 2014). This leads to aggressive expansion which in turn often leads to balancing coalitions against the dominant threat. Mearsheimer (2014) provided the examples of the balancing coalitions against expansionist Napoleonic France (1803-1815) and Nazi Germany (1933-1945).

1.2.5 Defensive Realism

Defensive realism is another variation of structural realism. Presented by Kenneth Waltz (2010) in his book *Theory of International Politics* originally published in 1979, defensive realism asserts that anarchy incentivises Great Powers to “behave defensively and to maintain rather than upset the balance of power” (Mearsheimer, 2014, p. 20). Security is a state’s utmost objective, rather than expansionism and conquest. In defensive realism, balancing coalitions play the important role of preventing a Great Power from becoming powerful enough to achieve hegemony over, or threaten, other Great Powers (Mearsheimer, 2014). Therefore, balancing coalitions help to maintain the balance of power. This concern for the balance of power is why defensive realism is important to this research.

1.2.6 Balance of power

The balance of power has been defined numerous times as was outlined by Michael Sheehan (1996) in his book *The Balance of Power: History and Theory*. One of the definitions quoted by Sheehan (1996, p. 3) is by Hans Morgenthau (1949) (an important figure in developing realist theory): “The balance of power refers to an actual state of affairs in which power is distributed

among several nations with approximate equality”. This definition is the one used in this research as it simply and accurately reflects the apparent meaning of the term used during the Concert. This is reflected in another, anonymous, definition quoted by Sheehan (1996, p. 3) from 1741 (among others from the 19th century): “An equal distribution of Power among the Princes of Europe as makes it impractical for one to disturb the repose of the other”. This understanding of the balance of power is aligned with defensive realism which is why this theoretical variant plays an important role in analysing the balance of power later in this thesis. Such analysis is necessary given the prominent role given to the balance of power, by both actors and analysts, in the functioning of the Concert. Furthermore, the balance of power is inherently more aligned with realist power politics than with liberalism, thus making it an important factor in determining the extent to which liberalism influenced the Concert.

1.2.7 Political Equilibrium

Political equilibrium is an idea posited by Paul Schroeder (1989) which he later expanded on in 1992 (Schroeder, 1992). Its purpose was to explain the use of the word equilibrium during the Concert. Schroeder’s (1989, p. 143) simplified definition of political equilibrium is that “political equilibrium meant a balance of satisfactions, a balance of rights and obligations and a balance of performance and payoffs, rather than a balance of power”. Schroeder (1989, p. 143) stated that two conditions had to be met to achieve political equilibrium:

“Political equilibrium required that (1) the rights, influence and vital interests claimed by individual states in the international system be somehow balanced against the rights, influence and vital interests claimed by other states and the general community, and (2) that a balance or harmony exist between the goals pursued by individual states, the requirements of the system, and the means used to promote one’s interests.”

These explanations are useful but also vague. It is therefore necessary to also quote Schroeder (1989, p. 143) on what it was specifically that European states were balancing:

“Subjectively political equilibrium meant the enjoyment of stability, peace, and guaranteed rights; freedom from threats and isolation; the recognition of one’s legitimate interests, sphere

of influence, and the right to a voice in general affairs; and especially for the great power, assurance of equality in rank, status, and dignity, even if not in power.”

Political equilibrium therefore was not an equilibrium of power and instead draws on more liberal issues such as legitimacy, peace, rights, and diplomacy. As such, political equilibrium and the balance of power were very different and was designed by Schroeder (1989) to better explain the use of the term equilibrium in Concert documents and to argue that the role of the balance of power in the Concert has been overstated.

1.3 Literature Review

Much scholarly literature has been written about the Concert. A considerable amount of that work has been done by historians. Historians' accounts of the events of the Concert serve the important role of describing the series of events and characters that defined the Concert. These historical sources provide strong literary backing for understanding what the Concert was, how it operated, who were the essential players, and the context in which the Concert existed. For example, historians have long established the origins of the Concert as being the result of the Napoleonic Wars, and that it began with the Congress of Vienna. Historians have documented the events of the Independence of Belgium and Greece, the Crimean War, and the events surrounding the unification of Germany so thoroughly that they have enabled modern IR scholars to build their analysis based on the work of Historical scholarship. This research draws upon such Historical scholarship.

1.3.1 Historical Scholarship

Europe: The History of a Continent by Jean-Baptiste Duroselle et al. (2023) details the history of Europe over the last two thousand years and discusses the Concert alongside the development of liberalism, romanticism, nationalism as well as the Napoleonic Wars and the Great War as key ideas and events in the evolution of Europe as a continent. It provides clues to how the ideas that evolved alongside the Concert may have impacted it. *Napoleon: the Decline and fall of an Empire* by Michael Broers (2023) similarly serves to provide context to the Concert by focusing on adjacent events (specifically the fall on Napoleonic France and the alliance that formed against him). Other Historical scholarship is centered on the Concert itself or the events that took

place within it. Turkey's entry into the Concert of Europe, detailed by Fikret Adanir (2005) and others such as Rene Albrecht-Carrie (1968) and Rendall (2006), describes the events surrounding the Ottoman Empire and its role within the Concert. Adanir (2005) writes about the broader context of the Concert of Europe and the events that had led up to it (including previous centuries) but is mostly focused on how the Ottoman Empire was handled by the European Powers in such detail that enables the 'Eastern Question' (that is the question of how the great Powers were to handle the Ottoman Empire before and through the Crimean War) to serve as a case study for how the Concert operated and the varying interests and ideas that motivated key actors and influenced events.

Other Historical scholarship focuses on describing and analysing the Concert in its entirety. Denis Richards (1967) and John McManners (1974) were both important sources in this regard. A key text that provides a firm foundation for analysing the role of liberalism, by offering excellent primary evidence in the Concert, is: *The Concert of Europe* by Rene Albrecht-Carrie (1968). The value of Albrecht-Carrie's work is that it extends beyond its value as a comprehensive analysis of the Concert as it also provides the text of every major treaty and document of the Concert translated into English. In fact, almost all translations and copies of official treaties and documents are acquired from Albrecht-Carrie. Albrecht-Carrie does also provide analysis and descriptions of the events and individuals that contextualise these documents. In this, Albrecht-Carrie's approach to the Concert was more aligned with other Historical scholarship than with IR scholarship. The Historical scholarship tends to place more emphasis on the role of individual actors, preceding historical events and context, and the ideas of the time influencing the Concert. There is also considerable analysis of minute details of the events surrounding the Concert. Given this, it makes sense that the Historical scholarship places less emphasis on material and structural factors, such as the balance of power on the Concert than do IR scholars.

It is notable that much of the Historical scholarship covers most of the content of this thesis in book form. Therefore, much of the historical scholarship used in this thesis is limited to several all-encompassing books. This has limited the historical scholarship used, especially in contrast to traditional IR scholarship, and has led to fewer sources being needed overall than if the Historical scholarship relied primarily on journal articles or research reports. Furthermore, much

of the Historical scholarship of the Concert is from the 20th century. Recent literature on the Concert that is as detailed and comprehensive as that of the mid-20th century is rare. This stands in contrast to the IR scholarship that tends to be more recent. This does not mean that the historical scholarship is outdated. It does, however, mean that the average age of the sources used for this thesis is older than other contemporary IR work.

1.3.2 International Relations Scholarship

Much of the literature on the Concert from the field of IR is focused on which theories best explain the Concert. Some IR scholars have placed strong emphasis on the balance of power in describing the success of the Concert. Realist scholars like Mearsheimer (2014) identify the balance of power and structural dynamics as key to understanding the concert. He used the later periods of the 19th century as examples of his offensive realist theory in action. Henry Kissinger (1956) also takes a realist approach to the Concert, albeit adopting a less structuralist approach than Mearsheimer (2014). However, Kissinger (1956) recognised the important role of the skilled diplomats of the time. Matthew Rendall (2006), while opposing Mearsheimer's (2014) strict structural, offensive realist interpretation, describes the Concert as best described by defensive realism and, like Morgenthau (1949), places significant emphasis on the balance of power and other realist concepts such as self-help and the anarchic nature of the international system. However, not all IR scholars take this approach. Rendall (2007) himself described the Belgian crises as a success of collective security and admits other more liberal elements of the Concert existed (Rendall, 2006; Rendall, 2007). Dan Lindley (2021) argued that the Concert pioneered multilateral diplomacy but that the increased transparency resulting from the Concert often enabled more effective *realpolitik*. Of particular interest, and value, for this research is the work of Schroeder (1992) who argued that the Concert system did not rest on a balance of power, and its significance has been vastly overstated. Schroeder (1992) instead argued that it was built on the ideals of a political equilibrium of general principles such as stability and peace through the rule of law and Great Power unity (Schroeder (1992) detailed similar opposition to accrediting the balance of power in Schroeder (1975) and Schroeder (1989)). Richard Elrod (1976) also presented a more liberal and, arguably, constructivist view of the Concert that had a reduced role for the balance of power and placed greater emphasis on multilateralism, the actions and beliefs of individual actors, and the importance of belief in the system. While, more often

than not, realist interpretations of the Concert dominate international relations scholarship on the topic (as Schroeder (1992) and Elrod (1976) both acknowledge), there is debate over the nature of the Concert within IR scholarship (evidenced by Schroeder (1992) and Elrod's (1976) dissent).

The literature of the Concert is broad and varied. Historical literature allows for a complex, unit-level understanding of the events that took place and the actors involved. It is also an excellent secondary source of primary evidence. Due to its unit level analysis, Historical literature places less emphasis on structural and theoretical analysis. That gap is then filled by IR literature which primarily focuses on structural and theoretical explanations for unit level events. However, international relations scholars also proved to be a good source of primary evidence and provided some unit level analysis. Together, they provide material for a comprehensive analysis of the Concert.

1.4 Analytical Framework

The analytical framework for this research is primarily one of identifying features of what modern IR scholars call liberal internationalism (and earlier iterations of liberalism) in the Concert. The analytical framework, divided into four identifiable layers allows for identification of both liberal and illiberal parts of the Concert. Any liberal features identified in the Concert throughout the thesis can then be categorised according to the four layers of analysis.

1.4.1 Layer One

The purpose of this layer is to clearly identify features of the Concert that are consistent with liberalism and not simply a feature that appears liberal but is only mistakenly identified as such. It involves determining what part of liberal theory specific liberal features of the Concert align with. For example, does a feature belong to the liberal concept of multilateral diplomacy or does it belong to the liberal concept of peace through economic interdependence? Furthermore, does it fit the proto-liberal international relations of before the Concert or the liberal internationalism of the 20th and 21st centuries?

1.4.2 Layer Two

The second layer involves the identification of liberal features as an example of liberal internationalism in rhetoric, an example of liberal internationalism in the desires and/or perspectives of actors within the concert, or an example of liberal internationalist actions being undertaken as a part of, or alongside, the Concert. The purpose of this second layer is to help better determine the impact of liberal internationalism on the Concert. If the identified liberal feature of the Concert is only a rhetorical feature that is not believed by the actors involved nor acted upon within the context of the Concert, then it is likely, although not impossible, that the feature in question had limited impact on the Concert (such as a purely rhetorical impact). In contrast if a piece of liberal rhetoric were believed and/or acted upon by a key actor in the concert, it seems likely that the liberal feature in question had a relatively greater impact on the Concert than if it weren't believed and/or acted upon by said actor.

1.4.3 Layer Three

The third layer of analysis is one of identifying occasions when a liberal feature either complements or contradicts a realist feature of the concert. This third axis of analysis serves a dual purpose. First, it recognises the importance of realist theory in IR analysis and specifically in the Concert which many prominent IR scholars identify as a realist system of managing great power competition. Specifically, the role of the balance of power as a significant force in influencing the dynamics of the Concert. The second purpose is to further determine the extent to which liberal internationalism had an impact on the Concert. For example, should what appears to be a liberal action taken by a great power also align with realist behaviour, then that would indicate that the action taken may simply be one of a great power behaving according to realist principles despite the action's liberal appearance. Alternatively, should a great power take an action that is consistent with liberalism but inconsistent with realism, then it is reasonable to conclude that the action is, indeed, a liberal one.

1.4.4 Layer Four

The fourth layer will be an analysis of the impact that liberal and realist behaviour (beliefs, rhetoric, and actions) had on the success or failure of the Concert. This will help to determine the extent to which the Concert was a liberal system which was likely to be hindered by realist

behaviour and strengthened by liberal behaviour. Through these four layers of analysis, this research will demonstrate the extent to which liberalism had an impact on the Concert.

1.5 Methodology

The methodology for this research consists almost exclusively of qualitative analysis of both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources constitute the bulk of research as they provide the best insight into the presence of liberalism in the Concert. The primary sources for this research are comprised of treaties, official statements, official communications, contemporary newspapers, and private correspondence. Albrecht-Carrie (1968), a secondary source, serves as the source for most of the primary sources used in this research. However, other primary evidence can be found in Duroselle et al. (2023), Rendall (2006), and others. Two types of secondary sources inform this research. The first is Historical analysis done by modern (20th and 21st century) historians. These historians partially inform the interpretation of primary sources and provide knowledge and understanding of the events of the Concert not included in primary sources. The second is IR scholarship of the Concert and of the IR theories of liberal internationalism and realism. These sources are primarily used to identify the role of realism in the Concert when comparing and contrasting it to the role of liberalism per the research's analytical framework.

Four types of qualitative analysis guide the inquiry: historical analysis, content analysis, thematic analysis, and case study analysis. Historical analysis is first used to establish the events of the Concert as they appear to have happened with limited use of IR theory to interpret these events. Secondary source analysis of historians is the primary contributing source to this analysis as well as the primary source documents that are already outlined. Content analysis and thematic analysis are used in the analysis of primary source material to identify liberal rhetoric and actions (content analysis), and liberal themes across rhetoric and actions (thematic analysis). These are used in conjunction with case study analysis of several significant episodes that occurred during the Concert. These are the Belgian Crisis, the Greek Question, the Syrian Crisis, and the Crimean War.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the foundational ideas and concepts upon which this research will be based. In the theoretical framework, liberalism, in both its proto-liberal and liberal internationalist forms, is fundamental to this research. Realism also plays an important role as it often stands in contrast to the liberal elements of the Concert whilst also providing a more comprehensive understanding of the Concert through ideas such as the balance of power. Schroeder's (1989) conception of a political equilibrium adds further nuance to understanding the concepts behind the Concert and to better understanding the role of the balance of power. Then the literature review details the types of literature this thesis uses, why it uses that literature, and what that means for the thesis. Finally, the analytical framework and methodology outline the analytical logic of this analysis. Together, these concepts help provide a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which liberalism influenced the Concert.

2. Chapter Two

Liberalism and the Concert: Rhetoric

2.1 Introduction

Liberal influence on the Concert is most evident in the liberal language of official documents, including treaties, and demonstrable case studies. The cases and documents included in this chapter are treaties, protocols, and letters from the Belgian Crisis, the Greek Question, the Syrian Crisis, and the Crimean War. The analysis of rhetoric in these treaties is, per crisis, divided into groups that are designed to identify core proto-liberal and liberal internationalist themes and principles of the Concert. These are Morality and Responsibility, Rights and Law, Multilateralism and Collective Security, Europe, and Freedom of Trade and Navigation.

2.2 The Belgian Crisis

The Belgian Crisis (1830-1831) occurred due to the independence of Belgium from the Netherlands via a revolt. It demonstrated the ability of the Great Powers to act in concert and demonstrated how the Concert system worked, at times, as an effective form of crisis management. Liberal rhetoric during this crisis can be identified in four forms: the moral and political responsibilities of the great powers, the need for multilateralism, emphasis on the concept of Europe, and the desire to facilitate freedom of navigation and trade.

2.2.1. Morality and Responsibility

During the Belgian Crisis there was emphasis of the moral and political responsibility of the Great Powers in their official rhetoric. The document *Annex B. and C. to the Protocol No. 49. Note addressed by the Conference to the Plenipotentiaries of the Netherlands, and to the Belgian Plenipotentiary* signed in London on 15 October 1831 by representatives of all the Great Powers declared that they were taking charge of the crisis and were determined to resolve it. The primary evidence lies in Clause 4. and Clause 6. Clause 4. stated that “this Treaty, signed under the auspices of the Conference of London, shall be placed under the formal guarantee of the five

Powers” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 82) This Clause clearly affirms the authority of Conferences (at least the conference of London) and the Great Powers, which was an essential component to the functioning of the Concert. Clause 6. reinforces the Great Powers commitment to crisis management by stating that the Articles “contain the *final* and *irrevocable* decision of the five Powers, who by mutual agreement have resolved to take upon themselves to induce the full and entire acceptance of the said Articles by the adverse party, should either chance to reject them” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 83).

Within *Protocol No. 49.*, it is striking that the greater context and justification for the Great Power’s claims of authority and responsibility drew on many principles espoused by both proto-liberals of the past and contemporary liberal internationalists. The Great Powers asserted that it was their authority and responsibility to resolve the Belgian Crisis as being a matter of “duty” of their governments, or their “courts” as they were all monarchies at the time of the crisis, “towards themselves and toward other states” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 82). They went so far as to say that they were “forced to resolve these questions by the necessity of averting the incalculable miseries of general war” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 82). Such language, which added a moralistic quality to the Great Power’s roles, is not language rhetorically and theoretically consistent with a Machiavellian, realist system of power politics. Instead, it is further aligned with the early liberal ideas of Hugo Grotius who argued that states possessed the extension of the universal moral intuitions, obligations, and responsibilities, of individuals. As Martin (1963, pg. 261) explained “International law... begins with Grotius as a system of rules which nations are morally bound to obey. It is concerned with laws of humanity and decency whose public recognition would mitigate somewhat the horrors of international anarchy.” Immanuel Kant also described the inevitable role of morality in governing international law when he wrote that “men cannot get away from the idea of right in their private anymore than in their public relations ; and they do not dare (this is indeed most strikingly seen in the concept of international law) to base politics merely on the manipulations of expediency...” (Martin, 1963, pg. 275). Kant said states would pay homage to the idea of “right” and claim their actions, even morally dubious ones, to be given authority by “the unifying principle of all right” (Martin, 1963, pg. 275). Kant would then claim that states would not truly act morally unless the anarchic international system and fixation on state sovereignty and narrow national interest were ended (Martin, 1963). Notably, these are both liberal goals and Concert goals as will be continually

demonstrated throughout this thesis. The rhetoric of the Great Powers in this document appears to affirm the assertions of Grotius and Kant. Hence, in any analysis of the role of proto-liberal thought on the Concert, the rhetorical choices of the Great Powers aligning with the predictions of proto-liberal thinkers such as Grotius and Kant is hard to ignore even if the Courts of the Great Powers were unaware of the connection themselves.

2.2.2 Rights and Law

The documents pertaining to the Belgian Crisis also address, rhetorically, the issue of states rights and their role. In *Annex B. and C. to the Protocol No. 49*, the great powers identified that the Conference of London was “solely obliged to regard the principles of equity” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 83) which is consistent with the moral language already outlined. The rationale for this was described as an attempt to reconcile the interests of Belgium and the Netherlands with each other's rights. This is predicated on the idea that this arrangement is mutually beneficial. Such language supports the assertion of Schroeder (1975; 1989) that the success of the Concert system was not the result of maintaining the balance of material power but maintaining a political equilibrium in which the various parties saw their political insecurities recognised and resolved. Equity appears to have been a significant foundational principle in reconciling states' rights and interests and thus was important to maintaining the more liberal ideal of a political equilibrium as opposed to the realist structure of a balance of power.

2.2.3 Multilateralism and Collective security

The multilateral nature of the Concert's approach to the Belgian Crisis is evident in the rhetoric surrounding the crisis. The Great Powers referred to 'Europe' three times. The importance of this is not the use of the word 'Europe' but the use of the term as a reference to a broader community of states to which the Great Powers, the Netherlands, and Belgium had a duty to resolve the crisis. For example, the Great Powers described the resolution of the crisis as being “necessary for the repose of Europe” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 82). This point is further elaborated in the document, which states that the Great Powers had “only submitted to the supreme necessity of the most important interests of Europe; they have only yielded to the most imperious exigency, in settling the conditions of a definitive arrangement, which Europe, the friend of peace having the right to insist upon its being preserved” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 82). Here the Great

Powers appear to imply that their moral responsibilities are their responsibilities to Europe as a whole and not to any one state. In fact, it is stated very clearly in *Annex D. to Protocol No. 49* where the Great Powers claimed that another bout of conflict between the Netherlands and Belgium would “threaten Europe with a general war; the prevention of which is the first duty of the five powers” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 84). This wording was used more than once throughout the documents pertaining to the Belgian Crisis. There are two ways in which this is fundamentally liberal, anti-realist rhetoric. The first is that the idea of a state being responsible for the security and well-being of a community of states is in opposition to the realist principle of self-help (specifically the claim that protecting Europe is the “first duty” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 84) of the Great Powers). It is instead in line with the liberal principles of multilateralism, and collective security. Collective security occurs when multiple states coordinate to prevent and respond to an attack against any of them. It is to ensure that tragedy does not befall them. Therefore, the moral language of this document and its suggestion that the Great Powers, the Netherlands, and Belgium had a joint moral responsibility to a collection of states (Europe) to avoid the “incalculable miseries of general war” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 82) is an example of collective security. Multilateralism existed due to the sheer number of states involved in resolving this crisis (i.e. Britain, France, Prussia, Austria, Russia, the Netherlands, Belgium, and even Luxembourg). The seven/eight states involved here are only two states short of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) numbers at the time of writing (ASEAN, 2024). This alone does not fully imply multilateralism but when combined with the processes of the Concert of conferences and congresses, the idea that the management of the Belgian Crisis through the Concert was multilateral is implicit.

2.2.4 Europe

The fact that this collective of states is referred to as “Europe” identifies another element of the use of the term Europe that is noteworthy. The idea of the existence of a shared European sphere was developed as a liberal concept in the 18th and 19th centuries by liberal and romantic thinkers, notably Rousseau and Mazzini (Martin, 1963; Duroselle et al., 2023). This idea then became an institutionalised reality by liberals in the 20th and 21st centuries and is one of the pinnacles of liberal achievement in the international sphere to date. Consider the European Union (EU) (perhaps even the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)), which place high importance on

multilateralism, cooperation, and collective security. The consistent inclusion of the European ideal in the rhetoric of the Concert places the Concert at an important point in the development of liberal internationalism and provides further evidence that liberalism played an important part in the development and practice of the Concert.

2.2.5 Freedom of Trade and Navigation

Another liberal idea/principle that is rhetorically present in the management of the Belgian Crisis is that of freedom of trade, navigation, and movement. In *Annex B. and C. to the Protocol No. 49.*, the Great Powers expressed a desire to ensure “a mutually beneficial freedom of trade” and to “lighten the burdens and encourage the prosperity of both states” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 83). Freedom of trade that is mutually beneficial is reminiscent of the arguments of Adam Smith and other proto-liberals that developed in the latter half of the 18th century and is, rhetorically, a major departure from the mercantilist policies of the great powers throughout earlier periods. The same idea and rhetoric is also a significant part of liberal internationalism with modern institutions such as the WTO designed to uphold the principles of liberal trade policy. Freedom of navigation is addressed in an *Annex to the Treaty of London*, which detailed, with reference to the Congress of Vienna, upholding “Free Navigation of navigable rivers” including canals, river mouths, access to the ocean, equal duties for both states, and the establishment of a Commission, with representatives of both Belgium and the Netherlands, to manage the Piloting and Bouyage of the Scheldt (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, pp. 91-93). These details make up a sizeable part of the *Annex to the Protocol No. 49* and continue to express liberal notions such as ensuring that any duties or tolls levied are moderate and via further reference to freedom of navigation.

Ultimately, the Belgian Crisis documents contain a considerable number of references to liberal principles in their rhetoric as the Great Powers both claimed responsibility for crisis management and expressed that responsibility as a moral one.

2.3 The Greek Question

The Greek Question arose as a response to the Greek War of Independence (1821-1832). It produced a series of documents that contain rhetoric similar to that of the Belgian Crisis across

the same five areas. However, the Greek Question, given Greece was geographically situated on the other side of Europe to Belgium, did result in some different rhetoric.

2.3.1 Morality and responsibility

Morality and responsibility continued to be liberal themes in how the Great Powers handled the Greek Question (1821-1832) (which focused on the issue of the independence of Greece from the Ottoman Empire). In *Protocol Relative to the Affairs of Greece. Signed at St. Petersburg, April 4, 1826* the British and Russian monarchs declared that they would “not seek, in this arrangement, any increase in Territory, nor any exclusive influence, nor advantage in commerce for their subjects, which shall not be adequately attainable by other nations” (Pg. 106). This position against territorial expansionism is reflective of liberal principles and stands out in two ways. It continues the rhetoric of equity as a foundation for the operations of the Concert, and it stands in contrast with the realist principle of self-help. Such rhetoric and sentiments appear often in documents pertaining to the independence of Greece as it appears in the *Treaty for the Pacification of Greece between His Majesty, the Most Christian King and the Emperor of All the Russias* (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 109), *Protocol No. 1, of the Conference held at the Foreign Office, on the 3d of February 1830* (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 117), and *Protocol, No. 2, of the Conference held at the Foreign Office on the 3d of February, 1830* (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 119-120). Such rhetoric was apparent not only in treaty documentation. For example, in a letter to the Ottoman Empire, the involved Great Powers expressed the “motives which have prompted the alliance of the three courts” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 121) which they identified as “to fulfill an imperious humanitarian duty by putting an end to the disturbances which have ravaged these unhappy lands and restore to commerce and navigation the security which they had lost... to safeguard Europe... to safeguard peace... and finally to consolidate the very existence of the Ottoman Empire” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 121-122).

To express their intentions as ‘humanitarian’ is rhetoric that is undeniably liberal. Thus, such a note is telling as, even if it did not represent the true intentions of the powers, it was the view of their intentions that they wanted to portray to the Ottomans. Beyond denying individual advantage and the pursuit of self-interest, other moralistic rhetoric is evident. In the *Treaty for the Pacification of Greece between His Majesty, the Most Christian King and the Emperor of All*

the Russias the Great Powers expressed their goals to be driven, in part, by “the desire of putting a stop to the effusion of blood, and of preventing the evils of every kind which the continuance of such a state of affairs may produce” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 107). Here, the suggestion is that their goals are not entirely commerce, power, or otherwise interest driven but are at least equally driven by moral obligation as it goes on to express that their goals are driven by “sentiments of humanity” as much as they are by the “tranquility of Europe” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 108). This is aligned with the thinking of proto-liberals such as Grotius and Kant and, once again, stands in rhetorical contrast with realism’s focus on hard power and disregard for moral considerations.

2.3.2 Rights and Law

Of further interest to this analysis is that such expressions of desire for humanitarianism and avoidance of conflict are expressly sought to be resolved through diplomatic channels. This should be no surprise given that the Concert system was one driven by diplomacy in an attempt to prevent war. Nonetheless, the Great Powers, in expressing their moral desires to secure a peaceful outcome of the crisis, made clear that it was to be resolved by “formal treaty” brought about by their “combined efforts” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 107). This is reflective of a liberal perspective and is foundational to international law in the modern era. While there was no codified international law during the concert, much of the rhetoric surrounding the Concert and used by the Great Powers was remarkably consistent with an attempt to establish a clear regional order built on the foundation of diplomacy, adherence to treaties, and several liberal values. Within the context of the Independence of Greece, this is most clearly seen in the common reference to what today may be considered fundamental human rights (an idea already developed by the liberals of the 18th century, with continued development throughout the 19th century). One issue that garnered special attention was protections for civilians impacted by the conflict. In *Protocol, No. 1, of the Conference held at the Foreign Office, on the 3d of February, 1830*, the Great powers stipulated that the subjects of Greece and the Ottoman Empire should be “reciprocally treated, in regard to the rights of commerce and navigation” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 117). The document went further by declaring the need to protect the property of both Greeks and Ottomans as well as their ability to move freely should they need. The Great Powers specified in the *Protocol Relative to the Affairs of Greece* that the Greeks should have “a

complete liberty of conscience, an entire freedom of commerce, and should, exclusively, conduct their own internal government” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 105). All three of these are liberal sentiments but freedom of conscience relates to another concern that appears in *Protocol, No. 3, of the Conference held at the Foreign Office on the 3rd of February, 1830*. The protocol ensured that the new Greek state would protect the Catholics in the country and that “the Catholic religion should enjoy in the new State the free and public exercise of its worship, that its property should be guaranteed to it, that its bishops should be maintained in an integrity of the functions, rights, and privileges, which they have enjoyed under the protection of the Kings of France” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 121). This is striking liberal rhetoric, especially as it was signed by Protestant Britain and Orthodox Russia. However, the liberal intent of the rhetoric is brought into question by the text itself which recognised that such rights were granted at the request of Catholic France given that Greek Catholics had previously enjoyed French protection while under Ottoman rule. Nonetheless, the document went on to state that the Great Powers desired prevention of religious conflict in Greece and its consequences. They would do so by ensuring that “all the subjects of the new State, whatever may be their religion, shall be admissible to all public employments, functions, and honours, and be treated on the footing of a perfect equality, without regard to difference of creed, in all their relations, religious, civil, or political” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 121). While this statement shifts further toward domestic affairs and away from international relations (despite its being brought about due to of an international issue), such a liberal statement from illiberal regimes (Russia especially) demonstrates the extent to which liberal thought had entered the psyche and vocabulary of the Great Powers engaged in the Concert.

2.3.3 Multilateralism and Collective Security

Multilateralism and collective security continued to be liberal themes in rhetoric during the handling of the Independence of Greece. *Annex A. to Protocol 17. Joint Report of the Dragomans of France, Great Britain, and Russia, dated the 2nd of November, 1827* detailed a conversation between the Ottoman Foreign Minister Reis Effendi and the representatives of France, Great Britain, and Russia after an incident in which the Ottoman fleet was destroyed (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 111). In it, Effendi asked why they had all arrived together when he had summoned them individually. To this a representative responded by saying “because the

recent event at Navarino has reference to the Greek Question, in which the three Allied Powers make common cause” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 112). This show of solidarity is a fine representation of the multilateral nature of the rhetoric present in the handling of Greek Independence. This incident is also indicative of collective security as the relevant Great Powers had collectively committed to ensuring, by any means necessary, that both the Greeks and the Ottomans adhered to the *Treaty for the Pacification of Greece between His Majesty, the Most Christian King and the Emperor of all the Russias*. Further evidence exists in this document of rhetorical commitments to collective security. The Great Powers expressed concern for the commerce of the collective of European States and the “tranquility of all Europe” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 108-109). In the same treaty, the great Powers committed themselves to not acquiring any more benefit from the resolution than any other nation which aligned the prior discussed issue of equity with collective security. Multilateral diplomacy, like in the Belgian Crisis, is implicit in the rhetoric in the documents and treaties of the Greek Question. The incident described in *Annex A. to Protocol 17. Joint Report of the Dragomans of France, Great Britain, and Russia, dated the 2nd of November, 1827* described a multilateral meeting and military action. However, it was the multilateralism inherent in the London Conference of 1830 that produced the London Protocol, and the subsequent London Conference of 1832 (which revised the London Protocol), that suggests the multilateral diplomacy characteristic of the Concert. Of further interest is that in *Protocol, No. 1, of the Conference held at the Foreign Office, on the 3d of February, 1830* the Great Powers congratulated themselves on their achievements and praised their multilateral action: “the three courts sincerely congratulate themselves on having come to a perfect agreement... the maintenance of their union during such periods, offers the best pledge of its permanency; and the three courts flatter themselves that this union, as firm as it is beneficial, will not cease to contribute to the peace of the world” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 119). While this rhetoric is not itself liberal, it is in praise of the kind of multilateral, diplomacy centric crisis management consistent with liberal internationalism. Given this, the handling of the Greek Question may be read, in rhetoric, as an attempt at facilitating equity and collective security via multilateral diplomacy. However, it should also be noted that many of the treaties and documents of the Greek Question excluded Prussia and Austria as signatories due to their concerns about supporting rebels (the Greeks) and their own influence in

the Balkans (Richards, 1967). The exclusion of these states limits the breadth of multilateralism in crisis management and implies a weakening of concert multilateralism and collective interests.

2.3.4 Europe

Europe is also referred to in documents handling the issue of Greek Independence. As mentioned prior, in *Treaty for the Pacification of Greece between His Majesty, the Most Christian King and the Emperor of all the Russias* the Great Powers expressed their interest in protecting the commerce and tranquility of “all Europe” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 108-109). This is further evidence that the Great Powers had accepted the idea of a European community with common interests and that, as was expressed during the Belgian Crisis, the Great Powers had a duty to that collective. Such rhetoric is consistent with liberalism as outlined during the analysis of the Belgian Crisis. However, relative to documents pertaining to the Belgian crisis, reference to Europe is less frequent. This may have been due to the Ottoman Empire and Greece being on the geographic and cultural periphery of Europe. Alternatively, it could be a result of the limited role of Austria and Prussia in the crisis, thereby reducing the legitimacy of calling it a “European” issue. Of further interest is that in *Protocol, No. 1, of the Conference held at the Foreign Office, on the 3d of February, 1830* Great Britain, France, and Russia expressed their efforts as being to the benefit of the “peace of the world” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 64-65) which is further evidence, albeit far from conclusive, that those powers viewed the Greek Question as a European issue but also an issue of peace relevant beyond Europe.

2.3.5 Freedom of Trade and Navigation

In the *Protocol Relative to the Affairs of Greece* the Great Powers made clear that in the settlement, Greece should have “entire freedom of commerce”. This rhetoric is consistent with the liberal notion of free trade. In the later document the *Treaty for the Pacification of Greece between His Majesty, the Most Christian King and the Emperor of All the Russias*, the Great Powers express dissatisfaction at the crisis resulting in “impediments to the commerce of the States of Europe” and an increase in piracy (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, pp. 107-110). Rhetorically this is written as though the Great Powers are pursuing the interests of Europe as a whole. This concern is consistent with liberal principles and the liberal rhetoric surrounding the Independence of Greece. This rhetorical liberalism is further evidenced by *Protocol, No. 1, of the*

Conference held at the Foreign Office, on the 3d of February, 1830, in which the Great powers stipulated that the subjects of Greece and the Ottoman Empire should be “reciprocally treated, in regard to the rights of commerce and navigation” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 117). The document went further to protect the property of both Greeks and Ottomans as well as their ability to move freely under various circumstances. While property is addressed as a practical matter (especially as something that dwells in the domestic sphere), commerce and navigation are mentioned as issues of rights. Not to be confused with a liberal internationalist view of human rights, rights in this respect may be liberal in so far as being consistent with the proto-liberal ideas of free trade and freedom of navigation. This is consistent with prior rhetoric around the issue. Therefore, proto-liberal principles continued to appear in the rhetoric of the Concert. This is of little surprise given that the Great Powers shifted away from mercantilism to more liberal economics in the 19th century (Duroselle et al., 2023).

The Greek Question ultimately produced very similar liberal rhetoric to that of the Belgian Crisis. The only notable change is that the use of the term Europe was slightly more limited. This makes sense as the crisis took place further from most of Europe than the Belgian Crisis. Furthermore, like the Belgian crisis, references to the balance of power were nill. Overall, the rhetoric of the Greek Question was very liberal.

2.4 The Syrian Crisis

The Syrian Crisis began when the Viceroy of Egypt, Mehmet Ali, a subject of the Ottoman Empire, took advantage of the failure of the Ottoman Empire to secure a victory in Greece and invaded Ottoman Syria in 1831 (Richards, 1967). This led to a crisis that was not fully resolved until 1841 (Richards, 1967). The Syrian Crisis presented a serious challenge to the the unity of the Great Powers and therefore to the Concert. Some of the Great Powers handled this crisis very differently from the Belgian Crisis. The rhetoric in the documents analysed below reflects that fact.

2.4.1 Morality & Responsibility

In handling the Syrian Crisis of Mehmet Ali’s challenge to the Ottoman Empire, the Great Powers (excluding France which initially found itself backing Ali) made the same declaration

that they did about the Greek Question. In *Protocol of a Conference held at London the 17th of September, 1840* Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire declared that they would “seek no augmentation of territory, no exclusive influence, no commercial advantage for their subjects, which those of every other nation may not equally obtain” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 141-142). It further declared that the Ottomans recognised the “good faith and disinterested policy of the Allied Courts” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 142). This demonstrates continued emphasis of the idea that the Great Powers were operating in the interests of a broader collective and not according to realist self-help principles. The French, even in their opposition to the other Great Powers, ultimately continued to use such liberal language also. A French note from 8 October argued that removing Ali would upset the “European equilibrium” but that France’s “love of peace can be relied upon” and that “her disinterestedness is likewise dependable, for she could not even be suspected of seeking territorial advantages in the Orient” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 142). With these statements from the Powers being made in 1840, 25 years after the beginning of the Concert, it is evident that the liberal expressions of disinterest in individual advantage and a desire to pursue the greater good of the collective had become a rhetorical norm in the functioning of the Concert.

Despite this, much of the moral language that Kant and Grotius might have wished for and seen during the Belgian Crisis and the Greek Question was not present in the documents of the Eastern Question around Ali. For example, there were few mentions of the miseries of general war, evil, or humanitarianism (An exception was a brief mention in Article 1 of the *Convention between Commodore Napier, commanding Her Britannic Majesty’s Naval Forces before Alexandria, on the one part, and his Excellency Boghos Joussof Bey, specially authorized by his Highness the Viceroy of Egypt, on the other part; signed at Alexandria, the 27th November, 1840* which described “putting an end to the calamities of war” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 143)). One potential reason for this is that it had been 25 years since the Napoleonic Wars and European States had seen little major military conflict on the continent since. Conflict that had occurred included the Greek War of Independence (1821-1832) which had seen violence and European military intervention. That war ended well for the Great Powers (there was a permanent resolution without a general war in Europe) and the memory of the Napoleonic Wars likely began to lose its grip on the minds of European statesman. War was once again becoming viewed as a tool to advance political objectives, even if it came at the expense of concern over

the political equilibrium and other principles that had been guiding the Concert. This may be seen in the threat of the use of force against Ali by the Great Powers (except France) who had, in *Reserved Protocol signed at London on the 15th of July, 1840, by the Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain; Austria; Prussia; Russia; and Turkey*, stated that Consuls of the Great Powers would assist the Ottomans with “all the assistance and support in their power, and shall use all means of influence with Mehemet Ali, in order to persuade him to accept the arrangement...” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 140-141). Such language alone may imply the use of force but the implication was not needed as the Great Powers followed that statement by declaring “the Admirals of the respective squadrons in the Mediterranean shall be instructed to place themselves in communication with the said Consuls on this subject” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 141). That is, naval power would be used as a tool to bring Ali to submit if necessary. This is a clear rhetorical example that indicates the Great Powers view of war may have been shifting, that is, regressing, back to a pre-Concert understanding whereby war was a legitimate tool of hard power; more in line with realism than the rhetoric around war that prevailed in the prior Belgian Crisis and on the Greek Question.

2.4.2 Rights and Law

The rules and norms of the 19th century international order continued to be an important part of the rhetoric of the Concert in dealing with Mehemet Ali. One of the most common issues to be raised in documentation was that of the Straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles. These had been considered, in recognition of Ottoman sovereignty, demilitarised. The *Convention between the Courts of Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia on the one part, and the Sublime Porte on the other, for the Pacification of the Levant. Signed at London, July 15, 1840* detailed an allied plan to protect the Straits of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles from Ali in order to ensure the security of the Ottoman Empire (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968). The plan would entail allied ships of war being stationed in the straights and around Istanbul. However, the Great Powers (excluding France) placed great emphasis on this deployment being conditional on their presence being requested by the Sultan. This came with the commitment that “as long as the Porte is at peace, to admit no foreign ship of war into the Dardanelles; on the other hand [the Sovereigns of Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia]... engage to respect this determination of the Sultan and to conform to the above-mentioned principle” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 136). This statement is

consistent with both the conservative instincts of the Monarchist Great Powers to respect tradition and the liberal internationalist notion of respect for state sovereignty.

Such rhetoric was common when the Ottoman Empire was the focus of the Concerts attention. The rhetoric appeared again in the *Protocol signed at London, on the 15th of July, 1840, by the Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain; Austria; Prussia; Russia; and Turkey* (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 139), *The Plenipotentiaries of the Powers to Chekib Effendi* (Pg. 147), *Protocol of a Conference held at the Foreign Office, July 10, 1841* (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 148), and the *Convention between Great Britain, Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, and Turkey* (Pg. 149-150). This rhetoric made clear the importance of respecting the sovereign rights of, at least, the Ottoman Empire. This is consistent with the analysis of Schroeder (1975; 1989) that the Concert functioned on the goal of balancing the insecurities of European States in an equitable manner as opposed to a realist balance of power. Should Schroeder's (1975; 1989) analysis be correct, such rhetoric toward the Ottoman Empire fits well into the Great Powers attempts to ensure a European equilibrium (that is a political equilibrium and not a balance of power according to Schroeder (1975; 1989)). The language of the French, who supported Mehmet Ali, supports such an analysis as they described their defense of Ali as a defense of the European Equilibrium which they called both the "European equilibrium" (this term is used twice) and "general equilibrium" in the same note of 8 October (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 142). The French also framed their support for Ali in the context of justice (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 142).

2.4.3 Multilateralism and Collective Security

Much like the Belgian Crisis and the Greek Question, the Great Power's rhetoric consisted of reference to multilateral action to solve the Syrian Crisis. Notably, the Great Powers continued to write and sign joint documents that, in having worked toward and provided solutions, stressed their rhetorical unity. For example, the *Convention between the Courts of Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia on the one part, and the Sublime Porte on the other, for the Pacification of the Levant. Signed at London, July 15, 1840. And related Instruments* (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 134) consisted of most of the Great Powers, except France due to their support for Ali, and referenced a "Collective Note" presented to the Ottoman Empire. Such use of the term "Collective" further implies a continuation of the multilateral nature of crisis management in the

Concert system. Many more documents could be noted in support of this continued desire to uphold the Concert's principles, such as *Protocol of a Conference held at London the 17th of September, 1840* (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 141) which described a conference consisting of the plenipotentiaries of Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire. Such a document suggests the continued use of multilateral conferences as a means of crisis management. The rhetoric of collective security also continued to be present during this crisis. The *Protocol of a Conference held at London the 17th of September, 1840* (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 141) contained a "pledge" by the Great Powers that "their union and their agreement offer to Europe the most certain pledge for the preservation of general peace". In another example, the "Collective Note" (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 134) by the Great Powers was said to be consistent with their desire for "maintaining the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire as a security for the peace of Europe" (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 134). Such descriptions of multilateral action ensuring general peace for the Great Powers and the rest of Europe continues the rhetoric emphasising the importance of multilateralism and collective security as primary functions of the Concert throughout Mehmet Ali's challenge to the Ottoman Empire.

2.4.4 Europe

As evidenced by the *Protocol of a Conference held at London the 17th of September, 1840* (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 141) and the *Convention between the Courts of Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia on the one part, and the Sublime Porte on the other, for the Pacification of the Levant. Signed at London, July 15, 1840. And related Instruments* (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 134), Europe continued to appear in the rhetoric of the Great Powers during this time. Common reference to the goals and actions of the Great Powers being for the peace of Europe are consistent with the Great Power's prior expression of commitment to a European collective of states. Commonly used in the context of justifying the statements and actions of the Great Powers, it is evident that Europe serves as a rhetorically significant concept in the operation of the Concert. Reference to the protection of Europe as a justification for collective action can now certainly be described as a rhetorical norm within the Concert system. However, such a justification could also be invoked unilaterally as was demonstrated by the French note of 8 October (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 142) in which they justified their break from the position of the other powers as being "necessary to Europe" with the hope that "Europe" would approve of

France's decision. Furthermore, in this note the French described their desire to "maintain the European equilibrium" of which it was the "responsibility of all the Great Powers" and their "glory and their main ambition" (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 142). This was the strongest language about Europe used in any documentation of the crisis. The reason for this may be that, in breaking with the Concert, France had broken the norms of crisis management and was thus in dire need to justify its position. Should this be the case (the extent of this will be analysed in later sections of this research), it would be unusual behaviour in the context of a realist concert determined by power politics and self-help principles. This rhetoric is more consistent with the view that the Concert was a relatively liberal system for the time and a much more liberal system than it has been given credit for.

2.4.5 Freedom of Trade and Navigation

Reference to commerce and navigation and the liberal concept of the freedom of those things was more limited in the handling of this crisis than it was during prior crises. In the *Protocol of a Conference held at London the 17th of September, 1840* (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 141) the Great Powers committed themselves to no commercial advantage for themselves over other states in the handling of the crisis which is a pledge the Concert powers have made in the past. Such a pledge is arguably more consistent with issues of collective action for the greater good (that is moral and normative actions) than it is a commitment to free trade. Other mentions of commerce or navigation are restricted to matters of the administrative responsibility for tax collection (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 138), or military navigation (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, pp. 139, 148). The lack of liberal rhetoric in this area is notable given the prior rhetoric of the Great Powers in other crises. There is no one obvious reason for this shift in rhetoric but if it had continued through the next two case studies, it would become clear that concerns about freedom of commerce and navigation had lessened.

The Syrian Crisis saw a shift in the use of rhetoric in Concert documents. Some rhetoric was less liberal than that of the Belgian crisis with threats of the use of force being the obvious example. Other rhetoric was still liberal but appears to be used toward illiberal ends. Overall, the Syrian Crisis saw an erosion of the liberal rhetoric of the Concert.

2.5 The Crimean War

The Crimean War (1853-1856) was fought between Russia on one side and Great Britain, France, and the Ottoman Empire on the other. It was the first war fought between the Great Powers since the Napoleonic Wars (Richards, 1967) and, like the Syrian Crisis, presented a considerable challenge to Concert liberalism. This was also reflected in the use of liberal rhetoric.

2.5.1 Morality and Responsibility

While the politics surrounding the Crimean War acted as a clear erosion of the Concert system, liberal rhetoric continued to be employed by the Great Powers. The issue of moral responsibility continued to be a consistent theme. In a note to the British from Russia in 1844, the Russian Count Nesselrode expressed several sentiments compatible with liberal notions of moral responsibility. Some rhetoric was consistent with prior liberal rhetoric of the Concert. For example, Nesselrode appealed to the British and Russian common interest in the independence of the Ottoman Empire which he described as compatible with the “general interest of the maintenance of peace” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 154). Rhetoric of peace and avoiding conflict were expressed several other times in this memorandum (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 155-157). The liberalism inherent in such rhetoric has been described in the cases examined earlier in this chapter. What is more notable in this instance is that Nesselrode, in what may have been preparations for the events of the Crimean War, laid out two grievances with the Ottoman Empire. The first grievance was that, in Nesselrode’s view, the Ottoman Empire was trying to play the European Great Powers off against one another to secure advantages for itself and violate treaties it had entered (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 155). For this section of analysis, the point of particular interest is that Nesselrode argued that in doing this the Ottoman Empire “will screen itself from all responsibility” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 155). He went on to stress the importance of this: “It is essential not to confirm the Porte in this delusion. Every time that it fails in its obligations towards one of the great Powers, it is the interest of all the rest to make it sensible of its error, and seriously to exhort it to act rightly towards the Cabinet which demands just reparation” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 155). This quote is full of moralistic language. Responsibility, obligations, and acting rightly are all consistent with the language of the Concert seen prior. This is distinctive, however, as it not only espoused the requirements of the Great Powers but also those of other states (in this case the Ottoman Empire). This demonstrates a

rhetorical expansion of Concert responsibilities beyond the core Great Powers and beyond Europe. The second grievance expressed by Nesselrode was what he characterised “flagrant acts of oppression and religious intolerance” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 155) toward Christians in the Ottoman Empire by the Ottoman State. This rhetoric was accompanied by further rhetoric of responsibility. He argued that the Great Powers must not be indifferent to the “oppression” and that they ensure the Ottomans treat the Christians of their Empire with “tolerance and with mildness” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, pp. 155). Such was their “duty” he argued (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 155). Notably, Nesselrode also argued it was the duty of the Great Powers to recognise Ottoman sovereignty and to ensure that the Christian population of the Ottoman Empire were “in submission to the sovereign authority” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 155). Such expression of duty to a moral cause and the sovereign rights of the state are both indicative of prior liberal thought.

The moralising language around this crisis extended beyond Nesselrode’s memorandum. Another example is the Protocol from the Conference of Vienna which included the recognition that a state of war existed between the Ottoman Empire, Great Britain, and France on one side and Russia on the other. This was described as a “solemn moment” but also as being “founded in right” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 174-175). Missing from this rhetoric was an expression of patriotism, nationalism, militarism, or other illiberal rhetoric. Instead, the Great Powers that signed the Protocol continued to express peace as their desire (although they made clear that it was unattainable so long as Russia continued to violate Ottoman sovereignty). Further reference to peace can be further observed in the 1854 Treaty of Alliance between the Great Britain, France, and Austria (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 181). In the instance of war breaking out between the Great Powers of the Concert, the strong rhetorical emphasis on peace is evident and, given the historical precedent of the Concert so far, expected.

2.5.2 Rights and Law

In the documentation pertaining to the crisis of the Crimean War, rhetoric of rights and law was considerably more frequent than in documents concerning prior crises. For example, Nesselrode's memorandum brought to the rhetorical fore the issue of the rights of Christians in the Ottoman Empire. While Nesselrode did not describe the “oppression and religious intolerance” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 155) as an issue of rights, it was described as so by the

Four Powers that opposed Russia's invasion of the Ottoman Empire. They declared: "the Undersigned have at this solemn moment declared that their Governments remain united in the double object of maintaining the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire... and consolidating in an interest so much in conformity with the sentiments of the Sultan... the civil and religious rights of the Christian subjects of the Porte" (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 175). Such rhetoric is decidedly liberal and importantly outlines the necessity to balance the rights of a minority populace with the rights of a sovereign state government. Such an issue has long been grappled with by liberals in attempts to reduce the effects of anarchy and establish an international order that respects both. This can be traced from the inception of the Treaty of Westphalia through to the UN and the EU.

That state sovereignty and territorial integrity (especially that of the Ottoman Empire) were important to the rhetoric of the Great Powers is well established by this point in the Concert (for further evidence of this in the Crimean War crisis see Albrecht-Carrie (1968, pp. 154, 155, 175, 184,186)). What makes the rhetoric in documentation around the Crimean War interesting is the presence of language that is consistent with the fundamentally liberal concept of international law. Liberal efforts to establish international law are clear in modern liberal internationalist institutions, such as the UN (and its associated agencies and organisations) and the EU. It was also present in the thought of the protoliberals of the 18th century. Grotius' thinking that moral obligation (such as toward upholding treaties or respecting the rights of non-combatants) is a critical foundation of international law (Martin, 1963) is hard to ignore. Consider the rhetorical emphasis placed by the Great Powers on protecting Ottoman sovereignty and the rights of the non-combatant Christian population of that Empire. Grotius might have predicted that such moral obligations would lead the Great Powers to create a system of international law. Indeed, he would have been right to do so. In the *General Treaty of Peace between Great Britain, Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, Sardinia, and Turkey. Signed at Paris, 30th March 1856* which concluded the Crimean War, the Great Powers emphasised several points that would be recognisable to modern readers of contemporary international law (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968). It contained the following provisions: amnesty to the subjects of all parties, the return of prisoners of war, the protection of Christians in the Ottoman Empire, the neutralisation of the Black Sea, and the establishment a European commission to protect the navigation of "international rivers"

(Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 187). However, perhaps the most revealing rhetoric was to call the Concert “the Public Law and System of Europe” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 186).

Further evidence of a push for international law was present at the Conference/Congress of Paris in 1856. For example, in the *Protocol of Conference between Great Britain, Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, Sardinia, and Turkey, suggesting the reference of Disputes between Foreign Powers to the Mediation of a Third Power, previous to Hostilities* the plenipotentiaries of the present states agreed that disputes between powers should be mediated by a third party.

Specifically, the British representative (the Earl of Clarendon) proposed extending that idea (which had been established to resolve Ottoman disputes) to a “general application” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 192) and that should do so to ensure an enduring “Maintenance of Peace” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 192). Of note is the fact that the Earl of Clarendon emphasised that such action should be “without prejudice... to the Independence of Governments” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 192). This was a point expressed by other representatives also. The Austrian representative stated that they could not accept the proposal as it would “limit the Independence of the Austrian Cabinet” to which the Earl of Clarendon replied that “it is by no means his intention to restrict the authority of the Governments” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 193). This is a striking conversation that reflects similar issues that international law still grapples with today. One might suggest that a liberal-realist tension exists between state sovereignty, anarchy, and self-help in relation to international law. Such tension appears to have been characteristic of the concert (and modern international relations). That the conversation was consistent with liberal principles of international law is evident in its content. Further evidence is that it was undertaken in the form a Congress (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 193), thereby placing it within the realm of what was previously referred to as the “Public Law and System of Europe” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 186) (that is the Concert). Furthermore, in discussing past examples where that idea could be applied (specifically the Greek Question), the Earl of Clarendon invoked the “Laws of Neutrality” (Pg. 193) which was in line with a liberal approach to international relations (although likely more consistent with the natural law of Grotius and other proto-liberals than modern international law).

The most compelling evidence that the Conference/Congress of Paris was attempting to establish something akin to international law, at least in rhetoric, was the *Declaration signed by the*

Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain, Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, Sardinia, and Turkey, respecting Maritime Law. Paris, 16th April, 1856 which covered the issue of “Maritime Law” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 195). In the document the signatories agreed that Maritime Law had long been disputed and needed resolution. To do so they agreed the necessity for a “uniform doctrine” and that they were “seeking to introduce into international relations fixed principles in this respect...” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 195). The rhetoric here was remarkably consistent with the liberal desire for international law and restrain and manage the affects of anarchy. The signatories went on to note that the declaration was only binding to those that had acceded to it or would accede to it but that, regarding other sates not present at Paris, they “invite them to accede to it” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 196). Such language is once again consistent with the approach of modern international institutions (i.e. the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)). All of this leaves the documentation surrounding the Crimean War as the clearest rhetorical evidence that the Concert was an attempt at establishing a system of, or akin to, international law consistent with liberalism and a system in partial opposition to those that realists emphasise, such as anarchy and self-help.

2.5.3 Multilateralism and Collective Security

Like the other crises that faced the Concert, the rhetoric used by the Great Powers to deal with the Crimean War and its surrounding events showed a multilateral response. Some examples of this are less significant such as reference to common interests in the Nesselrode memorandum (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 154). Of more significance is that, like during the crisis of Mehmet Ali’s invasion of Egypt, the Great Powers used collective notes in attempting to mediate tensions between the Ottoman Empire and Russian Empire. The multilateral nature of these “collective” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 165) notes is evident in the multiple signatories and their description by the powers as being a “collective” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 165). This combined the use of conferences and congresses continued the multilateralism of the Concert throughout the Crimean War. Take the example of the *Draft of Protocol of a Collective note to be signed at Vienna* (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 165) which opened with “The Undersigned, Representatives of Austria, France, Great Britain and Prussia, in conformity with the instructions of their Courts, have met together in Conference in order to devise the means of reconciling the difference which has arisen between Russia and the Sublime Porte” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 165). A stronger

example of multilateralism presented itself at the Conference/Congress of Paris, which produced the *General Treaty of Peace between Great Britain, Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, Sardinia and Turkey. Signed at Paris, 30th March 1856* (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 186). This can be judged as multilateral not just by the number of signatories and states represented but by the fact that even the prior mentioned European commission was to be “consisting of one delegate from each of the signing Powers” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 187). Other examples include the *Protocol of Conference* designed to ensure mediation of conflict by a third party (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 192), the attempt to establish Maritime Law (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 195), or the Congress of Paris itself (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 185). It should again be emphasised that such multilateral rhetoric is much more consistent with the principles of liberalism than the realist principles of self-help and anarchy

As with multilateralism, the rhetoric of collective security was also present in the documentation surrounding the Crimean War. In his memorandum, Nesselrode explained that the Great Powers needed to stay united and not become divided by the Ottomans (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 155). However, Nesselrode appealed more to the interests of the Great Powers than he did to their security. A better example of collective security is the *Collective Note* signed by Austria, France, Great Britain, and Prussia in Vienna in which they emphasised that the protection of the Ottoman Empire was necessary for the “balance of power in Europe” which was in turn necessary for the “tranquility of all other Powers” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 166). It is notable that this statement does have realist implications. This sentiment was further expressed in the *Protocol of a Conference of the Four Representatives held at Vienna, December 5, 1853*. In this document, the Austria, France, Great Britain, and Prussia expressed that “the existence of Turkey in the limits assigned to her by Treaty is one of the necessary conditions of the balance of power in Europe... the existing war cannot in any case lead to modifications in the territorial boundaries of the two Empires, which would be calculated to alter the state of possession in the East... which is equally necessary for the tranquility of all the other powers” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 167-168). Upon this foundation, the aforementioned Powers expressed their preparedness for joint intervention: “In this state of things, the Undersigned are convinced that the readiest and surest means of attaining the object desired by their Courts will be to make a joint communication to the Sublime Porte, in order to set before it the wish of the Powers to contribute, by their friendly intervention, to the reestablishment of peace...” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 168). Many aspects of that rhetoric

(both just discussed and discussed prior) around the intervention against Russia were liberal, as they were concerned with international war, collective diplomacy (multilateralism) and action, Ottoman sovereignty and territorial integrity, general peace, obligations to other states, etc. However, it is necessary to recognise that the examples just discussed were specifically rooted in balance of power rhetoric. The balance of power is a fundamentally realist idea that is distinct from the more liberal concept of equilibrium as expressed by Schroeder (1975; 1989; 1992). Nonetheless, that it was an example of collective security, a concept consistent with liberalism, remains true.

2.5.4 Europe

The interests of Europe as a whole continued to be reiterated in rhetoric throughout the Crimean War. The decidedly liberal concept thus clearly retained rhetorical importance. Europe was mentioned thrice in Nesselrode's memorandum. It was first mentioned in reference to the "Cabinets of Europe" (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 156) that were the Great Powers. That mention contained very little relevance to liberalism other than reference to Europe itself. Such a reference may be considered a norm by that point. The second time was an expression of the Russian desire for the "maintenance of the balance of power in Europe" (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 157) with the third having been an expressed desire to maintain "the peace of Europe" (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 157). Nesselrode's memorandum, having been delivered eight years prior to the Crimean War, was not a perfect indication of the continued rhetorical importance of the European concept through the Crimean War. This can instead be seen in the aforementioned *Collective Note* which referred also to the balance of power in Europe (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 166). Rhetoric related to the European balance of power continued to be expressed (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 167-168). The realist underpinnings of those mentions of Europe, however, do not imply that the concept of Europe had taken on a realist character by that point in the Concert. There are two reasons to believe that Europe remained a characteristically liberal idea. The first is that in the late 1840's and early 1850's, the idea of a 'United States of Europe' gained momentum among liberals and romanticists (Duroselle et al, 2023)) such as Vesinet, Charles McKay (who used the term in two articles in *The London Telegraph*), Emile de Girardin (who used the term in *La Presse*), and Carlo Cattaneo who expressed that "We shall have peace when we have the United States of Europe" (Duroselle et al., 2023, pp. 431-437). Of particular note is

a speech given by Victor Hugo at a Peace Conference in Paris in 1849: “A day will come when you France, you Russia, you England, you Germany, you all, nations of the continent, without losing your distinctive qualities and your glorious individuality, will forge yourselves into a close and higher unity: you will form a European fraternity, just as Brittany, Burgundy, Lorraine, and Alsace are all united within France... a day will come when these two great groupings that face each other, the United States of America and the United States of Europe, will join hands across the seas...” (Duroselle et al., 2023, Pg. 437). While the ideas of Hugo may have been too radical for the European Powers, who were still very concerned about the independence of their courts (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 193), the idea that European unity was necessary for peace was one pioneered by the liberals of their day should continue to be a reminder that the European concept was a characteristically liberal one. The second reason to believe that the concept of Europe was liberal in nature is that, despite a number of references to the European balance of power, the Great Powers continued to refer to European equilibrium (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 175). If Schroeder’s (1989) analysis was correct, the European equilibrium was distinct from and was much more liberal than the realist balance of power. Schroeder (1989) also argued that many translations of balance of power were not accurately translated, and that European equilibrium is more accurate. That cannot be verified by this research, but it is worth considering. Furthermore, in many cases the rhetoric appeared to suggest that the general interests of Europe were dependent on the maintenance of the balance of power thus when the general interests of Europe were mentioned, it was a realist concern and not a liberal one. This would be a tempting reading of the documentation were it not for the many instances in which the general interests of Europe or other such uses of the term Europe were used in a context separate to the balance of power. For example, the free navigation of the Danube (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 183-184) or indeed the general equilibrium of Europe (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 175). Therefore, despite the increase in balance of power rhetoric, the term Europe can still be considered rhetorically consistent with liberalism (after all it is inherently collectivist language) and in many ways contrasted with realist principles of self-help and anarchy.

2.5.5 Freedom of Trade and Navigation

The rhetoric of free commerce and free navigation continued to be present in Crimean War documents. For example, in the *Memorandum communicated by the Plenipotentiaries of Austria*,

France, and Great Britain, to Prince Gortchakoff, on the 28th of December 1854, the Great Powers proposed solutions for “the freedom of navigation of the Danube” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 184). Two years later in the Treaty of Paris, the Great Powers once again attempted to “deal with the navigation of the Danube” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 187) in “accordance with the principles laid down in the settlement of 1815 for the navigation of international rivers” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 187). Furthermore, the Great Powers established the neutralisation of the Black Sea which ensured protections for the “commercial and maritime interests of all nations” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 187). That rhetoric was only liberal insofar as it accounted for the liberal interests of free navigation, free commerce, and collective interests. It was not a step beyond what had been agreed to in prior treaties. However, the attempt to clarify and codify maritime law was considerably more significant. It included rhetoric for protecting commercial shipping (such as from piracy or other raiding) and to establish stronger international law in the international relations of the time (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968). Such rhetoric was, as has already been established, decidedly liberal. One can imagine that it set a good precedent for the international maritime laws of later times. Despite that declaration, the rhetoric of free commerce and free trade was lacking in the documentation surrounding the Crimean War. The reasons for that are unclear. Perhaps the limited commercial interests of Great Britain and France in Black Sea or Danube trade provide a realist explanation. Such an explanation could limit a liberal interpretation of the Concert in this instance.

Like the Syrian Crisis, the Crimean War saw an erosion of liberal rhetoric in both how often it was used and the ends to which it was used. However, before and during the war, the erosion is more evident than it was in the Syrian Crisis. Despite this, the Treaty of Paris still contained some very liberal rhetoric and some very strong allusions to international law.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that there were clear liberal rhetorical norms during the first half of the Concert. The documents from the Belgian Crisis, the Greek Question, the Syrian Crisis, and the Crimean War that have been analysed show a consistent pattern of liberal rhetorical norms across all covered areas from morality and responsibility to free trade and navigation. Among these were denying individual advantage, stressing Great Power unity and multilateralism, and

pacifism. The consistent use of this rhetoric confirms that many Concert principles were liberal, not realist. Notably, balance of power rhetoric was minimal and used less than the language of equilibrium. This adds weight to the assessment of Schroeder (1989; 1992) that the balance of power was less important to the Concert than had previously been thought. The amount, types, and ways liberal rhetoric was used changed from the Belgian Crisis to the end of the Crimean War as the liberal rhetorical norms so present during the Belgian Crisis and the Greek Question were eroded during the Syrian Crisis and Crimean War.

3. Chapter Three

Liberalism and the Concert: The Great Powers

3.1 Introduction

The presence of liberal rhetoric alone does not demonstrate that liberalism was important to the Concert. However, liberal rhetoric combined with demonstrably liberal intent and action from the Great Powers indicates that liberalism did have influence over the Concert. Liberal intent and actions are identified through Concert actors, primarily foreign ministers and the heads of state of the Great Powers. As such, Chapter Three covers important figures in the governments of Great Britain, Russia, France, Austria, and Prussia. In this chapter, the liberal intentions of actors in the Concert are best identified in correspondence between individual actors. This can be seen from the very beginning of the Concert, such as discussions about a new post-Napoleonic European system, through to its most challenging periods during the Crimean War and the rise of German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898).

3.2 Beginnings

Before the beginning of the Concert in 1815, the ideas that ultimately resulted in its inception were being discussed among the allied powers. For example, in 1804, Tsar Alexander of Russia sent a letter to the British in which he expressed his wishes for post-war Europe. Albrecht-Carrie (1968, pp. 26-27) described these wishes as liberal as they were not designed to reinstitute the old European order but to construct a new and better one that were, according to Tsar Alexander himself, founded “on the sacred rights of humanity” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 27). He put forth numerous ideas that were liberal in nature. For example, he made several allusions to something akin to international law. He expressed the necessity of having a rules-based system as peace could not be attained until the “relations of states to each other have been fixed on more precise rules” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1963, p. 27). Similarly, Alexander expressed the need for a “law of nations” that would be “established on true principles” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1963, p. 27). Alongside

international law, Alexander described the need for “clear, precise principles” for the “rights of nations” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1963, p. 27). Near the end of these wishes he further expressed his desire for a “code of the law of nations” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1963, p. 27). Although this was not outright advocacy for international law as is known today, this was certainly a precursor to such an idea. In fact, it is the kind of language one might have expected to hear later from Woodrow Wilson when he advocated for the League of Nations (consider the language used in his Fourteen Points (National WWI Museum and Memorial, n.d.)). In fact, many of Tsar Alexander's ideas are consistent with the Covenant of what would later be the League of Nations (this same statement may be made about many of the themes of the concert) (United Nations, n.d.). The idea of international law or a law of nations is just one of these. Alexander also gave attention to the idea of a more united Europe expressing that the new “law of nations” should be “sanctioned by the greater part of the nations of Europe” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1963, p. 27), that his desired treaty “would become the basis of the reciprocal relations of the European states” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1963, p. 27), and that all of this relied on Europe being saved from Napoleon (Albrecht-Carrie, 1963, p. 27). Most interestingly though, he stated that the law of nations would regulate “the relations of the European Confederation” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1963, p. 27). A European Confederation would have been an extremely radical step and is of course something that did not eventuate. However, a treaty which established fixed principles and a new order for managing the relations and rights of European states did become a reality in Vienna in 1815. Alexander expressed other liberal sentiments as well. He mentioned the “dream of perpetual peace” and a “general pacification” and the “birth” of a “new league” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1963, p. 27). He detailed the need for diplomacy over war, collective agreement to the law of nations, and collective enforcement of the law of nations (Albrecht-Carrie, 1963, p. 27). All of these are consistent with the liberal ideas of diplomacy, multilateralism, collective security, international law, and opposition to war. In fact, it could be said that Tsar Alexander was proposing a liberal, international, rules-based order.

3.3 The British

The British response to Tsar Alexander appeared to affirm the Tsar’s intentions. Albrecht-Carrie (1963, p. 27) described Britain’s response, which came from British Prime Minister William Pitt (1759-1806), as “not unfavorable”. This was a euphemistic description given the consistent

liberal language between both parties. Pitt described the necessity of a “Treaty to which all the principal Powers of Europe should be parties” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1963, p. 28) and that the treaty should bind them to protect each other’s “rights and possessions” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1963, p. 27). He wrote that “it should reestablish a general and comprehensive system of public law in Europe” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1963, p. 28). This affirmation of Alexander’s ideas indicated British support for what would later become the Concert. Much better evidence that the British genuinely approved of the Concert approach, specifically that of multilateral diplomacy, came from British Foreign Minister Castlereagh in a report he gave on the Conference of Aix-la-Chapelle: “It really appears to me to be a new discovery in the European Government, at once extinguishing the cobwebs into which diplomacy obscures the horizon, bringing the whole bearing of the system into its true light, and giving to the great Powers the efficiency and almost the simplicity of a single state” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1963, p. 43). This was a striking statement that praised both multilateral diplomacy and the European idea and reveals the sincerity with which Castlereagh, a very important actor in the early stages of the Concert, was committed to the liberal elements (especially the multilateralism) of the new system. However, Castlereagh’s commitment to the Concert came with limits. For reasons of domestic politics and a lack of British interests being tied to the issue, Castlereagh did not attend the Congress of Troppau (Richards, 1967). This episode coincided with Castlereagh’s declining mental health (Richards, 1967) and it is difficult to say whether that had any bearing on Castlereagh’s apparent reduced enthusiasm for the Concert. Nonetheless, for most of his tenure, Castlereagh supported the Congress even if domestic politics pressured him to do otherwise.

Castlereagh’s successor, George Canning, was a more liberal (in the domestic sense) figure than Castlereagh (who was more sympathetic to the likes of Austrian Foreign Minister Metternich) (Goodlad, 2008). He was Foreign Minister from 1822 to 1827 (Goodlad, 2008). According to historian Graham Goodlad (2008), Canning and Castlereagh differed in their domestic politics and their political styles/strategy (both domestically and internationally). On foreign policy, Castlereagh was a stronger supporter of conferences than Canning and Canning was much more inclined to the unilateral pursuit of independent British interests. Richards (1967) agreed with this and would go further arguing that Canning was vehemently opposed to Castlereagh’s foreign policy and that he gladly brought an end to the “Conference System” in the name of British self-interest. Richards (1967, p. 74) even quoted Canning as saying “things are getting back to a

wholesome state again. Every nation for itself, and God for us all". Richards' (1967) argument here is well worth noting and should not be discounted. If it were to be granted that Canning's approach eroded British practice of the Concert principles of multilateralism and obligation, claims he ended that system were clearly an exaggeration. In fact, Goodlad (2008) argued that Canning was still in favour of the Concert (albeit in a more limited sense) and was still, in many respects, aligned with Castlereagh's foreign policy. This alignment then, despite their personal and policy differences, is not surprising given they were both members of the same Conservative Party and strong supporters of Prime Minister Pitt (the younger) (Goodlad, 2008). Thus, divergence in their foreign policy had limits. An example of foreign policy agreement in respect to the Concert between the two men was their intervention in the Greek Question. Castlereagh, in a rather realist fashion was, according to Goodlad (2008), initially opposed to Greek independence out of fear of reducing Ottoman power and creating a power vacuum which Russia might have stepped into. He claimed that limiting Russian power in the Eastern Mediterranean was also an important goal of Canning's foreign policy even if Canning supported Greek independence. Their successors, including Lord Aberdeen, who had a more liberal foreign policy of diplomacy (Cross, 2006; Parry, 1938), and Lord Palmerston, who was much more of a realist (Henderson, 1938), also took seriously the liberal issue of preserving Ottoman Sovereignty for a very realist end, protecting British interests and constraining Russian power in the Eastern Mediterranean (Adanir, 2005). In fact, Lord Aberdeen was Prime Minister from 1852-1855 and thus oversaw much British involvement in the Crimean War (GOV.UK, n.d.). The culmination of British leadership during the Concert leading up until the rise of Bismark is one of support for a liberal internationalist approach to foreign policy (with notable exceptions such as Lord Palmerston and to some extent Canning) in order to achieve realist ends, that is the preservation and expansion of British power. A likely reason for this is that the British, in pursuit of colonial empire, depended on a peaceful, stable European continent. As such, some of the realist policies of British foreign ministers came from a desire not to get entangled in continental conflicts (Richards, 1967). They likely came to the realisation that a rules based international system centered on the principles, and practice, of multilateral diplomacy was the best way to achieve that.

3.4 The Russians

It should come as less of a surprise that some in the British Empire, being the most liberal of the Great Powers, embraced many of the liberal ideas of the Concert. However, the Russian Empire was, like Austria, and Prussia, an autocratic, absolute monarchy. Thus, Russian domestic institutions and arrangements did not incentivise liberal thought. It is likely then that Tsar Alexander's liberalism did not stem from Russian political culture. His liberal inclinations are well attested to by historians (Albrecht-Carrie, 1963; Duroselle et al., 2023, p. 419, Richards, 1967). However, despite his liberal streak, Tsar Alexander was perfectly capable of being a realist. Alexander's most realist moment came in 1815 when he used Russia's territorial acquisitions during the Napoleonic Wars to press Russia's interests in attaining Poland and Finland. Ironically, his attempts to attain Poland were driven by his liberal desire to reconstitute a Polish state (under Russian control of course) (Richards, 1967). However, this liberal desire caused considerable tensions for the young Concert as Alexander convinced Prussia to relinquish Polish territory in exchange for parts of Saxony (Richards, 1967) launching Europe into the Polish-Saxon crisis (Schroeder, 1992). Austria was the state most threatened by this arrangement and vehemently resisted it (Shroeder, 1992). The ensuing tensions pushed Europe to the brink of war (Schroeder, 1992). Interestingly, that crisis demonstrated both the Tsars realism and his liberalism. Schroeder (1992) argued that, once acquiring the desired Polish territory, Alexander realised the damage he had done and, granted without relinquishing most of the territory, attempted to appease Austria by pushing Prussia into a compromise. Although, it is worth noting that this may also be a good example of the defensive realist behaviour outlined by Rendall (2006). However, Schroeder's (1992) argument for this not having been a realist event was that Alexander recognised that his actions were upsetting the political equilibrium in Europe. This was because Austria's primary issue with Russian actions was not necessarily increased Russian hard power. Instead, it was that the reestablishment of a Polish state would incentivise revolutionary movements in the region thereby threatening the security of the multi-ethnic Austrian Empire (Schroeder, 1992). This makes considerable sense given Metternich's determination to prevent nationalist and liberal revolts (outline below).

Nonetheless, Alexanders initial actions around Poland and Finland were certainly an opportunistic land grab more aligned with realism. In a conversation with French Foreign Minister Tellyrand about values and the rule of law, Tsar Alexander argued that Russia would keep what it "held" (Duroselle et al., 2023). When Tellyrand questioned the legitimacy of some

of Russia's holdings and stated that he, Tellyrand, "put the law first, and what suits people afterwards", Alexander responded that "what suits people, in Europe, constitutes the law" (Duroselle et al., 2023, Pg. 420). Such a sentiment, as Duroselle et al. (2023) noted, would appear out of character. However, this conversation was simply a foreshadowing of Alexander's political evolution. After the Concert was established, Alexander became noticeably less liberal. According to Richards (1967), Alexander was increasingly influenced by the reactionary figure Kotzube (1761-1819). After Kotzube was killed in 1819, the Austrian Foreign Minister Metternich attempted to sway Alexander toward a more conservative lens. Metternich was so successful that Alexander is recorded as having said "To-day I deplore all that I said and did between 1815 and 1818" (Richards, 1967, p. 126). However, this newfound conservatism was not akin to Alexander abandoning the ideals of the Concert. Instead, his opposition was to domestic liberalism and revolutionary, nationalist movements (Richards, 1967). This is consistent with Chad Nelson's (2023) assessment that fear of revolutions incentivised Great Power cooperation and "played a key role in undergirding the transformation of European international politics into a more cooperative order". As evidence for this, Alexander refused to violate Ottoman sovereignty by supporting Greek independence. Whilst inconsistent with his former domestic liberalism, Alexander was certainly consistent with the ideals of state sovereignty and legitimacy. He also brought Russia to participate in the congresses of Aix-la-Chapelle, the Congress of Troppau, the Congress of Laibach, and the Congress of Verona (Richards, 1967). On the whole, Alexander did more to promote the liberal elements of the Concert (multilateralism, compromise, and legitimacy) than he did to oppose them, most notably by his enthusiastic support for the entire system in the first place.

Tsar Alexander I was succeeded by Tsar Nicholas I, his brother, in 1825. Nicholas was a firm autocrat and was not subject to the same liberal sympathies as his brother before his conversion by Metternich. Due to this, Nicholas proved to be a strong supporter of Metternich's opposition to revolution in Europe. Therefore, Nicholas continued his brother's pro-Concert foreign policy. Both Nicholas and Alexander (in his later years) were opposed to nationalism and supported the principle of legitimacy (McManners, 1974, p. 299). Nicholas even helped to save the Austrian Empire from the revolutions of 1848 (Rock, 1975). This support did, however, have some notable exceptions in the Tsar's policy toward the Ottoman Empire. Initially, Nicholas was cautious not to upset the Concert. His first incursion into the Ottoman Empire during the Russo-

Turkish War of 1828-1829 (Rendall, 2006) was restrained. Russia had the ability to take Constantinople and neither France nor Great Britain were inclined to intervene militarily (although they protested any advance on the city) (Rendall, 2006). Despite this, the Russians settled for securing autonomy for Wallachia and Moldavia (with Russian garrisons) (Rendall, 2006) and signed the Treaty of Adrianople on 14 September 1829 (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968). In fact, the Russian's went out of their way to present their incursion as an attempt to bring the Ottoman Empire in line with the Concert (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 114). Nicholas did not take Constantinople or Ottoman territory for himself. However, in later incursions, Russia, under Nicholas, became increasingly bold in its unilateral actions. Russia later intervened in the Ottoman Empire in 1833 to defend it from Mehmet Ali of Egypt. Russia used the opportunity to exact further concessions out of the Ottomans (Richards, 1967; Rendall, 2006). While this raised more concern for the other Great Powers than the Russo-Turkish War (Richards, 1967), Nicholas was still relatively conservative in his approach. Rendall (2006) suggested that Tsar Nicholas was not interest in considerable territorial gains for Russia. He had even gone so far as to question what value the "conquest of Turkey" would provide for Russia, saying that "Poland is enough for me" (Rendall, 2006, p. 534). There is no evidence that Nicholas restrained himself out of concerns for legitimacy and other liberal aspects of the Concert as he had appeared to earlier in his reign. Richards (1967) offered insights into why Nicholas held that view explaining that Nicholas believed that Russia was better off maintaining the Ottoman State (albeit a weakened one) than strengthening Ottoman adversaries. This demonstrated a keen awareness of Russian interests and of the balance of power by Nicholas. Combined with his opportunism toward the Ottoman Empire's many crises, Nicholas increasingly exposed himself as a realist actor. This was most evident when Russia invaded the Ottoman Empire again in 1853, beginning the Crimean War and throwing the Concert into crisis. Nicholas was willing to test the limits of the Concert and cautiously assert Russian interests, even if it undermined the Concert. He was, then, a realist actor and, by the end of his reign, a significant departure from Alexander I.

One of the most influential actors in Russian foreign policy was Nesselrode. Nesselrode was Russia's Foreign Minister from 1816 to 1856, serving under both Alexander I and Nicholas I. The available evidence suggests that Nesselrode was aware of, and capable of handling, both the multilateral and legitimacy concerns of the Concert and the balance of power and pursuing Russian interests within these constraints. For example, he was perfectly comfortable with using

some of the more liberal rhetoric of the Concert to justify Russia's realist actions before the Crimean War. Nesselrode expressed several sentiments compatible with liberal notions of moral responsibility such as appealing to the British and Russian common interest in the independence of the Ottoman Empire which he described as compatible with the "general interest of the maintenance of peace" (Pg. 154). Furthermore, he used the rhetoric of peace and avoiding conflict (Pg. 155-157). At the same time, Nesselrode used liberal rhetoric to undermine the legitimacy of the actions of Ottoman Empire to justify Russian intervention in the eyes of the Concert. Nesselrode himself expressed his view that Russia had to appease the other Great Powers and preserve the Concert saying:

"From the beginning... we have established the principle of appearing in the theatre of events solely as the Porte's auxiliaries and at the formal demand of the Sultan. By this we have legitimated our action, and disarmed Europe... But from the moment we changed our system and acted... not in favour of, but despite the Porte, we should be sure to unite all the powers against us, and from that time on our role would become difficult to maintain, unless we decided to devote all our resources to it [unclear word or words] plunge Russia into a general war. This is surely not the will of the Emperor." (Rendall, 2006, p. 533)

His apparent desire to position Russia's behaviour as consistent with Concert principles helps to explain his use of the memorandum that he sent to the British prior to the Crimean War (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968) in which he attempted to use liberal and moralistic Concert rhetoric to justify Russian intervention against the Ottoman Empire. The above quote also suggests that Nesselrode's concern about the Concert was centered on the balance of power. In fact, Nesselrode's concern for the balance of power was reiterated in the years before the Syrian Crisis when he said that "however resigned and powerless they may be at the present moment... we should soon see combinations rising against us whose consequences would inevitably kindle a general war in Europe" (Rendall, 2006, p. 532). Evidently, Nesselrode's thoughts about Russia's foreign policy were heavily influenced by realist power politics whilst also recognising the role of the Concert. Nesselrode could therefore be considered a realist more closely aligned with Nicholas I than with Alexander I.

3.5 The French

French actors also, at times, expressed liberal foreign policy views. Talleyrand, although only having briefly directed French foreign policy at the very beginning of the Concert, demonstrated liberal values in his discussion with Tsar Alexander. According to Duroselle et al. (2023), Talleyrand was primarily loyal to his own interests rather than those of any one government. However, they also argued that Talleyrand opposed the concept of “might is right” and that he “supplied the intellectual underpinning for the new European system...” of “legitimacy and balance of power” (Duroselle et al., 2023, Pg. 417). Such intellectual underpinnings can be seen in a quote from Talleyrand provided by Duroselle et al. (2023, Pg. 417) in which he:

“railed against the idea ‘that confiscation, condemned by the domestic laws of enlightened nations, should in the nineteenth century be sanctified by the general law of Europe; ... that sovereignty should be lost or won by the mere fact of conquest; that the nations of Europe are bound together by moral ties no greater than those which link them with the South Sea Islands, that they live together under nothing but the pure law of nature, and that what is known as the public law of Europe does not exist; ... that the customs established among the nations of Europe, which they have universally, constantly, and reciprocally observed for three centuries, are in no way a law for them; in a word, that might is right’”

All that Talleyrand described here could be considered consistent with realist concepts. Thus, while Talleyrand summarised his position as being opposed to “might is right”, it might better be summarised for the modern reader as an opposition to realism. However, Duroselle et al. (2023) emphasised Talleyrand's concern for the balance of power as the only way to ensure peace. Such concern lends itself to a realist perspective more so than a liberal one. As far as the analysis of Duroselle et al. (2023) is concerned, Talleyrand's opposition to a realist, anarchic system and his concern for the balance of power was coherent. For Duroselle et al. (2023), Talleyrand and Metternich were allies in their vision for the new European system and Metternich, as will be explored later, may have had very similar views. It is important to recognise that for the statesmen of the 19th century, a coherent liberal or realist theory had not been fully developed as they are known in the 21st century. As far as Talleyrand or Metternich were concerned, the (realist) balance of power was an important way of ensuring that (realist) anarchy and power politics didn't prevail over the rule law, diplomacy, and peace. In other words, these were not to them, and likely should not be to modern readers, mutually exclusive ideas. Nonetheless, when

conducting an analysis of the extent to which liberalism, including the liberal internationalism consistent with the 21st century, influenced the Concert, it is important to recognise that the balance of power is an integral part of realist theory. However, for Schroeder (1992), these positions may not have been, from a modern perspective, ideological contradictions but mostly consistent with the modern idea of liberalism. While recognising Talleyrand's dubious, unreliable character, Schroeder (1992) argued that Talleyrand genuinely believed, not in a balance of power, but what should be properly translated and understood as a European equilibrium. This equilibrium was not based on a material balance of hard power but on the rule of law, respect for state sovereignty and the "security and legitimacy" of governments (Schroeder (1992) specifically used the term rulers). This analysis from Schroeder (1992) makes considerable sense given Talleyrand's apparent disdain for realist power politics. It is with Talleyrand's precedent that France entered into the Concert.

Other French officials dedicated to liberal elements also participated in the Concert. Louis-Philippe, French monarch from 1830 to 1848, had a foreign policy preference for working with the other powers, especially Great Britain, and trying not to upset the European order established under the Concert (Richards, 1967). He was determined to avoid a war between the Great Powers even when public opinion was opposed to his pacifist foreign policy (Richards, 1967). As a foreign policy, it would be hard not to recognise that Louis-Philippe's pro-Concert, pacifist, pro-compromise, and pro-diplomacy foreign policy views were primarily liberal. For a while, the King had a foreign minister, Adolphe Thiers, who was more inclined to pursue French national interests by confronting a united Concert. However, Thiers successor, after the King dismissed him, was much more aligned with Louis-Philippe. This successor was Francois Guizot. Guizot was a strong supporter of sincere French engagement in the Concert especially its more liberal elements. In a note to the French Ambassador in London, Guizot wrote "we have no intention of remaining outside the general affairs of Europe. We are convinced that it is desirable for us to participate in them and that it is likewise desirable for others that we should. If the rest have proceeded without us, they must feel and tell us that they need us. In the condition of Europe, I believe in the necessity of the concert among the great governments on important questions. Isolation, or fragmentation and the formation of separate camps is a good policy for none of them. There are higher interests which, for a long time, bid Europe operate in concert and in unity; and if there is no concert, there is no unity in Europe in the absence of France" (Albrect-

Carrie, 1968, p. 143). Given Guizot's noted alignment with Louis-Philippe (Richards, 1967; Albrecht-Carrie, 1968), this note provides an excellent insight into the values and resulting foreign policy of the July Monarchy. More so, it is a prime demonstration of the liberal values that underpinned the Concert and that many realist assumptions about how the Concert was intended to operate may be misguided. For example, Guizot stated that the Concert only worked if there were unity and discussion between the Great Powers. This strongly implies the multilateral diplomacy seen in conferences and congresses. He appealed to higher interests, further suggesting the moral obligation underpinning the Concert. More importantly though, Guizot stated that "Isolation", "fragmentation", and "the forming of different camps" (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 143) were harmful to the Concert, not key to it. Therefore, the realist suggestions that there was a balance of (hard) power that relied on balancing coalitions and constant competition (Mearsheimer, 2014), typical of a realist, anarchic system, defined the Concert are not an accurate interpretation of the way the system operated, as the Europeans themselves (or at least the July Monarchy) understood it.

While there were some excellent examples of French representatives expressing liberal foreign policy views during the Concert, French foreign policy views were not always aligned with those of Talleyrand, Louis-Philippe, and Guizot. One example, already mentioned, was Thiers. Another was Emperor Napoleon III who, in the application of his foreign policy, had a complicated relationship with liberalism. Richards (1967, p. 104) adequately described Napoleon III as a "queer mixture of ideals and ambitions". Perhaps the most illiberal, anti-concert element of Napoleon III foreign policy was his willingness to use military force to achieve, sometimes liberal, foreign policy goals. As Richards (1967, pg. 107) described it, Napoleon III "could not resist the traditions of his uncle" as "his ambition and sometimes his ideals prompted him to undertake military campaigns". One such example of this was Napoleon III, joining with Great Britain, to enter the Crimean War against Russia on the side of the Ottoman Empire. This action, like Napoleon III himself, is complicated to comprehend within a liberal-realist binary. On the one hand, protecting the Porte from a Russian invasion is consistent with the Concert ideal of maintaining the European equilibrium, protecting Ottoman sovereignty, and opposing Russia's attempt to solve the crisis militarily (the French and British continually stressed during this period that Russia should reengage in diplomacy (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968). That the conflict was settled in the Congress of Paris was arguably a triumph for the Concert, pulled from the jaws of

catastrophe (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968). On the other hand, Napoleon III may have entered the war not out of a sincere attempt to defend the Concert system but instead to protect French interests in the Mediterranean (Richards, 1967). As Richards (1967, p. 107) described, Napoleon III was motivated by “personal grievance” (neither liberal nor realist behaviour) against Tsar Nicholas and a desire to “assert French claims wherever possible”. According to Richards (1967), Napoleon III attempted to acquire Crimea from Russia. If accurate, such desire would have contradicted the oft expressed principle, as seen in the treaty documentation, of no one state securing unilateral advantage that was not also afforded to the others. Napoleon III’s more liberal internationalist side was well described by Duroselle et al. (2023, pg. 438) who described Napoleon III’s support for the very liberal concept of a “European union” or a “European association”. Another very liberal view of Napoleon III’s was his support for greater economic integration (Duroselle et al., 2023). He enacted liberalising trade treaties with Great Britain, Belgium, Turkey, Prussia and other German states, Italy, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Austria (Duroselle et al., 2023, p. 391). That Napoleon III genuinely believed in a Europe of free trade is quite plausible for, as economic historians Charles Gide and Charles Rist put it, “ ‘in the mid-nineteenth century,... the doctrine of Adam Smith Conquered Europe... Free trade was accepted as an unassailable dogma by economists everywhere” (Duroselle et al., 2023, p. 389). Duroselle et al. (2023) while noting Napoleon III’s failure to create a politically-unified Europe, states that Napoleon III can be credited with making Europe a “real economic entity” in the 1860’s. Furthermore, Napoleon III, after the Congress of Paris, became obsessed with the idea of Congresses (Duroselle et al., 2023) and repeatedly called for them to resolve a number of issues (Duroselle et al., 2023; Albrecht-Carrie, 1968). Nonetheless, Napoleon III’s liberalism was still overshadowed by his pension for disputes and military action. After the Crimean War, he launched military campaigns in Italy (a crisis in which, notably, he did not want a Congress to resolve (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968)), Mexico, and Germany (Richards, 1967). Overall, one might describe Napoleon III as a liberal but one who often used realist hard power and pursued self-interested goals. Such a figure was not one that advanced the cause of the Concert. Instead, Napoleon III may have fatally undermined it.

3.6 The Austrians

The Austrian Foreign Minister Klemens von Metternich could be considered the leading advocate for the Concert to ensure both the realist balance of power and the suppression of revolutions that could threaten the European monarchies. Metternich's strong opposition to liberal and nationalist revolutions had given him a conservative, or even reactionary, reputation. Furthermore, Metternich's concern for the balance of power certainly included a realist balance of hard power. In a note written by Metternich protesting the Prussian annexation of Saxony, he argued that "Austria is not jealous of Prussia. On the contrary, she regards her as one of the most useful counterweights in the European Balance of power... situated as they both are between the two great Empires of the East and the West, Prussia and Austria complement their respective defense systems; united the two monarchies form an impregnable barrier against the inroads of any conquering prince who someday, perhaps, might once more occupy the throne of France or Russia" (Duroselle et al., 2023, p. 419). Metternich was expressing an undeniably realist perspective, and the account of it stands to contradict Schroeder's (1992) opinion that the issue of Saxony was one of legitimacy for the Great Powers. The implication of such a statement is that Metternich was a realist. This might indicate why Schroeder (1992) invoked Talleyrand in defence of his argument more so than Metternich. However, Sofka (1998) defended Schroeder's (1992) view and argued that Metternich himself was not a conservative, realist figure but an enlightened figure whose views were crafted by enlightenment principles. Sofka (1998) outlined Metternich's enlightenment tutors and his reading of Kant's liberal international relations work (particularly Kant's essay *Idea for a Universal History* which Sofka (1998) claims Metternich endorsed) and concluded that Metternich envisioned an international system of international law and diplomacy. Understanding Metternich is important for this analysis as, having been Austrian Foreign Minister from 1809 to 1848, he was the foremost statesman in the Concert. The extent to which this is true is further determined by analysing Metternich's actions whilst out of power and contrasting his foreign policy to that of his successor.

Metternich's successor, Prince Felix of Schwarzenberg, was primarily concerned with saving the Austrian Empire from collapse after the advent of the revolutions of 1848. A military man, Schwarzenberg was considered to have a very different diplomatic style to Metternich and more closely resembled the British Foreign Minister Lord Palmerston. In fact, Kenneth Rock (1975, p. 86), wrote that Tsar Nicholas I of Russia had described Schwarzenberg as "Palmerston in a white uniform". Rock (1975) described that on the surface, Schwarzenberg had similar foreign policy

intentions to Metternich and had been described, by Metternich, as a pupil of Metternich's foreign policy (Rock, 1975, p. 86). These shared foreign policy goals included the preservation of Austrian power in Central Europe and Italy, preventing Prussian hegemony (that would be ensuring the balance of power was not turned against Austria), and suppressing nationalist revolt. However, Schwarzenberg was much more of a realist than Metternich. This is because Schwarzenberg had a *realpolitik* (a foreign policy approach "in which preservation of the state and promotion of the national interest are the ultimate goals and power is the primary tool for achieving those ends" (Humphreys, 2014, p. 1)) and a *machtpolitik* (meaning power politics (Abendshein, 1999)) foreign policy approach. That is, he was more inclined to use military power and ultimatums to achieve his goals than to use Metternich's approach of compromise. Furthermore, Schwarzenberg's goals extended beyond the preservation of Austrian power. His desire was to establish Austrian hegemony over central Europe, and he was prepared to humiliate Prussia, threaten war, and use ultimatums to do so (Rock, 1975). Metternich was said to be so alarmed by this that he desired to intervene to ensure that "the German drama would not develop into an Austrian tragedy" (Rock, 1975, p. 95). Schwarzenberg also desired to create a customs union that would help to establish Austrian economic sovereignty over Central Europe (Rock, 1975). An attempt at free commerce between a great number of states can certainly be described as a liberal policy. However, Schwarzenberg's intentions were not one of liberal economic integration for prosperity's sake but for Austrian hegemony (Rock, 1975). With such *realpolitik* and *machtpolitik*, Schwarzenberg was certainly a realist in his approach. Rock (1975, p. 99) summarised Schwarzenberg's foreign policy approach as one of "warfare and diplomacy, realism and opportunism, energy and arrogance, imagination and even fantasy" and compared it to the likes of Palmerston, Bismarck, and Napoleon III. What is notable about Schwarzenberg's foreign policy approach is that the contrast in approach to Metternich presents Metternich more clearly as having had a foreign policy that was more consistent with liberalism (that is, in Metternich's case, multilateralism, compromise, respect for other states interests, and peace) than with realism. Therefore, despite his conservative, anti-liberal views on how states ought to be run, Metternich's foreign policy positions can, overall, be considered liberal.

3.7 The Prussians

The Great Power that arguably produced the most realist statesman of the 19th century was Prussia. Ruling Prussia from 1797 to 1840 was King Frederick William III. He was a conservative figure in his domestic politics and had a foreign policy that switched between neutrality and interventionism before 1815. As has already been discussed, in 1815 Prussia took the opportunity to secure territorial advantages by aligning itself with Tsar Alexander (Richards, 1967; Schroeder, 1992). One of the apparent liberal actions taken by Prussia during this period was trade liberalisation that began in 1818 with the removal of internal trade barriers between Prussian states (Richards, 1967). In the form of a Customs Union known as the Zollverein, Prussia extended its free trade area to include most German states by 1844 (Richards, 1967). However, these actions were not so liberal. To achieve this Zollverein, Prussia imposed crushing tariffs on German states that refused to join (Richards, 1967). That the Zollverein was inspired by liberal idealism is also questionable as it expanded Prussian influence in Germany to the detriment of Austria (Richards, 1967; Rock, 1975). These actions arguably upset both the balance of power and equilibrium in Central Europe. This strongly suggests that Prussia was systematically undermining the status quo that the Concert rested upon. When Frederick William III died in 1840 and was succeeded by Frederick William IV, the changes of note came in domestic policy (Richards, 1967), not foreign policy. However, the softer, more humanitarian domestic policy of Frederick William IV contributed, alongside numerous other factors, to the revolutions of 1848 which ultimately toppled Metternich and brought Schwarzenberg to power in Austria (Richards, 1967). However, it must be said that Prussia played a considerably reduced role in the Concert compared to other powers (at least in terms of actions of interest to this analysis). Prussia, even when a treaty signatory, played a muted role in issues such as the Greek Question and the Crimean War (Albrecht-Carré, 1967).

Prussia's significance in this analysis stands primarily in the figure of Otto von Bismarck. Bismarck's actions provide a significant contribution to understanding the system that existed prior to his arrival. Bismarck was the ultimate realist with his foreign policy being defined by *realpolitik* and *machtspolitik*. His views on the Concert values of moderation, legitimacy, and multilateralism could not have been more realist. In fact, it would not be a stretch to argue that the actions of Bismarck both upended the status quo of the Concert and set Europe on the path to World War I. Duroselle et al., (2023) argued that Bismarck, with his *realpolitik*, undermined the European balance of power (or equilibrium as Schroeder (1992) would say), and had

considerable disdain for the idea of “Europe” and international law. The evidence for this is overwhelming. For example, Bismarck's statements that “I base my conduct with other governments solely on the good or the harm that I judge them able to do to Prussia” and “Austria and Prussia are states too big to be bound by the text of a treaty. They can be guided only by their own interest and convenience” (Duroselle et al., 2023, pg. 445). If a treaty stands in the way, then it must be broken could not be a better demonstration of his realism. Furthermore, to make Talleyrand role in his grave, Bismarck stated that “the importance of a state is measured by the number of its soldiers... it is the destiny of the weak to be devoured by the strong” (Duroselle et al., 2023). In all the research for this analysis, there appears to have been no greater endorsement of ‘might makes right’ during the Concert. It is in his militarism that his *realpolitik* became *machtpolitik*.

Accompanying these views arose a jingoistic Prussia that built an empire on the wreckage of Concert multilateralism and compromise. Bismarck managed to isolate his neighbours and defeated Austria in the Austro-Prussia War and then France under Napoleon III in the Franco-Prussian War (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968). This is the fatal role played by Napoleon III previously mentioned. The Concert did not intervene decisively against Bismarck as he threw out the status quo. This is best explained by realist theory as “buck passing” (Measheimer, 2014, p. 289-293). That is, no power wanted to take on the challenge and thus passed responsibility onto other states (Measheimer, 2014). Thus, the German Empire was established, setting up a new balance of power in Central Europe which marked a considerable shift for the Concert system. To fully explore this is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, Albrecht-Carrie (1968) argued that the Franco-Prussian War was the most significant event in the international relations of the 19th century. Duroselle et al. (2023, p. 445) argued that, due to these events, the notion of Europe that was present in 1815 and the early days of the Concert was “destined to disappear”. This is evidenced by Bismarck's remarks on Europe. He stated that “I have always heard the word ‘Europe’ from the mouths of statesmen who wish to obtain from a foreign power something which they would not risk requesting for themselves” (Duroselle et al., 2023, p. 445). When a British Ambassador to Berlin said to Bismarck that Europe would not tolerate his actions, Bismarck responded by saying “who is Europe?” (Duroselle et al., 2023, p. 446). Such an attitude broke the rhetorical norms of the period of the Concert where Europe was frequently mentioned as the justification for Concert action and the primary obligation of the Great Powers.

Further evidence of this Concert transformation are the views that were held by those at the time. Duroselle et al. (2023, p. 446) quoted the Oxford Professor Max Mueller as saying “we live like beasts of prey in prehistoric times. What will become of Europe when no state feels secure unless it has more cannons than its neighbour”. Such a statement is evidence that prioritising legitimacy (in the form of security for states) as a pillar of European international relations in the Concert had been thoroughly diminished. It was no longer legitimacy that kept a government in power or a state secure, but hard power. That in turn is further evidence that Schroeder (1992) was right in claiming it was not a balance of hard power that held the Concert together, but a political equilibrium based on legitimacy and state sovereignty (at least for the Great Powers). To tie everything together is a quote from Queen Victoria. Writing to Kaiser Wilhelm I she said, “I have until now regarded Prussia as one of the great Powers which... have been the guarantors of treaties, the guardians of civilisation, the defenders of the law, and the veritable arbiters of Nations... If you, dear Sir and Brother, abdicate from these obligations, you will also have abdicated from this position for Prussia. And if such an example were to find imitators, then the civilisation of Europe would be delivered to the hazards of the storm” (Duroselle et al., 2023, p. 446). What Victoria was saying here was that Prussia was upending the status quo order of state cooperation and international law (or “public law” to use the language of the Concert) that had bound Europe together (notably a confluence of liberal concepts). Prussia was thus abandoning Europe to anarchy.

Evidently, after the Crimean War, Europe shifted towards a more realist constellation. The liberal elements described in the paragraphs above were diminished. From that point on, a realist analysis best applies to and describes European international relations. Bismarck, recognising the consequences of his actions, feared French retribution as France “contested the annexation” of Alsace-Lorraine for over 40 years (Duroselle et al., 2023, p. 448). A biographer of Bismarck, according to Duroselle et al. (2023, p. 449), Erich Eyck, wrote that “the annexations... made impossible a real and lasting peace between Germany and France. Bismarck’s sleep was haunted by the nightmare of coalitions against Germany. The whole European continent became an armed camp”. Bismarck then concluded an alliance with Austria-Hungary (formerly Austria or the Austrian Empire) which pushed France and Russia, and Britain and Russia, into an alliance (Duroselle et al., 2023). By the early 1900’s Russia, France, and Great Britain were allied against Germany in the Triple Entente (Mearsheimer, 2014). Realist theory would, accurately, describe

this response as a traditional balancing coalition (Mearsheimer, 2014). Such a coalition was designed to counter German hard power. By 1914, that series of actions and reactions, armament and counter armament, alliance and counter alliance had created an environment ripe for a crisis to spiral into war. There is much debate about when the Concert came to an end. However, it did not continue after 1914.

3.8 Conclusion

The actions and beliefs of Concert actors provide an additional layer to understand the functioning of liberalism in the Concert alongside the rhetorical analysis in Chapter Two. Some Concert actors were both staunch conservatives regarding domestic politics but advocates for a more compromising, pacifist (liberal) foreign policy. Others were more liberal domestically with deep liberal sympathies, such as Napoleon III, but were willing to pursue opportunism in spite of Concert principles. There were also those who were blatant realists such as Bismarck. Overall, however, there was still a strong pattern of liberal behaviour and intent that is mostly consistent with the rhetorical analysis in Chapter Two. Most of the Concert principles of rhetoric identified in Chapter Two, were confirmed as important in Chapter Three. However, some, such as rights within states, Free Trade and Navigation, and to some extent Collective Security proved to be less prominent. Also consistent with Chapter Two is the decline of liberalism over the course of the Concert with a notable shift in the lead up to the Crimean War, with that trend toward illiberalism continuing post-Crimean War. To conclude, Chapter Three broadly confirms the findings of Chapter Two; liberalism played an important role in the Concert.

4. Chapter Four

Liberalism and the Concert: The Balance of Power

4.1 Introduction

With a thorough analysis of the liberal rhetoric, actions, and beliefs of the most liberal Concert period concluded, it is necessary to now analyse the most realist part of the Concert: the balance of power. Mearsheimer (2014) provided an excellent realist analysis of the Concert after the Crimean War and especially that of the rise of Germany. However, Mearsheimer (2014) had little to say about the Concert prior to the Crimean War. In fact, all Mearsheimer (2014) had to say about the Concert prior to the Crimean War was that “Europe was relatively peaceful for almost forty years after the Napoleonic Wars ended in 1815. In fact, no war was fought between any of the great powers until the Crimean War started in 1853” (Mearsheimer, 2014, p. 288). Evidently, Mearsheimer’s (2014) theory of offensive realism does not explain the events of that period. However, Rendall (2006) posited that defensive realism, not offensive realism, best explains the events between 1815 to 1853. Rendall (2006) argued that the Great Powers from 1815 to 1853 were not aggressive actors interested in regional hegemony to secure themselves. They were instead defensive realists focused on cautious action and occasionally opportunism to ensure their security (Rendall, 2006). Ultimately, Rendall (2006) argued that the balance of power played a major role in this behaviour and prevented the collapse of the Concert. To demonstrate this, Rendall (2006) analysed the impact of the balance of power on the Polish-Saxon crisis, the Greek Question, the Belgian Crisis, and the Syrian Crisis.

4.2 The Polish-Saxon Crisis

Rendall’s (2006) analysis of the Polish-Saxon crisis is the least compelling example of how the balance of power protected/upheld the Concert. Rendall’s (2006) case for the balance of power being a factor in the resolution of the crisis rested on the idea that when Russia and Prussia attempted to push their agenda, and even threatened war in doing so, it was a balancing coalition of Austria, France, and Great Britain that forced Russia and Prussia to compromise. However,

Schroeder (1992) had, as has been previously outlined, made the argument that it was the issue of legitimacy and not of the balance of power that had prevented war. Rendall (2006) recognised that the evidence for this position is not strong and subsequently, having referenced Schroeder (1992), downplayed the significance of the balance of power. There were several reasons for Rendall's (2006) caution. First, neither Austria, nor Great Britain, nor France were confident of their position to fight a war against Prussia and Russia (Rendall, 2006). Metternich recognised that there was little Austria could do to dislodge the Prussians from Saxony if they were to invade (Rendall, 2006). It may have had to fight alone initially while unprepared French and reluctant British forces prepared for war (Rendall, 2006). Furthermore, the Russian's appeared to be very confident of their ability to defeat their opponents with one Russian general stating that Russia had an "inestimable advantage, unique today in Europe" and that Russia "is the power that should least fear the resumption of hostilities" (Rendall, 2006, p. 530). The balance of power was likely on Russia's side, a point that Rendall (2006) conceded. Furthermore, Schroeder (1992) made the case that Austria had initially attempted to resolve the issue through the balance of power by attempting to bring Prussia on side. Yet, Russia won the balance of power by enticing Prussian support itself (Schroeder, 1992). Therefore, Schroeder (1992) argued, Austria attempted a diplomatic compromise with Prussia and Russia. A compromise was ultimately reached that allowed Russia to keep most of its Polish territory and Prussia only received some of Saxony (Schroeder, 1992; Rendall, 2006). This scenario appears to demonstrate that Austria abandoned balance of power tactics and thus the balance of power was not a deciding factor in restraining Russia.

However, Schroeder (1992), whilst having explained why the attempt to balance Russia with Prussia did not work, did not fully explain why it was not the balancing coalition of France, Britain, and Austria that lead Russia and Prussia to agree to a compromise, albeit a one sided one. After all, while the balance of power may have been in Russia's favour, it is plausible that the balance of power was not so severely in Moscow's favour that the balancing coalition was still enough of a threat to prevent Russia from pushing for greater concessions. One answer to this is that Russia was content with the territory that it had. Indeed, the primary Russian goal was likely to secure the territory it had acquired during the Napoleonic Wars (Rendall, 2006). However, that still does not answer the question as to why Russia did not attempt regional hegemony as offensive realism would suggest. The answer to this is that the threat of war with

Austria, France, and Great Britain likely did deter Russia but not due to the balance of power. Rendall (2006), attempting to present this period as evidence of defensive realism and against offensive realism, provided evidence that it was Tsar Alexander's commitment to the ideals of the Concert that restrained him. Alexander had reportedly said that "I could certainly decide the affair, as did Napoleon, by dispatching 500,000 men; but as I am not here for war, but consolidating the tranquility of Europe, I am abandoning my demands" (Rendall, 2006, p. 529). That Alexander was concerned for the tranquility of Europe is consistent with his prior enthusiasm for setting up the Concert before the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Going to war over this crisis would not have been consistent with the "dream of perpetual peace" and a "general pacification" (Albrecht-Carrie, 1963, pg. 27). Evidently, the likely explanation is that Alexander did not want to upend the system that he had, with such enthusiasm, only just helped to establish when he had already achieved considerable concessions. While this crisis shows mixed motives from Alexander, something that has already been demonstrated, it also shows that it was likely not balance of power concerns that resolved the crisis.

4.3 The Greek Question

To further counter Mearsheimer's (2014) offensive realist claims, Rendall (2006) argued that, during the Greek revolution, Russia could have taken considerable advantage of the Ottoman Empire but continued to be conservative in its approach. In fact, Russia could have taken Constantinople (Istanbul) three times but did not (Rendall, 2006). In assessing the role of the balance of power in the decision not to take Constantinople or substantial Ottoman territory, Rendall (2006, p. 530) described the balance of power as a "sufficient" but not "necessary" explanation. However, when the revolution first broke out in 1821, Alexander could have easily intervened and defeated the Ottoman Empire (Rendall, 2006). As the protector of Orthodox Christianity, he certainly had a claim, or even an obligation, to intervene. Rendall (2006) accounted that there were no plans for a coalition against Russian intervention, but Alexander may have feared one anyway. Therefore, Rendall (2006, p. 531) stated, "balance of power considerations thus may - or may not - be sufficient to explain Russian restraint". Rendall's (2006, p. 531) alternative explanation was that Metternich "succeeded in grouping Alexander. Opposition to revolution and commitment to the Concert of Europe were at least as important as fear of Western balancing in holding the tsar back". This claim is consistent with the evidence

that Tsar Alexander had been persuaded to Metternich's view to the point of saying "To-day I deplore all that I said and did between 1815 and 1818" (Richards, 1967, p. 126). Albrecht-Carrie (1968, p. 103) held the view that Metternich had specifically convinced Alexander that, despite Alexander's "sympathies and Russian interest... the Sultan was the legitimate ruler in Greece". Rendall (2006) also had very strong evidence for that case. In 1826, Tsar Nicholas received an internal report stating that Alexander didn't invade the Ottoman Empire because of the "'fear of altering the nature of his relations with the leading European powers, the danger of thus weakening the guarantees of general peace', the fear of assisting the revolutionaries, and the hope of gaining allied cooperation" (Rendall, 2006, p. 531).

That it was his commitment to the Concert that restrained the Tsar is also consistent with the rhetoric of the documents from the crisis signed by the Great Powers. For example, the Great Powers presented the goal of their cooperation on the crisis as being "to fulfill an imperious humanitarian duty by putting an end to the disturbance which have ravaged these unhappy lands and restore to commerce and navigation the security which they had lost... to safeguard Europe... to safeguard peace... and finally to consolidate the very existence of the Ottoman Empire" (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, 121-122). It was also consistent with the Great Powers commitment to "seek no augmentation of territory, no exclusive influence, no commercial advantage for their subjects, which those of every other nation may not equally obtain" (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 141-142). Had Alexander I used the opportunity to seize Ottoman territory or even Constantinople, it would have very clearly rendered such rhetoric as being only rhetoric. Given that he did not pursue an opportunistic policy, and his commitment to the Concert was confirmed, the rhetoric in the documents of the time carry considerably more legitimacy for this analysis than they otherwise would have.

However, after these events, in 1829, Russia had another opportunity to seize Constantinople during the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-1829 (Rendall, 2006). By this point, Tsar Nicholas had come to power. Here the evidence for balance of power concerns restraining Russia presented by Rendall (2006) are stronger. Russia had the ability to take Constantinople and neither France nor Great Britain were inclined to intervene militarily (although they protested any advance on the city) (Rendall, 2006). Despite this, the Russians settled for securing autonomy for Wallachia and Moldavia (with Russian garrisons) (Rendall, 2006) and signed the Treaty of Adrianople on 14

September 1829 (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968). The Russians did not take Constantinople or Ottoman territory for themselves. Rendall (2006) argued that the reason for Russian restraint was twofold. First the Russian's felt that further territorial expansion into Ottoman territory was not in their security interests (Rendall, 2006). Instead, they believed that they were better served by expanding Russian influence into neighbouring states (Rendall, 2006). The evidence provided by Rendall (2006) for this was that Russian Minister Dmitrii Dashkov had explicitly made that exact point to a "committee of Near Eastern policy" (Rendall, 2006, p. 532). Secondly, Russian officials may have feared that the collapse of the Ottoman Empire may have opened a power vacuum allowing for a more powerful neighbour to arise and, in the long run, lead to a balancing coalition against Russia (Rendall, 2006). The evidence for this was stronger. According to Rendall (2006, p. 532) Russian Foreign Minister Nesselrode wrote in an internal memorandum that "however resigned and powerless they may be at the present moment... we should soon see combinations rising against us whose consequences would inevitably kindle a general war in Europe". Such a statement was consistent with both a realist focus on the balance of hard power and the more liberal emphasis on the European equilibrium as both concepts rest on the idea that upsetting their balance (of power and/or equilibrium) would lead to war (with the Napoleonic Wars being the primary precedent). However, Nesselrode's reference to "combinations rising against us" (Rendall, 2006, p. 532) does imply that they were concerned about a balancing coalition which is certainly more consistent with a realist interpretation of the balance of power.

Rendall's (2006) explanation suggests that Russian involvement in the Russo-Turkish war that ended in 1829 and its restraint in its goals was motivated out of Russian (defensive realist) self-interest. Such behaviour would not contradict the realist perspective of Tsar Nicholas. However, Albrecht-Carrie (1968) presented an alternative explanation. That the Russo-Turkish War was not endorsed by the other Great Powers was undisputed by Albrecht-Carrie (1968) who recognised that the war "strained the continuing agreement among the three powers" (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 113). Contextualising this strain demonstrates the role of realist balance of power theory in this instance. According to Richards (1967), the British in particular, but also Austria, feared a weakened Ottoman Empire. However, the Great Powers were becoming frustrated with Ottoman refusal to grant concessions to the Greeks which led to a series of incidents between the Great Powers and the Ottoman Empire (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, pp. 111-114). The first incident was the Navarino Incident in which a Great Power Fleet (comprised of

French, British, and Russian ships) destroyed the Turko-Egyptian Fleet in 1827 (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968). This led to a good example of Great Power unity during the Greek Question as when the Ottoman Foreign Minister Effendi asked why the Great Power representatives had all arrived together when he had summoned them individually, they responded by saying “because the recent event at Navarino has reference to the Greek Question, in which the three Allied Powers make common cause” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 112). The second incident was a French expedition in Morea to force the withdrawal of Egyptian forces (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968). While the Russian military intervention was more unilateral, the French intervention had “at least a partial European mandate” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 114). This is important as it may explain Article X in the Treaty of Adrianople (the peace treaty that concluded the Russo-Turkish War) which suggested an attempt to pull the Ottoman Empire into alignment with the Concert (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, p. 114):

“Article X. In declaring its entire adhesion to the stipulations of the Treaty concluded at London of the 24th June... 1827 between Russia, Great Britain, and France, the Sublime Porte equally accedes to the Act entered into on the 10th... of March, 1829, with common consent, between those same Powers upon the bases of the said Treaty, and containing the arrangements of details relating to its definitive execution.”

Evidently, while Russia’s war in the Balkans was unilateral, it was fought within the context of Great Power pressure on the Ottoman Empire and its conclusion in the Treaty of Adrianople, pressured the Ottoman Empire to accept a solution to the Greek Question in union with the Concert and the will of the Great Powers. Russia was careful not to damage Great Power unity during the crisis. Therefore, the realist nature of the Russo-Turkish War is not a clear ‘black and white’ example and may even be considered a demonstration of Russia’s commitment to some liberal aspects of the Concert (such as multilateralism). Nonetheless, Russia’s unilateral invasion of the Ottoman Balkans, and subsequent garrisoning of the region, suggests a level of opportunism from Russia, despite attempts to align said opportunism with some liberal elements of the Concert. Furthermore, it is likely that the balance of power also weighed on the minds of Russian decision makers (Rendall, 2006). Therefore, while the example of the Russo-Turkish War suggests that liberalism exerted influence on Russian foreign policy in that period, the balance of power and defensive realism demonstrate considerable explanatory power.

4.4 The Belgian Crisis

In 1830, the Belgians revolted against Dutch rule and were supported by France in seeking independence (Richards, 1967). Rendall (2006) argued that, due to the ideological and personal interests of Tsar Nicholas, Russia was preparing to intervene unilaterally on behalf of the Netherlands. One of these reasons, consistent with the views of both Tsar Alexander (in his later years) and Metternich, was to suppress a revolt against a legitimate government (Rendall, 2006). However, Russia did not intervene. Rendall (2006, p. 535) explored the extent to which the balance of power may have influenced that decision suggesting that had Poland not revolted against the Tsar, he would have, and supposedly said he would have, intervened “unilaterally” against the Belgians. However, the Russians made repeated suggestions that they would not intervene unless they had the full support of all other Great Powers (Rendall, 2006). Ultimately, no other Great Power was prepared to intervene at least partially due to fear of French intervention on behalf of the Belgians (Rendall, 2006). Rendall (2006) then suggested that at least some of the Great Powers, particularly Prussia, were fearful that they could not defeat France in a war. While Rendall (2006) didn’t explicitly suggest this to be the case, the implication of this is that the belief that the balance of power was in France’s favour was one of the reasons that there was no intervention on behalf of the Netherlands. However, such an argument would be hard to justify. Should all the Great Powers have agreed to intervene on behalf of the Netherlands, even if it meant war with France, the balance of power would have been in their favour. Therefore, it is more likely that the reason for non-intervention was that there was no desire for war regardless of the balance of power, especially in the case of the pacifist Frederick Wilhem III (Rendall, 2006) and Louis-Philippe (Duroselle et al., 2023), and that the Great Powers were still committed to the multilateral crisis management of the Concert. That commitment was evident in the London Conference of 1930 (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968), its subsequent enforcement, and personal beliefs of some of the actors. With that commitment, the Great Powers likely desired an outcome with full Great Power consensus, consistent with the Concert principles of multilateral diplomacy and compromise. Indeed, they proceeded to do exactly that through the London Conference of 1830 (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968). Such an interpretation is consistent with the prior explored liberal rhetoric of documentation pertaining to the crisis which was some of the most liberal rhetoric in official diplomatic documents of the

Concert. Therefore, the Belgian Crisis instead serves as an excellent example of the liberal elements of the Concert in practice.

4.5 The Syrian Crisis

The next Russian intervention in the Ottoman Empire came in 1833 in response to the viceroy of Egypt, Mehmet Ali, invading Ottoman Syria in 1831 and threatening Constantinople (Rendall, 2006; Richards, 1967). Russian forces successfully limited Egyptian gains but in return, Russia secured a defensive alliance out of the Ottomans (Rendall, 2006; Richards, 1967). The details of this alliance, beyond a defense commitment, were that in exchange for Russia withdrawing from the Balkans, the Ottoman Empire would close the Dardanelle Straits to warships and Russia received territory in the Caucasus (Rendall, 2006; Richards, 1967). Rendall (2006) argued that that was a scenario in which Russia could have pushed for further concessions from the Ottoman Empire but was again constrained by the fear of a balancing coalition. Once again, it was Nesselrode that expressed Russian concerns about the balance of power (Rendall, 2006, p. 533):

“From the beginning... we have established the principle of appearing in the theatre of events solely as the Porte’s auxiliaries and at the formal demand of the Sultan. By this we have legitimated our action, and disarmed Europe... But from the moment we changed our system and acted... not in favour of, but despite the Porte, we should be sure to unite all the powers against us, and from that time on our role would become difficult to maintain, unless we decided to devote all our resources to it [unclear word or words] plunge Russia into a general war. This is surely not the will of the Emperor.”

Nesselrode’s consistent concern for the balance of power suggests that it did play a role in influencing Russian actions. Alongside Nesselrode, the Russian General Paskevich expressed similar concerns (Rendall, 2006). English concerns about Russia’s actions provide further evidence that the Russians had at least some reason to worry about a balancing coalition (Richards, 1967). However, Rendall (2006) did recognise that another reason for Russian restraint was that Tsar Nicholas was not interested in securing considerable territorial gains. He had even gone so far as to question what value the “conquest of Turkey” would provide for Russia, saying that “Poland is enough for me” (Rendall, 2006, p. 534). Richards (1967) offered insights into why Nicholas held that view explaining that Nicholas believed that Russia was

better off maintaining the Ottoman State (albeit a weakened one) than strengthening Ottoman adversaries. Whilst that was a different balance of power concern than that of Nesselrode, who was concerned about a balancing coalition of the Great Powers, it was still a balance of power concern due to the prior mentioned fear of a power vacuum allowing for a stronger regional rival. The only way in which Russia's intervention on the side of the Ottomans and the subsequent alliance could be considered an act of liberalism is if it was motivated by concerns for the principle of preserving (Ottoman) sovereignty. Such concern would be consistent with the rhetoric in official documents that has already been analysed and showed great concern for Ottoman sovereignty. However, the only evidence that Russia was motivated by such liberal principles in that instance is that Russia had signed documents emphasizing Ottoman sovereignty outlined in Chapter Two (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968). Instead, the bulk of the evidence suggests that the balance of power was the primary constraint on Russian actions.

In 1839, Mehemet Ali's desire for Ottoman territory ultimately developed into the Syrian Crisis as he again invaded Ottoman territory (Richards, 1967). In 1840, all the Great Powers (excluding France) demanded Ali withdraw his forces (Rendall, 2006). The French government, instead, supported Ali (Richards, 1967; Albrecht-Carrie, 1968; Rendall, 2006). As a result, a rupture developed in the Concert (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968). However, France ultimately did not intervene despite aggressive rhetoric and an arms buildup (Rendall, 2006). Rendall (2006, p. 537) claimed that "this decision was clearly dictated by the balance of power". The evidence Rendall (2006) provided was that the French knew that the balance of power was weighted heavily against them and that they were unprepared for war. Rendall (2006, p. 537) quoted Thiers as saying, "we did not want war... we did not aim at it, and among a thousand reasons, one was decisive: France was not ready, and could not be for eight to nine months". However, there exists considerable evidence that the balance of power was not the decisive factor in France backing down. Firstly, as Rendall (2006) recognised, French King Louis Philippe was vehemently and principally opposed to war. Public pressure to go to war was something he had resisted before. His opposition to war went so far as to fire Thiers, replace him with Guizot, and firmly commit France to the Concert. Thus, even if the balance of power had been in France's favour, it is unlikely that Louis-Philippe would have agreed to go to war with Great Britain and Russia (and/or Austria and Prussia). Beyond his opposition to war, Louis-Philippe's government, upon hiring Guizot, was very pro-Concert, pro-multilateralism, and even pacifist. The only times that

Louis-Philippe had utilised French forces against a foreign state with the endorsement of the Great Powers and consistent with the Concert. Therefore, the Syrian Crisis is not a compelling example of the balance of power impacting the Concert.

4.6 Conclusion

Rendall's (2006) case for defensive realism provided some good examples of the role of the balance of power in the Concert. However, it failed to demonstrate that the balance of power was the predominant variable in a series of the Concert's most significant challenges. This analysis of Rendall's (2006) case demonstrates that the balance of power was not a decisive factor in the Concert, but it was still important in some cases. In particular, the balance of power was important in restraining Russian expansion but ultimately failed to prevent the Crimean War. This chapter, by demonstrating the limited role of the balance of power, supports the case that the Concert was influenced by liberalism.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The extent to which liberalism influenced the Concert of Europe is best seen through both the underlying principles according to which the Concert operated and how they played out in practice. There are many fundamental principles upon which the Concert was founded that are consistent with both the liberal internationalism of the 20th and 21st centuries as well as the proto-liberalism of the 17th through to the 19th centuries. These include emphasis on multilateral diplomacy, compromise, peace, respect for international rules and norms, collective interests and security, the concept of a European community, free trade and navigation, and the moral convictions underlying these principles.

5.2 Rhetoric

Those principles were prominently displayed in the rhetoric of official documents and treaties to varying degrees. The most common liberal rhetoric used referred to multilateralism and collectivity (whether in reference to ‘Europe’ or the Great Powers). The rhetoric of morality and free trade and navigation was used less often and less consistently. For example, it was primarily used during crises, such as the Belgian Crisis and the Greek Question, which occurred in areas where considerable trade was practiced. Notably, liberal rhetoric was most evident in the documentation surrounding the Belgian Crisis and the Greek Question. This explains why the liberal concepts of morality, free trade, and navigation were more commonly expressed during those periods, but were not emphasised during other crises. Even when there was less consistent liberal rhetoric, such as during the crisis around the Crimean War, that rhetoric made a strong return in the 1856 Treaty of Paris which was an attempt to renew the rhetorical norms that had existed during the Belgian Crisis. Furthermore, throughout the rhetorical analysis, clear balance of power rhetoric was rare (although it grew in frequency over time). Therefore, Schroeder’s (1989; 1992) analysis of Concert rhetoric is reaffirmed by this analysis. Reading that documentation, it is difficult to imagine the Concert being anything other than liberal unless the rhetoric was dramatically removed from the practice of managing these crises.

The liberal rhetoric continued into the Syrian Crisis and the Crimean War. However, by the Crimean War, there was a reduction in the use of liberal concepts and principles or shifts in the way they were used. For example, during the Syrian Crisis, moral rhetoric was used considerably less than during the Belgian Crisis and the Greek Question. The most notable instance of moral rhetoric being used was in French attempts to justify their break from the Concert. Such an attempt to use Concert moralistic rhetoric, consistent with the norms of Concert rhetoric, to legitimise their break was consistent with the typically pro-Concert, pro-diplomacy foreign policy of Louis-Philippe. That the French used such language to justify their break suggests that Concert rhetorical norms were still in place. However, the reduced use of moralistic rhetoric, combined with France's break from the Concert, and use of such rhetoric to legitimise that break, suggests a weakening of those rhetorical norms. During the Crimean War, moralising rhetoric was more common from all powers than it was during the Syrian Crisis. However, like the Syrian Crisis, much of the moralising rhetoric still came from one Great Power. In that case, Russia had broken from the Concert by threatening, and then starting, a war against the Ottoman Empire. In his letter to Great Britain, Nesselrode used primarily moral rhetoric to justify Russia's aggression in a possible attempt to legitimise Russia's actions within the context of the Concert. The Crimean War was a definite breakdown of the Concert that both undermined the Concert by breaking the norms of multilateral diplomacy (as a form of crisis management). The use of such moral rhetoric by Nesselrode continued the apparent trend of diminishing the value of that rhetoric as a tool of the Concert and its norms. That is evident when comparing the use of moral rhetoric by France during the Syrian Crisis and Nesselrode around the Crimean War to its use by the Great Powers during the Belgian Crisis. Alongside those reductions/changes in liberal rhetoric, there was also a slight increase in balance of power rhetoric which serves as further evidence that the rhetorical norms of the Concert had shifted because of both events. Liberal rhetoric in the Concert did change and was reduced over time. That it did so is an affirmation of its liberalism to begin with.

5.3 Actors

Interpreting the motivations and principles behind Concert actors is more complicated. The actors that pushed for the more liberal elements of the Concert were at the same time firmly anti-liberal domestically. For example, Metternich can be credited with having been an ardent

defender of the liberal elements of the Concert such as multilateral diplomacy, compromise, legitimacy, rules and norms; he was also vehemently anti-liberalism as a form of home governance. He strongly supported autocratic monarchy and strongly opposed domestic liberalism and nationalism (Richards, 1967). While that did become a part of his foreign policy in the form of his opposition to liberal and nationalist revolts overseas, opposition at an international level ultimately fit neatly into his care for legitimacy and state sovereignty. Of course, Metternich also had some care for the balance of hard power, especially in Germany (Duroselle et al., 2023, p. 419), yet his foreign policy netted a primarily liberal approach (even if he would have scoffed at the term liberal). Metternich was just one example of an extremely complicated set of actors whose ideas and actions are not consistent with a liberal-realist binary one learns in modern textbooks. Many actors, such as Alexander I, Napoleon III, and Canning demonstrated the ability to be realists and disregard some of the Concert's liberal principles and yet they were also capable of recognising their importance and submitting to them. Alexander and Canning were both illiberal at times. Alexander, however, was ultimately committed to the liberal values of the Concert while Canning, who was extremely skeptical and even dismissive of the Concert, still did not fully withdraw Great Britain from it. Napoleon III had many liberal inclinations. He loved congresses and the idea of a European community (Duroselle et al., 2023). Yet, he often could not resist his realist instincts which led him to opportunism and military intervention. Then there were the blatantly realist actors such as Bismarck and Schwarzenberg. Both actors entered the Concert either just before or after the Crimean War. Their foreign policies served as an excellent contrast to the likes of Metternich or Castlereagh. Overall, the Concert actors before the Crimean War (the case could be made that 1848, a year that brought Napoleon III and Schwarzenberg to power, is a better inflection point (Lemke, 2019)), had foreign policies aligned with the liberal principles and rhetoric of the Concert. However, that alignment was imperfect and diminished over time. Given this, there is no room for a definitive statement that 'the concert actors were liberal and firmly aligned with their liberal rhetoric, therefore the Concert was liberal'. In fact, the Concert actors demonstrate that liberal rhetoric was an expression of the ideals of the Concert and not a perfect reflection of how the Concert played out, even if they acted mostly consistent with those ideals until the Crimean War.

That the rhetoric of the Concert was very liberal and many actors were roughly aligned with that rhetoric suggests that the extent to which liberalism influenced the Concert was at least

moderate, with liberal ideas being clearly important to the Concert. However, they do not demonstrate that the Concert itself, as it operated, was more liberal than it was realist. Neither do they demonstrate that the Concert could not have operated without liberalism. Yet, that can be demonstrated by the impact the actors had on the stability and success of the Concert. What this analysis has shown is that the actors that pursued a foreign policy consistent with the liberal principles and rhetoric of the Concert, were instrumental in the Concert's success. Meanwhile, those who pursued a realist foreign policy put the entire system in danger. For example, when Alexander I attempted to push his advantage after the Napoleonic Wars, he started the Polish-Saxon Crisis which threatened to bring a swift end to the new order. Yet, when he reneged on seeking individual advantage for Russia and acted in concert with and respected the legitimacy and security of the other Great Powers, the Concert was stable. Another example is that of Louis-Philippe whose reign was one where France was an asset to the Concert's success, especially during the Belgian Crisis. The one major exception this is that of the Syrian Crisis where France pursued realist opportunism and abandoned the Concert but quickly came back in line in recognition of the importance of a unified Concert.

Nicholas I and Nesselrode, who initially were respectful of the Concert's restraints, began to increasingly behave unilaterally and aggressively, and were increasingly only constrained by the balance of power. The culmination of that trend was the Crimean War that brought an end to decades of peace between the Great Powers and coincided with the prior mentioned decline in liberal rhetoric. Napoleon III joined with Britain to defend the Ottoman Empire but used the opportunity to attempt to exact territory from Russia. After the first war of his reign (the Crimean War) Napoleon III warred against Italy and entered the Franco-Prussian War (Duroselle et al., 2023), resulting in a French defeat, the success of Bismarck, and the decline of Concert liberalism. That record leaves little doubt that the Concert's success depended on liberalism, and that realism, by preventing the practice of liberal principles, prevented the Concert from successfully defending peace in Europe.

Another important takeaway from the Concert actors, but also Concert rhetoric, is that DPT had no role to play in the success of the Concert. None of the state actors of the Concert were liberal democracies. Instead, they were absolute monarchies (Prussia), empires (Russia, Austria, France), republics (France), and constitutional monarchies (United Kingdom, France) (Richards,

1967). Therefore, there was no democratic peace to speak of. Instead, there was an autocratic peace of sorts. Thus, a major part of liberal internationalism was completely absent from the Concert. This may be a reason to consider it less liberal than it otherwise would be. However, given its position in time between the proto-liberals of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries and the liberal internationalists of the 20th and 21st centuries, the extent to which it was influenced by liberalism should not be diminished much by this.

It is also important to recognise that the role of free trade and navigation as a liberal principle of the Concert was limited. Often, when free trade and navigation were prioritised by the Great Powers, they were not being used to advance a liberal agenda. For example, both Prussia and Austria took advantage of customs unions (free trade zones) to advance their political interests of unifying or vassalising smaller German states under them (Richards, 1967; Rock, 1975). However, free trade and navigation were still important to some actors for its own sake. For example, Napoleon III was genuinely supportive of the liberal idea of free trade and navigation and was determined to see it spread across Europe (Duroselle et al., 2023). That free trade was also important to the Great Powers in treaties resolving the Belgian Crisis and the Greek Question are also important. However, neither of these examples demonstrates that free trade and free navigation was a principle that, when implemented, had the effect of creating peace through economic interdependence. Further research needs to be conducted to better determine if that effect was present during the Concert.

Henry Kissinger (1956) recognised that individual actors played an important role in the success of the Concert. That is an assertion that this thesis has demonstrated to be true; individual leaders and their varying ideologies and beliefs (and diplomatic skill) had a drastic impact on the Concert. This is evidence for the liberal idea that leaders can have significant influence on international politics in ways that contradict the realist assertion that individuals largely do not matter and that, instead, underlying structural constraints and incentives play a predominant role.

Finally, there were no international institutions or international law akin to that of the 20th or 21st century of relevance to the Concert. However, the system of congresses and conferences and treaties was analogous to an international law for the European states of the time. They themselves described it as “public law” (Albrecht-Carrie, 1968, pp. 28, 186). Evidently, the

extent to which the Concert was liberal is less than the liberal systems of the 20th and 21st centuries.

5.4 The Balance of Power

However, that does not mean that realism was completely absent from the Concert as one realist principle had a definite place in the success of the Concert: the balance of power. From the clear role of the balance of power in certain crises or the weight placed on it by actors such as Nesselrode, the importance of the balance of power should not be dismissed.

There were certainly instances in which the balance of power protected the Concert. For example, the Russian incursions into the Ottoman Empire were certainly constrained by considerations of the balance of power. Had France been led by a leader more realist and militarist than Louis-Philippe during the Syrian Crisis, the balance of power would likely have been the primary restraint on France. Furthermore, there were actors who themselves recognised the balance of power as being important to the Concert. For example, Metternich recognised that Prussia and Austria were an important check on the hard power of France and Russia.

Nesselrode, likewise, recognised that the balance of power, and the risk of a balancing coalition, was crucial in restraining Russian territorial expansion. However, even the balance of power depended to some extent on liberalism as if a state like Russia were to require a balancing coalition, said coalition would require cooperation from the other Great Powers and not opportunism such as that displayed by Prussia during the Polish-Saxon Crisis. Furthermore, a balancing coalition, while undeniably consistent with a realist interpretation of balance of power politics, could also be viewed as an act of collective security. Within the context of the Concert, such an interpretation is consistent with the rhetoric of collective security seen in Chapter Two. This would also be in line with Rendall's (2007, p. 271) analysis of the Belgian Crisis as a "qualified success for collective security". Evidently, balancing coalitions, while still more realist, can fit within a liberal interpretation of the Concert.

While some of the examples presented by Rendall (2006) are very good demonstrations of the balance of power having influence events in the Concert (the Russo-Turkish War, the Syrian Crisis (before 1839)), many examples also left considerable room for interpretation or were better examples of the explanatory power of liberal theory and not the balance of power (the Belgian Crisis, the Polish-Saxon Crisis, the Syrian Crisis (from 1839)). That liberalism was so

pervasive in the Concert was accepted by Rendall (2006). In fact, the reason that Rendall (2006, p. 523) argued that defensive realism had such explanatory power regarding the Concert was that it “combines structural realism with non-realist theories of state preferences”. He (2006, p. 524) recognised liberalism specifically as being important to an analysis of the concert as “defensive realism gains its explanatory power by smuggling liberalism in through the back door” (this is another example of the Concert breaking the liberal-realist binary and allowing important ideas from both theories to coexist within a single system). Evidently, while it had its place, the balance of power was not the primary function by which the Concert operated, nor the primary reason for its initial success.

5.5 Implications

Liberalism’s considerable influence on the Concert has several implications for contemporary international relations. The most important of these is that a multipolar liberal order is possible that provides global stability and, for the most part, promotes peace. However, to work, said system requires Great Power cooperation and enforcement that begins with multilateral diplomacy and a willingness to compromise. In theory, focusing on a political equilibrium could be the basis for compromise between contemporary Great Powers. The Great Powers of the Concert certainly set a precedent for a peaceful and cooperative multipolar order (Schulz, 2018). Furthermore, a general balance of power is important. However, the use of power politics, even within the context of the balance of power, can shatter norms and eliminate diplomatic taboos in ways potentially fatal to the political equilibrium thereby setting up bloc confrontation and an end to Great Power cooperation.

There are also implications for how liberal theory is interpreted. The Concert demonstrated that a relatively liberal system can operate even in a system dominated by illiberal, autocratic states. Therefore, the assumptions of DPT may not be a necessary condition for a world order with liberal characteristics. However, the opposite could also be true. Had the Great Powers all been liberal democracies, perhaps the success of the Concert would have lasted beyond the 1850’s.

One final implication is that, alongside power politics, nationalism is a political force that can dramatically alter, and even end, liberal international systems. In the case of the Concert, Bismarck’s Germany was a nationalist state that demonstrated this point by eroding norms and reshaping both the political equilibrium and balance of power to destabilise the Concert in ways

that it never recovered from. This is a lesson that has been verified time and again by historical events such as Nazi German conquests through to contemporary developments such as Putin's Russia (Shuhe, 2022) and aspects of the Trump administration's foreign policy (Snyder, 2024), and advocacy of nationalist populism (Peters, 2020), in the United States. These are the primary implications of this research. To be fully understood, they require further research beyond this thesis.

5.6 Conclusion

The Concert of Europe, throughout some periods of its existence, operated as if it was a liberal order. It was established on several ideals, from multilateral diplomacy to opposition to power politics, that were more consistent with the liberal theory of international relations than the realist one. Liberalism was so fundamental to the successful operation of the Concert that realist actions often threatened to undermine or end it. There was a limited but important role for realist balance of power politics in the Concert. Yet, it was political equilibrium that held more sway over the Concert and its actors. However, such analysis is largely only applicable to the Concert until the Crimean War. Toward the second half of the 19th century, the liberalism of the Concert was overtaken by the growth of realist power politics. Great Power rivalries led to the breakdown of the Concert in the middle of the 19th century and a definite end to it in 1914. That being said, the first half of the Concert, can be described as nothing less than the success of the Concert at its most liberal and thus a resounding success and a demonstration of liberalism as an effective doctrine of foreign policy, of Great Power cooperation, and of crisis management. Therefore, it can be concluded that liberalism was fundamental and critical to the success and functioning of the Concert, thereby influencing the Concert of Europe to a very significant extent.

6. Bibliography

Abendshein, B. (1999). *The machtpolitik doctrine from antiquity to present* (thesis). Western Michigan University.

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi%3Farticle%3D6052%26context%3Dmasters_theses&ved=2ahUKEwifjX477OQAxWPzjgGHb-TFtYQFnoECBgQAQ&usg=AOvVaw34iNgrneKtKC6XTmt2kEYN

ADANIR, F. (2005). Turkey's entry into the Concert of Europe. *European Review (Chichester, England)*, 13(3), 395–417. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1062798705000530>

Albrecht-Carrie, R. (1968). *The concert of Europe*. Macmillan.

ASEAN. (2024). *ASEAN Member States*. Asean.org. <https://asean.org/member-states/>

Bandow, D. (2021). *Napoleon's Death at 200: How Should Murderous Dictators Be Remembered?* Cato.org. <https://www.cato.org/commentary/napoleons-death-200-how-should-murderous-dictators-be-remembered#>

Broers, M. (2023). *Napoleon - The Decline and Fall of an Empire: 1811-1821*. Pegasus Books.

Concert of Europe. (2012). In *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Diplomacy*.

Cross, A. (2006). The Crimean War and the Caricature War. *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 84(3), 460–480. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4214321>

Duroselle, J.-B., Mayne, R., Delouche, F., & Teasdale, A. (2023). Europe: The history of a continent. Michael Joseph.

Elrod, R. B. (1976). The Concert of Europe: A Fresh Look at an International System. *World Politics*, 28(2), 159–174. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2009888>

George Hamilton Gordon Earl of Aberdeen. History of George Hamilton Gordon Earl of Aberdeen - GOV.UK. (n.d.). <https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/george-hamilton-gordon-earl-of-aberdeen>

Goodlad, G. (2008). FROM CASTLEREAGH TO CANNING: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY. *History Review (Bedford, England)*, 62, 10.

Henderson, G. B. (1938). HISTORICAL REVISION: LXXXIV.—The Foreign Policy of Lord Palmerston. *History*, 22(88), 335–344. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24401363>

Humphreys, A. R. C. (2014). In *Realpolitik* (p. 1). essay, Wiley-Blackwell.

IKENBERRY, G. J. (2020a). Liberal Democracy and International Relations. In *A World Safe for Democracy: Liberal Internationalism and the Crises of Global Order* (pp. 26–65). Yale University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv15pjxns.6>

IKENBERRY, G. J. (2020b). The Nineteenth-Century Origins of Internationalism. In *A World Safe for Democracy: Liberal Internationalism and the Crises of Global Order* (pp. 66–99). Yale University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv15pjxns.7>

Jaeger, M. (2025). Democratic peace theory. In *Why democracies stick together: The theory and empirics behind alliance formation* (pp. 3–4). Atlantic Council.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep68475.5>

Kant, I., Smith, M. C., & Latta, R. (2016). *Perpetual peace*. Perpetual Peace, by Immanuel Kant-A Project Gutenberg eBook. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/50922/50922-h/50922-h.htm>

Kissinger, H. A. (1956). The Congress of Vienna: A Reappraisal. *World Politics*, 8(2), 264–280.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2008974>

Lindley, D. (2021). The Concert of Europe: Forum Diplomacy and Crisis Management. In *Promoting Peace with Information* (pp. 55-). Princeton University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv18zhdj0.7>

Lemke, T. (2019). Limits of cooperation: The German Confederation and Austro-Prussian rivalry after 1815. In *The Two Worlds of Nineteenth Century International Relations* (1st ed., pp. 60–79). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315180557-4>

Locke, J., Berkeley, G., Hume, D., & Adler, M. J. (1952). *Great books of the western world: Locke, Berkeley, Hume* (Vol. 35.). Encyclopædia Britannica.

Martin, K. (1963). *French liberal thought in the eighteenth century*. Harper and Row.

Mearsheimer, J. J. (2014). *The tragedy of great power politics* (Updated edition.). W.W. Norton & Company.

Morgenthau, H. J. (1949). *Politics Among Nations the Struggle for Power and Peace*. Alfred A. Knopf.
<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=http://slantchev.ucsd.edu/courses/ps240/04%2520Conflict%2520with%2520States%2520as%2520Unitary%2520Ac>

[tors/Morgenthau%2520-%2520Politics%2520among%2520nations%2520\(selected%2520chapters\).pdf&ved=2ahUKEwi1haPH7K-QAxWRaPUHHfAyEVEQFnoECBAQAQ&usg=AOvVaw3SZHUnIhv0GUc_g_asY3Js](https://www.jstor.org/stable/24401449)

Nelson, C. E. (2023). Fears of Revolution and International Cooperation: The Concert of Europe and the Transformation of European Politics. *Security Studies*, 32(2), 338–370. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2023.2200202>

Nelson, C. E. (2022). Liberal Revolutions and the Concert of Europe. In *Revolutionary Contagion and International Politics*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197601921.003.0004>

Paine, T., Hook, S., & Fruchtman, J. (2003). *COMMON SENSE, RIGHTS OF MAN, AND OTHER ESSENTIAL WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE*. Signet Classics.

Parry, E. J. (1938). A REVIEW OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN GUIZOT AND LORD ABERDEEN, 1840–52. *History*, 23(89), 25–36. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24401449>

POPESCU, I. (2025). International Relations Theories and Great Power Politics. In *No Peer Rivals: American Grand Strategy in the Era of Great Power Competition* (pp. 11–40). University of Michigan Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.12393858.5>

Peters, M. (2020). Trump’s nationalism, “the end of globalism”, and “the age of patriotism”: “the future does not belong to globalists. The future belongs to patriots.” *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 52(13), 1341–1346. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2019.1678447>

RENDALL, M. (2006). Defensive realism and the Concert of Europe. *Review of International Studies*, 32(3), 523–540. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210506007145>

Rendall, M. (2007). A Qualified Success for Collective Security: The Concert of Europe and the Belgian Crisis, 1831. *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 18(2), 271–295.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09592290701322358>

Rock, K. W. (1975). Felix Schwarzenberg, military diplomat. *Austrian History Yearbook*, 11, 85-100. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0067237800015320>

Rousseau, J. J., Secondat, C., & Montesquieu, B. (1952). *Great books of the western world: Montesquieu, Rousseau* (Vol. 38). Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Schroeder, P. (1975). THE “BALANCE OF POWER” SYSTEM IN EUROPE, 1815-1871. *Naval War College Review*, 27(5), 18–31. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44641576>

Schroeder, P. W. (1989). The Nineteenth Century System: Balance of Power or Political Equilibrium? *Review of International Studies*, 15(2), 135–153.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20097176>

Schroeder, P. W. (1992). Did the Vienna Settlement Rest on a Balance of Power? *The American Historical Review*, 97(3), 683–706. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2164774>

Schulz, M. (2018). The Concert of Europe and international security governance: How did it operate, what did it accomplish, what were its shortcomings, what can we learn? In *Great Power Multilateralism and the Prevention of War* (1st ed., pp. 26–45). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315206790-2>

Shuhe, M. (2022). Putin’s Imperial Nationalism and Obsession with Ukraine. *Asia-Pacific Review*, 29(2), 56–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13439006.2022.2105527>

Smith, A. (1952). *Great books of the western world: Adam Smith* (Vol. 39.). Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Snyder, R. S. (2024). Realist or Just Anti-Liberal? Trump's Foreign Policy in Retrospect. *International Journal (Toronto)*, 79(1), 79–95. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00207020241234245>

The Emergence of Austria: Franz Grillparzer. (2012). In *The Historical Experience in German Drama* (pp. 99–123). Boydell and Brewer Limited.

The Fourteen points. National WWI Museum and Memorial. (n.d.).
<https://www.theworldwar.org/learn/peace/fourteen-points>

United Nations. (n.d.). *The covenant of the League of Nations*. The United Nations Office at Geneva. <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/about/league-of-nations/covenant>

Waltz, K. N. (2010). *Theory of international politics*. Waveland Press.

