Wellington and the Congress of Verona, 1822

IN 1917 I delivered a paper before the Royal Historical Society[1] on the position taken up by Wellington at the Congress of Verona. In that paper I put forward a theory which I thought likely to be true, because it was coherent and because it was the only way which I could discover of reconciling apparently hopeless contradictions. Very briefly that theory came to this, that Wellington fell so much under the influence of Metternich as practically to substitute an Austrian policy for a British policy at the congress, and that this assumption carries with it the inevitable corollary that the Congress of Verona cannot therefore be said to have opened up a new era in British foreign policy. Now there are undeniably certain facts with which this theory does not seem at first sight compatible; and within the narrow limits of that paper, I could not be expected to answer those obvious and formidable objections. What I shall attempt to do here is to show that these objections are not really inconsistent with the theory I have adopted, and that properly understood they may even support it.

Now the real difficulty of accepting that theory lies in this, that at first sight it seems impossible to reconcile it both with Wellington's three protests of 30 October, 19 November, and 20 November, and in a lesser degree perhaps with the repeated exhortations which he addressed to the French ministers as to the dangers to which France was exposed on the side of Spain from a military invasion of that country. These are the main objections, and no one who has studied the history of these times will be inclined to belittle them. I shall attempt to reconcile our theory with these discrepancies by showing first that the famous protest of 30 October was for all practical purposes withdrawn; secondly, that the protests of 19 and 20 November appear to have been written partly with the object of providing a substitute for the paper of 30 October, and partly with the intention of throwing dust in the eyes of parliament; and thirdly, that so far from doing all that in him lay to thwart the French in their

[1] *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th ser., i. 59–76, 1918.

design of invading Spain, Wellington may even have supplied them with a plan of campaign, placing at their disposal his unrivalled military talents, and his expert knowledge of that country which was the object of their joint deliberations. With the explanation then in our hands, let us examine these criticisms in their order.

1. Our first criticism was that the protest of 30 October was for all practical purposes withdrawn. This is by no means to say that the paper was actually withdrawn in the sense that the copies then in circulation were restored to their author. For if this were the case, we should be hard put to it to explain how it comes about that a copy has found its way into the French foreign office. All I mean to say is that from 30 October to 25 February this paper remained in what we may choose to call a state of suspended animation. Circumstances, and circumstances too of a kind which no one could possibly have foreseen, first made it possible and then made it necessary to include this paper among the official correspondence tabled in our houses of parliament. Now if we follow the history of Wellington's paper we shall see that it had a startling career before it. It was read twice before the conference, once on the night of 30 October, and once again at the first general conference of the 31st. It was so warmly resented at the time that it required all Metternich's skill to prevent a rupture then and there. During the next three weeks it was exposed to merciless criticism. But what is more to our purpose, it drew from Montmorency a reply. That reply was read to Wellington on 2 November ; a copy was handed to him on the 21st ; and on the 26th he transmitted a copy to Canning.[1] We are at once led to inquire why it was that Wellington had to wait three weeks before obtaining a copy of Montmorency's paper. If we confine our attention for a moment to the events of those three weeks, we may perhaps discover an answer to this question.

November 2 is an important date in the history of these negotiations, and that for three reasons. At the outset we have Montmorency's paper. This raises three questions : to whom it was largely due, for what purpose it was written, and, if there was any opposition to it, of what nature was that opposition. Happily we are able to give an answer to all three questions. Montmorency no doubt was highly exasperated at the character and tone of Wellington's paper, but it was Pozzo di Borgo who presented him with an unanswerable case for present action. That passionate but astute diplomatist was at pains to point out that France as well as Great Britain was governed by parliamentary forms, and that were the British note to come to the

[1] This is all the more curious because a copy was sent to Villèle on 5 November.

knowledge of parliament the reputation of France would suffer if she could not at once show that never for a moment had she admitted its application to the affairs of Spain. And there was so much reason and cogency in this argument that it was in vain that Metternich and Wellington, anxious above all things to preserve the unity of the alliance, urged Montmorency to abandon his intention. The French minister gave Wellington full and fair warning that if his paper of 30 October was inserted in the protocol, he must expect to find there the French reply. The date, 2 November, moreover, is important not merely because of Montmorency's paper, but because it was on that very day that Wellington first offered to withdraw his own.[1] He expressed his readiness to withdraw his paper if the other powers would withdraw theirs. The proposal was not accepted. It was vetoed by the Russians. Here again we have a pretty problem. Why did Nesselrode, Pozzo, and Tatistcheff veto this proposal? On *a priori* grounds, at any rate, it was to their interest to accept it. Of one thing we may be sure: it was not due to any change of opinion on their part. They disliked Wellington's note on 30 October, and they disliked it every bit as much on 2 November. The explanation seems to lie in their suspicion of Metternich. They had already begun to observe that close co-operation between Metternich and Wellington to which allusion has been made. They were aware of the change which had come over Wellington since Montmorency's paper of the 20th. They knew that both Montmorency and Wellington were anxious to return home as quickly as possible, that the congress had met five weeks late, and that, if the British offer were accepted, three weeks more of valuable time would have been spent in fruitless negotiation. Behind Wellington's proposal they appear to have seen the controlling brain of Metternich, and in the condition attaching to his proposal a clever move on the part of the Austrian chancellor to break up the congress before any decisions had been come to on the subject of Spain.[2]

Lastly, let us note the presence of Wellington. He is there on 2 November; we shall meet him again on 20 November. But in the interval if we search for his name in the roll-call of the conferences, we shall search in vain. How are we to explain his

Villèle, *Mémoires*, iii. 199. Montmorency's dispatch of 11 November: 'Vous avez vu cette dernière réponse à nos demandes, qui est si mauvaise et que le duc voudrait lui-même retirer.' See also Archives Nationales, France, Boislecomte 720; and Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, i. 488, Lord Londonderry's memorandum of 3 November. For Wellington's account of all this see his dispatch of 5 November, *ibid.* p. 492.

[2] Arch. Nat., Boislecomte 720. Cf. also Villèle, *Mémoires*, iii. 162. Montmorency's dispatch of 28 October and Lord Londonderry's memorandum no. 3 of 3 November (Wellington, *Suppl. Desp.* i. 486).

absence, and to what extent does he influence the collective decision from outside? To the first question Montmorency and Boislecomte provide the answer. They tell us that Wellington felt so much embarrassment at being continually obliged to protest against the proceedings of the allies that he determined to take no further part in their formal discussions.[1]

But if during these three weeks Wellington disappears from the conferences, his influence upon their deliberations is never more apparent. The other four powers, it is true, had made up their minds to act without him if they could not carry him with them, but they were not insensible to the disadvantage which any such course would entail. Wellington's protests had shown how hopeless was the task of attempting a reconciliation between his instructions and their intentions. On 30 October he had protested against any interference on the part of France. On 1 November he had protested against any interference on the part of the allies. He had in this way brought the proceedings of the congress to a standstill, and it became clear that unless the alliance were to split asunder, or unless the allies were prepared to abandon all hope of British co-operation, the continental powers would be compelled to introduce substantial modifications into their programme. Metternich was not the man to believe that the resources of diplomacy could ever be exhausted, and the tsar had a personal interest in the preservation of the alliance which he believed to be his own creation. Austria and Russia now begin to draw together, and they drew together upon the assumption that they need not yet despair of British co-operation, and that even if Great Britain was not of a mind to assist in the overthrow of the existing institutions in Spain, she might at any rate be brought to connive secretly at their fall.[2] All the powers

[1] Arch. Nat., France, Boislecomte 720: 'Ils s'abstinrent également par la suite de paraître aux réunions qui eurent lieu relativement aux affaires d'Espagne, ayant déclaré qu'ils ne pourraient s'y présenter que pour ajouter à leurs protestations précédentes des protestations nouvelles et plus formelles encore . . .'; also Villèle, *Mémoires*, iii. 179, 1904. In his dispatch of 5 November Montmorency wrote: 'Le duc de Wellington avait témoigné à plusieurs reprises aux chefs de cabinet l'embarras et le regret qu'il éprouvait d'être obligé, surtout dans les conférences générales, d'opposer à chaque instant une sorte de protestation ou de dénégation contre les principes énoncés par les Alliés.' Compare his dispatch of 19 November: 'Le tout vient d'être communiqué aujourd'hui dans une conversation confidentielle au duc de Wellington en l'absence duquel nous avions travaillé, comme je vous l'ai mandé, pour ménager son propre embarras' (Villèle, *Mémoires*, iii. 223). Wellington admitted his absence: 'The ministers of the four Powers have had two or three meetings, to consider of the terms of the communication to be made to Spain. . . . It is impossible for me to know all that passed at these meetings' (dispatch of 12 November, Wellington, *Suppl. Desp.* i. 532).

[2] Villèle, *Mémoires*, iii. 164–5, Montmorency's dispatch of 28 October: 'M. de Metternich persiste à espérer qu'on pourra l'amener, sinon à entrer dans les vues communes, du moins à marcher *à côté et jamais contre*.' Cf. Londonderry's memoranda, nos. 2, 3, and 4, of 2, 3, and 4 November (Wellington, *Suppl. Desp.* i. 485–7, 510).

were prepared to make large concessions if by doing so they could purchase the co-operation, secret or open, of Great Britain; and it was during these three weeks and in that hope that these concessions were made.[1] Their first task was to discover to what extent Great Britain was prepared to conform to the policy of the allies, and, if she was not able to support them in any way, whether she would remain neutral in the event of war. That was the secret which, as Wellington afterwards confessed, he carried with him to the congress,[2] and if Metternich tried to discover that secret, I am unable to believe that he who was so rarely baffled was baffled here. The evidence for the truths of history must often be accidental, and there is no sure and certain proof that Wellington gave that secret away. The only confident assertion we can make is this, that whether the allies were in possession of this piece of information or not they acted and wrote as if they were.[3]

[1] Villèle, *Mémoires*, iii. 180, 194, 202, 223, Montmorency's dispatches of 5, 9, 11, 19 November.

[2] Wellington's *Parliamentary Speeches*, i. 112, 1854. 'The Government, however, of which I had the honour of forming a part, determined on preserving a strict neutrality. My Lords, they sent me to Verona with instructions to that effect; and, in conformity with the spirit of these instructions, I entered upon the negotiations, the merits of which your Lordships are this evening assembled to discuss' (speech of 24 April 1823).

[3] According to Boislecomte, Wellington gave a very strong hint. He appeared to have suggested that in a Franco-Spanish war England would remain neutral for economic and domestic reasons. These probably were the true reasons. The transition from war to peace, always a critical period in the history of nations, had not been unaccompanied by disturbances, and those disturbances were accentuated by the fact that we had not yet had time to accommodate ourselves to the new economic conditions implied in the industrial revolution. 'Le Gouvernement français', says Boislecomte, winding up his argument, 'peut donc, en cas de guerre, compter sur l'appui moral et sur l'appui matériel de l'une de ses alliés, sur l'appui moral des deux autres et sur la neutralité du 4e.' The Villèle memoirs contain an account of an important conversation which took place between Montmorency and Alexander on 7 November. Alexander spoke of England with a frankness which seems to have astonished Montmorency, saying he was sure she would do nothing against them, but if her co-operation was desired the powers must show a united front (*Mémoires*, iii. 198). Perhaps also this belief in British neutrality will explain Lord Londonderry's bewilderment at the ineffectiveness of the British opposition (see his memoranda, nos. 2 and 3, Wellington, *Suppl. Desp.* i. 484–9). Anyway it seems to have persisted up to the close. On 20 November Montmorency wrote, '*Le plénipotentiaire anglais . . . n'a cependant* pu refuser son approbation à la marche qu'on a suivie et à la réserve dont chacun a fait usage. Nous devons donc croire que le Cabinet de Londres ne proclamera pas, dans cette circonstance, sa séparation des principes de l'Alliance. Il n'y a du moins pas à craindre de protestation de sa part contre ce qui a été résolu ici.' And again on the same date to Herman: 'L'Angleterre n'admet pas la chance de la guerre, de manière qu'elle ne nous a pas promis son secours; mais elle ne désapprouve rien de ce qui s'est fait; elle se borne à ne point y prendre part, et nous n'aurons probablement pas de protestation, comme elle en a fait à Laybach. Je crois qu'en résultat elle est un peu embarrassée d'une conduite qui la sépare de l'alliance, et qu'elle craindra de signaler cette séparation par des actes quelconques' (Arch. Nat., C. de Vérone 721). Boislecomte says that Wellington went even further than this: 'Le soir même de son départ le Prince de Metternich lui demanda si, à la place des Alliés, il eût tenu une

The new policy was tried. Its success was startling. The collapse of British diplomacy dates from now. On the 31st of October it was settled that the continental courts should each send a note to Madrid protesting in the most thorough fashion against the proceedings of the revolutionary party in Spain; on the 2nd of November it was arranged that the drafts of these notes should be submitted to Wellington, who would thereupon make known the intentions of his government;[1] and on the 4th it was decided to substitute dispatches in place of notes as affording greater facility for discussion and explanation. The drafts of these dispatches were shown to Wellington. Their severity was toned down so as to meet what were thought to be the requirements of Great Britain. He was not averse, so Wellington told the allies, to sending similar instructions to A'Court.[2] He holds out to Metternich golden hopes of British co-operation and expresses the wish to be back in London at the critical time so as to bring pressure to bear upon Canning.[3] So favourable indeed were his dispositions that Metternich even asked him to put them into writing.

As for the paper of 30 October,[4] Metternich told the conference

conduite différente de celle contre laquelle il avait protesté; il répondit: "que dans la situation des Alliés il eût agi comme eux et qu'il eût même été beaucoup plus loin"' (Arch. Nat., France, Boislecomte 720). In the postscript to an undated dispatch of Villèle's written early in November, he tells De la Garde that the gist of the Verona dispatches is that England will not oppose the allies. De la Garde acknowledged this dispatch on 14 November. But the news did not appear to surprise him, for previously on 30 October he had written that San Miguel, the Spanish minister for foreign affairs, was very much upset because of news from a Spanish agent who had had an interview with Wellington at Verona. This agent, whom De la Garde in his dispatch of 6 December says was excellently well instructed, reported that Wellington had told him that England would not come to the rescue of Spain (Arch. Nat., Espagne 717).

[1] Wellington, *Suppl. Desp.* i. 519, 'Memorandum to Sir Charles Stuart on the state of the Spanish Question' dated 12 November. Wellington gives the date of this arrangement as 1 November. It is immaterial.

[2] Arch. Nat., France, Boislecomte 720: 'Quelquefois Lord Wellington laissait entendre que désirant se séparer le moins possible de l'action des Alliés, il n'était pas éloigné d'envoyer lui-même des instructions analogues à M. A'Court.' In the conference of 19 November, 'Le Prince de Metternich annonça que Lord Wellington lui faisait espérer qu'il amènerait son gouvernement à transmettre à M. A'Court des instructions telles que l'envoyé Britannique à Madrid s'écartât le moins possible dans sa conduite et dans son langage du langage et de la conduite des ministres des 4 cours'.

[3] Arch. Nat., France, 721. Caraman to Montmorency, 27 November: 'Il (Wellington) sera 9 à 10 jours en route, quoiqu'il se dise très pressé, dans l'espoir d'arriver à tems pour concourir à la rédaction des instructions qui seront données au Chevalier A'Court. Il donne à son empressement les meilleures intentions et dit que c'est pour engager le Ministre Britannique à faire tout ce qui lui sera possible pour ne pas se trop séparer des Alliés.'

[4] Arch. Nat., France, Boislecomte 720: 'D'autrefois on mettait en avant qu'il n'était plus question que des instructions à envoyer, et l'on représentait l'émission de la note anglaise comme une circonstance déjà ancienne qu'il fallait oublier et sur laquelle il y avait mauvaise grâce à revenir.'

on the 17th of November that it was withdrawn. It was agreed that Wellington should be asked to inform Canning of this, so as to render its publication impossible.[1] This he seems very naturally to have declined to do, and the reason is not difficult to guess. That paper had already been sent to England, and a copy was even then in the possession of Canning.[2] The foreign minister of Great Britain looked upon this paper as a valuable contribution to British foreign policy, and would never, I fancy, have consented to its withdrawal. To have asked for such a thing would have been merely to have aroused his suspicion, and secrecy was of the very essence of this matter, both in its relation to Canning and in its relation to parliament. So wholesome a dread had Wellington of incurring parliamentary displeasure, that he insisted upon some alterations in the text of the French dispatch, and struck out those parts of it which might be construed as referring to Great Britain as well as to the rest of the allies. Moreover the resources of diplomacy are not easily exhausted. There are always ways and means, and ways and means were not wanting now. Let us hear what they were from Wellington himself. 'We then discussed the documents which should be framed; and it was settled that there should be no protocol, that everything that had passed should be confidential, and that nothing should be allowed to transpire.'[3] This agreement of course involves the exclusion of his paper of 30 October. But Montmorency was still uneasy. For it is not in the nature of statesmen to place too much confidence in the sincerity of their confederates. Wellington, it is true, had let it be known that he was willing to withdraw his paper, but that resolution had never been put into writing. In actual fact that paper was in existence still. And it was this consideration which induced Montmorency on leaving Verona to give Wellington a copy of what he had read over to him at the conference of 2 November. In handing him this copy, Montmorency made it clear that if ever the British note were made public, he reserved to himself the right of making public his reply. This measure on the part of Montmorency was purely a precaution. It was a preventive against a contingency which no one thought likely to occur. But in politics it is the

[1] Arch. Nat., France, Boislecomte 720: 'Le Prince de Metternich fit connaître que Lord Wellington avait consenti à retirer sa note. . . . Le C^te^ de la Ferronnays demanda que Lord Wellington fût invité par la conférence à informer officiellement son Gouvernement que, sur les représentations des Alliés, il avait retiré sa note et que l'on en prît acte pour éviter que par la suite cette même note ne vînt à être reproduite. Cette proposition fut accordée.'

[2] Wellington's paper was received in London on 14 November.

[3] Wellington, *Suppl. Desp.* i. 564. There were certain exceptions to this arrangement. These exceptions will be dealt with immediately. It appears that the idea of a protocol on Spanish affairs was only abandoned after consultation with Wellington (Arch. Nat., France, Vérone 723).

unexpected that happens. That document was among the papers tabled in our houses of parliament, and we are at once led to inquire how that came about.

The silence was broken by the indiscretion of Chateaubriand, who had succeeded Montmorency as French minister for foreign affairs. In his carefully elaborated oration of 25 February 1823 the foreign minister of France proceeded to quote a paragraph from Wellington's paper word for word.[1] From the moment of the delivery of this speech, the publication of the entire text of this document was inevitable. It became clear even to Wellington that it would have to be included among the official papers which the government were about to lay before parliament.[2] If Wellington was untrue to his colleague, of whose policy he disapproved, he had no wish to appear false to the foreign ministers at Verona. How greatly he was perturbed at the indiscretion of Chateaubriand is clear from three letters he addressed to Canning on the matter. These letters were written on 20, 21 March, and 5 April, and they show how anxious he was to clear himself of the imputation of bad faith.[3] 'I engaged', he tells us, 'that it should not be produced, and the government must either perform the engagement or disavow my right to make it', and

> I entreat you to write to the Allies before my paper of the 30th of October is laid before Parliament. It will never be believed that Government could have made this paper public notwithstanding Mons. de Chateaubriand's conduct in misquoting it, without making some communication to the allied courts, if what passed in conference on the 20th of November had been known.[4]

If there was any doubt in our minds as to the virtual withdrawal of this protest that doubt is dispelled by the perusal of these letters.

2. So much for Wellington's protest of 30 October. Two other protests remain, and they can be dealt with very briefly. On 19 November the continental powers concluded a secret treaty against the revolutionary government of Spain. The treaty was not signed before its contents had first been shown to Wellington.[5] This treaty, together with the formal organized

[1] Arch. Parl., 2e série, t. 38, p. 423. The passage complained of referred to Wellington's approval of the substitution of an army of observation for the sanitary cordon. Chateaubriand introduced the quotation as follows: 'Dans une note officielle de S. G. le duc de Wellington, présentée au Congrès de Vérone, se trouve ce passage, "En considérant qu'une guerre civile est allumée sur toute l'étendue des frontières",' &c.

[2] Wellington, *Suppl. Desp.* ii. 75: 'If you are determined to produce this paper, as I think you must,' &c.

[3] 1823; see *ibid.* ii. 72, 74, 87.

[4] It was not really a case of misquotation. What Chateaubriand did was to tear from its context one single paragraph, and thus create an entirely erroneous impression with reference to the whole.

[5] Wellington's *Suppl. Desp.* i. 563, Wellington's dispatch of 22 November.

intention of sending dispatches to Madrid, a measure which in itself was expected to lead up to the withdrawal of the allies' legations, were the two main contributions made by the Congress of Verona towards the solution of the Spanish problem. Wellington protested against both these contributions.[1] He refused to sign the treaty, arguing that it would merely endanger the lives of the Spanish royal family. He further stated that Great Britain could not concur in the policy of sending dispatches to Madrid, and that the exertions of his government must be limited to allaying the ferment which they were likely to produce. These protests filled the congress with dismay, for they were in fact a formal repudiation of all its transactions. And they occasioned the more surprise, because although Wellington did not assist at the conferences, he certainly made but little objection to what was done at them. Only quite recently he had promised to use all his influence to obtain some form of co-operation between the British minister at Madrid and the rest of his colleagues.[2] The thought of British isolation in Spain filled him, so he said, with dismay.[3] After such manifestations of sympathy and goodwill his protests of 19 and 20 November came as a painful surprise. And the allies were no less astonished at his explanation. 'For these protests', so Wellington told Metternich, 'were of no importance. He scarcely knew what was in them, and they had been suggested to him by others.'[4] This explanation appears to have been accepted. For it is a remarkable thing that these papers were allowed to pass unchallenged. Such was not the original intention. The allies told Wellington that they would reply to them,[5] but if these replies were written no record of them survives. And Boislecomte expressly states that they were never written. And if we would understand the reason let us glance for a moment at what took place on 20 November, at the final big conference on Spanish affairs. With a view to concealing the differences between

[1] Wellington protested at first verbally and then later in two official minutes, dated 19 and 20 November respectively.

[2] Arch. Nat., France, Boislecomte 720: 'Le duc de Wellington n'avait pas assisté aux dernières conférences lorsqu'on lui en avait communiqué confidentiellement le résultat, il avait promis de faire ses efforts pour que M. A'Court se rapprochât autant qu'il lui serait possible de la conduite des Ministres ses collègues à Madrid.' Cp. Villèle, *Mémoires*, iii. 223, Montmorency's dispatch of 19 November.

[3] Arch. Nat., France, Boislecomte 720: 'Lord Wellington disait au contraire "y avoir un état d'isolement dont il se sentait effrayé".'

[4] Arch. Nat., France, Boislecomte 720: 'On fut donc très surpris, après la manifestation de sentimens aussi conciliaux, de voir paraître deux pièces qui étaient une protestation formelle contre tout ce qui s'était fait au Congrès. On ne le fut pas moins d'apprendre l'explication qu'il en donna au Prince de Metternich: "que ces pièces n'étaient qu'un papier sans importance; qu'il savait à peine ce qu'il y avait dedans et que c'étaient ces Messieurs qui les lui avaient dictées."'

[5] Wellington, *Suppl Desp.* ii. 591, dispatch of 26 November.

Great Britain and the continental powers it was urged that, with the exception of the treaty, everything that had passed should be regarded as confidential and that nothing should be allowed to transpire. There was to be no protocol, but a simple memorandum embodying the acts of the congress and unsigned. Montmorency agreed in the hope that he would thus be able to shelve his parliamentary responsibilities, but Wellington, whose anxieties though similar in origin were different in kind, demurred on the ground that as the allies' dispatches would be certain to find their way into every newspaper in Europe, he must have something to show parliament on the part of his government. It was then agreed to allow the publication of these two papers if ever the treaty which was secret should become known, or the dispatches, as was only too probable, should reappear in the press.[1] The arrangement thus come to was this. Wellington's paper of 30 October, excluded from publication by the terms of this agreement, disappears; his protests of 19 and 20 November survive.[2] But how vast is the change! If any one will take the trouble to compare the paper of 30 October either with the paper of 19 November or with the paper of 20 November, he will discover for himself, far better than from any discourse of mine, how far along the allies' path Wellington has travelled in those three weeks; and only then will he be in a position to gauge the measure and extent of Metternich's triumph.

3. What is our final criticism? Our final criticism is this. Wellington's sense of reality, his profound knowledge of strategy, his no less profound knowledge of the internal resources and condition of Spain did not enable him to sustain the part of attempting to dissuade France from intervention on purely military grounds. Our evidence for this reposes mainly, though not exclusively, on Boislecomte. Boislecomte tells us how Wellington admitted the extreme facility of military operations, and how these operations became the subject of conversation after the circulation of Montmorency's paper of 20 October. As I have stated elsewhere, this paper was generally construed as an intimation that the French were preparing for war. Let us hear what Boislecomte has to say in his own words:

> On parlait alors de la probabilité de la guerre et que dans le cas où elle se ferait les Français se concentreraient d'avance jusqu'à l'Ebre; qu'ils donneraient ainsi un puissant encouragement aux Royalistes; que

[1] Wellington, *Suppl. Desp.* i. 564, dispatch of 22 November; also Villèle, *Mémoires*, iii. 227, Montmorency's dispatch of 19 November.

[2] This arrangement seems to have been kept. The dispatches found their way into the press, and Wellington's paper of 20 November appears among the parliamentary papers. His paper of the 19th does not appear. The existence of a secret treaty was suspected but not known.

ceux-ci assurés d'être soutenus se porteraient en avant ; que l'armée vivrait facilement dans ces provinces les plus fertiles de l'Espagne ; que de là elle pourrait également marcher sur Madrid, si le mouvement national Espagnol l'y portait, ou attendre des renforts et occuper la ligne des places frontières. Lord Wellington approuvait ce plan : ' Si Bonaparte ', disait-il, ' fût resté sur l'Ebre je n'eusse jamais pensé à l'y attaquer ; mais il a été répandre ses armées sur toute la surface de l'Espagne, en sorte qu'ayant à moi la population, je le ruinais partiellement et pouvais sur tous les points lui opposer des forces supérieures ; les Français ont d'ailleurs 45 vaisseaux de ligne ; ils peuvent en monter 25 et se porter où ils voudront.'

C'est ainsi que parlait le Ministre Anglais quand il ajoutait qu'il était impossible aux Espagnols d'opposer aucune résistance ; que rien ne pouvait empêcher 25,000 Français d'arriver à Madrid. Mais bientôt après il rentrait dans son rôle officiel, et annonçait qu'il ne suffirait pas de 100,000 hommes pour accomplir une telle entreprise, et que l'on s'exposerait en la tentant à des dangers terribles et certains.[1]

This is not all. ' Eh bien,' disait une autre fois Lord Wellington, ' j'admets que vous arriviez à Madrid. Deux bataillons vous y conduiraient. Mais que ferez-vous alors ? '[2]

Has Wellington anything to say on this matter ? Let us turn to his dispatch of 5 November. There we read as follows :

The Emperor of Russia is more than ever anxious for war, and I know that a few days ago he had not given up the notion of an operation by the Russian army, as he sent Count Lieven to me on Saturday to go through the whole question, with a view to the consideration and getting the better of its military difficulties.[3]

Lieven of course contributes some information, but without making a study of the Petrograd archives it is impossible to say what the precise value of his contribution is. We give the extracts as they stand :

L'Empereur fut très satisfait de la conduite du duc de Wellington au Congrès de Vérone, parce que la décision de cette assemblée par rapport à l'intervention de la France ' au nom de l'Europe ' dans les affaires intérieures de l'Espagne eut toutes les sympathies de ce plénipotentiaire. Le duc de Wellington communiqua au comte Lieven, sous le sceau du plus grand secret, un plan d'opérations militaires que l'armée française, selon lui, aurait dû adopter en Espagne. Il connaissait parfaitement ce pays et voici en quoi consistait son plan : les troupes françaises ne doivent pas s'arrêter devant les forteresses espagnoles et marcher directement sur Madrid, en se bornant à cerner les places fortes et à faire bloquer Cadix par une flotte française. Tous les efforts des Français doivent tendre à prendre possession au plus vite de la capitale espagnole et de prévenir la formation de détachements de guérillas.

Ce plan fut immédiatement communiqué par l'ambassadeur de Russie à St. Pétersbourg et, comme on le sait, c'est ce plan qui fut adopté par les

[1] Arch. Nat., France, Boislecomte 720. [2] *Ibid.*
[3] Wellington, *Suppl. Desp.* i. 494.

troupes françaises commandées par le duc d'Angoulême. Le duc de Wellington communiqua en outre au comte Lieven, en lui demandant le secret le plus absolu, les lettres du ministre d'Angleterre à Madrid, Lord FitzRoy Sommerset, qui faisaient la description de la situation intérieure de l'Espagne. (Rapports du comte Lieven du 13 (25) février et du 4 (16) mars 1823.)[1]

On the prospects of a French invasion of Spain, Wellington wrote, 'The Spanish bubble will burst and there will be no military resistance at all'. 'The French will be successful in their military operations as far as they can carry them.'[2] Two things at any rate seem clear. Conversations were held at Verona relating to French military operations in Spain, and Wellington joined in these conversations. It was natural for him to have done so. All of us delight in our profession and love to discuss our art. The blame does not lie with Wellington in yielding to an infirmity common to man, but with those who selected him for the work of the congress.

In anticipating and, as I hope, in helping to remove these objections, we have incidentally disclosed some of the grounds we have for supposing that Metternich's policy prevailed over Canning's at Verona. How indeed can we deny the collapse of British diplomacy and the accompanying French intervention in Spain in the spring of 1823? How get away from the knowledge that 'our protests were treated as waste paper' and 'our remonstrances mingled with the air'? And how can we explain these things in any other way? For there were only two obstacles in the way of a French invasion of Spain. The one obstacle was the uncertainty of military operations; the other obstacle was the fear of Great Britain. On both, Wellington seems to have reassured the allies. From the mouth of the greatest soldier in Europe, whose every syllable on military matters was worth its weight in gold, they seem to have been told of the easy campaign which lay before them; nor were they disposed to deny to Wellington in the inner circles at home the exercise of that imposing influence which he wielded abroad.

J. E. S. GREEN.

[1] Martens, *Traités conclus par la Russie*, xi. 395–6, 1895.

[2] Wellington, *Suppl. Desp.* ii. 64, 1867. Also *Suppl.* i. 521, 557, 563. See also certain passages in *Politique de la Restauration*, Brussels, 1853, containing the correspondence between Chateaubriand and Marcellus, the young French chargé d'affaires in London, e.g. letters of 3 May, 3 and 6 June 1823, pp. 129, 166, 169. *Les Tablettes Universelles*, no. 40, of 27 August 1823, rather supports Marcellus. The author, Guizot, asks if Canning was deceived at Vienna, Verona, and Paris.