

‘Our aim is the Rhine frontier’: the emergence of a French forward policy, 1815-1830

There is a traditional consensus, easily summarized, about the Bourbon restoration’s foreign policy. After the lenient provisions of the first treaty of Paris in 1814, the second treaty of Paris following the Hundred Days was significantly harsher, stripping France of border fortresses and territories and imposing on her both an army of occupation and a 700 million franc indemnity. This was compounded by the inglorious sight of Louis XVIII returning home ‘in the baggage wagons of the enemy.’ Over the next fifteen years the restored monarchy did little to recover France’s lost great-power status. The occasions on which it tried, such as the Spanish expedition of 1823, were mere nuances in its pacific foreign policy. For these reasons, the Bourbons were unable to shake off their association with defeat and national humiliation, which contributed to their overthrow in July 1830. In Robert Tombs’ pithy verdict: ‘Always there *faute de mieux*, tepidly welcomed because they seemed to offer peace and quiet, they could never provide a focus of loyalty for the post-revolutionary nation.’¹

This article argues that the restored monarchy’s foreign policy was distinctly less passive than usually thought, and that its will to revise the Vienna settlement has been significantly underestimated. Indeed, by its last years the régime had acquired an adventurist streak that might even have threatened the stability of Europe had the July revolution not intervened. The story of how this ‘alternative’ policy had become dominant by 1828 has rarely been studied in depth. Paul Schroeder acknowledges it in his seminal *The Transformation of European Politics*, but only in the course of one paragraph, and the most recent history of the régime, Francis Démier’s *La France de la restauration*, passes over it in a few lines. The one detailed account comes in a German monograph of 1963, Karl Hammer’s *Die Französische Diplomatie der Restauration und Deutschland 1814-1830*. This is informative and scrupulously researched, but focuses on only one aspect of France’s increasing assertiveness in the 1820s, its effect on her relations with the German

states.²

The process by which the Bourbon restoration moved from a cautious to a 'forward' foreign policy was complex and needs first to be understood chronologically; it developed alongside, and constantly interacted with, the diplomatic and military events of the 1820s. The transition from one policy to another was never wholly complete, so that tensions between both remained until the end of the régime. Nevertheless, two broad phases are discernible. In the first, running from 1815 to 1823, France sought to achieve her diplomatic aims strictly within the framework of the Vienna settlement. Then, over the next four years, this course came under increasing attack, but was vigorously defended by the prime minister Villèle until his fall in 1827 and the shift to a forward policy under the last two ministries of the restoration.

The first phase corresponds most closely to the received picture. However, it is difficult to see what other diplomatic options Louis XVIII and his ministers had at the time. They had to contend not only with the second treaty of Paris, but also with the wider problem posed by the Vienna settlement, one of whose aims was to limit and contain France. Partly this was done by tilting the European balance of power decisively against her. Austria became the dominant power in northern Italy, and Prussia was awarded the Rhineland. This ensured that any future French expansion across the Alps or the Rhine would be blocked. More vulnerable states on France's borders were also reinforced, with Holland gaining Belgium and Piedmont regaining Savoy. Two further factors added humiliation to defeat. The treaty of Paris was supplemented by the quadruple alliance between Russia, Britain, Austria and Prussia, signed on the same day and designed to keep France under close surveillance. For the French public, its most tangible, and much resented, manifestation was a twice-weekly conference of the alliance's ambassadors in Paris to monitor France's internal situation.³

The first aim of French statesmen after 1815 was naturally to extricate their country from what Emmanuel de Waresquiel and Benoît Yvert have aptly dubbed her ‘diplomatic purgatory.’⁴ This was achieved in the autumn of 1818 by the duc de Richelieu as foreign minister, who secured at the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle the end of the allied occupation of France, and the reduction and then the complete extinction of the war indemnity. Yet France’s reintegration into the international system was still fragile and ambiguous. Europe was still dominated by the Quadruple Alliance, and France’s diplomatic and military freedom of action remained distinctly circumscribed. When in 1820 and 1821 revolutions broke out in Italy, one of her traditional spheres of influence, the task of suppressing them was given not to her but to her old rival Austria.⁵ Richelieu retired from government, but after his departure French foreign policy became even more cautious. In the mid-1820s the dominant minister was Villèle, whose overriding concern was France’s financial stability and who once drily quipped: ‘Les écus n’aiment pas les coups de canon.’⁶

This situation began to change, however, with the successful French invasion of Spain in April 1823. On the surface, this was entirely consistent with existing restoration diplomacy: it was launched to uphold the Vienna settlement, by rescuing King Ferdinand VII from a popular revolution. In fact, the expedition proved a turning-point, and began the transition to a very different foreign policy. Above all, its success proved that, eight years after its spectacular defection to Napoleon during the Hundred Days, the French army was now a disciplined and effective instrument of the regime. On the eve of the invasion, this had not appeared self-evident, but as it turned out, the campaign was a military promenade. The army settled doubts about its loyalty by dispersing at the Bidassoa a small force of French republicans and Bonapartists who urged it to mutiny, and in the one serious battle of the war stormed the Spanish revolutionaries’ fortress of the Trocadero with exemplary élan. For the first time since 1815 the essential prerequisite of an active foreign policy, a reliable military force, was in place.⁷

The Spanish expedition also brought to the forefront of French politics the man who more than any other was to shape this forward policy, François-René, vicomte de Chateaubriand.⁸ There are few if any other examples in modern history of such an important intellectual and cultural figure also being a leading politician. As a great writer and poet, author of *Le Génie du Christianisme* and *René*, and one of the founders of European Romanticism, Chateaubriand remains a major figure in modern literature. Yet for most of the restoration he was also a front-rank political figure, as a peer of France, ambassador to Berlin, London and Rome, plenipotentiary to the congress of Verona and, in 1823-24, foreign minister.⁹ There is little doubt that his ambitions went further than this, and that his ultimate aim was to become prime minister. Had he managed to regain the foreign ministry in the late 1820s – and he made several efforts to do so – this would have made him the dominant figure in the government.

Chateaubriand also had a comprehensive, if grandiloquent, vision of the future of the restored monarchy both in domestic and foreign policy. He described it succinctly, with characteristic lack of modesty, in the *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*: ‘I was not insensible to the idea that I could give my country liberty at home and independence abroad.’¹⁰ Chateaubriand’s championship of ‘liberty’ was a major theme of his writings, and is well-known. It was expressed in his campaign for press freedom throughout the restoration and, in works like *De la monarchie selon la charte*, his advocacy of a representative monarchy as the best means of healing the wounds of the Revolution. In contrast, his key foreign policy objective, ‘independence’, is less familiar. This is partly because Chateaubriand the author has always eclipsed Chateaubriand the statesman, but also because its main aim appears overambitious and chimerical – the regaining of the ‘natural frontiers.’¹¹

This concept had a long history. Julius Caesar in his *Gallic Wars* had first stated that ancient Gaul had originally extended to the Rhine, the Alps, the Atlantic and the Pyrenees. The French state that had emerged by the seventeenth century was considerably smaller, and the extent to which Louis

XIV had dreamed of returning to them remains controversial. The Revolution, however, brought the 'natural frontiers' to the forefront of national rhetoric. Its most famous expression came in Danton's speech to the Convention of 31st January 1793: 'The limits of France are marked out by nature. We shall attain them at each of their four points: at the Ocean, the Rhine, the Alps and the Pyrenees.' After immense efforts these frontiers had been gained by 1801, then extended by Napoleon, before being swept away in his fall.¹²

In the era of the Vienna settlement, with its deep suspicion and careful quarantining of France, it seems extraordinary that any politician could have dreamed of extending her borders once more to the limits conquered by the Revolution. This is certainly the view of those historians who have mentioned it: Schroeder dismisses it as 'absurd more than dangerous', while for Jardin and Tudesq it was merely a 'mirage.'¹³ In fact, it was not quite as implausible as generally thought, particularly in the later 1820s. Its real attraction, however, was as much domestic as diplomatic. This lay in the support it was assumed to enjoy in public opinion. Regaining even part of the natural frontiers would enormously strengthen the régime by associating it with two of the most powerful legacies of the Revolution, territorial expansion and military glory. This, Chateaubriand and his followers were convinced, was the key to achieving their goal of a popular, patriotic monarchy restored to the ranks of the great powers.

Just how far the French public did support this policy is difficult to gauge. Public opinion had been recognized as a major political force since the late eighteenth century, but measuring and interpreting it was still in its infancy.¹⁴ Indeed, one aspect of the Bourbon restoration marked a step backwards from what progress had been made. The detailed monthly reports on 'esprit public' required from the prefects in each department at the end of the Napoleonic regime were mostly discontinued after 1814.¹⁵ Apart from for a few isolated years, this valuable source simply disappears from the archives after 1815 until its reappearance, significantly, under the second

empire.

However, the restoration does yield another source that Napoleonic censorship had previously made almost invisible – a relatively free press. The charter of 1814 guaranteed the French people liberty of expression ‘in conformity with the laws necessary to repress its abuses.’ In attempting to strike this balance, successive ministries passed a bewildering variety of laws, some of which temporarily re-established censorship. This was, however, a significant improvement on the stifling regulation that Napoleon had imposed. The last period of restoration censorship, introduced by the law of 16th August 1824, ended just six weeks later when Charles X restored press freedom on his accession to the throne.¹⁶ The years in which France shifted to a forward foreign policy also witnessed a dramatic revival of public debate and polemic.

At the forefront of this was the periodical press. This was mostly Paris-based, and since it functioned by individual subscription which was relatively expensive, its formal circulation probably did not exceed 60,000. However, it reached a much wider audience than this, via aristocratic salons, public reading rooms, or cafés. One Paris prefect of police estimated that a single copy of the popular liberal newspaper, *Le Constitutionnel*, was read by a hundred people.¹⁷ If this is correct, given that *Le Constitutionnel* had 16,250 official subscribers in 1824, then its real circulation was 160,000. Its main rival in terms of readership was the *Journal des débats*, with 13,000 subscribers. Founded in 1799 by the Bertin brothers and still owned by them in the 1820s, its political position oscillated between ultra and more measured royalism, and its most important contributor was Chateaubriand himself. Less powerful, but still influential, were the firmly ultra *La Quotidienne* with 5800 subscribers, the moderate royalist *Journal de Paris* with 4175, and the liberal *Courrier Français* and *Journal du Commerce* with 3,000 and 2380 apiece.¹⁸ Analysing opinion through the press can never be an exact science, but if one takes a cross-section through *Le Constitutionnel*, *Le Journal des débats* and *La Quotidienne*, the three major newspapers that

represented liberalism, moderate and ultra-royalism respectively, one gains some idea of what the French public thought about France's changing diplomatic direction after 1823.

This analysis supports the assumption that a forward foreign policy had popular appeal. Every time the possibility of France revising the Vienna settlement came before the public in this period, both the *Journal des débats* and *Le Constitutionnel* swung in support of it. The former's stance is hardly surprising, since Chateaubriand wrote many of its editorials, but *Le Constitutionnel* was if anything more vociferous, since the 'natural frontiers' formed part of the revolutionary legacy it upheld. Conversely, the ultra *La Quotidienne* condemned a forward policy and the 'natural frontiers', precisely because of their revolutionary associations. Yet compared with the *Journal des Débats* and *Le Constitutionnel*, which accounted for half of formal press circulation and were most diffused among the non-subscribing public, *La Quotidienne* was in a distinct minority.

The Spanish expedition was in large part an attempt to harness these forces and exploit them to improve the restoration's domestic standing. It is no coincidence that Chateaubriand, who became foreign minister just months before it was launched, was its chief promoter. As a journalist, he immediately grasped how the invasion could popularize the regime. It was, as he put it to Villèle, 'perhaps a unique occasion to restore France to the ranks of the military powers and to rehabilitate the white cockade through a short war that presents almost no dangers.' Once victory was gained, he stressed its internal benefits with his usual hyperbole: 'Twenty days of war have done more to strengthen the legitimate throne than eight years of peace.'¹⁹

Restoring some of France's prestige and proving the army's loyalty was just the first step in Chateaubriand's foreign policy; the next was to regain as much of the natural frontiers as possible. The success of the Spanish expedition proved to him that this was feasible. 'From then on', he recalled, 'in ministers' offices or in the field, we were in a position to revise, by negotiation or by

force, the odious Vienna settlement.’ At this stage, however, he was well aware of the need for caution: ‘This notion at the back of my mind, which I secretly cherished as a corollary of our success in Spain, I refrained from discussing with my colleagues except as a dream, a lament, a vague aspiration.’²⁰

The problem was that Chateaubriand’s days in government were numbered. Villèle had only reluctantly agreed to the invasion of Spain, and now feared that his foreign minister might become a rival for his job.²¹ The expedition’s success further inflated Chateaubriand’s habitual self-importance, making him an increasingly difficult colleague. By the summer of 1824 Villèle had decided to get rid of him, and his refusal to support a government bill for the conversion of annuities provided an excuse to do so. In fact, on this issue Chateaubriand’s political instinct was surer than Villèle’s, since the conversion, whose profits were earmarked for an eventual indemnity for the *émigrés*, was very unpopular with the public.²² On 6th June Chateaubriand received a particularly brutal letter of dismissal, and two hours later, in a fury, moved out of the foreign ministry. With his departure, the cause of a forward foreign policy lost its most prominent supporter in government, but it did not fade from the political scene. Another international issue had now arisen that, even more than the Spanish question, offered it a rallying-point: the Greek revolt.

Since 1821, the Greeks had been in rebellion against their Ottoman overlords.²³ The conflict was long-drawn out, bitter and extremely bloody. Both sides committed dreadful atrocities, but those carried out by the Turks received most publicity. The result was a strong philhellene movement in public opinion, based in part on concern for suffering fellow-Christians, and also on a Romantic sensibility that venerated the ancient Greeks and admired the heroism of their modern descendants. Largely thanks to Byron, the most famous examples of this philhellenism are British, but it was also very strong in France. The Greek struggle inspired Hugo, Vigny and Delacroix, while in 1825 Chateaubriand himself founded the most important French pro-Greek pressure group, the *Société*

philhellène, and in the same year provided it with a manifesto in the form of his *Note sur la Grèce*. The press also strongly supported the Greek cause; it has been calculated that in 1824, of the 60,000 French newspapers in circulation 40,000 belonged to the philhellene camp, and only 8,000 to their opponents'.²⁴ If the Greeks' war of independence could be made to serve a French forward policy, this clearly had support in the political nation.

Yet the key opportunity the Greek revolt offered this strategy lay not in the rising itself, but in its international repercussions. As the traditional protector of Orthodox Christians, Russia had an obvious excuse to intervene. She had a further pretext for hostilities against the Ottomans, since they had not fulfilled their obligations under the treaty of Bucharest, which had ended the last Russo-Turkish war in 1812. If Russia did go to war, this was bound to revive Catherine the Great's old project of partitioning the Ottoman empire. This prospect offered the best hope for a French forward policy. If France supported Russia's ambitions in the east, she could demand as a *quid pro quo* territorial gains in the west, preferably Belgium or the Rhineland. Alone, she had no hope of extending her borders; the Greek revolt, by tempting Russia to overturn the status quo in the Balkans, gave her a potential ally with an equal interest in dismantling the Vienna settlement.²⁵

At this stage, the idea was expressed only in hints and loose talk. On one occasion, however, it may have been explored at an international level. In *Le Congrès de Vérone*, his account of his mission in 1822 to the congress of Verona, Chateaubriand hints that by then Czar Alexander I had come to feel that France had been treated too harshly in 1815, and now supported rectifying this.²⁶ He gave no further details in his memoir, but may have done so elsewhere. Five years after Verona, *Le Constitutionnel* carried an editorial claiming that at the congress the Czar, increasingly tempted to use the Greek question as a *casus belli* with Turkey, had made a proposal to one of the French representatives there, who could only have been Chateaubriand. In exchange for France's armed neutrality while he went to war, Alexander had allegedly promised her 'future frontiers that would

make her one of the greatest and most influential powers in the world.²⁷ Yet Villèle, alarmed by such a bold idea, had ‘ruined the project.’ Clearly the story is second-hand, and Chateaubriand may well have embroidered it, but it probably reflects some of the notions circulating at the time.

Had Chateaubriand continued as foreign minister, these expansionist plans would no doubt have come to the fore, and shaped the second stage of his foreign policy. His abrupt dismissal, however, postponed them for almost four years. For Villèle, now in unrivalled charge of the ministry, the Greek question was an international crisis to be resolved rather than an opportunity to be exploited. In July 1827, his government signed the treaty of London committing Russia, Britain and France to impose Greek autonomy on the Turks by force if necessary. Three years after the Spanish expedition, France was appearing again on the world stage, but this time she was happy to be chaperoned. A French squadron formed part of the allied fleet that destroyed the Turks at Navarino the following October and sealed Greek independence, but a British admiral was in overall command, and apart from the Greeks the main beneficiary was Russia. Yet at this moment, unexpectedly, prospects for a forward foreign policy revived. Facing mounting domestic opposition, Villèle called a general election, lost his majority²⁸, and a change of ministry became inevitable.

The new government was formed in January 1828 and led by the comte de Martignac.²⁹ It is usually viewed simply as an interlude between the fall of Villèle and the July revolution, plagued by hesitations and contradictions in its domestic policy. This judgement can be questioned, and certainly does not apply to foreign affairs. Here, the ministry’s twenty months in office marked the apogee of France’s forward policy. Paradoxically, this did not involve Chateaubriand’s return to government. Even after his fall, Villèle still enjoyed credit with King Charles X, who had succeeded Louis XVIII in September 1824, and he used it to block his rival.³⁰ The new foreign minister was a respected career diplomat, the comte de la Ferronnays. Yet la Ferronnays was also a close friend of Chateaubriand (and a fellow native of St Malo), and strongly supported his scheme to revise the

Vienna settlement. Furthermore, he knew Russia well, having been ambassador to St Petersburg for seven years before entering the ministry. Accepting the gilded consolation prize of the Rome embassy, Chateaubriand wrote to him: 'I am only an ambassador because you are a minister',³¹ and from his Roman retreat exerted a powerful influence on the new government. The foreign ministry remained beyond Chateaubriand's reach, but he played a critical part in shaping its actions.

A further sign that France had changed diplomatic direction was the choice of la Ferronnays' replacement as French ambassador to Russia. The duc de Mortemart was the head of a leading noble family and a distinguished soldier, who had served Napoleon before rallying to the restored Bourbons. He was also a close friend of la Ferronnays, and strongly supported the plan of revising the Vienna settlement in partnership with Russia.³² His correspondence with la Ferronnays during his embassy, much of which remains unstudied, forms the most complete record of the efforts to implement a scheme, which its promoters, rightly or wrongly, felt to be on the brink of success in 1828 and 1829.

Mortemart's role in the project was crucial. As delicately as possible, he was to raise with the new Czar, Nicholas I, the eventuality of the collapse of the Ottoman empire, and assure Nicholas of full French support for whatever actions he took in response.³³ The subtext was obvious: France was offering Russia a free hand in the east, no doubt in exchange for territorial concessions in the west. Then, just as Mortemart was setting off on his mission, a major piece of news brought this prospect a long step closer. Citing Turkish violations of her treaty rights in the Balkans, Russia declared war on the Ottoman empire. Mortemart immediately altered his travel plans. Instead of proceeding directly to St Petersburg, he decided to head first to Bender in Bessarabia, where the Czar was marshalling his army for the coming campaign.³⁴

Mortemart had his first meeting with Nicholas I on 26th May 1828. Bizarrely but significantly, it

was as much about French public opinion as the progress of the war. The Czar said that he found this ‘detestable’; he had been reading the most recent French newspapers and been horrified by their seditious tone. ‘Does the king no longer rule?’, he asked rhetorically. Mortemart riposted that while Villèle had been unpopular, the new ministers were greatly respected: ‘Far from being concerned about public opinion in France, I am certain that right now, if his honour required it, the king could ask the chambers for a billion francs and 500,000 men, and that this would immediately be granted.’³⁵ The exchange reveals a great deal about each man’s conception of public opinion: for the reactionary Nicholas, it was indissolubly linked to revolution, while to the more pragmatic Mortemart, it could be tempted into government service.

A few weeks later Mortemart received his first despatch from la Ferronnays, dated 9th June. It enclosed a document on which the ministry was to build its hopes for over a year. This was a copy of another despatch, from the Russian foreign minister Nesselrode to his veteran ambassador in Paris Count Pozzo di Borgo, who had passed it on to la Ferronnays. In it, Nesselrode gave an assurance that if France supported Russia in her war against the Ottomans, she would receive her share of the spoils. ‘The more energy and activity France displays in the affairs of the Levant’, he wrote, ‘.....the more Russia will feel obliged to insist that she shares the fruits as well as the perils of her intervention.’ Nesselrode also hinted that his comments had the Czar’s blessing.³⁶

For la Ferronnays, the prize seemed tantalizingly within reach. At the same time, he was terrified it might be withdrawn if snatched at too quickly. He assumed that if the Ottoman empire were partitioned, Austria would be compensated with Serbia and Bosnia, and Britain with some Mediterranean islands. However, underlining just how thorny the issue of France extending her own borders was after 1815, Mortemart was to broach it with extreme caution. ‘In order for us to gauge what expectations we should form’, wrote la Ferronnays,

It would be useful to know the Russian cabinet’s thoughts, and I beg you, M le duc, to try and find these out. You realize of course that such a question must be approached with the utmost delicacy

and in the most profound secret. You should try to bring the conversation round to the subject naturally, and present the considerations to be discussed simply as the product of your own reflections.....³⁷

In the private letter which accompanied the despatch, la Ferronnays set out France's aims much more forthrightly. If the Ottoman empire survived, France would accept this as necessary for the peace of Europe, but if not, it would be intolerable if other powers benefited and she did not. In a remarkable outburst, revealing the deep sense of grievance French statesmen felt against the Vienna settlement, he even threatened war if France was excluded:

In that case the only solution would be a general congress in which Russia would undertake to support France's just and moderate claims. If things were otherwise, we would have no hesitation in resorting to other, much more dangerous, means We desire peace in good faith, we do not complain at the status quo, even though, relatively speaking, it is so unfair to us, but if the status quo is upended, *ventre saint gris!*³⁸ I swear by my beard that this will not go unpunished. We only need to press a button to conjure up legions of soldiers, and I assure you that, given the current mood in France, it would be best not to force us to use our new-found strength.³⁹

In the background of the despatch appeared a figure who was to play an increasing role in France's expansionist strategy – King Charles X himself. La Ferronnays made a point of telling Mortemart that Charles had been 'extremely touched' by Nesselrode's words about France sharing the fruits as well as the perils of her intervention in the Levant, which he assumed had been inspired by the Czar. The instructions to explore them further with both Nicholas and Nesselrode were presented as a direct order from the king. This would have come as no surprise to Mortemart. Charles was significantly less prudent – and intelligent – than Louis XVIII, and much more inclined to sabre-rattling diplomacy.⁴⁰ Now deeply devout after a libertine youth, he was much moved by the sufferings of his fellow-Christians in Greece, and as early as 1826 had hinted to the British foreign minister Canning that he was prepared to use force to help them.⁴¹ Partnership with Russia for territorial gain was as much the king's own policy as his ministers'.

By this time French public opinion had awoken to the opportunities offered by the Russo-Turkish war. On 29th July the *Journal des débats* published a long editorial on the subject. It was an

impassioned plea for France's natural frontiers, but artfully phrased to cause the least possible alarm to her neighbours. Advancing to the Rhine was presented not as an act of aggression, but as a basic French security need. Otherwise, Paris itself was vulnerable, as had been proved at the start of the revolutionary war when Austrian and Prussian forces had seriously threatened it:

To defend ourselves, we had to conquer. Victory led us to the summit of the Alps and the left bank of the Rhine, necessary barriers for resisting the enemy's attacks, and France's natural limits. This position held no menace for Europe, but simply assured our own security.⁴²

These conclusions, the article argued, still held good thirty years later, particularly if the Ottoman empire were indeed partitioned and other powers gained territories as a result. In that case, France should not be tempted by any exotic overseas possessions that might be dangled in front of her as her own share, but look to her own frontiers:

France seeks neither advantages nor compensations, either in the Peloponnese, or even in Egypt. If the balance of power is disturbed, her only means of assuring her defence and independence will be much closer to home, in the form of better and stronger frontiers.⁴³

Here was evidence that the ministry's forward policy did indeed chime with the public mood. Now all depended on Mortemart's skill in insinuating to the Czar, 'as the result of his own reflections', what would be the most helpful territorial reward for France endorsing the end of the Ottoman empire. Mortemart's next despatch set out, in considerable detail, how he intended to do this. As an ex-cavalry officer, his preference was to broach the subject with the Czar during a horseback ride: 'I will then be much more in my element, more informal and at ease.'⁴⁴ However, it soon became clear that the conversation would have to be postponed. The Russian army, which all observers had assumed would swiftly crush the Turks, instead ground to a halt. Nicholas and his generals had been overconfident, and had not concentrated sufficient troops and supplies for the task at hand, particularly when they were forced to lay siege to three key, fiercely-defended fortresses, Varna, Silistria and Shumla.⁴⁵ If the Russian military machine was stalling, then the assumptions behind France's strategy began to look distinctly shaky.

La Ferronnays' reaction to this unwelcome news betrayed a whiff of panic. On the 30th July, he confessed to Mortemart that it was impossible not to be alarmed at the consequences of the Russian reverses. From talk of raising legions of soldiers, he now performed a complete about-face, and pressed Mortemart to urge the Czar to make peace as soon as possible: 'In heaven's name, I beg you, persuade the emperor to settle for the glory he has already acquired, and to add to it through his moderation.' He repeated the plea in his closing sentence: 'Make peace as soon as you can.'⁴⁶

La Ferronnays' sudden collapse in confidence reveals surprising volatility in such an experienced statesman. In fact, his health was buckling under the strain of the crisis. 'My health is so ruined', he confessed to Mortemart, 'that I can no longer go on.' The king, he continued, had ordered him to go and take the waters for two months, during which time the under-secretary of state, Rayneval, would replace him. However, Mortemart should continue to send him confidential letters detailing 'what only the king and I should know.'⁴⁷

This left Mortemart, now in Odessa, fighting to salvage a policy in which he still believed. In his reply, he conceded that the immediate prospect of the Ottomans' demise had receded: 'the partition of Turkey is a project for the future.'⁴⁸ However, France had too much at stake in the eastern Mediterranean to withdraw now. This argument had particular force since a further factor had intervened. Over the last weeks La Ferronnays had secured Russian and British consent to the despatch of a French expeditionary force of 15,000 men to supervise the evacuation of the remaining Ottoman forces from the Morea, their last base in southern Greece. This was clearly good for national prestige, and a military success would strengthen France's claims when the Ottoman empire did – and Mortemart remained convinced that it would – eventually collapse. If the Czar, on French advice, made peace prematurely, the Morea expedition, and all its potential strategic benefits, would be fatally compromised. Mortemart made the point as forcefully as he could to his ailing chief:

We need a resounding success in the Morea, as an example of what we could achieve, if necessary, with all our forces. Our military reputation, which stands high at the moment, will one day, and at no cost, secure us immense gains.....⁴⁹

In fact, Mortemart need not have worried. Although he did not know, it, by the time he was writing the Morea expedition had already set sail from Toulon, making the policy reversal he feared much less likely. The next month came an even more important development. Showing la Ferronnays' fears to have been groundless, the Czar decided to continue the war against the Turks come what may, and to launch a second campaign in the following spring. With Russia mobilizing her resources to make certain of victory this time, the international outlook changed once more. After its brief resurgence, the Ottoman empire was once more in mortal danger, and the spoils France might claim from this were again within reach.

At this point, Charles X made a revealing decision. He announced that he would make an official tour of France's eastern provinces, Champagne, Alsace and Lorraine, in the first three weeks of September. At first sight, this may not seem particularly remarkable; the king had made similar excursions to other parts of France in previous years. However, at a moment when he was taking both his domestic and his foreign policy in a visibly new direction, it is hard not to see this latest progress as symbolic. Having just installed a liberal ministry under Martignac, he was now visiting a region viewed as dangerously radical by Martignac's predecessor Villèle, who had virtually barred its leading citizens from public office. Having lost more territory in 1815 than anywhere else in France, the eastern departments were also likely to greet the new forward foreign policy with enthusiasm. Looked at in detail, the king's journey appears a carefully choreographed endorsement of his new ministry's internal and external aims.⁵⁰

It is clear that this message was understood, and heartily approved, by the greater part of the French press. Significantly, it was the leading liberal newspaper, *Le Constitutionnel*, that gave most

coverage to the royal progress. Ten days into the king's tour, in a long editorial, it noted the enthusiasm with which he had been greeted everywhere, and unhesitatingly ascribed it to delight at the replacement of Villèle by sincerely constitutional ministers: 'The mass of citizens, of all ages and classes, who flocked from everywhere to greet His Majesty, wished to demonstrate by their enthusiasm their gratitude to the prince who has received, and is keeping intact, the gift of the Charter.'⁵¹ The point was emphasized by an illuminated display at Strasbourg, when no less a figure than Benjamin Constant raised a curtain to reveal a recumbent woman representing Alsace, with the word 'Charter' engraved above her head.⁵²

References to foreign policy in the king's programme were less explicit, but nonetheless not hard to discern. They were most obvious at Strasbourg, France's prize possession on the Rhine and the culmination of the tour. At 1.30pm on 7th September, Charles entered the city on horseback through a triumphal arch to a 101-gun salute, the ringing of the cathedral bells, and a welcome from the inhabitants whose enthusiasm was 'impossible to describe.' That evening, the presence at dinner of the king of Württemberg, the grand duke of Baden, and an envoy of the king of Bavaria recalled the heady days of Louis XIV, when France had dominated southern Germany. The next day was devoted to military manoeuvres, whose high point came when a flotilla of twelve boats ferried 350 infantry and artillerymen from the French to the German bank of the Rhine under covering fire. The grand duke of Baden and his brothers, whose territory lay directly on the border, apparently followed the proceedings 'with keen interest.'⁵³

Glory and conquest were evoked the following day as well, when Charles made a halt in the village of Altkirch, where a previous treaty extending France's eastern frontier had been signed. His next stop, the town of Huningue, held less happy memories: all its fortifications had been demolished in 1815. The king was presented with a petition lamenting the fact, to which he returned a suitably diplomatic response: 'The walls of Huningue no longer exist for the moment, but they remain in the

hearts of its inhabitants, and this is the best defence France can have.’⁵⁴

Such anodyne phrases failed to reflect Charles’ real state of mind. He was overwhelmed by the enthusiasm that greeted him everywhere in Alsace and Lorraine, and this encouraged him to warlike plans. Specifically, he thought it probable that Austria would be dragged into the Russo-Turkish conflict, allowing France to aid Russia in exchange for revisions to the Vienna settlement. The patriotic fervour he had just witnessed convinced him that this course would be popular. The king confided these speculations to Martignac:

If the Emperor Nicholas attacks Austria, I shall hold back and wait on events. But if Austria attacks, I will immediately march against her. Perhaps a war against the Viennese court will be of use to me, since it will end domestic divisions and give the nation wider horizons, as she desires.⁵⁵

It was in this febrile atmosphere that la Ferronnays returned to Paris from taking the waters. Revealingly, one of his first actions was to commission from Chateaubriand in Rome a memorandum on the opportunities the Russo-Turkish war offered France.⁵⁶ This was completed and sent to him on 30th November. Chateaubriand was sufficiently proud of it to publish it later in the *Mémoires d’outre-tombe*, and it remains the most comprehensive and powerful exposition of French forward policy in the 1820s. It began by rehearsing the arguments in favour of a Franco-Russian alliance: of the major powers, Britain and Austria were committed to upholding the Vienna settlement, whereas Russia, tempted by expansion herself, would be more likely to condone France’s ambitions. Chateaubriand also set out quite specifically what territorial gains France had in mind as the price for supporting Russia: ‘our aim is the Rhine frontier, from Strasbourg to Cologne.’⁵⁷ This was a very ambitious goal, involving the cession to France not only of the Prussian-ruled Rhineland, but conceivably also of eastern Belgium, then part of the kingdom of the Netherlands. However, the Czar was both the son-in-law of the King of Prussia and the brother-in-law of the Crown Prince of the Netherlands, and thus able to exert influence on his relatives to trade these losses for compensations elsewhere.

The next months, from the winter of 1828 to the summer of 1829, marked the high water mark of the restoration's forward foreign policy. In the major capitals of Europe, French diplomats worked feverishly to further it. They were encouraged in this by the first good news to emerge from the campaign in the Balkans – on 29th September, Varna capitulated to the Russians. His personal prestige restored, Nicholas I returned to St Petersburg. The focus of French efforts, however, now shifted away from the Czar and his ministers, to the Prussian government in Berlin. This made clear logical sense: if France's borders were to advance east, then Prussia would have to be persuaded to relinquish the Rhineland, her major gain from 1815. The comte d'Agoult, Charles X's shrewd and experienced ambassador to Berlin, set to work on this task. In March 1829, he sent a long memorandum analysing Prussia's situation to Paris. This was passed on to the king, who read and approved it.⁵⁸ D'Agoult argued that Prussia's current geography was far from ideal: '[she] still needs to round off her possessions, and fortify herself.'⁵⁹ The obvious solution was for her to exchange the Rhineland, which was far to the west of her heartland, for Saxony, which would make her territory far more compact. In fact, this idea had some pedigree, since the acquisition of Saxony had been Prussia's original preference at the congress of Vienna.

On this basis, France's aim was to construct an alliance between France, Prussia and Russia. Its first purpose would be to help Russia win her war against the Turks. The pact did not need to be formal; if Britain and Austria tried to intervene to save the Ottomans, a simple declaration of neutrality by France and Prussia would dissuade them from war. A grateful Russia would then ensure that her allies were suitably rewarded – no doubt with the Rhineland and Saxony. However, tempting the highly conservative and risk-averse King Frederick William III of Prussia and his equally cautious foreign minister Count Bernstorff onto such a bold course was no simple matter. D'Agoult exerted his powers of persuasion on Bernstorff, while Mortemart made a special detour to Berlin on his way from Varna to St Petersburg to put the case to Frederick William III.⁶⁰

Three weeks later the prospects for the new alliance improved dramatically. It was announced that the Czar would travel to Berlin in June for the wedding of his brother-in-law, Prince Wilhelm of Prussia. In the French government and press, expectations mounted that Nicholas would use this opportunity to remove his Prussian relatives' last hesitations about joining the Franco-Russian pact. The second campaign in the Balkans was about to open, and with luck would shortly yield Russian victories to reinforce his arguments. The stakes were high, since Turkey's collapse could spark a European war, but France had everything to play for. As the *Journal des débats* put it: 'An unprecedented conflagration is looming, and the smallest spark could set it off!.....No power has ever before been so well-placed as France to dominate the coming events.'⁶¹

La Ferronnays, however, would play no part in this dénouement. Just three months after returning to work, he had a stroke and collapsed in his office, making a permanent replacement necessary.⁶² The moment seemed tailor-made for Chateaubriand's return, but an obstacle was soon apparent. During La Ferronnays' first illness Charles X had acquired a taste for being his own foreign minister. In September and October, even during his tour of the eastern departments, he was corresponding with la Ferronnays' deputy about the Russo-Turkish war, firing off notes on such subjects as the blockade of the Dardanelles.⁶³ The king wanted less a foreign minister than a subordinate director of foreign policy, who shared all his political views and knew when to bow to his will. On none of these grounds did Chateaubriand qualify for the situation.

In contrast, there was one political figure who did: Prince Jules de Polignac, the French ambassador to London. An old and close friend of Charles X, Polignac was an extreme ultra-royalist, whose devout Catholicism bordered on mysticism. However, he was far too conservative to be acceptable to Martignac, so a new ministry would have to be constructed around him, and this would take time.⁶⁴ Meanwhile, pressure from Chateaubriand's advocates inside and outside the government had to be resisted. The king's tactic was to temporize. When the minister of the marine Hyde de

Neuville urged Chateaubriand's recall, he replied: 'I'm not saying no, I'm very attached to him, I know he could be very useful to me.' The existing ministers were split. If appointed, Chateaubriand would be an overbearing colleague; if not, he would probably defect – along with the significant group of deputies loyal to him – to the opposition. As *La Quotidienne* put it: 'They have decided with eyes fixed on this daunting choice.'⁶⁵

In April 1829 Charles X revealed his hand. Until Polignac was ready, an interim foreign minister was necessary, so the king chose the pliable duc de Laval, currently French ambassador to Vienna. This was a calculated snub to Chateaubriand, whose reaction was to set off from Rome to Paris to resign his embassy in person. The sequel was a comedy of errors. Chateaubriand arrived in Paris to find that Laval had just returned from Vienna, having not accepted, but refused, the foreign ministry. The position was once again vacant, but it swiftly became clear the king would not relent – he gave Chateaubriand an audience, but only to ask when he was travelling back to Rome.⁶⁶ Chateaubriand prepared to do so, but not before taking two steps that underline how critical he thought the juncture was, and how much he wanted to play his part in it. The first was to leave a letter at the foreign ministry on the day of his departure, asking that if an international congress was called to end the Russo-Turkish war and resolve the Eastern Question, he should be chosen as the French plenipotentiary.⁶⁷ Six years on, he was hoping to reprise, with even greater effect, his role at the congress of Verona.

Chateaubriand's second step was taken in the open, and aimed at the wider political world and public opinion. On 16th June he rose in the chamber of peers to support the granting of extra credits to the foreign ministry. From this point of departure he launched into a much more wide-ranging speech. On one level, it was a powerful expression of his vision of a France allying domestic liberty to an assertive foreign policy. On another, it was a warning that if in the near future the Ottoman empire was partitioned and France excluded from the benefits, she should be ready to go to war:

Diminished when other powers expanded, France lost her colonies, her conquests and even part of her former territory; in exchange she receive her rightful princes and the Charter, and she has gladly accepted this outcomeBut if events as unexpected as they are improbable should force us to change this attitude to preserve the benefits of peace, is not Charles X surrounded by a valiant and devoted nation?.....New means of success are at hand in the institutions given us by our kings.....liberty needs only to stamp her foot on the ground for glory to gush forth.⁶⁸

In fact, though Chateaubriand did not know it, the crisis he anticipated had broken five days before. On 11th June, d'Agoult had a vital interview with Nicholas I, who had now arrived in Berlin. He had assumed that this would set the seal on the new pact between France, Russia and Prussia. Instead the Czar, visibly ill at ease, talked only of France's internal problems and his doubts that Martignac's ministry would survive. This was a repeat of the tactic Mortemart had noted, implying that France was too divided and turbulent to make a reliable ally. Baffled, d'Agoult sought an explanation from Bernstorff, and found to his fury that he had been duped. Distracted by severe gout, Bernstorff let slip that Austria, alarmed by France's overtures to Russia and Prussia, had secretly made a counter-proposal to St Petersburg and Berlin: a negotiated end to the war in the Balkans, the preservation of the Ottoman empire, and close co-operation against France, where revolution might recur at any time. Coming at such a critical moment, this had been enough to give the Czar pause.⁶⁹

Relaying this news, d'Agoult pointed out that his colleague in St Petersburg was now best placed to undo the damage inflicted by Austria, through speaking privately with the Czar on his return. Instructions to this effect, reflecting Charles X's deep concern, were soon on their way from the foreign ministry to Mortemart: 'you can imagine that His Majesty is very impatient to know the result of this mission he is confiding to your tried and tested zeal.'⁷⁰ On 8th August, at the military camp at Krasnoe Selo, the ambassador managed to engineer the moment on horseback he had first planned the previous year. It began well; when Mortemart raised Austria's insinuation that France was on the brink of revolution, the Czar reined in his horse next to his, and 'boot to boot', assured him that only Charles X could judge his country's situation, and attempts to misrepresent this were

merely base intrigues.⁷¹

Emboldened by the Czar's words, Mortemart warmed to his anti-Austrian theme. His focus, however, was not her manoeuvres in Berlin or defence of the Ottomans, but her apparent attempt to gain control of France's Italian neighbour Piedmont. He then took the critical step, and broached the taboo subject of revising the Vienna settlement. If Austria continued her incursions, he asserted, France would go to war with her 'to gain.....compensation for her sacrifices of 1815'. Immediately he realized he had gone too far. 'For the love of God', the Czar burst out, 'don't do that, you'll set all Europe aflame; we need peace so much!'⁷²

This was the moment when the dreams of Charles X and Chateaubriand were dispelled by the most powerful man in the world. At this decisive juncture, forced to choose between territorial gain at the risk of a European conflict and the more prosaic stability offered by the Vienna settlement, the Czar was opting for the latter. To d'Agoult in Berlin, and Mortemart in Bender and Krasnoe Selo, Nicholas consistently made it clear that his prime concern was the international revolutionary menace, to which France was especially susceptible, and which would only increase if the Russo-Turkish war extended to the other powers. He was grateful for France's diplomatic support against the Turks, and happy in return to make general promises of Russia's friendship and good offices, but refused to undermine the foundations of the continental status quo. One suspects that Mortemart, who genuinely believed in a Franco-Russian alliance to expand the territory of both countries, did not sufficiently appreciate this fact.

Yet this might not be the whole story. Nicholas I's ultimate views on the Eastern Question remain controversial. Throughout his reign the Czar was suspected by the other powers of wishing to destroy the Ottomans and capture Constantinople, and these fears eventually helped launch the

Crimean war. Historians now generally accept that Nicholas preferred to keep Turkey in an enfeebled state, overshadowed by Russian might, rather than destroy her completely.⁷³ Yet it is rare for rulers and statesmen never to contemplate an alternative to their chosen policies, and in this case the alternative, partitioning the Ottoman empire, was obvious and tempting. While concluding that the summer of 1829 was not the right moment to take this course, it is quite possible that the Czar kept it in reserve to use if circumstances changed. Even after his rebuff in Berlin, d'Agoult thought the Franco-Prussian-Russian alliance was still a possibility, and he was a shrewd observer. The Austrian plan that had momentarily scotched it was still 'extremely vague', he noted, '[and] is challenged by another potential alliance....of which France would form the nexus.'⁷⁴

What is clear is that d'Agoult's and Mortemart's meetings with the Czar marked the furthest point the restoration monarchy reached in implementing its forward policy. This gives a new perspective on its final attempt to revive it before the July revolution, the so-called 'Polignac project.' On 8th August, just a day before Mortemart's horseback conversation with Nicholas I, Charles X finally executed his cherished plan of dismissing Martignac and replacing him as prime minister by Jules de Polignac. By now, the tide of war in the Balkans had at last turned in Russia's favour. Under new, more effective generalship the Russian army took Silistria, circumvented Shumla and marched straight across the Balkan mountains for Constantinople. With the end of the Ottoman empire seeming imminent, Polignac commissioned from the head of the foreign ministry's political section, the comte de Boislecomte, a formal proposal for partitioning Turkey and redrawing the Vienna settlement, to be sent to Mortemart for presentation to Nicholas I.⁷⁵

The 'Polignac project' was, to say the least, wide-ranging. Under its terms, Russia would gain the Danubian principalities in the Balkans she was already occupying, and a large slice of Turkish Asia Minor around Armenia and the Caucasus. France, for her part would take Belgium. Around this core, a somewhat surreal reordering of Europe would take place. Constantinople would not become

Russian, but instead the capital of a new greater Greece. Prussia would lose the Rhineland, which would become an independent buffer state, but receive in return Holland and Saxony. The King of the Netherlands would be compensated for the loss of his kingdom with the unlooked-for honour of ruling the new Greek state.

Containing as it does so many visionary ideas in a single document, the Polignac project is by far the best known example of France's forward policy in the late 1820s.⁷⁶ As a result, it has entirely eclipsed the diplomatic efforts that preceded it. Yet as Bertier de Sauvigny has pointed out, it was merely a 'clumsy copy' of the ideas and policies of Chateaubriand and la Ferronnays.⁷⁷ Chateaubriand's aim of a Rhine frontier from Strasbourg to Cologne was extremely ambitious, but the triple alliance designed to achieve it was at least a practical possibility. In contrast, Polignac's literally Byzantine plans for Greece and scheme for an independent Rhineland smacked of fantasy. Above all, his substitution of Belgium for the Rhine as France's goal would unquestionably have involved her in war with the one global superpower of the day, Britain, which had just successfully fought a twenty-two year war to prevent her absorbing the Low Countries.

As it turned out, the Polignac project was over before it had begun. It was sent to Mortemart on 4th September 1829; on the 14th, before it had even arrived, Russia and Turkey signed a peace treaty at Adrianople. Russia contented herself with strategic and commercial rather than territorial gains – the Danube delta, enclaves on the eastern Black Sea, and access to the Mediterranean for Russian shipping. A small independent Greece – a far cry from Polignac's grand vision – was also created. Mortemart realized immediately that, for the moment at least, Adrianople fatally compromised France's forward policy in Europe, and when he did receive Polignac's proposal decided not to raise it with the Czar.⁷⁸ The plan, with its sweeping geopolitical ambitions, was consigned to the diplomatic archives.

In one sense, however, the restoration's forward policy did not end in 1829, but simply shifted away from Europe. Within months of the news of Adrianople, Polignac's ministry began planning a military expedition to conquer Algiers. France did in fact have a *casus belli*; the city's ruler, the Dey Hussein, had recently insulted the French consul in the course of a commercial dispute, and Algerian pirates were a menace to all European shipping in the Mediterranean. But it is also clear that, once again, Charles X and his ministers were hoping for a military victory to burnish the régime's laurels and appeal to public opinion.⁷⁹ There were other continuities. The Dey Hussein was nominally a vassal of the Ottoman sultan, and the French government made sure of Russian support before implementing its plans. As Karl Hammer observes, one aim of the Algerian expedition may well have been to remind the Czar of the help France could offer by 'rolling up the Ottoman empire from the west.'⁸⁰

The French forces disembarked before Algiers on 14th June 1830, and three weeks later had captured the city. Yet the victory dividend the king and his ministers expected did not materialize. This may have been because extra-European conquests did not arouse the same enthusiasm as European ones to a French public reared on the Napoleonic legend. Certainly the capture of Algiers was insufficient to disarm the growing opposition to Charles and Polignac, who were increasingly suspected of plotting an authoritarian coup d'état at home. The *Journal des débats* and *Constitutionnel*, which had so ardently supported a forward European policy, were both distinctly tepid about the news from North Africa. Neither would allow Polignac any credit for the expedition's military achievement. The *Journal des débats* commented sourly: 'The capture of Algiers cannot be made a party-political victory, and this public triumph must not be confiscated by a faction.' To exploit the victory properly, added *Le Constitutionnel*, 'we need a government that can march in step with France.'⁸¹ As for the public, the lack of the usual rejoicing at the thanksgiving Te Deum held at Notre-Dame made an impression even on the king; during the ceremony 'his eyes vainly sought out faces reflecting the enthusiasm such an event should excite.'⁸²

The contrast between this depressing occasion and the joyful scenes at Strasbourg less than two years earlier is revealing. In September 1828, Charles X had just appointed a relatively liberal ministry committed at home to upholding the Charter and abroad to retrieving France's position in Europe. In July 1830, he was backing a ministry that hoped a North African victory abroad would legitimize an attack on the Charter at home. Of course, one should not read too much into these public demonstrations; how far the crowds who flocked to the king in Alsace were expressing approval of his ministers' domestic or foreign policy, or simply enjoying a day out watching mock battles on the Rhine, can never be known. Yet the genuine, and victorious, battle of Algiers was greeted only with 'dejection and silence.' Its misfortune was to have been planned by an unpopular government, and fought on a distant shore.

A fortnight after the Te Deum at Notre-Dame, the Parisians took to the streets for another purpose, to resist the government's long-anticipated coup d'état. Within two days the king's troops had been put to flight. Whether the outcome would have been different had they been reinforced by the 40,000 soldiers currently in Algiers is an open question. On 2nd August, Charles X abdicated. One of his last acts as king was to appoint the duc de Mortemart, recently returned from St Petersburg, as prime minister with powers to make sweeping concessions to save the throne. Two days later Mortemart realized the task was impossible, resigned, and after a decent interval rallied to the new ruler installed by the revolution, Charles's liberal cousin Louis-Philippe.⁸³

The Bourbons' forward policy of the 1820s was never likely to achieve its goals. Regaining territories lost by Napoleon, in face of the suspicion and hostility of all the major powers, was a near-impossible undertaking. The ingenious idea of supporting Russian ambitions in the east to extend France's borders in the west was ultimately too complicated to succeed, though it did come close enough in the summer of 1829 to cause Austria deep alarm. Yet the policy's practical viability

is less important than what it says about French policymakers and public opinion at the time. Contrary to the traditional picture, the restoration monarchy was acutely aware of its association with national defeat and prepared to go to considerable, even dangerous, lengths to erase it. In 1829, the prospect of a Russian alliance led Charles X to contemplate European war. Had he still been in power in August 1830, the temptations offered by the Belgian revolution might have pushed him even further. In that sense, although an acute domestic upheaval, his fall actually advanced international peace. For the next eighteen years, Charles's successor Louis-Philippe steered clear of major continental conflict, often in defiance of press and popular agitation. France's next challenge to the Vienna settlement came only with Napoleon III.

¹ R Tombs, *France 1814-1914* (Harlow, 1996), 352. See also P Renouvin ed, *Histoire des relations internationales* (8 vols, Paris, 1953-58), vol.5, 39-40 and DH Pinkney, *The French Revolution of 1830* Princeton, NJ, 1972), 18.

² P Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848* (Oxford, 1994, 1996 edn), 668; F Démier, *La France de la restauration (1814-1830): l'impossible retour du passé* (Paris, 2012), 806-07; K Hammer, *Die Französische Diplomatie der Restauration und Deutschland, 1814-1830* (Stuttgart, 1963). Of the two major twentieth-century histories of the restoration, G de Bertier de Sauvigny, *La Restauration* (Paris, 1955), does devote a chapter to French foreign policy between 1824 and 1829, but argues that it aimed at 'preserving the general peace' (551), a contention with which this article disagrees. E Waresquiel and B Yvert, *Histoire de la restauration 1814-1830: naissance de la France moderne* (Paris 1996), as its title suggests, is excellent on domestic affairs, but has only a few pages on foreign policy, concentrating on the 'cautious' period of 1815-20 (235-43).

³ Waresquiel and Yvert, *Histoire de la restauration*, 166.

⁴ Op. cit., 167.

⁵ Bertier de Sauvigny, *La Restauration*, 234-36; G T Romani, *The Neapolitan revolution of 1820-1821* (New York, 1978).

⁶ Cited in A Jardin and AJ Tudesq, *La France des notables: l'évolution générale 1815-1848* (Paris, 1973), 86.

⁷ Démier, *La France de la restauration*, 713. The best modern treatments of the Spanish expedition are E Larroche, *L'Expédition d'Espagne 1823: de la guerre selon la charte* (Rennes, 2013) and A Roquette, *La Restauration et la révolution espagnole: de Cadix au Trocadéro* (Paris, 2016).

⁸ The best modern biography of Chateaubriand is J-C Berchet, *Chateaubriand* (Paris, 2012); also important are J-P Clément, *Chateaubriand: biographie morale et intellectuelle*, and M Fumaroli, *Chateaubriand: poésie et terreur* (Paris, 2003). There is also the first volume of George Painter's projected three-volume biography: GD Painter, *Chateaubriand vol.1, (1768-1793): The Longed-For Tempests* (London, 1977).

⁹ On Chateaubriand the politician, see E Beau de Loménie, *La carrière politique de Chateaubriand* (2 vols, Paris, 1929) and G de Bertier de Sauvigny, *Chateaubriand homme d'état* (Saint Malo, 2001).

¹⁰ F-R de Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'outre-tombe* (3 vols, Paris, 1973 edn), vol.3, 603.

¹¹ On the concept of the 'natural frontiers', see G Zeller, 'La Monarchie française et les frontières naturelles', *Revue d'Histoire Moderne*, 8, (1933), 305-33; P Sahlins, 'Natural Frontiers Revisited: France's Boundaries since the Seventeenth Century', *The American Historical Review*, 5:5 (Dec.19190), 1423-51; J Smets, 'Le Rhin, frontière naturelle de la France', *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française*, 314 (1998), 675-98. For the concept's importance at the end of the Napoleonic wars, see M Price, *Napoleon: The End of Glory* (Oxford, 2014), 155-57 and 189-97.

¹² On Danton's views and actions at this point, see also Schroeder, *The transformation of European politics*, 113-16.

¹³ Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics*, 659; Jardin et Tudesq, *La France des notables* vol 1, 174.

¹¹ Two helpful studies of the development of public opinion in the period are D Reynié, *Le Triomphe de l'opinion publique. L'espace public français du 16ème au 20ème siècle* (Paris, 1998) and A Farge, *Dire et mal dire. L'opinion public au 18ème siècle* (Paris, 1992).

¹⁵ These reports are in the F1c III series in the Archives Nationales, Paris, but are very sparse for the restoration period. There is, for example, a confidential document entitled 'Esprit public' and dated 6th March 1815 from the Moselle département, in F1c III Moselle 9 (unnumbered folios) and another section on the same subject in a 'Compte moral de l'administration' dated 1st February 1818 from the Bas-Rhin département in F1c III Bas-Rhin 8 (also unnumbered folios), but these are very much the exception rather than the rule. In his very informative *L'Etat des esprits: l'invention de l'enquête politique en France, 1814-1848* (Rennes, 2008), Pierre Karila-Cohen makes the point (273) that this lacuna was to an extent filled by new sources of information, particularly the magistrates of the *parquet* and the *Gendarmerie*. Whether these were an adequate substitute for the monthly Napoleonic reports, however, remains debatable.

¹⁶ For the press during the restoration see C Ledré, *La Presse à l'assaut de la monarchie, 1815-1848* (Paris, 1960), I Collins, *The Government and the Newspaper Press in France, 1814-1881* (Oxford, 1959), G Feyel, *La Presse en France des origines à 1914* (Paris, 1999) and D Rader, *The Journalists and the July Revolution in France* (The Hague, 1973).

¹⁷ Démier, *La France de la restauration*, 265-66.

¹⁸ This figures are taken from J Dimakis, *La Guerre d'indépendance grecque vue par la presse française (période de 1821 à 1824)* (Thessaloniki, 1968), 29-35. See also F Bertran de Balenda, *Louis de Bonald: publiciste ultra* (Aix-en-Provence 2010), 45-52.

¹⁹ Démier, *La France de la restauration*, 704; Bertier de Sauvigny, *La Restauration*, 260.

²⁰ F-R de Chateaubriand, *Le Congrès de Vérone*, in *Oeuvres de Chateaubriand* (10 vols, Paris, 1856-57), vol.10, tome 19, 164, 166.

²¹ Waresquiel et Yvert, *Histoire de la restauration*, 363.

²² Waresquiel and Yvert, *Histoire de la restauration*, 362-63.

²³ On the Greek revolt, see D Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence, 1821-1833* (London, 1973); R Clogg ed, *The Struggle for Greek Independence* (Hamden, Conn, 1973); D Brewer, *The Flame of Freedom: The Greek War of Independence, 1821-1833* (London, 2001).

²⁴ Dimakis, *La Guerre d'indépendance grecque*, 163.

²⁵ The Levant was a traditional sphere of French influence, though since the reign of François Ier this had been exerted on the side of the Ottoman empire. The later eighteenth century, however, had seen the beginnings of a shift on the part of French statesmen to considering the benefits a partition of Turkey might bring Versailles. See J Hardman and M Price eds, *Louis XVI and the comte de Vergennes: correspondence, 1774-1787* (Oxford, 1998), 135-44.

²⁶ Chateaubriand, *Le congrès de Vérone*, 165.

²⁷ *Le Constitutionnel*, 27th February 1829.

²⁸ The standard work on the election of November 1827 is S. Kent, *The Election of 1827 in France* ((Cambridge, Mass and London, 1975).

²⁹ There is only one scholarly biography of Martignac, F Boyer, *Martignac (1778-1832): itinéraire politique d'un avocat bordelais* (Paris, 2002).

³⁰ Beau de Loménie, *La Carrière politique de Chateaubriand*, vol.2, 257.

³¹ *Op. cit.*, 279.

³² See comte de la Ferronnays to duc de Mortemart, 9th June 1828, C[orrespondance] P[olitique] Russie 174, A[rchives du Ministère des] A[ffaires] E[trangères], Paris, 237.

³³ 'Instructions pour M le duc de Mortemart, ambassadeur du roi en Russie', AAE M[émoires] et D[ocuments] Russie, 329-30.

³⁴ Mortemart to La Ferronnays, 25th May 1828, AAE CP Russie 174, 186.

³⁵ Mortemart to La Ferronnays, 27th May 1828, AAE CP Russie 174, 190-91.

³⁶ 'Copie d'une dépêche adressée au comte Pozzo di Borgo par le comte de Nesselrode, en date de Pétersbourg du 17/29 avril 1828', AAE CP Russie, 121, 123.

³⁷ La Ferronnays to Mortemart, 10th June 1828, 'confidentielle et secrète', AAE CP Russie 174, 247.

³⁸ An expletive traditionally associated with Henri IV.

³⁹ La Ferronnays to Mortemart, 9th June 1828, 'particulière', AAE CP Russie 174, 237-38.

⁴⁰ There are few scholarly biographies of Charles X; the best are J Cabanis, *Charles X: roi ultra* (Paris, 1972) and J-P Clément and D de Montplaisir, *Charles X: le dernier Bourbon* (Paris, 2015).

⁴¹ W Hinde, *George Canning* (London 1973), 411-12.

⁴² *Le Journal des débats*, 29th July 1828.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Mortemart to La Ferronnays, 2nd July 1828, AAE CP Russie 174, 282.

⁴⁵ W Bruce Lincoln, *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias* (London, 1978), 125-26.

⁴⁶ La Ferronnays to Mortemart, 30th July 1828, AAE CP Russie 174, 383.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 385-86.

⁴⁸ Mortemart to La Ferronnays, 31st August 1828, AAE CP Russie 175, 73.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁵⁰ See, for example, ‘Voyage du roi dans les départements de l’Est’, editorial in *Le Constitutionnel*, 10th September 1828.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² *Le Constitutionnel*, 18th September 1828.

⁵³ *Le Constitutionnel*, 13th September 1828.

⁵⁴ *Le Constitutionnel*, 14th September 1828.

⁵⁵ A Nettement, *Histoire de la restauration* (8 vols, Paris, 1860-72), vol.8, 308.

⁵⁶ Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d’outre-tombe*, vol.3, 16.

⁵⁷ Op.cit., 29.

⁵⁸ Comte Portalis to comte d’Agoult, 24th April 1829, AAE CP Prusse 272, 111.

⁵⁹ D’Agoult to Portalis, 27th March 1829, AAE CP Prusse 272, 90.

⁶⁰ ‘Note particulière pour M de Mortemart’, 10th February 1829, AAE CP Prusse 272, 38.

⁶¹ *Le Journal des débats*, 16th June 1829.

⁶² Beau de Loménie, *La Carrière politique de Chateaubriand*, vol.2, 293.

⁶³ Charles X to comte de Rayneval, 23rd September 1828, AAE CP Russie 175, 141.

⁶⁴ Waresquiel and Yvert, *Histoire de la restauration*, 412, 423.

⁶⁵ *La Quotidienne*, 15th January 1829.

⁶⁶ Beau de Loménie, *La Carrière politique de Chateaubriand*, vol.2, 324.

⁶⁷ Op. cit., 325.

⁶⁸ *Le Journal des débats*, 17th June 1829.

⁶⁹ D’Agoult to Portalis, 14th and 17th June 1829, AAE CP Prusse 272, 156-79.

⁷⁰ Portalis to Mortemart, 4th July 1829, AAE CP Russie 178, 34.

⁷¹ Mortemart to Portalis, 9th August 1829, AAE CP Russie 178, 63.

⁷² Mortemart to Portalis, 9th August 1829, AAE CP Russie 178, 64.

⁷³ See, for example, Lincoln, *Nicholas I*, 115-16.

⁷⁴ D’Agoult to Portalis, 14th June 1829, AAE CP Prusse 272, 171.

⁷⁵ Hammer, *Die Französische Diplomatie der Restauration*, 155.

⁷⁶ See, for example, Bertier de Sauvigny, *La Restauration*, 592-95; Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics*, 658-59.

⁷⁷ Bertier de Sauvigny, *Chateaubriand homme d’état*, 46.

⁷⁸ Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics*, 659.

⁷⁹ Pinkney, *The French Revolution of 1830*, 18; Renouvin, *Histoire des relations internationales*, v, 108-9.

⁸⁰ Hammer, *Die Französische Diplomatie der Restauration*, 220.

⁸¹ *Le Journal des débats*, 10th July 1830; *Le Constitutionnel*, 11th July 1830.

⁸² *Mémoires du baron d'Haussez, dernier ministre de la marine sous la restauration* (2 vols, Paris, 1896-97), vol.2, 218.

⁸³ M Price, *The Perilous Crown: France 1814-1848* (London, 2007), 162, 171-74; G Antonetti, *Louis-Philippe* (Paris, 1994), 644.