

Case study on france and tallyrand

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Political Science

France and Tallyrand

Napoleon had waged war on the rest of Europe without showing any mercy. Napoleon lost the war and the winners wanted to divide up France. Not only for France's resources but also so they would never have to worry about France making war again. Count Tallyrand was France's foreign minister who needed to make sure France negotiated for everything it could get at the conference after the war. The peace conference was held in Vienna and the winners were represented by France's worst enemies. The purpose of the peace conference was to decide on a post-war settlement. This is a brief case study of the situation and how Count Tallyrand saved the day for France with his diplomatic skills.

Today's political pundits would probably call Tallyrand the 'Teflon Count' because nothing negative stuck to him as he changed like a chameleon to keep his position of power. For example during the Bourbon dynasty he had been a Catholic Bishop. The 1789 French Revolution overthrew the Bourbons so Tallyrand changed his stripes. He was able to reinvent himself so that people forgot he was ever involved with the church. By the year 1845 he was accepted as a member of the prerevolutionary movement in France and in Europe.

The four great powers who would decide the fate of France were (a) Prince Metternich of Austria, (b) Tsar Alexander of Russia, (c) Viscount Castlereagh of Britain, and (d) Prince von Hardenberg of Prussia. Prince Metternich was

the negotiator for Austria because he was an excellent diplomat who knew how to use his intelligence and cleverness to reach the goals the Austrian emperor wanted. It was Prince Metternich that was considered the most difficult opponent for Count Tallyrand to overcome but the other three negotiators for the winners were also talented in their own ways.

Tallyrand had to show great skill in order to save France and make sure the France to not lose any land. It was sure the others would be happy to divide up the spoils in pieces of France if given the chance. He also had to negotiate with former enemies who had every reason to take revenge on the way France had behaved during the war. France's show-no-mercy military tactics caused terrible suffering. Napoleon had forced men and boys in places he ruined to join the army. If Napoleon was unable to convince the local monarchy to support him, he replaced them. His soldiers were allowed to take whatever they needed to eat or use from the places they conquered; leaving nothing for the people who lived there.

In the past France had been strong both militarily and economically. But Napoleon had lost the war and the war had drained off the money in France's treasury. The only tools left for Tallyrand to use were his negotiating skills. Only diplomacy would be able to save France from being butchered up and annexed to the countries of their enemies. Amazingly Tallyrand found a diplomatic strategy that saved the day for France. His main talking point was the need to keep a balance of power on the European continent. This was exactly the argument Britain responded to. His second convincing talking point was to bring the Bourbon dynasty back to France. This argument was

exactly what all four of the major players wanted to hear because after the French Revolution the monarchies were worried about a loss of power.

Over the course of the negotiations at the Vienna peace conference Tallyrand was able to successfully convince France's former enemies that it was important to them to take part in the restoration of France. At the time this success was thought to be a short term win. It turns out that the peace lasted in Europe for ninety-nine years without any lasting break.

Reference

Viotti. International Relations and World Politics, 4th Edition. Pearson Learning Solutions. pp. 131-133.