DIET OF THE GERMAN CONFEDERATION

(FRANKFURT)

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FRANKFURT

FO 30/150: Baron Cowley to Viscount Palmerston, No 176, Frankfurt, 9 June 1851

Restoration of the Federal Diet; state of public opinion

It was not until the 6th inst. that the forms to be observed on the occasion were regulated so as to enable the Central Commission[1] to make over the Powers with which it had been entrusted for a year and a half, to the Commission deputed by the Diet to receive them. General Peucker took the opportunity, to the annoyance I believe both of his Austrian Colleagues and of the Diet's Commission, to make a lengthened statement of all that the central Commission had done since its instalment. Both the General and M. de Bötticher his Colleague are much vexed at the manner in which they have been dismissed.[2] They were, as Your Lordship will recollect, originally nominated by their own Government, not by the Confederation. They have been since employed by that Government to make head against the Diet so long as the restoration of the Diet did not suit its views, and they now find themselves dismissed by a resolution of the very Assembly, to counteract the power and influence of which they had been engaged.

The vessel of the Confederation is then once again afloat. Is it better equipped than before? Is it stronger, more able to contend against those elements of strife which although slumbering now, experience has shewn may be roused in an awful manner almost without a moment's notice? Such is the question in every one's mouth, but those who have followed the affairs of Germany for the last three years, if they have gained no other wisdom, will at all events have learnt not to indulge in vain predictions, and I, as one of them, am certainly not inclined to venture on such frail and uncertain ground. Nor would it be fair to do so before it is seen whether any and what measures are taken

[1]The four-man *Bundeszentralkommission* was established by the Austro-Prussian convention of 30 September 1849. It officially succeeded the Vicar of the Empire, Archduke Johann, as the highest authority in the Confederation on 20 December 1849.

[2]On 30 May 1851, the Federal Diet decided to dissolve the *Bundeszentralkommission*. On 6 June, a commission of the Diet entrusted with the implementation of this decision took over the administration of federal property.

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by the Diet to strengthen its authority and to conciliate the respect of the German nation. In 1848 it had lost both. It was condemned by Sovereigns and subjects, by Ministers and Parliaments, by Prince and peasant. It has been recalled into existence from the sheer impossibility of peaceably and legitimately replacing it by any other institution, and whatever reforms are introduced without violence must be dictated by its own good sense and prudence.[3] I wish however that I could discern among its influential members, as much anxiety to prevent revolution by good institutions as determination to put it down by force of arms – as great a desire to ensure that constitutional liberty which has been over and over again promised to the German people; as to maintain the authority of the Governments – and a more lenient appreciation of the character of those who honestly differ in opinion from themselves.

I am always anxious to enquire from the persons whom I see here passing from different parts of Germany whether there is any improvement in the feelings of the people. If apathy is an improvement it appears to exist to a great extent in the North. The South, if constrained to keep its hands quiet, is not sparing of the language of discontent, and would I fear be ready for mischief should an opportunity offer. On the other hand an improved tone is remarked in the Universities both among professors and students.

FO 30/151: Baron Cowley to Viscount Palmerston, Confidential, No 227, Frankfurt, 22 July 1851

Observations on proceedings at Diet; conflicting interests of the different states; general distrust of Prussia; role of Austria

Having the intention of availing myself tomorrow of Your Lordship's kind permission to absent myself from my post for a short period, I am desirous before leaving Frankfort of making a few observations upon the proceedings of the Diet up to this time.

Those who have expected or hoped for any real benefit to Germany from its resuscitation must begin to doubt of success.[4] Difficulties appear to augment instead of diminishing. The task of reconciling the conflicting interests of above thirty different Governments who have, momentarily at least, complete liberty of action, seems impracticable. Those members of the Diet who six weeks ago were sanguine in their

[3]The Federal Diet was reopened on 2 September 1850 under Austrian leadership (the Frankfurt Rump Diet) after having been suspended in July 1848. All the remaining member states rejoined in May and June 1851, after the failure of the Dresden Conferences.

[4]For the reconstituted Federal Diet see n. 3 in this section.

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expectations of a good result to their deliberations,[5] begin one after another to despair of it. Count Thun in the intimacy of confidential conversation avows that he has neither health nor strength to support the fatigue and discomfort of his position. General Rochow will not remain a moment beyond the time which he originally fixed for his departure, the end of this month, and there is a general conviction among his other colleagues that the Diet will return to its pristine insignificance after slightly remodelling the federal law on a stricter basis. It is not a little curious to hear the various reasons that are assigned for this anticipated failure. Austria and Prussia will tell you that they are acting cordially together, but that their good intentions are frustrated by the egoism and illwill of the smaller Courts. The smaller Courts will reply that the good understanding between the two great rivals is not real, and that they undermine each other in secret, while the efforts of both are directed to destroying the independence of those who trust to them for support. Others will find an excuse in the mass of business which is forced upon the Diet at once, and a fourth party will plead the want of men of sufficient courage to point out the evils which exist, or of sufficient talents to attack the opposition and prejudices which must be overcome before those evils can be removed.

There is probably some truth in all these allegations. The understanding between Austria and Prussia is forced not cordial, and will only last so long as Prussia is content to follow in the wake of Austria.

The smaller Powers are suspicious even of this approximation, and unite as far as they can against it, while each at the same time pursues its own individual interests[.] Then again the system of referring every question however trifling to a commission, and the jealousy of Austria and Prussia to sit in all Commissions paralyses the progress of affairs. The want too of men of business among the members of the Diet is much felt.

I have said that Prussia follows in the wake of Austria. Both General Rochow and M de Bismark have admitted as much to me. They contend that it is the only part that Prussia can at this moment play, that she is distrusted by the majority of the Governments, and that she can take no active part in German politicks until either Austria has destroyed the prestige now existing in her favor, which they evidently think she is in the fair way to do, or until the Prussian Government has found means to regain the confidence of others, which it has now lost. This accounts for the great discrepancy which I have remarked between General Rochow's conversation and his conduct in the Diet. In conversation the decided opponent of restrictive measures except to restore order where it is actually disturbed, in the Diet he is found bringing forward conjointly with his Austrian Colleague

[5]For the Dresden Conferences see n. 1 in Saxony section.

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propositions of an arbitrary character. In private the advocate of temperate constitutional liberty, in public he would place that liberty at the mercy of the decisions of the Diet.

The fact is that either the supremacy of Austria must be felt in the Diet or she must abandon the confederation. I do not fear to say that if ever the day arrives when Prussia can count upon a majority in the federal Assembly, to make head against Austria, from that day the Confederation as far as Austria is concerned is at an end. And in this truth, if I may so call it, lies the whole secret of the desire of Austria to enter the Confederation with all her provinces, of her resistance to the alteration of the Presidency, of her striving to carry out her commercial projects, and of her anxiety to alter the proportions of voting in the Diet.[6] In this truth lies also the desire of the Gotha party to separate Austria altogether from Germany.[7]

In endeavouring to give Your Lordship an insight into the proceedings and organisation of the present Diet, I cannot omit mentioning its President Count Thun.

Perhaps of all the diplomatists in the service of Austria a more unfortunate choice for Austrian interests could not have been made. Although clever and ready he has no experience in business, and his manners are so discourteous, though unintentionally so, that he has managed to set almost all his Colleagues against him.

The two persons who exercise the greatest influence over the smaller Courts are the Hanoverian and Holstein Plenipotentiaries. The former, Baron Scheele, is very highly spoken of by all his Colleagues and is the best man of business among them. Baron d'Oertzen, the Mecklenburg Plenipotentiary also enjoys a considerable degree of favor.

FO 30/157: Alexander Malet to Earl of Malmesbury, No 51, Frankfurt, 29 June 1852

Possibility of a third commercial union around Bavaria; dangers for economic interests of middle states and public order

Your Lordship will no doubt have learnt from various sources that the prospects of the Darmstadt Coalition leading to a dissolution of the

[6]The Act of the Confederation of 1815 stated that the president of the Federal Diet was to be appointed by Austria. Prussian demands that this privilege be renounced were rejected. Austria also dismissed proposals to strengthen the position of the middle and smaller states in the Plenum of the Diet.

[7]The constitutionalist Gotha Party – named after the meeting of former members of the Frankfurt National Assembly in Gotha in June 1849 – advocated German unification (excluding Austria) under Prussian leadership.

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Zollverein, and to the Constitution of a third Union, in which Bavaria would probably expect to occupy a position somewhat analogous to that filled by Prussia in relation to the hitherto existing commercial Union, gains more probability.[8]

The consummation of such an event will be contrary to the expectations I had formed, and to the opinions I have all along ventured to express. Those opinions were founded on considerable acquaintance with the material interests and predominating feelings of a considerable portion of Southern Germany.

Against these solid grounds for preferring connection with Prussia to a separate and apparently independent League or a closer connection with Austria, all means have been resorted to of appealing to the spirit of national independence, supposed to be lightly dealt with by Prussia in concluding the Treaty with Hanover,[9] and to the activity and self interest of the Classes who would profit by a return to the systems of monopolies and high protective Duties.

That Austria has had political views in promoting the schism is self evident – her aims are doubly promoted by weakening Prussian preponderance, and by gaining over to her own system, or to a system approaching thereto, so considerable a portion of Prussia's former adherents. Your Lordship will have learnt that the ratification of the Protocol C. of the Darmstadt Conferences, which has not yet taken place, is about to form the basis of a fresh meeting of the Representatives of the States engaged in the Darmstadt Conferences, at Vienna.[10]

This Protocol stipulates that these several States should be indemnified by Austria for any loss incurred in their Custom House receipts by their separation from the Zollverein.

What that indemnity is likely to be, I have already had the honor of reporting to Your Lordship in my Despatch No 29 of April 27th. I am now told that Austria bids 10 percent more, and that 90 instead of 80 percent will be the amount fixed.

The States which receive a subsidy of this nature, appear to me to place themselves in a humiliating condition of dependence, widely differing from the relation they have as yet held to Prussia.

[8]For the Darmstadt Coalition see n. 10 in Prussia section.

[9]Commercial treaty of 7 September 1851. Prussia agreed to Hanover's entry to the *Zollverein* on 1 January 1854, without consulting the other *Zollverein* states.

[10]Protocol C was the plan for an Austrian-led customs union excluding Prussia, and was one of three proposals submitted by Schwarzenberg to the Vienna Customs Conferences in January 1851. The announced conference met at Vienna on 30 October 1852 (see the following dispatch).

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At the same time all the publick organs of their Governments and those of the Austrian Press, are very earnest in their protestations of independence, not only as regards Austria, but France.

I beg to enclose an Article extracted from the Frankfort Journal of this day, principally directed against the supposition that France has or ought to have any part or influence on German Politics.[11]

This Article is written in the Austrian view of the question, although couched in cautious language and is meant to combat a very prevalent persuasion that the seceding States are in any degree acting under French influence or likely to succumb to it hereafter.

In concluding this Despatch I feel bound to express to Your Lordship my conviction that if this separation of the Southern States from their connection with Prussia is effected (and I am as yet by no means convinced that such will be the case) one of two things will be likely to occur – either the experiment will render the Governments which have imposed it upon their People, so unpopular that publick opinion will speedily bring about entire or partial returns to the Prussian system and connection – or that discontents arising therefrom will take a more dangerous direction, and combining with other sources of disaffection risk disturbance of the publick tranquillity where the Governments obstinately adhere to so erroneous a course.

FO 30/158: Alexander Malet to Earl of Malmesbury, No 104, Frankfurt, 1 November 1852

Austrian attempts to form a new commercial union; economic obstacles to this scheme

Austria having met with apparently insurmountable obstacles to the attempt made at the end of last year to enter the Germanic Confederation with all her states,[12] endeavours to find a compensation for the frustration or forced adjournment of that scheme, by adjoining to herself in the bonds of commercial union and fiscal connection, as many of the various Governments as she can by any means induce to adopt her restrictive system.

Various causes, as will be seen by my previous reports, conduced to favour the accomplishment of her policy, and at the present moment it seems only to depend on the line taken by the Hanoverian

[11] Enclosure: article in French from *Journal de Francfort*, 26 June 1852.

[12] Schwarzenberg's plan for an 'empire of seventy million', which had been repeatedly brought forward since the end of 1848, was rejected at the Dresden Conferences of 1850–1851. It was also opposed by the British and French governments.

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Government whether Austria's policy is to be crowned with complete or partial success.[13]

I have not omitted during the progress of this commercial conflict, to point out to Your Lordship to the best of my ability, the various phases that it assumed, and the serious political consequences involved in its result.

It appears that in the Conferences now going on in Vienna,[14] a scheme for a Zollverein having Austria instead of Prussia for its nucleus, is being matured, and as was the case in the original Union, the Protocol will be left open for the accession of such states as may be willing to join it.

The Seven States known as the Darmstadt Coalition,[15] namely, Bavaria[,] Wurtemberg, Saxony, the two Hesses, Baden, and Nassau, all of them detached from the Prussian union, will, if this scheme is realised, adopt, with a population of fully 11,000,000, of souls the restrictive commercial system of Austria in lieu of that of Prussia.

There are still however some obstacles which may impede, if they do not prevent the realization of this plan[.] Prussia has certain means of coercion which she can put in action against Saxony, Nassau and Hesse Cassel, which she would probably only exert in the last extremity; these means arise from geographical position, and the hindrances which may be put in the way of communication.

A railway for instance is projected from Deutz opposite Cologne to Wiesbaden which must depend upon the assent of the Prussian Government. It is of vital importance to Nassau that the line should take its course through what is called the Westerwald, but Prussia can give it another direction, and reach Frankfort wholly avoiding the territory of Nassau.

The most serious difficulty however is the making up to the several Governments by Austria the deficiencies which their revenues may suffer under the new Tariff. This probable deficiency is variously estimated, but from the best information I can obtain, will probably be from 18 to 20 Millions of Florins, a serious drain on Austrian finance, especially if it is to be paid in specie instead of Paper with an agio[16] as at this moment of 30 per cent.

Your Lordship will therefore see that though great disturbance still exists in the commercial and political relations of Germany and

[13]Malet alludes to the new Hanoverian government under Eduard von Schele, which was friendlier towards Austria than its predecessor, and Hanover's uncertain adherence to the treaty of 7 September 1851 (see n. 9 in this section) if the *Zollverein* were to be dissolved.

[14]See n. 10 in this section.

[15]See n. 10 in Prussia section.

[16]'Premium'.

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though there are prospects of the existing difficulties being pushed to extremity, there is still a latent force in an order of things so long established as the Zollverein has been, that renders its dissolution an affair of great difficulty, and there is room to hope, especially if Hanover maintains the Treaty of September, that Prussia may not be reduced to the isolated position she must occupy if deserted in this crisis by that state.

FO 30/161: Alexander Malet to Earl of Clarendon, No 33, Frankfurt, 5 March 1853

Popular outrage over political refugees in Britain and subscriptions for Mazzini and Kossuth

The excitement on the Refugee question[17] is still very strong, and I cannot go into any Society without hearing it made matter of discussion.

This being a place where from it's official and other Residents the opinions of all Germany may be fairly gathered, I think it my duty to inform Your Lordship in what spirit and temper this question is remarked upon.

It is generally such as to give little room for argument, but though I have never avoided the subject when challenged, and can hardly flatter myself with having worked changes in preconceived opinions, I generally find myself listened to with more patience than could have been expected from the heat and anger with which all that relates to the subject is ordinarily handled.

A far greater difficulty than that of defending the policy of our Government as respects the refugees has been to explain how it could tolerate the public announcement of a subscription[18] at the head of which are the names of members of Parliament and of other people in respectable positions in life, the proceeds of such subscription to be handed over to Messrs. Mazzini and Kossuth to be applied as they should think best.

I fear I altogether fail in making it understood that the freedom of action allowed by our Institutions, is distinct from direct countenance and favour being given to such a project by authority; and it has been observed to me, that even if our Laws permit so great a latitude, the Government might at least mark its disapproval of a project so

[17]The Refugee Question revolved around the British policy of permitting revolutionaries and political exiles from all European states to settle in Great Britain, especially in London.

[18]'Shilling subscription in aid of European freedom', initiated in May 1852 and publicized in *The Reasoner*, a socialist newspaper.

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injurious and insulting to a state with which we are in alliance, by some public declaration condemnatory of this open support of revolutionary projects.

I think it my duty to report these observations to Your Lordship, in the conviction that any explanation or declaration made in Parliament as relates to this matter by a member of Her Majesty's Government could not fail of having favorable effect.

Something of the kind will perhaps in Your Lordship's opinion be necessary to palliate or prevent the ill effects arising to us nationally from the mistrust and apprehensions created by recent events among our continental neighbours.

FO 30/167: Alexander Malet to Earl of Clarendon, No 22, Frankfurt, 25 April 1854

Ineffectiveness of the Federal Diet; deadlock due to Austro-Prussian rivalry; hopeless division and weakness of smaller German states

The views opened by M. Bismarck's remarks relating to The Diet, as reported in my preceding Despatch appear to me to have such important bearings on the present posture of continental affairs, that I think it my duty more particularly to call Your Lordship's attention to considerations attaching thereto.[19]

By the actual working of the German Diet as now constituted 20,000,000 of an homogeneous population are rendered of almost no account in the adjustment of European affairs.

Through the power exercised by the President,[20] and by traditional influence, Austria not only excludes Prussia from what would seem to be her just and natural position, (a state of things which Prussia endeavours to counteract by making The Diet of as small importance as possible,) but the antagonism of the two Governments works on the rest of Germany in a thousand shapes, all tending to weakness and to the destruction of Independence.

It would be easy to enlarge on this subject, but I must avoid prolixity, and point attention as briefly as possible, to the tenacity of Austria on the one hand, in retaining her grasp, while Prussia is not less resolved

[19]According to Malet's dispatch No 21 of 8 April 1854, Bismarck stated that, owing to Austria's holding of the presidency of the Federal Diet, 'Prussia would as much as possible slight and ignore the Diet, until its Constitution was effectively ordered', as 'they would not [. . .] subject themselves continually to having unpalatable measures thrust down their throats by Austrian majorities'.

[20]Anton Prokesch von Osten.

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to wrest the power she holds from her Imperial Rival, and only watches her opportunity to make the attempt seriously.

The Body politic of the States themselves as well as their Rulers, are vividly alive to the prospect of absorption[.] Each contemplates without much apprehension the fate reserved for his neighbour, with some vague idea of profiting by his misfortune, but with small notion of concerting measures to avert the catastrophe.

Perfectly informed of the State of things, Russia and France have kept up their interests with the minor States. France in this respect has done neither more nor less of late than follow her usual policy, but Russia has taken (and I have good reason to believe is still using) extraordinary efforts to maintain Her position.

It is quite needless to point out how the different influences at work establish a hopeless state of division, and the conviction that a change is likely soon to happen is probably one of the chief motives for Prussia's striving to remain neutral on the Eastern question in the hope that while the rest of Europe is fully occupied, she may secure the object of her dearest ambition.

It is my firm conviction that if in this conjuncture France and England would concur in making their influence felt in the Diet, Prussia would feel such a step as a check of vital consequence to her own intended move.

If it became known that the two Governments would appeal to The Diet on the present posture of European affairs, and would no longer allow the voice of 20,000,000 to be stifled by the want of concert between those who should lead them, the effect on the public mind could not be otherwise than of the most powerful kind.

The joint action of France and of Great Britain would prevent the apprehensions, which might attach to the isolated action of one or the other Power, and the members of The Diet itself could not be otherwise than flattered at an appeal to their independence.

Austria (unless her policy is much changed) would see a support of her own views in the course I would recommend. Prussia alone with whose ambitious projects it would interfere, would feel dissatisfied, but might thus be forced into a line of policy more consonant with that of the western Powers.

I do not trespass further on Your Lordship's time in recommending a course which may not meet the approval of Her Majesty's Government, but as the recent policy of Prussia does not any longer render it advisable that we should support her policy of ignoring The Diet, I should not have felt I had done my duty, if I omitted to point out a course by which the minor confederated States of Germany may be turned to useful account in the great question now agitating Europe.

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FO 30/168: Alexander Malet to Earl of Clarendon, No 130, Frankfurt, 2 November 1854

Possibility of direction of German emigration to Australia; worries in Germany about migration of middle classes

Frequent enquiries have been made of me in order to ascertain whether Her Majesty's Government does or would afford any facilities for German emigration to Australia.

I have been unable to satisfy the querists, nor have I obtained the desired information from Her Majesty's Consulate established in this residence.

I have seen frequent notices in the Public Papers of the want of labour in Her Majesty's Australian Colonies as well as of the means taken in England by giving free passages and other facilities to the emigration of Her Majesty's subjects of the United Kingdom, to supply that deficiency, but cannot learn that any of the encouragements held out to British Subjects are extended to Foreigners.

It might however, I would humbly venture to suggest, be seriously worthy of the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, whether a portion of the large German emigration continually pouring out of the various States of the Confederation, and especially from Southern Germany, (principally to America) might not be advantageously diverted to our Australian Colonies.[21]

The Class of those who emigrate in Germany has within the last two or three years undergone considerable alteration; not only do the numbers of those who expatriate themselves augment, but the disposition to do so is spreading rapidly from the lower to the middle Classes, to such a degree, that the Governments of some States are getting alarmed, and are throwing obstacles in the way of the intending Emigrant, in the fear that Capital as well as strength and sinews will desert the land.

It would be out of place and foreign from the object I have in view to enter into the causes of the emigration, but I may be allowed to state, that from my own observation, as well as from much information given me, I cannot doubt that very valuable elements might be found in it, for adding to and promoting the future prosperity of our Australian Colonies.

The Qualities of the German Peasant labourer and Artisan are too well known in England to make it necessary for me to advert to them, the occasion if it is thought desirable to take advantage of it, for

[21] During the 1850s, almost one million Germans migrated overseas. The peak years were 1853 and 1854.

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directing a portion of the Emigration now in progress amongst these Classes of Germans in the direction I have ventured to suggest, could not be more favourable.

It would require some slight machinery to make known the conditions of Passage, prospects of employ &c, and to keep in movement in the desired channel, the tide of voluntary exiles seeking a new Country.

Frankfort would, I imagine, be the best place for establishing this machinery in the Shape of an Agency for this express purpose, and my chief object in now addressing Your Lordship on the subject, is, that as I shall within a short period visit England, I may hope that the subject will have had time, (if Your Lordship shall have deemed it deserving attention,) to be brought under the consideration of Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, and that under Your Lordship's auspices I may have the honour of conferring with Sir George Grey on the subject.

FO 30/171: Alexander Malet to Earl of Clarendon, No 23, Frankfurt, 14 February 1855

Struggle between Austria and Prussia; need for Prussia to make a choice between alliance with Russia or with Western powers; divisions among smaller states

The struggle at present going on between the two Great German Powers is in progress with more than usual activity, but the field is at present more confined to the separate Courts than to Frankfort, where the results of previous arrangements and decisions become finally apparent.

This is naturally and inevitably a crisis of great moment, and intense anxiety exists, for it cannot be doubted that the period is at hand when Prussia must take a decision, either for or against Her Alliance and cooperation with the Western Powers, as it is the general persuasion that a Position of neutrality is untenable.[22]

Although in this conjuncture the aim and wishes of a certain Party in Prussia would inevitably lead to an Alliance with Russia, I find so few opinions venturing to support that policy, that I cannot induce myself to believe in its being adopted in the last extremity; but if the same hands which now direct the Powers of Government continue to hold them, Prussia, even if eventually seeking our Alliance, can hardly be looked on as sincere, either by England or France or Austria; of which latter Power more especially, Her jealousy and dislike are so

[22]For Prussia's position during the Crimean War see pp. 105–112.

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strong, that sooner or later they must, one would apprehend, find vent in open quarrel.

In this state of things, my Lord, I have carefully avoided language that could irritate the too great susceptibilities already existing on both sides. I have never failed to point out the advantages of Union, or the fatal consequences likely to ensue from a breach between these two States, not to themselves alone, but to the whole Confederation. I have indeed so far deprecated the policy of Prussia that I have never shrunk from qualifying it as, in my opinion, the least calculated for obtaining Her professed object of obtaining Peace, and have said that Her attitude was such as must continue to encourage the resistance of Russia, while there would be every prospect of the common object being attained by a frank adhesion to the side of the Western Powers.

There have recently occurred such sudden changes in the views of some of the Minor Governments that it is extremely difficult to pronounce on which side lies the majority of Votes in the Diet on any question decisive of the attitude to be taken by the Confederation, and, as generally happens, Bavaria thinking, (and perhaps not erroneously,) that the decision lies with Her, is making Her importance felt on both sides, and helping Prussia to delay decision.

The Secret Circular of the Vienna Cabinet of the 14th of last month[23] has been adroitly turned to Her own purpose by Prussia, and that Government, whose views as far as regards territorial arrangements and encroachments on Her Neighbours are notorious, has made use of that document to impute all sorts of projects of that kind to the Government of Vienna, and, as is said, with considerable success in detaching from the Imperial Government certain not very fast adherents.

The reported intended movement of French Troops in support of Austria, is now attempted to be turned to similar account, but I apprehend with less success, for it is not difficult to see that such assistance to Austria need give little umbrage, and would hold out but slight menace to Prussia, if she honestly fulfils her professed wish of remaining immoveable; and that, if really contemplated, it is only provoked and rendered necessary by the doubtfulness of the attitude now taken by the Cabinet of Berlin.

[23]In the secret circular of 14 January 1855, Count Buol announced Austria's intention to place the federal army on a war footing. This was proposed as a motion to the Federal Diet on 22 January (see n. 19 in Austria section). However, on 8 February, the Diet – on the basis of the report of its united committees – decided to take only preliminary steps for the mobilization of the federal army, which was to be directed against any external threat (and not only against Russia, as Austria had intended).

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FO 30/172: Alexander Malet to Earl of Clarendon, Confidential, No 97, Frankfurt, 19 August 1855

Plans to establish a pro-British newspaper in Germany

In submitting to Your Lordship's notice the accompanying project for establishing a daily Journal in Germany the Chief object of which should be the advocacy of English Interests, I beg to state that the scheme is wholly unconnected with the observations I ventured to lay before Your Lordship in my Despatch No 89 of the 30th of July.[24]

A strong confirmation of the necessity of something being done in this direction is afforded by this project, emanating as it does from native Germans without any suggestion whatsoever on my part, and founded solely, as I believe, on a serious consideration of the necessities of the case, as viewed through the medium of friendly feelings towards England, and hostility to Russia.

Whatever may be thought of the views of the parties who put forward this scheme, I believe the character and position of the two Gentlemen, through whom it has been communicated to me for the purpose of being laid before Your Lordship, offer sufficient guarantees for their honesty of purpose.

The history of their communication is as follows:

A few days since I was called upon by Mr. Sang (architect) a naturalised British Subject, who told me that he had been induced to come to me, by receiving from Dr. Gaerth an Advocate residing in Frankfort, a letter, asking him if there were no means of laying before the British Government, the desirableness of having some Organ in the German Press, and offering himself to direct such an Organ. Dr. Gaerth founded the proposal on the fact, that at the present moment, there is no daily or periodical exponent of ideas favourable to English Policy, throughout the length and breadth of Germany. Dr. Gaerth observed, that there are, on the contrary, numerous covert detractors, and scarcely fewer open enemies, while Russia has her Organs in every quarter.

I told Mr. Sang that I fully recognised the importance of our endeavouring by some means or other, to combat the malevolent insinuations which were constantly appearing in the public Press against England, and still more that of contradicting false statements which were assiduously being published by certain German Newspapers.

[24] In his dispatch, Malet suggested that Clarendon consider the possibility of establishing a staff devoted 'to the sole matter of watching and correcting the Press', which he felt was beyond the scope of the work of the diplomatic corps.

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That I was very glad to see that the matter struck German friends of England in the same light as it did myself – that if Dr. Gaerth would put in the shape of a brief memorandum such ideas as occurred to him on the subject, I should have much pleasure in receiving and considering them, and that I would transmit the memorandum to Your Lordship, if it appeared to me deserving of attention.

On Saturday Mr. Sang again called with Dr. Gaerth, having previously sent me the Memorandum which I have the honour to annex.[25]

I had a long conversation with these Gentlemen, in which I did not conceal from them, that my notions of the mode in which The German Press was to be influenced, varied from the project formed by Dr. Gaerth – That I thought existing Journals might be influenced, and that much good might be effected in this way, at an infinitely less cost than by the expensive process of establishing a new Journal – that I also feared that the influence of England could not be concealed, and would excite prejudice against such a recognised Organ, just as was undoubtedly the case at present with the Russian Journal de [*sic*] Nord[26] – That without entering further on the question of expense which I hardly felt competent to scrutinize, it must be evident to any one that for such an outlay as was contemplated, the fullest control must be exercised on the behalf of the Government which sanctioned the undertaking, and all receipts must be considered as belonging to the capitalist (as I thought it would be best to designate the Government,) whose funds created the undertaking – that I did not feel entitled to hold out hopes of a favorable response to the proposal, but that I would undertake to lay it before Your Lordship, and to beg that it might be considered.

Dr. Gaerth in reply to my remarks, said he thought that the influence of England need not be so blazoned, as had been the case with the journal I had alluded to, and might by prudence be kept from public knowledge. As to expense, he thought that independently of the difficulty of influencing existing German Papers, already engaged and paid by other Parties, it might be doubted, whether in the end this mode of operating would not be more costly, and less effective than his proposal. I need not, however, trouble Your Lordship at much more length with what passed on this occasion, but merely mention that by Mr. Sang's account, and by the position he occupies, as well as by such

[25]Enclosure: copy of the memorandum of Dr Gaerth, regarding the establishment of a journal favourable to British interests.

[26]Russian attempts to establish and fund a French-language newspaper in Berlin failed in March 1855, after the Prussian government refused its authorization. From July 1855, the pro-Russian *Journal du Nord* was published at Brussels.

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observations, as this interview afforded me the opportunity of making, Dr. Gaerth appears to be very competent to direct an enterprise of this sort, for which he seems as well fitted by his abilities, as by his enlightened notions and zeal in the cause of commercial and political reform in Germany.

Dr. Gaerth gave me to understand that if the plan should be seriously entertained by Her Majesty's Government, his programn [*sic*] might be modified as should be deemed advisable.

FO 30/175: Alexander Malet to Earl of Clarendon, No 15, Frankfurt, 6 February 1856

Prussian attendance at Congress of Paris; great influence of Prussia over Confederation's Eastern policy; diplomatic irrelevance of the minor states

In the sitting of the Diet to be held tomorrow the Austrian proposition inviting the pure and simple adhesion of the central organ of the Confederation to the five articles as accepted by the Russian Government will be brought forward.[27]

According to standing orders the matter will be referred to the commission on Oriental Affairs – and I have the most undoubted authority for informing Your Lordship that the reports of the Committee will depend on the prospect of the admission or exclusion of Prussia from the Conferences, about to be held in Paris.[28] If Prussia is assured of admission, the report will most probably be presented at the earliest possible date, and recommend the unanimous adoption of the Austrian proposition: if there remains any incertitude on the point, means for delaying a decision will be found; but if it is settled that no Prussian Plenipotentiary is to be admitted, an adverse report will be presented to the Diet, and the question either be allowed to drop, or if brought to a vote, be determined in opposition to Austria.

I have so frequently of late had occasion to set before Your Lordship the preponderating influence which Prussia unquestionably exercises upon the Diet in connexion with all questions arising out of the state of

[27]On 16 January 1856, Russia accepted the terms presented in the Austrian ultimatum of 16 December 1855. The articles (an extension of the Four Points agreed by France, Great Britain, and Austria at Vienna on 8 August 1854) included: the abolition of the Russian protectorate in the Danubian principalities; free navigation of the Danube; a neutralized Black Sea; and the regulation of the rights of Christians in the Ottoman Empire.

[28]Congress of Paris, 15 February–30 March 1856. Prussia was admitted to the congress on 10 March and joined the negotiations of France, Great Britain, the Ottoman Empire, Piedmont-Sardinia, Russia, and Austria from 18 March. The congress concluded with the Treaty of Paris, which officially ended the Crimean War.

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Warfare between the Allies of Turkey, and Russia, that Your Lordship will have been aware of the probability of Prussia's using her influence with the Diet as is being done, with the object of procuring her own admission to the Conferences.

Prussia is in fact compelled to adopt this course for unless she could count on the adhesion of some of the members of the Confederation to Her Policy – Her position as being isolated, would hardly be tenable, whereas by carrying a majority of the Diet with Her, the check upon Austria which is known to be most efficient, is still kept in play.

There is a possibility, even if Prussia adopts the five propositions, that Bavaria and Saxony may make a shew of asserting some independence of action, but it can lead to nothing: the minor States must do the bidding of one or other of the two greater Powers, and can have no will of their own if they are united.

It strikes me, and I venture to express the opinion with all deference, that those who have to decide on the admission of Prussia to the Paris conferences, must form their decision on the consideration whether the assumption or rather the retention of an expectant attitude by that Power together with a majority of the Germanic Confederation is of sufficient importance to make it worth while to convert that attitude into one of positive engagement in the principles laid down by the five points, by allowing Prussia to have a deliberative voice in the Conferences?

I understand that a plan of modification of the proposal to be made tomorrow, put forward by M. de Beust, has been set aside, and that pure and simple adhesion will be demanded, though a proposition on the side of Prussia had gone so far as to offer adhesion, with the reserve of power to recall such adhesion if any of the points admitted should give rise to controversy in the proposed Conferences.

FO 30/176: Alexander Malet to Earl of Clarendon, No 71, Frankfurt, 7 October 1856

Rising cost of living in Germany

The gradual increase of the price of the necessaries as well as of the luxuries of life, in continental Europe, has for some years attracted the serious attention of observers, and though the state of things which it produces does not often give rise to open complaint, – it is well known that privations are felt from the operation of the causes which are at work in bringing about general enhancement of the costs of living, to a far greater and more serious extent than can be detected by superficial observation.

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In some of the States of the Confederation – in Nassau for instance, and in the free State of Frankfort, the allowances of certain Classes of Public servants, have recently been augmented; and I am informed that similar measures are contemplated by other Governments: not, very willingly, as is usually the case in such circumstances, but under the pressure of very general complaints and evident necessity.

I beg to enclose an article relating to the subject, which has recently appeared in one of the most popular Journals of this place, and can from my own observations assure Your Lordship that it expresses what is very generally felt on this subject.[29]

An intelligent native of Frankfort recently stated to me that he computed the ratio of advance in the cost of living within the last twelve years at nearly one third: that for instance an outlay of 3,000 florins at the present day would be required to maintain a family in a similar condition of life to that which a dozen years since would be kept up for 2,000.

It is a very general persuasion that the fiscal measures of the British Government[30] attracting as they are said to do, the produce of the Continent to our markets, are the chief cause of the general advance of prices. I state the circumstances to Your Lordship, not only as a matter of interest, in moral and statistical points of view, but because the consequences are making themselves felt by the Servants of the British Government employed on the Continent, as well as by natives, and must as I conceive end by forcing themselves on the attention of her Majesty's Government with a view to revision of establishments, calculated on a far different scale of living on the major part of the Continent of Europe, to that which now prevails.

FO 30/176: Alexander Malet to Earl of Clarendon, Confidential, No 94, Frankfurt, 26 December 1856

Interview with Bismarck on Neuchâtel Crisis; relations between Swiss and Germans

The question of Neuchatel and the serious misunderstanding thereupon, which exists between The Prussian and Swiss Governments, are for the moment the chief subjects of attention in Germany, and naturally cause much disquietude.[31]

[29]Enclosures: extract from *Frankfurter Postzeitung* regarding the increasing cost of the necessities of life in Germany (original and translation).

[30]From the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, successive British governments had been committed to policies of free trade and curbing tariffs and duties.

[31]The conflict revolved around the failed attempts to restore Prussian authority in Neuchâtel (*Neuenburg*), which was simultaneously a Swiss Canton and a Prussian Principality,

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I have had various occasions of conversing with M. de Bismarck since his return to his Post, and if reliance is to be placed on his assertions, things have reached a point which make it impossible for The King his Sovereign to abstain from employing force to vindicate rights which it would, as M. de Bismarck observes, disgrace Him if He allowed them to be trampled upon with Impunity.

At the same time M. de Bismarck admits the quarrel to be a most unfortunate one, and that the whole principality of Neuchatel is not worth a drop of the blood which will probably be shed in asserting The King's pretensions.

It is, he says, like the case of a man who is engaged in an affair of honour, and who goes out to get shot at, heartily wishing the Police would interfere.

M. de Bismarck spoke of the efforts of The Emperor of The French to obtain concessions from the Swiss Government,[32] in warm and eulogistic terms, and said they had been most energetic and loyal. He also made some allusion, though not in a very distinct manner to our support having been given more to the Swiss than to his own Government's view of the question.

I have, however, reason to know that M. de Bismarck has spoken more explicitly to other persons than to myself on this part of the subject, and has represented The King of Prussia as being surprised and hurt at the course Her Majesty's Government has taken in relation to this affair.[33]

My object being rather to hear what M. de Bismarck might have to say on the matter, than to discuss it with His Excellency, the only remark I made in an interjectory manner was, that I thought it had been unfortunate that at the very outset of the affair, such menacing language had been used towards Switzerland,[34] but M. de Bismarck

following the establishment of a democratic republic in 1848 with the support of the neighbouring Cantons. A failed counter-revolutionary uprising occurred in September 1856, and, when the Swiss authorities declined Prussia's demand to stop the prosecution of the participants, Prussia decided on military intervention. In December 1856, Prussia suspended diplomatic relations with Switzerland, mobilized a part of its army, and sent an ultimatum that Switzerland must release the prisoners by 15 January 1857.

[32]On 28 November 1856, Napoleon III suggested that the Swiss Federal Council should release the prisoners.

[33]The underlying principles of British policy in the affair were: the recognition of the right of the people of Neuchâtel to choose a republican constitution; the maintenance of Swiss independence; and the preservation of European peace. In its efforts to mediate between Prussia and the Swiss Confederation, the British government suggested a complete separation of Neuchâtel from Prussia and an amnesty for the rebels held by the Swiss authorities.

[34]Royal decree of 14 September 1856, communicated as a verbal note to the president of the Swiss Confederation by the Prussian plenipotentiary, Rudolf von Sydow.

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conceived it was necessary, as the Swiss would never believe that they were in earnest at Berlin, if moderate language had been used.

He went on to say that the putting their army [*sic*] on a war footing would at least have one good effect, and would shew his Government whether the faults of organization, which were found to exist during the war for suppression of the Baden Revolution[35] had been, as they hoped, successfully remedied.

The idea of serious resistance on the part of the Swiss does not seem to have entered into M. de Bismarck's calculations. He says indeed, that the Force his Government will put in motion will be so large as to render a successful resistance nearly hopeless, as it will consist of from 120 to 150,000 men, of which number 80,000 are destined to form the Corps of active operations, the remainder will be "échelonné"[36] at different points between the Prussian and Swiss Frontier in reserve; Mr. de Bismarck has also assured me, that the consent of all the States through which their troops would have to pass, was either already formally given, or secured.

M. de Bismarck represents the national feeling on the subject in Prussia as generally favourable to The King's views, and is of opinion that the War, if war it is to be, will be popular.

No effort, however will be made under present projects, to do more than occupy Basle, Schaffhausen, and so much of the Swiss Territory as lies on the left bank of The Rhine, between those two points. This portion of The Swiss soil will, as M. de Bismarck says, be held till the King obtains satisfaction for the infractions of His Sovereign Rights, and farther till security is given for the costs of the Prussian military expenses being repaid.

M. de Bismarck remarked that the employment of Dr. Vogt in a public capacity in this conjuncture (he has I believe been sent as a Deputy from Geneva to the Vorort,[37]) has had a very bad effect in Germany, and shews the ultra democratic tendencies of those who have placed him in a situation where he may do much mischief.

Klapka the Hungarian Refugee was also, he said, exerting himself to envenom the dispute, – and there would doubtless be other Political Refugees anxious to mingle in the strife.

Vogt, I may observe, bears the character of being the most dangerous of the German Revolutionists of 1848 now in Europe, he was a Professor in the University of Giessen, and one of the leading members of the Frankfort Parliament in 1848–9. He there

[35]Third Baden Revolution, May–July 1849, which was put down by Prussian military intervention.

[36]'Spread out'.

[37]Bern.

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distinguished himself by considerable oratorical abilities, and strong red-republican opinions, and still more so by an open profession of atheistical opinions, which he had long been known to entertain, principles which, strange to say, had not been rebuked by authority, notwithstanding his having held the place of a public Instructor at Giessen. He took refuge in Switzerland in 1850, and has, I hear, found employment in his former line of the education of youth, in one of the public establishments of Geneva.

I may here remark, while reviewing passing events, that there is more chance of this quarrel being brought to a head, from their being very little good neighbourly feeling between the Swiss and the coterminous Germans. The Swiss despise Bavarians, Wurtemburgers and Badeners alike, – and the natives of these States return the dislike of The Swiss, whom they think an overbearing and overreaching race, and these feelings are transmitted to their Brother Germans, who do not come into geographical contact with the Republican Territory. There exists also a strong feeling among the German defeated revolutionists of 1848 that their party did not receive from Switzerland the support which they reckoned on, during their struggle, or the friendly reception and sympathy in their disaster to which they were entitled, when the remnant of the Baden Insurgents was driven across the Frontier in 1849.

M. de Bismark informs me that his Government will be able to employ the surplus of the loan raised for putting the army on the preparatory War footing in 1854,[38] which has not all been expended, and that the Ministry will ask an indemnity of the Chambers for the mode of employing this surplus; but as the amount will by no means suffice for preparations on the extensive scale to be adopted, and in the contingency of a sustained effort, a much larger supplementary sum will have to be demanded from the Prussian Chambers.

FO 30/179: Alexander Malet to Earl of Clarendon, Confidential, No 81, Frankfurt, 28 September 1857

French designs on the Rhineland; assessment of Bismarck's position, aims, and character; Prussian desire to annex Hanover

In my Despatch No 74 of the 24th of August, I had the honour of informing Your Lordship that Count Rechberg had mentioned to me a phrase to which some importance might be attached, which

[38]On the basis of the law of 20 May 1854 (*Gesetz betreffend den außerordentlichen Geldbedarf der Militärverwaltung*), Prussia took out a loan of 30 million thalers.

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appeared to have escaped M. de Bismarck in conversation with Count Rechberg, concerning "négociations" with France relating to the Prussian Rhenish provinces.[39]

The day before yesterday I saw M d'Usedom who told me that something had undoubtedly been agitated on the subject, though whether it had assumed the form of negociatiation [*sic*] between the two Governments he did not distinctly aver.

M d'Usedom, who as Your Lordship is aware, is not at present employed, is well informed and he says it is the aim of the Emperor of the French to persuade all those who are most nearly interested in the question, how conducive it would be to the future peace of Europe if those provinces should be amicably ceded to France. All the World (as M d'Usedom represents His Imperial Majesty's arguments,) is aware, how ardently the French people desire that acquisition, and how eminently such a transaction if brought about by friendly means, would conciliate the feeling of the nation, not only to himself as having obtained it, but to their neighbours on the other side of that great natural boundary, which would then indeed separate, but scarcely divide them.

On the other hand the probability that France would make her next warlike effort to recover that natural line of Frontier, is dimly kept in sight, and compensation to Prussia for her voluntary sacrifice vaguely hinted.

It cannot escape Your Lordship that M de Bismarck is not only retained in a post, which is of the greatest importance to Prussia, but that he is continually called to Berlin to give his personal advice in every emergency; and that no political event takes place in which his country is concerned in which he has not a voice.

Your Lordship will not have forgotten M de Bismarcks language to me at the time it was sought to engage Prussia in the Russian War – and his unhesitating avowals of a lust for the territorial aggrandisement of his Country, as reported to Your Lordship in my Despatch No 11 of the 29th of March 1854 and in my private and confidential Despatch of the 29th of May in the same year.

From the Principles[40] then avouched I have no reason to believe that His Excellency now recedes, and the conduct observed by His Government towards him, is to say the least of it singular, if he is not wholly trusted and found useful.

[39]In his dispatch No 74, Malet reported that, when Rechberg stated that he doubted France would permit Prussian territorial expansion into the Elbe Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein even if Prussia were to offer the Rhine provinces in exchange, Bismarck replied that Rechberg did not know what point negotiations had reached.

[40]Malet refers to Bismarck's belief in Prussia's destiny to assume leadership in Germany.

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His Excellency returns here for instance from leave of absence at the moment of the meeting of the Emperors of France and Russia at Stuttgardt[41] – presents himself at Darmstadt where he is not accredited, and has interviews with the Emperor of Russia. He then proceeds to Baden, ostensibly in attendance on the Prince of Prussia,[42] where (as I learn from a friend who was at Baden) he took remarkable pains to throw himself in the way of the Emperor of the French.

Count Rechberg whose business it is closely to observe M de Bismarck, has repeatedly expressed to me his opinion of his address and ability, and is apprehensive of his political preponderance in Prussia for the future.

He has also commented on the pains which M de Bismarck takes to ingratiate himself with The Prince of Prussia, since reports of the failing health of the King have been prevalent, and is far from thinking that his influence will end with the life of His present Majesty; considering him in fact a man whose talents are of an order that must be taken account of in Prussia by any Government under which that Country may be placed.

For my own part I am disposed to think that his intemperance of language is often calculated, that he has in fact a settled purpose of sowing disquietude. As long as this course produces no results, he may, and indeed must often be disavowed by his Government, but the manner in which that Government treats him, must surely be the best test of the estimation in which he is held.

It is not irrelevant to mention in this Despatch, that the desire of Prussia to obtain Hanover is perfectly well known in Germany and probably elsewhere, and that the Government of that country has recently been so conducted,[43] as to authorise the opinion that the Territorial occupation would offer no great difficulties to Prussia if effected with the consent of France.

FO 30/183: Alexander Malet to Earl of Malmesbury, Confidential, No 134, Frankfurt, 28 November 1858

Gotha Party; reactions to New Era in Prussia; discussions with Bismarck and Rechberg on political state of Germany

The concentration of the Representatives of all the Governments of Germany in Frankfort and the establishment of the German

[41] The emperors met on 25–27 September 1857.

[42] Prince Wilhelm.

[43] Malet alludes to: Prussia's influencing of the elections for the Hanoverian chambers in January 1857; the revision on 24 March 1857 of chapter six (on finances) of the Hanoverian constitution of 1840; and the controversial valuation of the royal demesne.

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Unitarian, called the Gotha Party, (the only one offering any consistency as opposed to the established order of things,) in its near vicinity to Heidelberg,[44] have made this point more than ordinarily interesting during the recent crisis in the Prussian Cabinet.[45]

In the first moments of the change, an unreasonable degree of apprehension was felt by all those who had looked on the recent order of things in Prussia as countenancing the efforts made in the majority of German States to reestablish their systems of internal Government as nearly as possible as they were before 1848.

The Gotha Party gave some slight signs of life as compared with the reserve and inaction which they have latterly maintained, but their elation, if felt, was not expressed in any shape or degree corresponding to the absolute alarm and terror professed to be felt by the favourers of absolutism.

The first impression which some of these Governments felt was, that 1848 was again upon them, and the red Republic about to start into life.

M. Henri de Gagern attended a public meeting in Frankfort[46] for the first time since 1850 and made a moderate declaration of adhesion to the general principles of his Party.

At present the exaggerated fears of the Ultra Party, at the change, are considerably calmed, and there are no indications that any faction likely to disturb public tranquillity thinks the moment come for action.

At the same time there can be no doubt that a check is already put to a great many reactionary projects, and that the Authors of some changes already effected in that direction in the minor States feel ill at ease. General attention is however for the present fixed on the coming meeting of the Prussian Chambers,[47] and very momentous consequences hang on the complexion which the future constitution and action of those Bodies may assume.

The language held here by M. de Bismark would lead to the conclusion that he expects his own speedy removal. He has even spoken of Baron Werther as his probable Successor, and of his own transfer to St Petersburg[,] Paris or London.

[44]In the 1850s, a number of prominent adherents of the Gotha Party (see n. 7 in this section) lived in Heidelberg, including Heinrich von Gagern, and they became known as the *Heidelberger Kreis*.

[45]Prussia saw a change of policy after the accession of Wilhelm as prince regent on 9 October 1858, in place of his brother Friedrich Wilhelm IV. The liberal-conservative ministry of the New Era was formed on 5–6 November.

[46]Malet most probably refers to the meeting on 13 November 1858 of the committee for the erection of a national memorial in honour of Freiherr vom Stein.

[47]The elections of November 1858 saw a victory for the liberals; the chambers met on 12 January 1859 (sitting until 14 May 1859).

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His removal will be generally interpreted as a mark of dissatisfaction and his nomination to another Post of importance will be rather with the view of keeping him at a distance from Berlin than any other motive. In this light I think he himself sees the prospect, at which he is by no means pleased.

As respects the present Prussian Government and its prospects, M. de Bismark's language has been unusually circumspect. He has dwelt on the difficulties of Constitutional Government as understood and practised in England, being applicable to his own Country, and in this respect I must say His Excellency coincides in opinion with the great majority of German Statesmen with whom I have conversed on the subject. "We have not" he observed "any wealthy and powerful Nobility to act as ballast or to be the l'abot de l'Etât,[48] and your Government could not render ours a better service than by counselling moderation and caution at Berlin."

It is not however in Prussia as M. de Bismark observed, that so much danger is risked by a change to a more liberal form of Government, but the peril is great in the smaller States, where the Governments and such an Aristocracy as they possess, are almost universally unpopular. The reasons for this latter feeling are, that the Nobility are rarely distinguished for Wealth, and can not therefore gain popularity in the various modes which the possession of ample means renders possible. They cling obstinately to their privileges, and the custom of exclusive marriages, cuts them off from intercourse with any class but their own – and precludes their repairing dilapidated fortunes by alliances with the Banking or mercantile Classes which are fast acquiring wealth and social importance.

Count Rechberg although one of the most liberal Austrians with whom I am acquainted was greatly alarmed at the Prussian changes, talked wildly of the Mountaine – "nous sommes en plein 48" &c &c.[49]

His Excellency did not allow himself to be persuaded that the danger was small, by my saying I saw little risk in Prussia's carrying out the theory of Constitutional Government which She had already adopted,[50] he inveighed against the insufficiency of the checks which the Constitution of the Body Politic in that Country presented to any such form of Government.

[48] 'Fetter of the state'.

[49] 'We are in full [18]48'. Rechberg is likening the political situation in Prussia to that of revolutionary France, where the extreme republican faction in both 1789 and 1848–1851 were referred to as the *montagne* (mountain).

[50] In his address to the cabinet of 8 November 1858, Prince Regent Wilhelm declared 'that Prussia was prepared to support law everywhere' (*Die Welt muß wissen, daß Preußen überall das Recht zu schützen bereit ist*).

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You English are too apt to measure all the world by your own Standard. The Germans and as much as any tribe among them – the Prussians, are unfit for self Government, they are so unused to think for themselves that they act like children when not kept in leading strings – and are so egoistical that you will never hear a large view of any political subject expressed by those who are not educated for that particular Science.

He spoke also of the poverty and want of independence of the class of Nobles, and said that no where in Prussia did there exist any safe check to ultra Democratic innovations.

As to Austria he felt at ease, She was far better off as far as regarded the standing of the Nobility and the attachment of the Masses to them and to the Government. His Excellency went so far as to affirm that among the latter class even in Italy, the Government was beloved, and that it was to their fidelity and attachment it was owing that Austria reestablished her authority in that country.[51]

This is rather diverging from the subject in hand, but I mention Count Rechberg's line of argument to Your Lordship because it was his object to shew that excepting in his own Country, there was no firm or stable Government in Germany, and the nearer approaches were made to his ideal model the greater were the prospects of order and tranquillity.

I find however that since the first impression has left time for reflection His Excellency's fears like those of most others who shared his apprehensions have been greatly modified. He was personally irritated also in the first instance as well as alarmed, for he told me confidentially that M. de Bismarck had assured him that the new Prussian Cabinet in removing him, would make it a sine quâ non at Vienna that Count Rechberg should also quit Frankfort.

His Excellency is now reassured on this point, and has learnt that no intimation of any such intention of the Berlin Cabinet had reached his own.

Count Rechberg having been generally designated as the possible successor of Count Buol, keeps in view, there can be no doubt, his dissent from the latter in many points and this feeling it is which induces him as he confidentially observed, to avoid compromising himself by accepting any other Office that Count Buol could have to bestow.

[51]Austria had retained her Italian possessions after the revolutionary uprisings in Lombardy-Venetia in 1848 and the defeat of Sardinia-Piedmont in the First Italian War of Independence in 1849.

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FO 30/186: Alexander Malet to Earl of Malmesbury, No 33, Frankfurt, 14 March 1859

Anti-French feeling in Germany; Austrian preparations for war in Italy

The Patrie[52] and certain other French Journals are at great pains to represent the expression of German public feeling against the presumed hostile intentions of France towards Austria, as springing from any other motives than those in which they really originate.[53]

It does not admit of a doubt that no such unanimous sentiment has pervaded the whole of Germany since the memorable year of 1813,[54] – and instead of being called forth by manoeuvres, or upheld by intrigue it is the spontaneous and genuine manifestation of a national impulse, the existence of which among the various branches of the Teutonic race has often been denied to exist.

It is not a little remarkable that most of the States which have been prominent in declaring their resolution to support Austria at all hazards, are so situated as to be exposed to the first brunt of a French attack, or were imagined to be in some degree under French influence.

Thus Your Lordship will have learnt that Bavaria, Baden, Nassau, and Wurtemberg, and this free City, have found public organs for making known the unanimous feeling of their population; and it is to be noted that these public declarations have in many instances outrun or overborne the will or discretion of the several Governments, which in no case have felt it safe, even had they been so disposed, to try to moderate or repress the popular voice.

The attitude of Prussia was beginning to be the object of angry remark and discussion, till the recent declarations of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State, and of Count Schwerin gave some satisfaction to public opinion in the rest of Germany.[55]

I hear a general expression of confidence that if Austria is attacked in Italy by France, the Prussian Government will be forced by the

[52] *Le Patrie*, Paris daily (established in 1841).

[53] Prior to the Second War of Italian Independence (April–July 1859), France, as stipulated in the secret Pact of Plombières of July 1858, supported Piedmont-Sardinia's quest for Italian unity and the secession of the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia from the Austrian Empire. In return, Piedmont-Sardinia agreed to the cession of Savoy and Nice to France.

[54] The War of Liberation in 1813–1814 against Napoleon's occupation of Germany led to a national movement and the political mobilization of the public.

[55] In his speech in the chamber of deputies on 9 March 1859, Alexander Freiherr von Schleinitz presented the principle of Prussian policy as the 'complete promotion of German interests'. The president of the chamber, Maximilian Graf von Schwerin-Putzar, agreed in the name of the chamber and stated that 'Prussia's interest could not be separated from the right, the honour, and the interests of the whole German Fatherland'.

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strength of the prevailing feeling, to abandon a neutral policy, or to make way for men who will do so.

At any rate Austria is not wholly unprepared vigorously to support the military means of Southern Germany. It is understood that She either has or shortly will have 15,000 men in the Voralberg; there are more than 3,000 of her troops in Rastadt, 5,000 in Mayence and 1,200 in Frankfort, and the whole attitude of the Imperial Government confirms the opinion I have already had the honour of expressing to Your Lordship that Austria is fully prepared to accept the challenge to War with France and Sardinia if it is seriously given.

FO 30/187: Alexander Malet to Earl of Malmesbury, Confidential, No 51, Frankfurt, 4 May 1859

Difficulties faced by British envoy to Frankfurt; Prussian opposition to Austria's attempts to involve Confederation in war in Italy; threat from France to northern coast and commerce

With reference to Your Lordship's Telegram of the 1st Instant instructing me to "protest strongly against the insane policy of Wurtemberg &c.",[56] it is necessary and is as your Lordship will I think perceive, of very great importance that I should explain the exact nature of my position here and the manner in which I can exercise my functions as Her Majesty's Envoy to the Diet and why therefore I could not act in the way Your Lordship's orders directed me.

The sittings, and in general the whole of the proceedings of that Body are secret, – as they publish just so much or so little of their Protocols as they think fit, or desire to make public.

A Foreign Minister is entirely dependent for information of what has passed, beyond the official publications, but more especially of what is projected, on his private intimacies and relations with Members of the Diet; It is evident that he can only keep these sources of information open by maintaining them on the most confidential footing, and observing great discretion and reserve in the use he makes of them.

In the matter now in view, the extraordinary convocation of the Diet was only determined upon on Saturday evening April 30th and I learnt it about 12 o'clock on Sunday, through M. d'Usedom; His Excellency also confidentially informed me of what was likely to pass

[56]Malmesbury's instructions were sent in response to Malet's telegram of 1 May, which alleged that Württemberg intended to 'move that the Confederation make common cause with Austria' and support the mobilization of the federal army.

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in that sitting, and I immediately made the important news known to your Lordship by Telegraph.

Your Lordship's reply, above referred to, reached me about 9 ½ the same evening. If I had taken any open step in the then stage of the proceeding, although the knowledge of the wishes of Her Majesty's Government would have given greater weight to the intended protest of M. d'Usedom, I should have compromised that Gentleman with his Colleagues, who were of a different way of thinking, and have strongly excited already existing susceptibilities against a foreign interference in the internal affairs of Germany.

I therefore sought an interview with the President of the Diet at 8 ½ on Monday morning the 2nd, and preparing what I might have to say, by asking His Excellency if he could tell me what was about to pass in the extraordinary sitting to be held that day. I was much pleased to hear that the proceedings would be limited to the communication of the Austrian Exposé and to referring that document to a Commission of the Diet.[57]

Count Rechberg told me that the notification he had received of the intended Prussian protest against the proposal to make common cause with Austria, which was to have been made by the Saxon, not the Wurtemburg Minister,[58] (as I had at first believed,) – had determined him to advise his Government to the course about to be adopted rather than seen [*sic*] the grave risks of a Schism in the Diet.

I at once expressed my gratification to Count Rechberg, and told him as much as I thought expedient of the reasons which led Her Majesty's Government to be opposed to any precipitate cause in the actual conjuncture by the German States, quoting to him the words of Your Lordship's telegram "too soon", and that they would expose themselves to heavy responsibility in bringing on an European War, and to incalculable losses, as they could not protect their Northern Coasts or their Commerce from the Naval attacks which could be directed against them by France and possibly by Russia, and that they could entertain no expectation of our assistance.

The first of these arguments, as was natural, touched Count Rechberg very lightly; – on the eve of an inevitable struggle with France, as an Austrian Minister he could not hesitate to seek a

[57]On 2 May 1859, Austria formally reported the events in Italy to the Federal Diet and justified military actions against Piedmont-Sardinia as legitimate resistance. According to the Austrian statement, the entry of France into the war threatened the security of the German Confederation as a whole. The matter was referred to the committee for military affairs.

[58]Julius Gottlob von Nostitz-Jänckendorf and Ludwig von Reinhard.

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diversion, and the possible preservation of his own Country from disaster, by creating one at any risk.

The suggestion of destruction of the German commercial Marine appeared to influence him as little, – excepting that His Excellency said with marked emphasis when I talked of Hamburg, – "mais oui, cela vous touche de près, – vous ne pourriez pas laisser anéantir le commerce de Hamburg"[59] and it was evident to me, that His Excellency thought he had rather found a motive to engage England in the War, if common commercial interests were imperilled.

His Excellency then pressed upon me that the attitude of Prussia was the only obstacle to an immediate Vote of a large majority of the Diet which would place five eighths of Germany in hostility with France.

At the same time his Government saw the vast importance of obtaining an unanimous support, and conceiving they had a full right to demand and to expect it and relying on the force of public opinion they had resolved to wait yet awhile to see if the resistance of Prussia could be overcome. In reality, continued His Excellency, they had not a little difficulty in repressing the ardour of some of the friendly States, and that a decision one way or the other could not be long delayed, without leaving themselves exposed to risks which Austria would not be justified in enervating.

On leaving Count Rechberg I went to M. d'Usedom and His Excellency was of course pleased at finding the view of events taken by his own Government coincided in by that of Her Majesty.

He told me that His Governments instructions had been most peremptory, and that a vote of a Majority against Prussia's policy, might have led to the secession of that Power from the Confederation.

His Excellency then read to me part of the Austrian Exposé which without making any direct claim on the Diet's aid showed very clearly that that aid was expected, – and the Memoir concluded by saying that His Imperial Majesty placed at the disposal of the Diet a number of Troops corresponding in force to the grave exigencies under which their services would be required.

Your Lordship will allow me to annotate this Passage by stating that whereas the obligations of the federal Act are that 97,000. men should form the Austrian Contingent, the Imperial Government has declared itself prepared in the present emergency to send a force of 210,000. men to Southern Germany who will be principally assembled in the Tyrol.

[59] 'But yes, this closely concerns you. You could not allow the commerce of Hamburg to be ruined.'

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FO 30/187: Alexander Malet to Lord John Russell, No 35, Frankfurt, 28 July 1859

Prussian difficulties following Austria's defeat in Italy; discussion of Gotha Party; importance of the Zollverein*; strength and influence of Austria*

The state of things now existing in Germany is such as to give reasonable ground for uneasiness to those who desire the maintenance of that apparent Unity attained by the Treaties of 1815.[60]

The result of the late War and the sudden conclusion of Peace[61] is, that Prussia remains all but isolated as far as regards the sympathies of nearly all the rest of Germany, and discussions and recriminations of a nature as bitter as those which were exchanged between the two chief German Powers half a century since, are being bandied between them at present, while the minor States contemplate with apprehensions a condition of things which looks more than ever like a prelude to a break up of existing relations.

Prussia, it is alledged [*sic*], has in the present crisis, successfully paralyzed the Confederation when anxious to take active measures in support of Austria.[62]

Old remembrances of 1806–7, of Prussia's vacillating policy at that period, and of French conquest and invasion with their train of humiliations and miseries are sedulously raked up with unsparing harshness of comment.

For her own protection, it is argued, quite as much as for that of the rest of Germany, Prussia became a Member of the Diet, whose constitution[63] was elaborated in concurrence with Her own [*sic*] Hardenberg. Now, when its provisions are tested, Prussia has violated them in the hour of emergency, declared She will submit to no majority, and treacherously sought to use an usurped authority to the detriment of the Diet itself, and of its chief member.[64] Such are the criminatory insinuations directed against the Policy which Prussia has followed in preventing the Diet from taking active measures against

[60]Act of the German Confederation of 8 June 1815, formally a part of the Act of the Vienna Congress, 9 June 1815.

[61]The preliminary Peace of Villafranca of 11 July 1859 ended the Second War of Italian Independence. Austria ceded Lombardy (without Mantua and Peschiera) to France, by whom it was to be handed to Piedmont-Sardinia. Venetia was to remain with Austria, although as a member of a projected Italian Confederation.

[62]For Prussia's policy see pp. 125–127 and pp. 483–486.

[63]Act of the Confederation of 8 June 1815.

[64]During the Austro-Italian conflict, Prussia had declared to the Federal Diet on 19 May 1859 that, while she was prepared to defend the security and independence of Germany, she expected that the other federal states would leave the initiative for the necessary military measures to her.

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France. For demanding the supreme command, while refusing to accept it at the hands of the Diet, and for withholding any distinct declaration of Her policy: but above all, for menacing (as it is affirmed she has done,) to coerce Her Confederates who wished to assist Austria.

That Prussia, it is further remarked, has shown want of wisdom in making Herself obnoxious to the 22,000,000 of Germans united in one common view of their interests, and that it was unbecoming (to use the mildest term) on her part, to seize the moment of a common danger to promote Her own views.

Prussia rebuts these arguments by stating that she felt bound to ward off the extensions of War from Germany as long as possible, that she believed the professions of the Emperor of the French of good will towards Germany, and could not allow that the Confederation had a casus foederis[65] which compelled them to take arms in defence of Austria's Italian possessions.

She further defends herself against the accusation of violating the Laws of the Confederation by arguments based on their infringing Her own Sovereign rights, and on the unpractical nature of the Diet's war constitution.[66]

Under present circumstances and without a real earnest supporter left in the Diet, it will not be surprising to see the Berlin Cabinet make efforts to revive the Gotha party,[67] or even that they should make approaches to democracy, the last being the stronger of the two Parties in Germany at present.

I have already had the honour of reporting to Your Lordship that the Gotha Party was shewing signs of life, these signs are yet however of the feeblest nature, and I understand that the members of the Party are divided, Gagern its former leader leaning decidedly to Austria.

During the Crimean War, I was instructed to make enquiry as to the condition and prospects of this party, and was surprised at finding how lifeless it had become.

The signs of existence which it has recently given, were all directed to giving an active support to Austria, and the military supremacy was to be deferred to Prussia on the condition that every effort should be energetically and promptly put forth for that object.

It is not therefore reasonable to suppose that men so thinking, would lend themselves to the attempt to exclude Austria from Germany; the

[65]Article 47 of the Vienna Final Act of 1820 provided a *casus foederis* (literally 'case of the alliance') for the Confederation to defend a member state against the danger of the infringement of federal territory.

[66]*Bundeskriegsverfassung* (federal military law) of 9 April 1821 and its regulations of 4 January 1855.

[67]For the Gotha Party see n. 7 in this section.

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favourite dream of those Prussians who call themselves the National Party.

One of the weakest points of the federal organization which has been betrayed by recent events, is the possibility of one Member of the Confederation feeling strong enough to do so, renouncing its obligations.

If in seeking a remedy for this abuse, Prussia makes the mistake of leaning on the Democratic element, the first great change which the leaders of that Party insist upon is a national representation as an adjunct to the Diet. Now the effect of such a measure would utterly defeat the views of the men who seek to aggrandize Prussia, for just in proportion as the central Organ became a more important Power would the influence of Prussia decline.

I do not however doubt that with time and prudence Prussia may recover her legitimate share of popularity and influence in Germany; Her form of Government will necessarily become more liberal than has hitherto been the case, and if Austria also adopts less restrictive forms, Prussia has an advance which the Imperial Government will hardly seek or be able to retrieve.

The Customs Union is in the nature of a political Bond which Prussia has hitherto turned to considerable account, and from which she will strain every effort to exclude Austria.

The growing prosperity and the increased luxury of Southern Germany are largely attributable to their commercial Prosperity, fostered by the Customs Union, and of which the Members are not unmindful. Prussia again has recently followed, or set an example, which has been adopted by all Southern German States of adding largely (30 per cent in most instances) to the salaries of their civil and military servants; a measure eminently just and necessary, and which has made the Governments extensively popular.[68]

Prussia, as well as Austria, it should be borne in mind, admits the natives of other States to her Military, and in some instances, to her civil service, thus affording a safety valve for discontents, and employment to the more active spirits, and forming bonds of union which have considerable influence.

The problems to be solved are three

1° that the Diet should be so constituted that Prussia can submit to its ordonances [*sic*],

2do that she should coerce it, or

3d that she should retire from the Confederation.

[68]The first measures in Prussia were taken in December 1857.

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As far as regards the polemic arising out of the conclusion of Peace, I do not apprehend that it has aggravated Prussia's position. Her determination not to assist Austria on account of attacks on the Emperor's Italian dominions was sufficiently notorious. Subsequent insinuations that other intentions might have been entertained, do not in general opinion bear discussion.

The position of Austria in federal Germany is at present stronger than ever, and with all her faults the Empire is evidently deeply rooted in the affections of the German People.

Whether Prussia will submit to let things take their course, and bide her time to recover her position (which in my humble opinion would be her wisest course) or whether chafed and irritated by the actually increased influence of Austria in the Diet, She will strive to effect reforms in the Organic constitution of the Confederation, is for the present uncertain. Your Lordship will I think perceive that the moderating influence of Her Majesty's Government might be usefully exerted in calming down angry feelings, at a moment when right or wrong in its judgment Germany is smarting under the impression that Austria has been robbed of a Province by the conduct of a member of the Confederation, and there is peril that changes entered on under the influence of the prevalent heats and feelings might lead to serious complications.

FO 30/188: Alexander Malet to Lord John Russell, No 72, Frankfurt, 2 November 1859

Attitudes towards Austria and Prussia; dangers of democratic agitation

Although the Diet has now been reassembled for nearly a month, no strong symptoms of party feeling have been exhibited; there seems to be just now a certain lassitude in the political mind, not unnatural after the excitement of the preceding months.

I think, however, that Austria has been losing ground in public estimation and this is felt with regret, by that larger portion of the community in this part of Germany, which always has a leaning towards that country.

The General State of Austrian finance and more especially the over issue on the national Loan, are deeply deplored by her friends, and anxiety is felt as to how the national Credit can be reestablished.[69]

[69]By August 1859, the overdraft on Austria's national loan amounted to 26 million florins. This was mainly due to the costs of the Italian war and Austria's unsound and irregular financial policy.

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Firm belief in the thorough honesty of Count Rechbergh [*sic*], is almost the only point which still maintains the credit of the Imperial Government.

The dismissal of Count Grünne has had an excellent effect on universal public feeling,[70] and is regarded as a proof of Count Rechbergs influence being paramount and that he will now be able to carry on the Government with fewer impediments in his way. I learn however from numerous sources that the affairs of Austria are looked upon by most of the friends of that State in Germany with extreme uneasiness, and that they fear the weakening and decadence of that Empire.

Though the violence of feeling against Prussia among the smaller and middle states is no longer as demonstrative as it was a short time since, the Berlin Cabinet is abused for pursuing oblique courses particularly in regard to the Press.

The belief is current, though I do not know whether it is well founded, that the Press is so conducted from Berlin as to spread irritating opinions throughout Germany, and that while mild language is held by the ostensible Government organs, democratic principles and subversive doctrines are promulgated by Provincial Journals, which are equally under the influence of the Cabinet of Berlin.

Surprise has been expressed in some quarters that the city of Frankfort has shewn itself so little favorable to the reform Party now endeavouring to revive agitation in that subject, and that the Government should have forbidden the founders of the Party calling itself national from establishing themselves here.[71]

Those however who remember the events of 1848–9 can well understand the dread felt at any thing likely to lead, however remotely, to a revival of the scenes of tumult and disorder of that epoch.

It is not perhaps the recurrence of such crimes as obtained notoriety that is so much feared, as the total disorganisation that ensued and remained long after the passing of a democratic storm such as that which then swept over Germany.

It is not forgotten that this city and its neighbourhood were at the time, and long after, infested by thieves and vagabonds of the worst description and that morality among the lower orders was for a time in abeyance. It is in fact only within the last two years, when the rural and urban police has been remodelled and increased, that Frankfort has

[70] Karl Graf Grünne was dismissed as adjutant general on 20 October 1859.

[71] The *Deutsche Nationalverein* (German National Association) was officially founded in Frankfurt on 16 September 1859. Consisting mainly of liberals and moderate democrats, it called for German unification under Prussian leadership.

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been visibly relieved from the anomalous Population, which seemed to have sprung forth, during the troubles of 1848.

In this Commercial City liberal opinions prevail, but the fear of beholding Frankfort become a centre of political agitation coupled as it is in the minds of the authorities, with the reappearance of the sinister visages which haunted the town at the time above referred to, has made most sensitive and circumspect as to anything that may unduly agitate the minds of the people.

FO 30/191: Alexander Malet to Lord John Russell, No 22, Frankfurt, 2 March 1860

Comparison of Italian and German unification

At this time, when so much attention has been directed to the possible formation of the federal form of Government in Italy,[72] Your Lordship may not think it inopportune that I should offer some brief remarks on what is likely to be the analogy between such a Confederation and that at present subsisting in Germany.

The actual Italian difficulties offer points of resemblance to those formerly existing in this country, and which were in a great measure resolved by constituting a central organ for the several states.[73]

Though not without serious defects, the scheme has answered at a great extent and the lapse of half a century, has shewn that no other political combination would have been equally effective. That German Unity which has been so much desired, has never been effected, and every succeeding year, renders such a consummation more improbable.

The Confederation has had the result of preventing either Austria or Prussia from attaining any absolute preponderance and has thereby obviated jealousies on the part of the other powers of Europe. It has in the main secured the well-being and happiness of the people for taking them as a whole, the mass of the German population, are as prosperous and as contented (if not more so) as those of any other State of Continental Europe.

It has been apprehended that a great difficulty exists for an Italian Confederation, in the preponderance of Austria, but reasoning from

[72]According to the Peace of Zurich of 10 November 1859 between Austria and France and Sardinia, an Italian Confederation was to be formed under the honorary presidency of the Pope.

[73]The German Confederation (originally consisting of thirty-eight member states) came into existence on 8 June 1815. The Federal Diet, its chief organ, convened for the first time in November 1816.

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what passes in Germany, I cannot believe that Austria would exercise any such preponderances. A long residence in Germany enables me to say without hesitation, that the chief influence of Austria in Germany, is based on traditional attachment to the Empire, and admiration of a period which retains its hold in German affections as one of glory.

Under the Empire[74] the German deemed himself individually a greater man, and with all the faults of the Kaisers, their memory is still held in respect.

The break up of the Empire was attended by humiliations and disasters, and the constitution of as much of a central authority as is vested in the Diet, has at least kept things together. Excepting by the sentimental influences above alluded to, Austria has had little other influence than that which she exercises from her conservative attitudes towards the Minor States, as contradistinguished from that of Prussia, and at all times her political weight has fluctuated according to the conduct she has herself observed. Austria is too poor to bribe, but is careful in minute attentions and deferential observances; she makes a Loan to Hamburg,[75] a liberal subscription to the sufferers by an explosion at Mayence,[76] and repairs and beautifies the cathedrals of Frankfort and of Spire.

These grounds of popularity, would be absolutely wanting to the Austrians in Italy; instead of traditional respect, she would have to encounter traditional hatred, and the natural and remarkable preference of the German people for the Austrian soldiery would be reversed on the Italian soil. The Italian Confederation would probably consist of not more than six States, and independently of the natural bias which the representatives of the Italian Government sitting in Diet would have to oppose Austrian views, some schemes of apportioning votes, might be contrived, which would obviate any risk of her exercising too great an authority in such an assembly, and Sardinia with tact and ability would probably carry all before her in an Italian Diet, relieved from apprehensions of the application of physical force.

Assurance of French support would neutralise the pressure of even the strongest Austrian garrisons in the fortresses of Venetia.

It is in fact, a somewhat natural conclusion, that in forming a project of an Italian Confederation, the Emperor of the French had in view the innocuous nature of that of Germany and would naturally desire

[74]Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (dissolved in 1806).

[75]In December 1857, the Austrian National Bank granted a loan of 10 million Mark Banco (Hamburg's account currency), repayable at the end of 1858.

[76]On 18 November 1857, the explosion of the powder magazine caused over three hundred casualties (including thirty-six fatalities).

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to see Italy in a condition which would offer as little umbrage to France, but judging from the working of the system in Germany, it is pretty evident, that in a Confederation, original sympathy and the love of sectional independence, and detestation of Foreign interference, whether Austrian or French, will have at least as powerful influences in Italy as they have here.

The System of a Confederation allows the scope for those separatist tendencies, which have always played so great a part in Italian history, and which though apparently subordinated for the moment to the Imperious necessity of shaking off a foreign yoke, at any sacrifice, would probably eventually revive and produce internal troubles, if Italy should be reconstituted under the supremacy of Sardinia.

In the Germanic Confederation all important affairs are first treated separately between the two chief members of the Diet.

It might so turn out in the case of Italy that Sardinia would play in that country, somewhat the part that Austria takes in Germany, and Austria would indirectly by her influence on Rome and Naples assume the position held by Prussia. It may be argued that under such antagonism questions submitted to the Diet would soon come to a dead lock, but such is rarely practically the case in Germany where the antagonism of the two great powers has long been of the most flagrant kind, and where the middle States have always the strongest interest to prevent a breach, from which they would be the greater sufferers.

The experience now attained of the weak points of the Germanic Confederation, would be of value in constituting a similar political bond in Italy, and in conferring as it was proposed should be done, the honorary Presidence of the Italian Diet in the Pope. The functions of the office might be so limited, that no undue influence should belong to the Presidential office. I am of course supposing that in the formation of an Italian Confederation, on the model of that of Germany, Austria would only enter it with her single vote for Venetia so is the case in Germany for Holland and for Denmark with their votes for Luxemburg and for Holstein.

FO 30/191: Alexander Malet to Lord John Russell, No 51, Frankfurt, 4 May 1860

Prussia's independent course within Confederation; prosperity and ambitions of smaller states

In having the honor to reply to Your Lordship's despatch No 27 of the 23rd of April, observing that it will be desirable that I should

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endeavour to counteract the disunion of Germany &c., I am anxious to draw Your Lordship's attention to the very great changes that have occurred in Germany within the last few years, and which I think are scarcely sufficiently appreciated in England.

Since the period when the King of Prussia refused the offer of an imperial crown,[77] a strong antagonism has arisen between Prussia and the middle and minor States, so strong that it has reached a point threatening at any moment a rupture of federal relations, between those States and Prussia; apprehension being felt by the former, that Prussia may pronounce her own secession from the confederation when it suits her purpose while some among the middle States are desirous of anticipating the choice of time and opportunity by Prussia by declaring that she has already ceased to belong to a federation, a fundamental principle of which she has flagrantly violated, by declaring that she would not submit to the decisions of a majority in the Diet.[78]

Since that memorable declaration, which as Your Lordship will recollect was made with reference to the disposition shewn by the rest of Germany to give material assistance to Austria in the war with France and Sardinia {vide my despatch No 64 of 16th of May 1859} Prussia has found another occasion of shewing that she really means to emancipate herself from all such control of the Diet in the question of the constitution of Electoral Hesse – for particulars of the actual state of which question, I beg to refer to my despatch No 50 of the 3rd Instant.[79]

I am unable to say whether or not, there is good foundation for the opinion which is prevalent in Southern Germany that Prussia is bent on finding a plausible ground of quarrel with the Diet, and of profiting by the occasion, to make territorial annexations in some direction or other, but that such is a commonly received opinion, I am bound to lay before Your Lordship.

On the other hand the middle and minor States which have most of them of late years, greatly increased in national prosperity, feel themselves more independent, and are, as I believe, with few exceptions desirous of preserving their separate existence, contrasting

[77]On 28 April 1849, Friedrich Wilhelm IV rejected the crown offered to him by the National Assembly at Frankfurt.

[78]For Prussia's declaration to the Federal Diet of 19 May 1859, see n. 64 in this section.

[79]On 24 March 1860, the Federal Diet ordered the government of Electoral Hesse to revise the constitution of 1852 and restore all the provisions of the constitution of 1831 (as far as they accorded with federal laws). On the same day, the Prussian government protested against this measure and refused to fulfil any obligations arising from the federal resolution. For the Hesse-Cassel Question see pp. 146–147.

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their lighter taxation and less severe conscription with the burthens of both kind [*sic*] prevailing in Prussia.

The other federal States of Germany, exclusive of Austria, have a population of nearly 18,000,000 and are mortified at finding they are held of little account. They have shewn on several occasions, and recently in the Wurzburgh conferences,[80] that they are disposed to combine against the preponderating influence of both the greater States.

Of the two however Prussia is regarded with most dislike as the quarter from whence danger threatens: while Austria though for the present inert, is looked on as the conservative element, and no territorial encroachments are feared from that side.

I have endeavoured as briefly as possible to sketch the present feeling in this part of Germany, but sufficiently as I trust, to enable Your Lordship to perceive that considerable changes have taken place.

I have even heard the opinion openly avowed and in a quarter discovering attention, that the middle and minor States would do well to separate themselves from Austria and Prussia – forming a separate federation of their own – under the condition of offensive and defensive alliances with both those states. [. . .]

FO 30/195: Alexander Malet to Lord John Russell, No 36, Frankfurt, 1 March 1861

Growth of the Nationalverein*; public exasperation over weakness of the Confederation*

With reference to my despatch No 18 of the 24th of January and the motion made by Hesse Darmstadt in the Diet relating to the interpretation of the Laws against Associations as applicable to the so-called National Society. I learn that the matter will (as I had then the honour of reporting) either be let drop, or treated in such a manner as to give the affair the least possible importance.[81]

At the same time it is my duty to inform Your Lordship that the National Society is attaining a developement [*sic*] which gives much disquietude to the majority of constituted Governments. The Society gains adherents and consistency and it may be predicted that the

[80]First Würzburg Conference on federal reforms, 23–27 November 1859; see n. 55 in Hanover section.

[81]On 5 January 1861, the government of Hesse-Darmstadt declared in the Federal Diet that the *Nationalverein* (see n. 71 in this section) should be banned according to § 1 of the federal law of 13 July 1854 (*Bundesbeschluß über das Vereins- und Versammlungswesen*).

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agitation will not cease as long as the sources in which it originated subsist.

These are to be found, in the disgust and irritation pervading the minds of all reflecting Germans at the political feebleness of the Confederation, & the consequent desire to find an issue at almost any risk from the helpless and humiliating condition to which they were condemned.

I am bound to call Your Lordship's attention to this increased irritation – I might say, exasperated feeling – evinced by Germans at the present time, arising from their appreciation of the political nullity of their country.

I do not see the immediate result of this state of feeling in the public mind; but do see reason to think more than I have hitherto done, that these sentiments are likely to be forerunners of ultimate changes in the Confederation, sooner than any one could have contemplated a twelvemonth since.

FO 30/201: Alexander Malet to Earl Russell, No 108, Frankfurt, 30 July 1862

Meeting of the German Rifle Association at Frankfurt

The meeting of the German national Rifle Association[82] which took place here and lasted from the 14th till the 21st Instant passed off in perfect order, and though taking a very different complexion from what was intended by those with whom it originated, was a most successful national meeting.

The political object aimed at was a display of armed force in support of the restricted German Union Party,[83] i.e. of those who would exclude Austria from Germany; and fears were entertained that the Assemblage would take a marked democratic aspect.

The aim of the projection (if such was their object) was defeated in limine[84] by the numerous partizans of the more extended Germany who attended, including many hundred Tyrolese, and Bavarians, and the occupation of contending for the Prizes kept political agitation completely in the background.

The Propagandists, of what is called the Gotha Party,[85] found it necessary to be cautious in their language, and Dr. Metz of

[82] *Deutscher Schützenbund*, founded on 11 July 1861 in Gotha.
[83] *Nationalverein* (see n. 71 in this section).
[84] 'At the outset'.
[85] For the Gotha Party see n. 7 in this section.

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Mayance, of whom I have had previous occasion to speak to Your Lordship, as a leader of the faction, met with a sharp rebuke from Professor Wildhauer [*sic*], a Tyrolese from Salzburgh, for using terms, disparaging towards Austria, under general applause from the assembled thousands.

A remarkable feature of the meeting was the attendance of upwards of 1000 Swiss who were among the most successful Marksmen. Allusions were not wanting to the political signification of this demonstration and to the importance of the close alliance of Switzerland and Germany for that the Mountain Regions formed the natural left Wing of the Rhine Land against France.

It has been sought indeed in some quarters, to give the meeting the character of an anti-French demonstration, but excepting that three of the Targets bore the names of Schill, Palm, and Hofer,[86] nothing which took place could reasonably be so interpreted.

The Duke of Coburg,[87] who is President of the Rifle Association, was very well received. His Highness having inaugurated the festival by presenting a Standard left Frankfurt before the close of the proceedings.

FO 30/202: Alexander Malet to Earl Russell, No 133, Frankfurt, 1 October 1862

Division over Franco-Prussian Commercial Treaty; threats to continuation of the Zollverein

The question of the comparative disadvantages of the acceptance of the commercial Treaty between France and Prussia, or the disruption of the German Customs Union, is the order of the day in the German Press, and is discussed with an acrimony proportionate to the important interests which are at Statue [*sic*].[88]

Prussia, Saxony and Baden as the States of the greatest importance which adhere to the Treaty, are grouped against Bavaria, Wurtemburgh, and Hanover, the most considerable of those which reject it, and in consideration of their geographical position the

[86]Referring to Ferdinand von Schill, Johann Palm, and Andreas Hofer, who were all executed for opposition to Napoleon I.

[87]Ernst II.

[88]The Franco-Prussian Commercial Treaty of 2 August 1862 stipulated the reduction of tariffs and a most-favoured-nation clause. Prussia made the renewal of the *Zollverein* treaty (due in 1865) dependent upon the approval of the Franco-Prussian Treaty. The plans of the south German states to admit Austria – which depended on protective duties – into the *Zollverein* were thus compromised.

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absurdity, if not the impossibility of reestablishing lines of Custom Houses between these States, is generally recognised.

On the other hand, the determination expressed by the Prussian Government to execute the Treaty (if persisted in) leaves no room for compromise – Although compromise, on the basis of revision of the Zollverein Tariff, is admitted and desired by all those States which reject the Treaty. The rejections rest on the double ground, that the Treaty as it stands gives France too great advantage, and excludes Austria from commercial connexion with the rest of Germany.

Prussia, as Your Lordship will recollect, declared in reply to the first rejections, that she would view the non-acceptance of the Treaty as a declaration of intended secession from the Zollverein.[89]

This declaration has hitherto failed of effect, as it has been followed by reiterated rejections by Bavaria and Wurtemburgh,[90] and hereupon is based the passionate polemic which now occupies most organs of the German Press.

The final rejection of the Treaty is admitted by most writers in the Southern Papers, to be extremely dangerous, as it would destroy the Zollverein, but still as being less so to the material interests and political independence of Germany, than cutting themselves off from all possible commercial union with Austria, as must be done if the Treaty is accepted.

As yet, each of the dissident parties seems to think that its opponent must give way, and the opponents of the Treaty maintain that if they hold out they shall obtain a revision of the Zollverein Tariffs, and union with Austria, and then recommence negotiations for a Treaty with France.

FO 30/202: Alexander Malet to Earl Russell, Confidential, No 159, Frankfurt, 31 December 1862

Prussian difficulties in the Diet; rumours of Bismarck conspiring with the French; course of new Prussian government under Bismarck

Monsieur de Sydow's appointment as Prussian Envoy to the Diet in place of Monsieur d'Usedom is most unfavourably looked upon, and in certain quarters is regarded with almost as much fear as dislike, it being presumed that this Gentleman is sent here to damage, or if possible, destroy the Diet.

[89]Bavaria rejected the treaty on 8 August 1862, followed by Württemberg on 11 August. Prussia reacted in the notes to Bavaria and Württemberg of 26 August.

[90]Württemberg repeated its rejection on 20 September 1862, Bavaria on 23 September.

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I am not disposed lightly to believe the numerous rumours of schemes which are afloat, but am assured by Monsieur d'Usedom, and am bound to repeat to Your Lordship, His Excellency's asseverations that Monsieur de Bismarck is determined to make a coup d'Etat in Germany, though Monsieur d'Usedom is not explicit as to the intended modus operandi.

His Excellency however asserts, that if the Majority of the Diet is against Prussia on the question of delegates, reported on by me to Your Lordship in my Despatch No 115 of August 15th and in No 154, 155 of the 16th and 19th December, Prussia will positively withdraw from the Diet, and I need not point out to Your Lordship the serious nature of such an act.[91]

Monsieur d'Usedom is further of opinion that Monsieur de Bismarck will not recoil from any step, however violent, in which he can get the King to support him, and that part of his present policy is so to compromise His Majesty as to have no possibility of retreat.

From another source I hear projects attributed to Monsieur de Bismarck of so extravagant a kind, that I have some hesitation in reporting them to Your Lordship, as they rather bear the impress of inventions calculated to damage that Minister's character than of realities.

It is in the first place said that His Excellency has a firm reliance on support from the Emperor of the French, but that this support is not to be given (as had been supposed) in exchange for cession to France of any part of Prussia's Rhenish Provinces, but by Prussia's conniving at a partition of Belgium. In this notable scheme, Holland, as is alledged [*sic*], is to share, and to obtain a portion of Belgium, France annexing the rest.

Prussia would aggrandise herself by taking the territory lying between her own Frontier[,] the Rhine and the Main, including Mayence, as well as all territory that lies on the North and Baltic Seas, up to the Dutch and Danish Frontiers, including of course Hanover, Hamburg, Oldenburg, &c. &c.

Wild as these plans may seem, I can assure Your Lordship that not only am I told that the outline has been sketched, but that details of execution are arranged.

[91] On 14 August 1862, Austria and the German middle states submitted a proposal to the Diet to establish an assembly of delegates elected by the *Landtage* of the federal states to advise on federal laws. On 18 December, the Diet decided to put the question to a vote, to be held on 22 January 1863. Prussia insisted on the unanimity rule in the matter, considering the procedure of majority voting in the Diet to be an infringement of the federal constitution.

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For instance: The Government of the Federal Fortress of Mayence will presently be changed, and on the 1st of January 1863, a Prussian General will hold that Post in alternation with an Austrian.

My informant says this officer will have instructions to prepare as far as he can for the seizure of the fortress.

This operation could not at any rate be easily effected, for though the Austrian and Prussian portions of the Garrison are numerically equal, there are above one thousand Hesse Darmstadt Troops in the Fortress, and there is no reason to believe they would side with the Prussians to say nothing of the improbability of a successful surprise, and the moral effect against Prussia which must result from so disloyal an act whether successful or otherwise.

Undoubtedly there exists a general uneasiness and apprehension as to what the Prussian Government under Count Bismarck's guidance may do in Germany, but my own persuasion is, that deprived as he is of popular support by his own acts, whatever his designs may be, he will be all but powerless.

That so able a Sovereign as the Emperor of the French should have engaged himself to participate in such plans as those I have alluded to, is not likely, but neither is it impossible that His Imperial Majesty may have lent an ear to the speculations of Monsieur de Bismarck while accredited to Paris with a view of gain to France by German disunion.

As to what The Emperor really did say to Monsieur de Bismarck in relation to German affairs – I think I have been able to verify that it was nearly to this effect.

That as to a Coup d'Etat in Germany, if any independent State chose to annex Herself to Prussia spontaneously, His Imperial Majesty should not have a word to say, but if Prussia used violence, He should interfere.

This language would rather offer a pledge for the maintenance of the Status quo in Germany, for it is the greatest of all improbabilities that any of the independent States should seek aggregation to Prussia in the present aspect of the internal affairs of that Kingdom.

Nevertheless the project of dismembering Belgium is one that for a long time past has been fervently entertained not only in France but in Holland, and the latter Country, counts strongly on popular sympathies in the Eastern provinces of Flanders, for facilitating the project of annexation.

Monsieur de Bismarck, will have had sufficient knowledge of these political yearnings to encourage him in his own Schemes – and the support of Russia, though of secondary importance, is one, he has the

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certainty of being able to count upon towards any effort on his own part or that of the Emperor of the French to realize these plans.

FO 30/207: Alexander Malet to Earl Russell, No 96, Frankfurt, 14 August 1863

Preparations for Fürstentag *congress of German princes in Vienna*

The acceptations, or rejections of the Emperor of Austria's invitation to the several Rulers of the States of the German Confederation being sent to Vienna – it is not yet accurately known here how many Sovereigns will meet His Imperial Majesty in Conference.[92]

The minority will at all events be numerically small, though headed by the King of Prussia, and it is alleged that no other Prince excuses himself on principle, – but on grounds of health, or other causes of inability to attend.

Though the friends of Austria are in a state of great excitement, and proclaim unbounded confidence in the intentions of the Emperor, I have to report the expression of much mistrust of the present, and uneasiness as to the future, as prevailing in large sections of the community, besides among those who have hitherto based their expectations for the futurity of Germany, on Prussian leadership.

It is no doubt true that those who looked to that Country are at present in a State of the deepest discouragement, and build all their hopes on prospects of change; but there are more reasons for mistrusting Austria than the fear of Romanist preponderance, and the practice of any thing approaching to liberality in that Empire is too new a thing, to have yet overcome the feelings generated by the contrary policy, which was so long pursued in that Country.

It is of little use to take up Your Lordship's time with the many reports which reach us from Vienna, as to the scheme of Dietal Reform so soon to be developed. I may however state, that I believe there is no truth in the rumour that the Emperor will merely lay a project before the assembled Princes, and leave details to be worked out by the several Ministers who are to be in attendance on the Sovereigns. I am, on the contrary, assured, that it is His Imperial Majesty's determination to bring matters to an issue, and that the Protocol will be left open for the future acceptance of such Princes as may have declined, or been unable to attend.

[92]The Austrian invitation to the congress of German princes (see the following dispatch) was dated 31 July 1863.

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FO 30/207: Alexander Malet to Earl Russell, No 98, Frankfurt, 20 August 1863

Frankfurt Fürstentag*; Austrian memorandum on federal reform; danger of rupture between Austria and Prussia*

The project of the reform of the Diet is now published, and I have the honor to enclose an official summary of its contents as first given to publicity in the "Frankfort Post Gazette" and translated for insertion in the "Europe."[93]

I also beg to annex the project in extenso, which, I regret to say, there has not been time to translate.

The first point which must strike an English reader of this document is that the project complicates instead of simplifying the machinery of the Central organ of the Germanic Confederation.

The placing at the head of the Diet a Directory composed of the Sovereigns or their representatives, together with those of the Free Cities, and conferring large Powers in this directory, does not look like a scheme to quicken the despatch of business, or likely to insure harmonious working in the machinery of a Government so composed.

Under this Directory it is proposed to constitute a House of Princes, and a Council of Confederation, very slightly altered in composition or in numbers from the existing Diet, whose attributes are very limited and whose resolutions are to be binding on the Directory in a very few specified contingencies.

The initiative in most affairs is reserved to the Directory – the Council having merely to formulate questions which are to be submitted to the House of Representatives.

This most important constituent of the proposed Reform, is to consist of three hundred members, to whom very extensive faculties of discussion and enactment are attributed, but limited (as it would seem) by an absolute and Sovereign veto being given to the Directory.

One of the most striking changes proposed, is that in the questions submitted to the Council, the principle of unanimity of the Votes hitherto required to effect organic Changes in the Diet is abandoned,

[93]The Austrian memorandum on federal reform was included in the invitation for the congress of German princes (*Fürstentag*), which took place at Frankfurt from 17 August to 1 September 1863. Enclosures: article from *Europe* (*Journal de Francfort*), entitled *Bases de la réforme fédérale présentée par l'empereur François-Joseph*; article from *Frankfurter Postzeitung* of 17 August 1863, entitled *Die kais. österreichische Reformproposition*: *Ansprache Sr. K. K. Apostolischen Majestät an die versammelten Fürsten*, *Entwurf einer Reformacte des Deutschen Bundes* (full text of Austrian reform proposal).

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and while for the weightiest questions a majority of two thirds is required, ordinary cases are to be decided by simple majorities.

The existing articles of the Act of Confederation, and of the final Conferences of Vienna,[94] are purposed to be confirmed when not expressly repealed or unless they are in contradiction with the newly proposed articles.

A high Tribunal composed of a President, two Vice-Presidents and twelve ordinary assessors, with power of adding to their number, forms an essential part of the scheme, and their independence is secured by making their appointment for life, or till seventy years of age, when they must retire on full pay.

Article XXXV of the final Act of Vienna, (relating to War and Peace) is more strongly accentuated, and the right of sending Representatives, as well as receiving foreign Missions forms a special clause of the newly purposed Act of Confederation.

Your Lordship will perhaps expect that I should pronounce an opinion as to the chance these projects of reform have of being adopted, but it is very hazardous to do so while Prussia abstains from taking any share in the discussion.

The other Sovereigns of Germany excepting the Princes of two of the minor States,[95] and The King of Denmark, as Duke of Holstein, are all assembled here. The King of the Netherlands[96] is represented by His Majesty's brother, Prince Henry.

It does not transpire, though the project has been now four days before the assembly, that any serious opposition has been made to it in the Congress itself, but rather that the scheme has been favorably received, but how it is to be put into vigour not only without the incurrence but probably in the face of opposition from Prussia it is not easy to imagine.

I have heard fears expressed that the measure would be likely to bring in an open rupture between Austria and Prussia, but under present appearances the latter Power would hardly venture on a contest in which she would not have a simple willing ally, and unless the Prussian Nation could be persuaded that their King had been unhandsomely dealt with by Austria, the Government would have the public opinion of their own People against them.

[94]Act of the German Confederation of 1815 and the Vienna Final Act of 1820.

[95]Leopold III, Prince of Lippe, and the Landgrave Ferdinand of Hesse-Homburg were absent.

[96]Willem III was Grand Duke of Luxemburg and Duke of Limburg, member states of the German Confederation.

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FO 30/209: Alexander Malet to Earl Russell, No 178, Frankfurt, 17 November 1863

Death of King of Denmark; policy of Federal Diet on Schleswig-Holstein Question; reactions of the press

The death of the King of Denmark is an event likely to create new complications in the Holstein question.

The Diet never recognised the right of succession to the Danish Throne and the States united under that Sceptre, as established by the London convention of the 8th of May 1852; and it is more than probable, that claims will be put forward on behalf of the Family of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg, which that Treaty set aside, in favor of the Glücksburg branch of the same family.[97]

The German Diet can pretend to no right of intervention as to the succession established to the throne of Denmark proper, but pretentions may, and probably will, be put forward in behalf of the Augustenburg succession to Holstein, and this is the more likely, because under that branch, the Dukes of Holstein and Schleswig were united, and would be so again if that right could be established.

By the Warsaw Treaty of the 5th of June 1851, Russia guaranteed the integrity of the Danish Monarchy,[98] and the London protocol of 1852 bound the Powers which signed that act to recognise the right of succession of the Glücksburg Branch to the Throne, but did not adopt the Russian guarantee.

The German Diet may say that Christian IX has no hereditary rights as Duke of Holstein, and argue that as the Duke of Holstein, is also Duke of Schleswig, neither can His Danish Majesty be Duke of the latter province.

[97]In the London Protocol of 8 May 1852, Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, Great Britain, Denmark, and Sweden acknowledged the integrity of the Danish monarchy as a 'European necessity and standing principle' and confirmed the personal union of Denmark with the Duchies of Schleswig, Lauenburg, and Holstein. The right of succession was decided in favour of Prince Christian, who, after the death of Frederik VII, was proclaimed King of Denmark on 16 November 1863. The claims of the Sonderburg-Augustenburg line of the house of Oldenburg in Schleswig and Holstein were based on the nullity of the Danish law of succession of 31 July 1853 for Holstein and the guaranteed indivisibility of the two Duchies, which had been in force since 1460. On 16 November 1863, Christian August renounced his hereditary rights in favour of his son Friedrich, who notified his accession as Duke Friedrich VII on the same day.

[98]In the Protocol of Warsaw of 1851, the Russian emperor, as the head of the house of Holstein-Gottorp, renounced his eventual rights of inheritance in the Duchy of Holstein in favour of Prince Christian.

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It is worthy of notice that some of the German papers are already insisting on the necessity of pressing the Execution[99] in Holstein as much as possible, in order to prevent the establishment of the new King of Denmark's authority, as Duke in that Province. Your Lordship is aware of the protection and countenance which the Augustenburg family have always found in Prussia, and although that Government signed the London Protocol, it is generally believed in Germany, that the Berlin Cabinet would see with pleasure any opening for the establishment of the ancient hereditary rights of that House in Holstein and Schleswig.

It is quite certain that other members of the Diet (Bavaria may be specially instanced) have looked forward to the possibility of the event which has now happened, by the Death of the King of Denmark, as giving occasion to assert the Augustenburg claims; and Her Majesty's Government must, I apprehend, be prepared to see them put forward in this conjuncture, in some shape that will add to existing political embarrassments.

I have already tried to impress on the members of the Diet, with whom I have spoken on this subject, that the accession of King Christian IX, imposes on the Diet the duty and necessity of delay in the measure of Execution, by the stronger motives of international comity and prudence.

FO 30/213: Alexander Malet to Earl Russell, No 11, Frankfurt, 8 January 1864

Reactions to British note over Schleswig-Holstein Crisis; importance of public opinion

It will not surprise Her Majesty's Government to learn that the communications I have been instructed by Your Lordship to make to the President of the Diet, and to request His Excellency to lay before the assembly, are received by a majority of that body with disfavour.[100]

[99]According to Article 31 of the Vienna Final Act and the *Exekutionsordnung* of 1820, the Confederation had the right to impose executive measures – including military occupation – on the government of a member state in cases of violation of federal laws and obligations. The federal execution (*Bundesexekution*) against Holstein and Lauenburg was agreed on 1 October 1863 and carried out in December.

[100]Russell, in his dispatch No 70 of 26 December 1863, instructed Malet to point out to Kübeck 'the serious complications which might ensue' from ignoring the agreements of the London Protocol of 1852, which supported the succession rights of Christian IX (see n. 97 in this section). However, he stated that this issue could be discussed at a conference attended by the signatories of the protocol and the German Confederation. Russell repeated this proposal on 31 December. On 2 January 1864, it was communicated by Malet, and on 8 January the Federal Diet referred it to the committee for Holstein.

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The wish to sever Schleswig from Denmark has taken such root in the German mind, that the project will not be abandoned without extreme reluctance.

On the one hand the establishment of the Augustenburg family[101] in the rule of the two Duchies is regarded by the ultra conservatives as giving a vassal to Prussia; while on the part of the democrats and progressists, it is thought that it will be less difficult to disembarrass themselves of a comparatively weak member of the Germanic Confederation, than could be the case, if the King of Denmark remained Sovereign of the Duchies.

Again it is observed that the Diet has no organ in England through which replies can be given to communications which Her Majesty's Government addresses directly to them. But the Representatives of all the petty States, think themselves entitled to criticize and discuss such official Documents as are laid before them, and being under a very different weight of responsibility from that which affects the greater Powers, are determined to shew their independence by endeavouring to compromise Austria and Prussia who they believe must fight their battles for them. The tension of the public mind is very great, and I am bound to say that there is a wonderful indifference to our representations while they are at the same time resented as interfering with a cherished project.

There is an absolute persuasion that England will not interfere materially, and our counsels regarded as unfriendly have no weight.

The Governments of the smaller states are quite powerless before the exciting agitation, and many of them strive to conciliate it, by going ahead of the popular wishes. The King of Bavaria, the Duke of Saxe Coburg[102] and the Grand Duke of Baden though possibly acting under the influence of strong convictions, seem to be running a race of popularity, and occupy, each in their sphere, a larger space in the German mind, than either the Emperor of Austria, or the King of Prussia. The latter for the time being, is certainly the most unpopular of sovereigns and of men, with the sole exception of His Minister for Foreign affairs Count Bismark.

I hear nothing of replies being yet in preparation, and the opinion that I have already had the honor of expressing that they would be delayed, seems likely to be realized in the hope that wants will give plausibility to the rejection which it is desired to make of our purposes.

[101] For the claims of the Sonderburg-Augustenburg family see n. 97 in this section.
[102] Ernst II.

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FO 30/215: Alexander Malet to Earl Russell, Confidential, No 154, Frankfurt, 18 June 1864

German reactions to possible British intervention in Schleswig-Holstein Crisis

The belief is gradually making its way in Germany that contingencies may arise leading England to give active support to Denmark against the farther encroachment of the two great German Powers.[103]

Still I regret having to say that the inadequacy of our military strength and the lukewarmness of British public opinion are studiously put forward as deterring causes, and though anxiety is undoubtedly felt upon the subject, the prevalent persuasion still is that no English Government will boldly face the complications attending on the Danish Question beyond sending our Fleet to protect Copenhagen and the Royal Family.

I am more than ever persuaded that the view taken of Austrian policy in my despatch No 144 of the 4th Instant was correct; – that this readiness of Austria to risk a general War arises from the pressure put upon the Imperial Government by Monsieur de Bismarck's imperious determination to find a pretext for renewing the conflict in Denmark.

The Austrian Government profess to be quite assured that under six months, France cannot come into action.

They also rely on our want of preparation for immediately assisting Denmark otherwise than by our Fleet, and reckon on being in Copenhagen before any serious measures could be taken to resist the combined land Forces already assembled in Schleswig and Jutland.

It is evident to me that Austria is all but indifferent to the acquisition of the German Rhenish provinces by France: even if such an aggrandisement of that Country was followed by the annexation of Belgium. The Austrian party asserts that these matters concern England more than themselves.

On one point I think the Austrian Government is a little too confident, which is in the persuasion that in the event of war with the Western Powers the whole Confederation would go heart and hand with Austria and Prussia[.]

Now it is very certain that the original move against Schleswig is by no means forgiven, and the sudden apparent reconciliation of Austria

[103]The Second Schleswig-Holstein War started with the Austro-Prussian invasion of Schleswig on 1 February 1864, following Denmark's refusal to abrogate the joint constitution for Denmark and Schleswig of 18 November 1863 (see n. 93 in Hanover section). Despite the temporary armistice of 12 May 1864, the crisis intensified with the Austro-Prussian proposal at the London Conference (see n. 106 in Hanover section) on 28 May for the complete separation of the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein from Denmark. On 26 June, the war was resumed.

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and Prussia has alarmed the minor States. If England is opposed to Austria, it is possible that some members of the Diet, might avail themselves of the fundamental Law which leaves it facultative for any member of the Confederation to abstain from taking part in a War which is not aggressive against a State of the Confederation (Vide Act: XLVI of the final Act of the Conferences of Vienna of May 15 1820).

The influence of Her Majesty's Government might be efficaciously used in this direction, and if the casus belli arose, would I believe, be successful in inducing some of the Governments to secede from Austria and Prussia.

I have however abstained from feeling my way in this direction, from not being aware of the views of Her Majesty's Government, and have carefully avoided shewing any anxiety as to results in such a possible contingency.

I have little doubt that it is to give distinct information as to prospects of federal support, that His Excellency the President has been summoned to Kissingen for which place Monsieur de Kubeck left Frankfort on Thursday Evening.

FO 30/215: Alexander Malet to Earl Russell, No 183, Frankfurt, 15 October 1864

Fears of Prussian expansionism

The customary sitting of the Diet on Thursday the thirteenth Instant did not take place.

The chief reason assigned is deficiency of matter for deliberation, and that the assembly is waiting for the presentation of the Papers relating to the Oldenburg claims of succession in Holstein and Schleswig.[104]

There are good grounds for looking on the delay which is taking place in this matter, as designedly calculated with the object of favouring Prussian plans in the Duchies.

No doubt can exist of the fact that strong expectations of the feasability [*sic*] of territorial annexation in that direction are entertained by an influential party in Prussia: that this Party under the guidance of Count Bismarck, will put every possible expedient in practice to retain the hold Prussia at present has upon Holstein

[104]On 19 June 1864, Tsar Alexander II ceded his rights of succession in the duchies as the head of the elder branch of the house of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp to the Grand Duke Peter II of Oldenburg. Oldenburg, which was ruled by a cadet branch, claimed its right of succession at the Federal Diet on 23 June 1864. The explanatory statement was presented to the Federal Diet on 3 November.

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and Schleswig, and that should events render positive annexation impossible, such conditions will be imposed on whatever Government is established in those States, as shall place them under Prussian tutelage and supremacy.

The prospect of these schemes being realised, gives rise to extreme uneasiness in most parts of Germany but no where, I apprehend, so much as in Hanover.

The geographical position of that Kingdom explains and justifies this feeling, and it is beginning to be generally felt, and said, that the entire want of political morality shewn by Prussia in her dealings with Denmark, justifies the apprehension that she will be withheld by no considerations but those of dangers to herself from encroaching on the independence of other neighbouring States.

The views of Monsieur de Bismarck in reference to territorial aggrandisement are too well known to require to be dwelt upon.

To arrive at the present posture of affairs this statesman has adroitly availed himself of the blind Zeal of German Ultra-liberalism, and of the assistance of Austria, only given with intent to check Prussia's schemes, now avowed; but His Excellency is now apparently nearing the point, at which he can venture to let one and the other find out that they are duped.

FO 30/219: Alexander Malet to Earl Russell, No 15, Frankfurt, 11 March 1865

Austrian rejection of Prussian claims to sovereignty in duchies; Prussian unwillingness to compromise

The Austrian reply to Count Bismarck's Note laying down the pretensions of Prussia in respect of that States future relations with the Elbe Duchies is reported to be of a nature to bring matters to a crisis.[105]

From what transpires of these negotiations, the Austrian Note rejects the Prussian claim to exercise any Sovereign rights in the Duchies, unless by formal convention with the new Government of that State, after such Government shall have been legally installed by Decree of the Diet.

This is the position taken by Bavaria, and the other secondary States which go with her, as founded on German legal right, opposed to that which Austria and Prussia desire from the cession of the Duchies by Denmark.

[105]In the note of 22 February 1865, Prussia declared her readiness to accept an independent state of Schleswig-Holstein, under the preconditions of the military and economic integration of the duchies into Prussia and the cession of certain territories. Austria declined the Prussian proposals on 5 March 1865.

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It is not possible to form an absolute opinion of the result, and I am only repeating myself, when I again express my belief that Prussia will eventually carry her policy to a successful termination.

I have already had the honour of stating my persuasion that Austria was not prepared to back her policy by force of arms, and though it may be surmised that a majority of the middle States are urging her to a Warlike decision – no doubt of how far the Vienna Cabinet will go, exists at Berlin.

One only course might possibly arrest Prussia in her plans of annexation, or of semi-sovereignty in the Duchies, and that would be if Austria should revive the scheme of German national representation, with the proposal to defer the final settlement to their decision.

Prussia will not submit to any adverse decision of the Diet, and Austria will be cautious in provoking the crisis in that manner, as she would be utterly discredited before her Confederates and before Europe if she refused to enforce her own policy at all hazards. Bavaria, as is generally believed, is for pushing matters to extremity through the instrumentality of the Diet. Austria is desirous of turning the difficulty, and I should not be at all surprised if the Vienna Cabinet brought forward some scheme for referring a final decision in this thorny question to an Authority, which would have more popular sympathy than the Diet, and which might even command Prussia's submission.

It may, however, be doubtful how far the Governments of the secondary States would concur in such a policy, which indeed I have only conjecturally put forward as likely to be adopted by Austria, because it is in my judgment the sole remaining course to be taken to frustrate the accomplishment of the views of Prussia on the Elbe Duchies.

FO 30/220: Alexander Malet to Earl of Clarendon, No 72, Frankfurt, 24 October 1865

Protests by Austria and Prussia over meeting of Deutsche Abgeordnetentag *in Frankfurt; infringement on rights of smaller states*

Since writing my Despatch No 71 of the 22nd instant, I have learnt that the answer of the Frankfurt Senate to the Austrian and Prussian notes therein referred to is identical.[106]

[106]In the notes to the Frankfurt senate of 6 and 8 October 1865, Prussia and Austria protested against the meeting of the *Deutsche Abgeordnetentag* (for which see n. 108 in this section) in Frankfurt on 1 October. The senate's reply was dated 20 October.

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This is rather a want of tact on the part of the Frankfurt Government for, as it is said, that the Prussian note threatened interference while that of the Austrian Government contained no such menace, it would have been well that the replies should, at least, have noted that difference.

The general purport of the answer is, that the Senate having deliberated on the demand made upon them by the two high Governments had referred the question to the Senator[107] charged with the direction of the Police of the free State, that his report was to the effect, that the last meeting of German Representatives[108] here of the 1st October had passed off with the utmost tranquillity and without any infraction of the Law of Frankfurt which could justify interference by the Police.

Short, as to the Permanent Commission of 36,[109] those gentlemen had already held sittings in Berlin, in Weimar and other places, without any disturbance being created, and without having been dis-quieted in their proceedings: that it was, therefore, somewhat invidious to call on Frankfurt to take repressive steps against a body of men who had not been interfered with previously, and who had not violated any local law.

Here, the matter stands for the present. The sensation it has created, is strong and general, and as both Austrian and Prussian Journals are seeking to attenuate the effect of what was universally considered as a menace against the autonomy of one of the smallest and most helpless states of the Confederation, by it's two most powerful members, it is probable that the threat (which the Prussian note at least contained) of taking the matter out of the hands of the Frankfurt-Government will not be executed.

It is generally thought that the whole proceeding was one of those feelers indulged in by the Prussian Government, to see how far they might go in the course of repressing all expression of public feeling as well as in coercing a minor state. The attitude of the Frankfurt senate finds such universal approval that, for the present at least, coercive measures can hardly be adopted.

Let me add that it is a matter of general astonishment that Austria should in any degree have concurred in a policy which

[107]Johannes August Speltz.

[108]The *Deutsche Abgeordnetentag*, consisting of members of the parliaments of the German states, was constituted on the *Nationalverein*'s (see n. 71 in this section) initiative in September 1862. Its fourth meeting, in Frankfurt in October 1865, was attended by 271 persons.

[109]The Committee of 36 was established by the *Abgeordnetentag* in December 1863 to coordinate the political agitation in the Schleswig-Holstein Question. Its objective was to enforce Friedrich von Augustenburg's claims as Duke of Schleswig and Holstein (see n. 97 in this section), ideally within a German federal state under Prussian leadership.

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bears such strong indications of originating at Berlin and, which, if preserved in, would be a direct infringement of the organic laws of the Confederation.[110]

The meeting of the National Association,[111] which is to be held in Frankfurt on Thursday next, is now become of much greater importance than if it had not been preceded by this incident.

FO 30/227: Alexander Malet to Earl of Clarendon, No 60, Frankfurt, 5 May 1866

Anticipation of war; economic impact of crisis; possibility of Italian intervention on Prussia's behalf

I have the honour to acknowledge and to thank Your Lordship for your Despatch No 25, marked most confidential of the 1st instant, of the information contained in which I have made such use as seemed advisable.[112]

Events are, as Your Lordship will see, moving rapidly, and the temper of mens minds assume dispositions that allow little room for friendly counsels; the die appears to be cast; and the members of the confederation seem absorbed in weighing the chances of the open rupture between Austria and Prussia which they consider unavoidable.

Murmurs are heard from various quarters, both against Austria and Prussia, and the people of the secondary states consider themselves more or less victims of the ambition of their more powerful Confederates.

In this part of Germany the personal predilections of the leading men incline towards Austria, but the almost devotional party attachment entertained towards her two years ago has vanished; and individual fears form the chief bond which links the Governments of the secondary states to the destinies of the Empire.

I have for some time thought that too much reliance was felt at Vienna on the zeal of the smaller powers.

One successful battle on a large scale, would rally them all to her banner; but till some such event occurs, Austria will have to put up with the tergiversations of lukewarm friends, or at least with half reluctant aid.

[110] Act of the German Confederation of 1815 and Vienna Final Act of 1820.

[111] *Nationalverein* (see n. 71 in this section).

[112] In this dispatch, Clarendon stated that Prussia was following threatening policies that 'appear calculated above all things to light up civil war'. Clarendon also came to the conclusion that Prussia and Italy were allied against Austria, and noted that Britain would remain strictly neutral in any conflict.

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Not being altogether blind to this contingency, Austria has seen Prussia's recent summons to Saxony[113] with a certain degree of satisfaction, as the conduct of the Berlin Cabinet towards that state will oblige the Government against which M. de Bismarck's threats are directed to take a decision, and will also compel others and especially Bavaria (about whose fealty certain doubts were felt) to declare themselves.

The disastrous consequences of threatened war are already making themselves felt, not only in the enormous fall of publick securities, but in the cessation of many industrial enterprises, and especially in the discharge of workmen in all branches of the building trade.

Artificers without work are the class on which M. de Bismarck has probably counted for raising a clamour for his plan for a parliament.[114] Hitherto it is a remarkable fact that although the necessity of assembling such a Body has been dwelt on in many publick meetings the scheme has, as emanating from a suspected source, hitherto met with no sort of encouragement. Growing richer year by year, prosperous and not generally seriously discontented with their Governments the middle and lower classes are only disquieted by events which impede their material welfare.

Nothing that can be done in the way of advice or deprecation can, like is expected, now avert war. The conviction that the British Government will not interfere in the expected contest was for long part so firmly rooted in the German mind that I find no difficulty in impressing on them the conviction of our neutrality.

The threatened attack on the part of Italy has been somewhat of a surprise; but the belief is universal that the design that the Italians shall precede the Prussians is part of M. de Bismarck's plan.[115]

Not only has M. de Savigny been sent for hence to Berlin, but General Voigts Rhetz, commander of the Prussian Garrison in Frankfurt, has also been called to the capital. The Prussian regiment here has been raised to the war establishment, and I hear also that the Prussian force in Mayence has been reinforced, while no additions have been made to the Austrian detachments in either garrison.

My impression is that M. de Bismarck, whatever happens in Italy, will for a time observe an attitude of armed observation, partly with

[113]See n. 111 in Saxony section.

[114]On 9 April 1866, Carl Friedrich von Savigny, the Prussian envoy to the Federal Diet, filed a motion to convoke a representative national assembly to discuss the reform of the constitution of the German Confederation. This motion was referred to a commission on 21 April.

[115]On 8 April 1866, Prussia and Italy concluded a secret military alliance against Austria. The crisis was aggravated by Italian preparations for war, and the subsequent mobilizations of the Austrian (21 April) and Italian armies (29 April).

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the object of throwing Austria off her guard, partly to make Prussia's military preparations more complete. It may even enter into his calculations not to interfere with the usual influx of summer travellers whose periodical visits enrich Germany at this season, and whose absence if arising from his proceedings would certainly add to his unpopularity.

A serious and disastrous war is looked forward to eventually, and the belief is outspoken that unless France and England were cordially united in a resolve to interfere at all costs, no means of averting the calamity exist.

Austria, I am led to think at this hour, is weary of the state of suspense, and has attained the conviction that her own honour and her interests in the Confederation, already seriously impaired, had better be defended in the field of battle.

FO 30/227: Alexander Malet to Earl of Clarendon, No 102, Frankfurt, 15 June 1866

Prussia secedes from the German Confederation; threat of Prussian occupation of Hanover, Electoral Hesse, and Frankfurt

As I had the honour of briefly reporting to Your Lordship yesterday by telegram, Prussia has retorted on the majority which sided against her with Austria yesterday, by a formal declaration of secession from the Confederation.[116]

I have the honour to annex the project of a new federal act, by which the Prussian Envoy accompanied his declaration made in the name of his Government,[117] that Prussia's connection with the existing Confederation has ceased, and that she invites the rest of Germany to form a new league with her, to the exclusion of Austria, and the portions[118] of Germany hitherto connected with the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

[116]On 14 June 1866, the Prussian federal envoy announced Prussia's secession from the German Confederation. In addition, Savigny announced its nullification owing to the mobilization of the federal army against Prussia, which was proposed by Austria on 11 June and agreed by the majority of the Diet on 14 June.

[117]Savigny presented the Prussian plans for reform on 10 June 1866 (before this they had only been communicated to the individual states). The central points were the establishment of an elected national assembly alongside the Federal Diet, a catalogue of legislative competences, and the assumption of the rights of foreign representation, declarations of war, and conclusions of peace by the new federal state (enclosure absent in FO 30/227, No 102).

[118]Luxemburg and Limburg.

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These results of the sitting of the 14th of June are so important that the consideration of their probable and imminent consequences tends to divert attention from the steps which have led to them, they must however necessarily be detailed, if we would arrive at a just estimate of the past conduct, and future prospects of either party.

It is unnecessary at present to look further back than to Austria's motion in the Diet on the 1st of June giving over to the Diet the settlement of the Holstein question, on which she declared herself to have exhausted all prospect of arrangement with Prussia.

Prussia, as is well known, took immediate measures in Holstein, in consequence of that step, but made no declaration in the Diet, till the 9th of June, when her willingness to treat the Holstein question in connection with that of the proposed national representation and reform of the Diet were put in conjunction, while no mention was made of Prussian troops having already entered Holstein, which had however taken place.[119]

On the 11th the Diet was seized of the Austrian proposition for mobilising the Federal Contingents with the avowed object of arresting Prussia in the arbitrary course on which she has entered in Holstein.

That this, though protested against by Prussia as we have seen, was a just and legal course a majority of two votes, affirmed in the sitting held yesterday; whereupon Prussia, having made her preliminary protest against the Diet's competence in the question, replied to the vote of the majority by declaring the Confederation dissolved, and brought forward the proposal above referred to, for forming a new Confederation.

It is premature to pronounce absolutely on what is now to ensue; but it seems in the highest degree unlikely that the States which have so far supported Austrian policy should fall away from her, and the long imminent open rupture may be looked on as near at hand.

The expectation here is that Prussia will at once occupy Hanover and Electoral Hesse. Some people even entertain fears for Frankfurt as there is a Prussian corps of more than 20,000 men with 46

[119]On 7 June, Prussian troops entered Holstein, which was under Austrian administration according to the Gastein Convention (see n. 116 in Württemberg section). On 9 June, Prussia rebutted Austria's insinuation that it had been Prussia's intention to annex the duchies with military force. Prussia also rejected Austria's policy of referring the Schleswig-Holstein Question to the Federal Diet, stating that this was inconsistent with former agreements and outside the Confederation's competency.

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guns at Wetzlar and the Diet's funds, to the amount of some 30,000,000 florins are in some opinions much exposed to a coup de main.

I need hardly inform Your Lordship that extreme agitation and uneasiness pervades all classes; and events of the most serious kind are looked forward to as momentarily impending.

[. . .]

P.S. Your Lordship will find the President's protest against the secession of Prussia, a protest to which the whole Diet ostensibly adhered by remaining and transacting business after M. de Savigny has left the Assembly, annexed. These documents have reached me too late for me to send translations.[120]

FO 30/228: Alexander Malet to Lord Stanley, Confidential, No 3, Frankfurt, 10 July 1866

Reactions of foreign envoys to the Diet leaving Frankfurt; request for instructions

My French Colleague Count de Réculot has been anxious to acquaint himself with the nature of my instructions in the event of the remaining members who constitute the Diet being obliged to quit Frankfort.

Monsieur de Réculot himself has instructions to concert a common action with his Colleagues of England and Russia.

Monsieur d'Ungern Sternberg has informed me that he is directed to follow the Diet – the actual place to which he is to go (Augsburgh) being mentioned – and His Excellency told me, that Prince Gortchakoff's Despatch intimated to him that he had been informed of my being furnished with a similar instruction.

Your Lordship will permit me to point out, that my instruction contained in Lord Clarendon's Despatch No 47 of the 23rd of June, the last I have received on the subject, contains nothing of the sort: That it refers wholly to the conduct of an Envoy to a Sovereign, and is inapplicable to that of Envoys to a collective Body like the Diet.

The Diet is not bound to sit at Frankfort, and if compelled to remove, subsists with all its attributes wherever its sittings are held within the limits of the Confederation.

These extend from Trieste to Luxemburgh in one direction, and from Königsberg to Constance in the other.

[120]In his declaration, Kübeck cited the indissolubility of the German Confederation and negated Prussia's right of secession (all enclosures absent in FO 30/227, No 102).

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Prussia ceasing to acknowledge the Diet[121] and being apparently about to attack its present seat of Residence, the Assembly which still reckons eleven members out of 18, may be forced to migrate, and Your Lordship will not fail to see the importance of the Foreign Ministers who are accredited to the Confederation having the orders of their Government to follow the members of the Assembly in their probable removal hence.

Her Majesty's Government here implicitly continued their recognition of the Diet, by maintaining me at my Post, and the Queen's proclamation of neutrality which I was ordered to communicate to the Diet distinctly recognizes it as a belligerent.[122]

Your Lordship will readily understand that, under present circumstances here, and in consequence of the change of administration in England,[123] I am anxious to be honoured with Your Lordship's instructions in the very critical position in which the Diet is at present placed, and when I am in hourly expectation of receiving the President's invitation to follow him to some other residence.

FO 30/229: Alexander Malet to Lord Stanley, No 44, Frankfurt, 27 August 1866

Reflections on the dissolution of the Diet

I received yesterday from His Excellency Baron de Kubeck, President of the Diet, a note, translation of which I have the honor to annex notifying the cessation of the Diet's functions.[124]

The elimination from the institutions of Europe of a body of so much importance as the central organ of the Germanic Confederation is an event which cannot take place unnoticed in the rest of Europe, nor without creating a perturbation in the Germanic fatherland, the limits of which it is not yet possible to foresee.

With all its defects, and the gravest of them have arisen from the jealousies which never allowed the Diet fairly to develop its organic constitutions, the Confederation has been a bond of pacific union, and has in that sense largely contributed to the perspicuity and well being

[121] See n. 116 in this section.

[122] Proclamation by Queen Victoria, 27 June 1866. On 2 July, it was sent by Malet to the president of the Federal Diet, Alois Freiherr Kübeck von Kübau, who communicated it to the Diet on 4 July.

[123] A minority Conservative government was formed under the Earl of Derby on 28 June, following the collapse of Earl Russell's Liberal administration in the course of debates over Parliamentary reform.

[124] Enclosure: French translation of note from Kübeck, dated 22 August 1866 (Augsburg).

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of all its members, so long as they submitted to its provisions. It has ceased to exist, when one powerful member emancipated itself from them. Whether the state of things which is to arise from the Diet's dissolution will justify the forecast of another fifty years of peaceful progress commensurate with the tranquil half century, which form the Diet's annals with the sole interruption of 1848–9, may reasonably be questioned.

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