



United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland

Status: Great Power.

Monarch: His Majesty King George III.

Regent: His Royal Highness Prince George (son of George III).

Prime Minister: Robert Jenkinson, 2nd Earl of Liverpool (left).

Delegate: Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh (right).

Background

After the defeat of Napoleon, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland was easily the **most powerful country in the world**. Protected by the English Channel and Royal Navy, Britain was the only major country in Europe to have survived the Napoleonic Wars without ever being defeated by, or submitting to, France. That, and the fact that they had been instrumental in Napoleon's downfall, made them the **most significant voice** at the Congress of Vienna.

France first declared war on Britain in 1793, but despite having a stronger army, was unable to threaten the British mainland thanks to the Royal Navy¹. In 1805, Napoleon attempted to break the blockade and cross the channel, but his fleet was caught in the **Battle of Trafalgar**, where a British victory eliminated all possibility of a French invasion. The British army finally landed on the continent in 1808, fighting with Portugal and Spain to resist Napoleon's plot to put his brother on the Spanish throne (the **Peninsular War**).



Britain clobbering France at Trafalgar

Aside from the Navy, Britain's main strength was the **copious amounts of money** generated by its manufacturing industry, modern banking system, and colonial empire. From 1793 to 1814, Britain forked out £46 million in cash subsidies to France's enemies, plus direct shipments of arms, uniforms, and food. In 1806, Napoleon tried to strongarm the continent into embargoing British trade via the **Continental System**, but the scheme was largely compromised by British smugglers and non-compliance from France's allies.

¹ At one point, Napoleon 'seriously considered' using a fleet of up to 2,500 hot air balloons carrying French soldiers to bypass the Royal Navy, but was told that it wouldn't work because of the wind.

By 1814, British, Spanish, and Portuguese forces led by the Duke of Wellington had secured the Iberian Peninsula and crossed into southern France. Simultaneously, Russian, Austrian, and Prussian armies (subsidised by Britain) attacked from the north and entered Paris in March 1814, ending the Napoleonic Wars.

Objectives

Since Britain's strength came from its colonies, manufacturing industry, and overseas trade, British foreign policy was centred around **keeping Europe stable** and minimising the need for future interventions. This meant Britain had to **stop its allies from opportunistically gobbling up territory** (e.g. Russia with Poland and Prussia with Saxony) which would inevitably provoke future wars. Rather than carving up France, Britain hoped to **deter future French expansionism** by surrounding them with strong, regional powers in the Netherlands, Germany, and Piedmont-Sardinia (Northern Italy).