Sample of Congress of Vienna Project

This is a shortened version of the project to ensure that the group who gets Great Britain does not copy it.

During the War of the Second Coalition (1799–1801), Britain occupied most of the French and Dutch colonies (the Netherlands had been a satellite of France since 1796), but tropical diseases claimed the lives of over 40,000 troops. When the Treaty of Amiens ended the war, Britain was forced to return most of the colonies. The peace settlement was in effect only a ceasefire, and Napoleon continued to provoke the British by attempting a trade embargo on the country and by occupying the German city of Hanover (a fief of the British crown). In May 1803, war was declared again. Napoleon's plans to invade Britain failed due to the inferiority of his navy, and in 1805, Lord Nelson's fleet decisively defeated the French and Spanish at Trafalgar, which was the last significant naval action of the Napoleonic Wars.

The series of naval and colonial conflicts, including a large number of minor naval actions, resembled those of the French Revolutionary Wars and the preceding centuries of European warfare. Conflicts in the Caribbean, and in particular the seizure of colonial bases and islands throughout the wars, could potentially have some effect upon the European conflict. The Napoleonic conflict had reached the point at which subsequent historians could talk of a "world war". Only the Seven Years' War offered a precedent for widespread conflict on such a scale.

In 1806, Napoleon issued the series of Berlin Decrees, which brought into effect the Continental System. This policy aimed to eliminate the threat of the United Kingdom by closing French-controlled territory to its trade. The United Kingdom's army remained a minimal threat to France; the UK maintained a standing army of just 220,000 at the height of the Napoleonic Wars, whereas France's army exceeded a million men—in addition to the armies of numerous allies and several hundred thousand national guardsmen that Napoleon could draft into the military if necessary. Although the Royal Navy effectively disrupted France's extra-continental trade—both by seizing and threatening French shipping and by seizing French colonial possessions—it could do nothing about France's trade with the major continental economies and posed little threat to French territory in Europe. In addition, France's population and agricultural capacity far outstripped that of the United Kingdom.

Many in the French government believed that cutting the United Kingdom off from the Continent would end its economic influence over Europe and isolate it. Though the French designed the Continental System to achieve this, it never succeeded in its objective. The United Kingdom possessed the greatest industrial capacity in Europe, and its mastery of the seas allowed it to build up considerable economic strength through trade to its possessions from its rapidly expanding new Empire. Britain's naval supremacy meant that France could never enjoy the peace necessary to consolidate its control over Europe, and it could threaten neither the United Kingdom nor British colonies outside the continent.

The Spanish uprising in 1808 at last permitted Britain to gain a foothold on the Continent. The Duke of Wellington and his army of British and Portuguese gradually pushed the French out of Spain and in early 1814, as Napoleon was being driven back in the east by the Prussians, Austrians, and Russians, Wellington invaded southern France. After Napoleon's surrender and exile to the island of Elba, peace appeared to have returned, but when he escaped back into France in 1815, the British and their allies had to fight him again. The armies of Wellington and Von Blucher defeated Napoleon once and for all at Waterloo.

Simultaneous with the Napoleonic Wars, trade disputes and British impressment of American sailors led to the War of 1812 with the United States. A central event in American history, it was little noticed in Britain, where all attention was focused on the struggle with France. The British could devote few resources to the conflict until the fall of Napoleon in 1814. American frigates also inflicted a series of embarrassing defeats on the British navy, which was short on manpower due to the conflict in Europe. A stepped-up war effort that year brought about some successes such as the burning of Washington D.C., but many influential voices such as the Duke of Wellington argued that an outright victory over the US was impossible.

Peace was agreed to at the end of 1814, but Andrew Jackson, unaware of this, won a great victory over the British at the Battle of New Orleans in January 1815 (news took several weeks to cross the Atlantic before the advent of steam ships). The Treaty of Ghent subsequently ended the war. As a result, the Red River Basin was ceded to the US, and the Canadian border (now fixed at the 49th parallel) completely demilitarised by both countries, although fears of an American conquest of Canada persisted through the 19th century. Due to the Congress of Vienna the United Kingdom was confirmed in control of the Cape Colony in Southern Africa; Tobago; Ceylon; and various other colonies in Africa and Asia. Other colonies, most notably the Dutch East Indies and Martinique, were restored to their previous owners.