12 From Augarten to Algiers

Security and 'Piracy' around the Congress of Vienna

*Erik de Lange**

Introduction

On 9 June 1815, the plenipotentiaries who had contributed to its making assembled to listen as the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna was read out.[1] The words echoing through the Chancellery reception hall, the sounds of peace being concluded, would reverberate far beyond the European continental territories with which so many of the treaty stipulations were concerned. A little over a year later, in the summer of 1816 on the shores of North Africa, it became clear that the echo of the peace could also come in the aural form of a roaring cannonade.

William Shaler, the American consul in Algiers, witnessed how the Vienna order came to North Africa. While most of his colleagues had left, Shaler stayed to observe an attack on the city. In the early hours of 28 August 1816, he ventured to peek outside from the consular residence. As a thunderstorm swept over the bay, Shaler noted in his diary how the bolts of lightning provided glimpses of 'hostile fleets retiring with the land breeze', the outline of masts and sails discernible 'on the deep obscurity of the horizon'.[2] The 'hostile fleets' that the American consul saw drifting off were a merger of Dutch and British navy squadrons. They had come to bombard Algiers and destroy its corsair fleet.

The extent of the damage done was clear the next day. 'I could not distinguish [. . .] the many fine houses which I had seen in the city the day previous',

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[1] A. Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace. The Fall of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna* (London: Harper Press, 2007), 485–6.

[2] W. Shaler, *Sketches of Algiers, Political, Historical, and Civil. Containing an Account of the Geography, Population, Government, Revenues, Commerce, Agriculture, Arts, Civil Institutions, Tribes, Manners, Languages, and Recent Political History of That Country* (Boston: Cummings, Hillard, and Co., 1826), 281.

a Royal Navy interpreter noted. 'Besides this', he went on, 'all the bay was full of the hulks of their navy, smoking in every direction and the water inside the mole was all black, covered with charcoal and half-burnt pieces of wood. But the most shocking and dreadful sight was the number of dead bodies which were floating in the water.'[3] Surveying this devastation, Dey Omar Agha, the Regent of Algiers, acceded to the demands posed by the British Admiral Lord Exmouth and his Dutch colleague Theodorus Frederik van Capellen. He signed a declaration forever renouncing 'Christian slavery': the centuries-old practice of holding captured Europeans imprisoned and asking for ransom while putting them to forced labour.[4]

Current estimates of the casualties that fell during the bombardment range from two to eight thousand. The Anglo-Dutch attack on Algiers illustrates that while the conclusion of the Congress of Vienna might have signified the beginning of a lasting, general peace on the European continent, it had very different consequences for Europe's near neighbours. In effect, the peace of Vienna created the frameworks in which European powers could pursue cooperative security efforts like this bombardment. Concerted efforts could come in the violent form displayed by the British and Dutch warships before Algiers. The Congress of Vienna thereby marked a point of substantial historical change for Tunis, Tripoli and Algiers – the 'Barbary Regencies' of the North African coast.

The literature on the Regencies largely recognises the significance of 1815 as a pivotal moment. Various publications stress that the Congress of Vienna marked the beginning of a gradual change. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the international standing of the Barbary Regencies was challenged and gradually debased as European statesmen and diplomats no longer accepted their legitimacy as states. Over the decades that followed the Congress, European political actors would begin to perceive and treat the Regencies as delegitimised robbers' nests that were up for imperial grabs.[5] Initially, calls for conquest or colonisation were largely beholden to pamphleteers and other radical voices in public debates, but, as the century progressed,

[3] D. Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs. The End of a Legend, 1800–1820* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 286–7.

[4] For a terminological discussion of 'slavery' versus 'captivity', M. Fontenay, 'Esclaves et/ou captifs. Préciser les concepts', in W. Kaiser (ed.), *Le Commerce des captifs. Les intermédiaires dans l'échange et le rachat des prisonniers en Méditerranée, XVe–XVIIIe siècle* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2008), 15–24.

[5] M. Kempe, *Fluch der Weltmeere. Piraterie, Völkerrecht und internationale Beziehungen, 1500–1900* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2010), 22–3. See also A. Jamieson, *Lords of the Sea. A History of the Barbary Corsairs* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 20; B.E. Vick, *The Congress of Vienna. Power and Politics after Napoleon* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 194, 213; C. Windler, 'Diplomatic history as a field for cultural analysis. Muslim-Christian relations in Tunis, 1700–1840', *The Historical Journal*, 44:1 (2001), 79–106, 97.

policies of imperial expansion and aggressive rhetoric would come to replace the caution and restraint that had characterised earlier diplomacy.[6]

The emerging idea that the Barbary Regencies and their corsair fleets were piratical threats to European security was central to this process of change. The concept of international security, however, remains largely absent in histories dealing with the nineteenth-century repression of North African corsairing.[7] Moreover, barring some general overviews, there is no detailed analysis of how the Congress of Vienna came to mark the beginning of an altered European engagement with the Barbary Regencies. The Anglo-Dutch bombardment of 1816 and the diplomatic talks at Vienna are linked, yet the question of how they are connected remains to be answered. Understanding the continental order constructed at Vienna as a nascent security culture helps make the nature of these links apparent.

The run-up to the 1816 bombardment provides numerous historical examples of the processes of bargaining that made up the core of international cooperation for the sake of security. The Anglo-Dutch attack on Algiers should, I argue, be understood as an attempt to exercise this security culture on the Mediterranean Sea. Situating the bombardment within the theoretical frameworks of security cultures also challenges prevailing readings of this concerted action. All too often, the Anglo-Dutch cooperation has been presented as a mere coincidence – actually it provides an illustrative example of European cooperation and the active role that smaller powers could take in such ventures.[8] The dynamics of agenda setting, diplomatic negotiation and decision-making that preceded the bombardment are of central importance in clarifying how the attack fits within the larger history of the security culture's regional extension. I analyse these political dynamics to show how naval cooperation only coalesced as Dutch and British threat perceptions and interest demarcations came to converge on the basis of shared outrage over 'Christian slavery'. Notions of Barbary corsairing as a threat to merchant shipping did not work to bring about concerted action with Great Britain, even though Dutch actors repeatedly applied such framing. Why the great power eventually *did*

[6] For the many incarnations of the idea of colonial conquest of Algiers, A. Thomson, 'Arguments for the conquest of Algiers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries', *Maghreb Review*, 14:1–2 (1989), 108–18.

[7] Janice Thomson does discuss the nineteenth-century fight against piracy, but in the framework of the state's monopoly on violence. J. Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns. State-building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[8] R. Perkins and K.J. Douglas-Morris, *Gunfire in Barbary. Admiral Lord Exmouth's Battle with the Corsairs of Algiers in 1816: The Story of the Suppression of White Christian Slavery* (Havant: Mason, 1982), 129; O. Löwenheim, '"Do ourselves credit and render a lasting service to mankind". British moral prestige, humanitarian intervention, and the Barbary pirates', *International Studies Quarterly*, 47 (2003), 23–48, 31.

proceed to act against Algiers should be understood with reference to smaller power diplomacy within European politics during and following the Congress of Vienna.

The cooperative efforts that the Vienna peace facilitated are not only of interest because they allow us to historicise security; they also impacted the Mediterranean region itself. In his *The Great Sea. A Human History of the Mediterranean*, David Abulafia has characterised the nineteenth century in Mediterranean history as a period with 'a greater degree of peace and safety than at any time since the heyday of the Roman Empire'.[9] Elsewhere, this period is defined as the moment when the Mediterranean became a 'colonial sea' as the result of (North) European imperial interventions in the region.[10] The notion of a security culture can unite these two conceptualisations in a single historical frame. The Congress of Vienna in this way signified the construction of a European order that was subsequently imposed and implemented upon the Mediterranean. Its waters might indeed have become more 'peaceful' and 'safe' as the shared threat of 'piracy' was fought in a concerted manner. Yet, these cooperative security efforts could also provide the pretext for conquest and subjugation, as exemplified by the 1830 French occupation of Algiers.[11] The Anglo-Dutch bombardment can be understood as an initial endeavour in this longer process of 'securing' the Mediterranean.

The manner in which the Barbary Regencies were discussed in Vienna has already been vividly and minutely described elsewhere. Therefore, the focus of my analysis lies mainly on the period between June 1815 and August 1816.[12] Still, in order to explain how Barbary corsairing came to be perceived as an international problem in the first place, I begin by discussing how historical actors tried to set the security agenda during the Congress of Vienna. I then explain how these attempts informed the cooperative action that marked the security culture's extension to the Mediterranean seaboard.

Agenda-Setting at the Augarten: Knights and Pirates

Before Napoleon had even been chased out of Paris and banished to Elba, the merchant classes of Amsterdam were already worrying about renewed dangers to Dutch ships on the Mediterranean Sea. Early in 1814, the Amsterdam Board

[9] D. Abulafia, *The Great Sea. A Human History of the Mediterranean* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), 561.

[10] M. Borutta and S. Gekas, 'A colonial sea. The Mediterranean, 1798–1956', *European Review of History*, 19:1 (2012), 1–13.

[11] For a discussion of the conquest of Algiers as linked to the fight against piracy, see G. Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs. France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

[12] Vick, *The Congress*, 212–24.

of Levantine Trade queried the government about the status of diplomatic contacts with Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Anne Willem van Nagell, gave a clear answer: 'The security of shipping dictates that our relationships with the Barbary Regencies be renewed.'[13] While the reinstatement of peaceful relations was easily arranged with Tunis and Tripoli, the Regent of Algiers proved more demanding. Dey Hadj Ali (r. 1809–15, the predecessor of Dey Omar Agha) argued that the Dutch government was behind on the tribute that it normally paid every year to maintain peace. Arrears had been built up while the Netherlands was under French occupation. This deficit, the Dey claimed, had to be paid before peaceful relations could be restored.[14] The Dutch government declined, even if the Amsterdam merchants vocally rejected this decision and urged the Minister of Foreign Affairs to give in to the demands.[15]

Dutch sailors quickly felt the consequences of this diplomatic standoff. In June and September, Algerine corsairs captured two ships flying the flag of the Netherlands.[16] Such renewed corsair activity marked a significant change from the later years of the Napoleonic Wars. Barbary corsairing had steadily decreased from 1806 onwards. The Regencies had adapted to the changing circumstances of European war by shifting their maritime activities from corsair chases to transportation and trade. As peace returned, this short-lived period ended too. After the Napoleonic Wars, Maghrebi sailors found themselves pushed out of their merchant ventures by European competitors. Revolts against central rule and successive natural disasters also made corsairing seem like a viable option for the Regencies again.[17]

The upsurge of corsair activity thus coincided with the return of peace to Europe. Contemporaries on the continent considered it a grave anomaly that merchant shipping would come under threat right at a time when war was supposed to be over. The Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs hoped that the upcoming negotiations in Vienna would quickly bring a solution to this issue. Writing to King William I, Van Nagell ruminated: 'And we may content ourselves in the hopes that the unheard of violent actions of the Barbary Regents will be an important subject of the deliberations of the Congress of Vienna.'[18]

[13] 'Memoir on relations with the Barbary states, 4 February 1814', National Archives The Hague (NL-HaNA), BuZa, 2.05.01, inv.no.94, doc.88a.

[14] On the Dey's demands, see 'Fagel to Castlereagh, 24 June 1814', National Archives Kew (TNA), Foreign Office Files (FO)37/73.

[15] 'Ortt to Van Nagell, 3 July 1814', NL-HaNA, BuZa, 2.05.01, inv.no.48.

[16] 'Fagel to Castlereagh, 7, 17 September 1814', TNA, FO37/73.

[17] Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs*, 293–304.

[18] 'Van Nagell to King William I, 16 November 1814', NL-HaNA, BuZa, 2.05.01, inv.no.96, doc.1036.

There were plans to put the Barbary Regencies on the congress agenda, but, in the end, the issue was never part of the official deliberations.[19]

The renewed corsair attacks did feature prominently in the whirl of events and pamphlets that accompanied the Congress sessions. The British Vice-Admiral Sir William Sidney Smith was one of the main attendees who endeavoured to make an issue out of Barbary. After having served in the Mediterranean during the Napoleonic Wars, Smith came up with the idea of forming a society for the sake of Christians imprisoned in North Africa. This 'society' became the chivalric order of the 'Knights Liberators of the Slaves in Africa'. The naval commander had been inspired by abolitionist efforts to ban the trans-Atlantic slave trade, a highly popular cause in Great Britain at the time.[20]

To help popularise the cause of his knightly order amidst the clamour of the Congress, Smith issued a pamphlet that set out its programme. The mission statement deplored the tribute that 'civilised peoples' paid to the Barbary Regents in general and Algiers in particular.[21] This tributary status made the European powers dependent on a 'chef de voleurs' which, Smith argued, was 'absurd', 'monstrous' and 'outrageous' to religion, humanity and honour.[22] As a more honourable alternative, he proposed that all interested states provide naval contingents for a composite maritime force that could surveil, arrest and prosecute pirates 'on land and sea'. Smith claimed that a squadron under his command would not only bring 'perfect security' to commerce, it could also help 'civilise' the coasts of Africa.[23]

In Vienna, the prime chevalier arranged an audience with the Russian Tsar and initiated correspondences with, among many others, Talleyrand and Metternich.[24] On 29 December 1814 he also organised a fund-raising 'picnic' to further his agenda-setting endeavours. This gathering took place in the Augarten, and among the invitees were Emperor Franz I of Austria, Tsar Alexander I of Russia, King Frederik VI of Denmark, King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia and Prince Leopold of Sicily.[25] The event was allegedly an elaborate and spectacular affair, even if many attendees were slightly at a loss

[19] Brian Vick provides some interesting and plausible explanations for the absence of Barbary corsairing on the official agenda: Vick, *The Congress*, 221–3.

[20] J. Barrow, *The Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir William Sidney Smith*, vol.II (London: Richard Bentley, 1848), 366–8.

[21] W.S. Smith, *Mémoire sur la nécessité et les moyens de faire cesser les pirateries des états barbaresques* (London, 1814). German and English translations were also issued.

[22] Ibid., 3–4. [23] Ibid., 5–6.

[24] 'Narischkin to Sidney Smith, Vienna 30 October 1814', National Maritime Museum Greenwich (NMM), Personal Collection of Sir Sidney Smith (SMT) 13. Other correspondences are printed in E. Howard, *Memoirs of Admiral Sir Sidney Smith*, vol.II (London: Richard Bentley, 1839), 316–7, 319–20.

[25] The invitation and 'List of illustrious chevaliers gathered at Augarten' are in NMM, SMT/13.

about the purpose of it all.[26] The money raised at the picnic was to be distributed among the consuls in North Africa, so they could set up a hospital and provide 'instant relief to the wretched sufferers'. To follow up on the publicity and 'strike at the root of the evil', Smith proposed to open negotiations with the Ottoman Sultan (the suzerain of the Barbary Regents) and ask for his assistance in repressing the North African corsairs.[27]

To one British commentator, all this personal effort and self-important running about 'smack[ed] a little Cervantic'.[28] Yet, Sidney Smith and his knights were hardly the only ones pushing this agenda at the Congress. Representatives of Lübeck and Bremen also called for action against the Barbary Regencies.[29] Lübeck's delegate, Senator Johann Friedrich Hach, criticised the inconsistency of being compassionate about the black slaves of Africa, while doing nothing to redeem the unfortunate 'civilised and Christian Europeans' enslaved by the Barbary 'pirates'.[30] The Marques de Labrador, the Spanish representative, picked up these arguments and raised them with Lord Castlereagh during talks on Spain's abolition of the slave trade.[31] The British statesman also received a letter by the Florentine Prince Corsini, representing Tuscany. The Prince called for British reprimands against the Barbary Regencies as the states of Italy simply could not protect their navigation like Great Britain could.[32]

The British government, however, was not very interested in confronting the Barbary powers. Russian delegate Count Nesselrode later recalled that whenever the subject of Barbary corsairing was raised, Castlereagh simply brought up the peace treaties that existed between the Regencies and Britain.[33] The Barbary Regencies had helped supply British troops on the Iberian Peninsula during the Napoleonic Wars. Moreover, commercial relations between Great Britain and Barbary were well in place, thanks to which, Sir William A'Court, a British envoy to Algiers (and later ambassador to Sicily and Naples), wrote, 'the Public Service has been facilitated, and a material saving [. . .] obtained for

[26] T. Pocock, *A Thirst for Glory. The Life of Admiral Sir Sidney Smith* (London: Pimlico, 1998), 221; Vick, *The Congress*, 216–8.
[27] Howard, *Memoirs*, 321–5.
[28] W. Hone, *The Cruelties of the Algerine Pirates. Shewing the Present Dreadful State of the English Slaves and Other Europeans at Algiers and Tunis* (London: Hay and Turner, 1816), 10–1.
[29] Vick, *The Congress*, 217–8, 221.
[30] 'Van Spaen van Voorstonden to Van Nagell, Vienna 4 October 1814', NL-HaNA, Legatie Oostenrijk 1814–1842, 2.05.10.10, inv.no.18, doc.15.
[31] Ibid.
[32] 'Prince Corsini of Tuscany to Castlereagh', Vienna 15 October 1814', TNA, FO139/21, fp.79–84.
[33] 'Verstolk van Soelen to Van Nagell, St Petersburg 18, 25 October 1816', NL-HaNA, BuZa, 2.05.01, inv.no.90, doc.4338.

Government'.[34] To the British delegates at the Congress, the Barbary Regencies were allies rather than a potential threat.[35]

Castlereagh was thus reluctant to commit to, or even discuss, violent action against the states of North Africa. Still, it would prove impossible for him to ignore the issue altogether. The adjacency in the public mind of 'black' and 'white' slavery ensured that the Barbary Regencies would come up almost any time abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade was mentioned – which was often, considering the centrality of international abolition to British goals for the Congress.[36] Spurred on by a strong and very vocal public opinion, Castlereagh could hardly retreat on the subject and tried hard to settle it at Vienna.[37] The negotiations on abolition slid into haggle and outright barter as Spanish and Portuguese delegates asked for financial concessions in return.[38] Sceptics, moreover, assumed that, for Britain, abolition was really about gaining some competitive, commercial advantage.[39] The enduring plight of the Christian captives in the Barbary Regencies seemed to prove their point. If Great Britain was so poised to end the black slave trade, the critics held, then why did its government do so little to end this other, 'white' type of slavery as well?

By the time the deliberations in Vienna ended, they had resulted only in a general declaration calling the slave trade 'repugnant to the principles of humanity and universal morality'. The statement carried little legal weight, but it did serve to cast a moral sheen over further negotiations.[40] Deliberations at Vienna also did little to alleviate the threat that the Barbary corsairs posed to Europe's smaller maritime powers. However, it had become clear that the perceived corsair threat could be used as a bargaining chip in international negotiations on abolition.

Towards Algiers: Translating Threats, Interests and Practices

No thought-out plans on how to engage with the Barbary Regencies were agreed at the Congress of Vienna. Still, the efforts of German and Italian

[34] 'McDonell to Colonel Bunbury, Algiers 1 June 1814', TNA, FO3/16. See also, 'Instructions to A'Court, 27 March 1813', TNA, Colonies and Dependencies (CO) 2/3, fp.23.

[35] G. Fisher, *Barbary Legend. War, Trade and Piracy in North Africa 1415–1830* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 4.

[36] Vick, *The Congress*, 10–1.

[37] P. Kielstra, *The Politics of Slave Trade Suppression in Britain and France, 1814–48. Diplomacy, Morality and Economics* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2000); J. Reich, 'The slave trade at the Congress of Vienna. A study in English public opinion', *The Journal of Negro History*, 53:2 (1968), 129–43.

[38] Reich, 'The slave trade', 137.

[39] Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace*, 346; B. Fladeland, 'Abolitionist pressures on the Concert of Europe, 1814–1822', *The Journal of Modern History*, 38:4 (1966), 355–73, 358–9.

[40] H. Berding, 'Die Ächtung des Sklavenhandels auf dem Wiener Kongress 1814/15', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 219:2 (1974), 265–89, 282–5.

delegates, as well as the activities of the 'Knights Liberators of the Slaves in Africa', indicated that the Barbary corsairs represented a topic of transnational importance, an issue that could be discussed on the European level and framed as a European concern.

In a geopolitical sense, the Vienna territorial settlements worked to sharpen Great Power conceptions of their national interests in the Mediterranean region. The security of Mediterranean shipping would come to be perceived in a different light due to territorial gains and alterations. Count Nesselrode, for one, claimed that the Russian acquisition of Finland, with its sizable merchant fleet, had made Mediterranean navigation a more pressing concern for the Tsar.[41] But it was perhaps most significant that the Vienna settlements recognised the acquisitions that Britain had made in the Mediterranean during the wars. The terms of peace solidified Great Britain's imperial and naval predominance in the region. Malta remained a British possession and the Ionian Islands became a protectorate under the post-Waterloo Treaty of Paris in November 1815.[42]

Such territorial gains also brought obligations. As early as 1798, Admiral Nelson had promised Royal Navy protection for Ionian subjects if they would expel the French troops stationed on their islands. This protection was a prime aspect of the tightening British hold on the islands.[43] Correspondingly, the occupation of Malta raised questions of how Britain would carry on the work of its previous rulers: the Order of St John, whose knights had derived their very *raison d'être* from opposing the North African corsairs. The Governor of Genoa argued that by occupying Malta, Great Britain had taken on 'the obligation' to act: 'The squadrons of the order protected the navigation and the coasts of those nations which could not purchase the peace from the Barbaric powers. Is not England charged with this protection? As to her ability to do so there can be no doubt.'[44]

The Vienna settlements also contained a strong emotive component, rooted as they were in an emotionally resonant preference for 'sense and sensibility'.[45] In this new European context, Barbary corsairing was made to seem absurd and abhorrent – even if it was perfectly acceptable from an international legal point of view. Diplomats and pamphleteers starkly contrasted corsairing and paying tribute to the general peace. The Dutch ambassador in London,

[41] 'Verstolk van Soelen to Van Nagell, 18, 25 October 1816', NL-HaNA, BuZa, 2.05.01, inv. no.90, doc.4338.

[42] See also N. Harding, 'North African piracy, the Hanoverian carrying trade, and the British state, 1728–1828', *The Historical Journal*, 43:1 (2000), 25–47.

[43] For the consequences of these promises, Vick, *The Congress*, 232.

[44] Howard, *Memoirs*, 318–9.

[45] B.A. de Graaf, 'Bringing sense and sensibility to the continent. Vienna 1815 revisited', *Journal of Modern European History*, 13:4 (2015), 447–57, 453.

Hendrik Fagel, claimed that the existence of a European peace had made the 'depredations' of the Barbary corsairs particularly 'insufferable'.[46] The fact that the European powers were no longer at war with each other, another Dutch diplomat stated, would allow them to redirect their attention and take a common stand against 'these revolting robberies' and 'humiliating vexations'.[47] One British pamphleteer argued along very similar lines:

> Christian Europe is now called upon by every humane and honourable principle to put an end, as far as it can, to evils which exist to its disgrace; and at no time can it be urged to do so with more propriety than at a crisis when we are taught to believe that a Saturnian reign is about to commence in each particular state, and bonds of Christian unity and brotherhood are solemnly subscribed to.[48]

Before this peaceable 'Saturnian reign', perpetual internal strife had hindered European powers from working together. Governments in Europe had long preferred to pay tribute to the Regencies in return for friendly dispositions as they would not or could not participate in collective action. Moreover, the authorities of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli played on the inter-European rivalries to further their own agendas.[49]

Paying tributes for peaceful relations with the Barbary Regents thus came to be seen as outrageous, even if it had been common practice only ten years before. This sudden reluctance to fulfil tributary obligations provoked new corsair captures, which were then framed as an outrage to the general European peace. In turn, captures were no longer accepted as a legal act of privateering, but, instead, came to be deplored as brigandage and piracy. Coastal raids of Italian islands, exemplified by a Tunisian razzia of Sant'Antioco in October 1815, further strengthened perceptions of Barbary brutality and illegality.[50] These altered attitudes and rising irritations were noticed in Constantinople as well. In August 1815, the Ottoman Sultan sent a firman warning his vassal in Algiers to cease 'these aggressive acts and abandon this sanctionable course of action'.[51]

Even if the Barbary Regencies were nominally part of the Ottoman Empire, European diplomats tended to view the Sultan as a potential ally, rather than a complicit foe. Historical actors generally differentiated between various Muslim rulers and societies, more than they clung to essentialist notions of

[46] 'Fagel to Castlereagh, 9 November 1815', TNA, FO37/84.
[47] 'Nijssen to Van Nagell, Tunis 10 January 1815', NL-HaNA, BuZa, 2.05.01, inv.no.55, doc.354.
[48] Hone, *The Cruelties of the Algerine Pirates*, 15.
[49] F. Hunter, 'Rethinking Europe's conquest of North Africa and the Middle East: The opening of the Maghreb, 1660–1814', *The Journal of North African Studies*, 4:4 (1999) 1–26, 14–5.
[50] In the raid of Sant'Antioco, southwest of Sardinia, 160 Sardinian subjects were captured. Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs*, 272–3.
[51] Ibid., 268–9. See also A. Temimi, 'Documents turcs inédits sur le bombardement d'Alger en 1816', *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 5:5 (1968), 111–33, 112.

Islamic perpetrators. In his Congress pamphlet, Sidney Smith argued that Tunis' head of state had a completely different character than the Dey of Algiers and would thus be more amenable to work with.[52] The dichotomous rhetoric of a crusade against the infidel did, at times, inform perceptions of the corsair threat but diplomats generally shied away from such discourse.[53]

European perceptions of Algiers, however, did become increasingly hostile – not just because of corsair attacks, but also as the result of diplomatic events. A peace treaty concluded between the United States and Algiers added to the idea that something ought to be done about corsairing. An American commander had managed to conclude a peace without tribute after he had taken Algiers' flagship, killed its commander Raïs Hamidou and threatened to bombard the city.[54] In Europe, this success was seen as an example of how 'half a dozen ships of war' could ensure that the Barbary Regencies were 'reduced into complete humiliation'.[55] For the Dutch government, the US treaty signified something of a missed opportunity. King William I had ordered the Dutch Mediterranean commander to cooperate with the Americans, but the instructions arrived too late.[56] The plan itself, though, indicates that the United States were also taken into account as potential cooperative partners and thus could be envisioned within the security culture as well.

Just as cooperation with the Americans failed, the Dutch government was equally unsuccessful in obtaining British assistance in its enduring conflict with Algiers. British officials maintained that they could not provide armed support because of the existing treaties between Britain and the Regency of Algiers.[57] In London, Dutch ambassador Fagel repeatedly tried to convince Castlereagh that the Algerians' conduct warranted violent action. According to Fagel, the 'security of Mediterranean navigation' was at stake as 'these pirates' hindered the commerce of Dutch subjects.[58] These agenda-setting moves had hardly any effect on British officials, even when the ambassador conveyed a disconcerting vision of an unchecked corsair fleet that would spread terror on the world's oceans.[59] Threat perceptions and the corresponding notions of the interests at stake were evidently too divergent. What Dutch diplomats represented as a menace to security did not seem that threatening to British

[52] Smith, *Mémoire*, 7. [53] Vick, *The Congress*, 219–20.

[54] For a detailed discussion of the American expedition, F. Leiner, *The End of Barbary Terror. America's 1815 War against the Pirates of North Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); R. Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary. A Diplomatic History* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2004), 128–32.

[55] Hone, *The Cruelties of the Algerine Pirates*, 7.

[56] 'Royal Decree, 21 July 1815', NL-HaNA, BuZa, 2.05.01, inv.no.61, doc.1411.

[57] 'Fagel to Van Nagell, 12 August 1814', NL-HaNA, BuZa, 2.05.01, inv.no.49, doc.978A.

[58] 'Fagel to Castlereagh, 24 and 25 June 1814', TNA, FO 37/73.

[59] 'Fagel to Van Nagell, 7 November 1815', NL-HaNA, Gezantschap Groot-Brittannië, 2.05.44, inv.no.26, doc.154.

statesmen. Castlereagh was averse to the idea of naval intervention because he feared the Royal Navy would probably carry all the costs, while the other powers could safely further their own commercial interests.[60]

Two factors helped to change this constellation, altering British officials' outlooks to the point where concerted action did become a conceivable policy option. The first was the increasingly frequent and ever more pressing call to end the 'slavery' of Europeans in the Barbary Regencies. Early in 1816, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs began to allude to the question of the 'White slave trade' in his letters to Castlereagh. The Minister, who also carried on a correspondence with Sidney Smith, wrote to compliment the British government on the zeal of its abolitionist efforts and wondered whether these should not be extended to end 'Christian slavery' as well?[61] In their diplomatic correspondence with London, Dutch officials thus shifted the emphasis of their threat and interest representations from the security of commerce to the plight of prisoners. Thereby, they tied in with public pamphleteering and activism, helping to further frame Barbary as a test of the supposedly limited idealism of British abolitionist efforts.[62]

The second aspect that contributed to changes in British policy were the small-power initiatives that ensued. As the Dutch government obtained nothing but largely inconsequential promises of consular assistance from Britain, it began to look for partners elsewhere. A unilateral Dutch expedition to Algiers in July 1815 failed miserably, further strengthening the official idea that cooperation was an absolute necessity.[63] Moreover, a report by the Dutch Minister of the Marine stressed that the navy did not possess the bomb vessels that were needed for a 'safe' attack on Algiers.[64] Technical limitations of the fleet thus further stimulated the search for partners.

The Dutch eventually found such a partner in the government of Spain. Together, the two powers negotiated the Treaty of Alcalá, a defensive pact against the Barbary Regencies that could be turned into a general European maritime league. The Dutch would invite the courts of Copenhagen, Stockholm and St Petersburg to join, while the Spanish would ask Naples, Turin and Lisbon. The move further illustrates that small-power initiatives were part of the security culture and that European security cooperation was by no means an exclusively great power affair. In the end, however, reactions

[60] 'Fagel to Van Nagell, 8 December 1815', ibid., doc.168.
[61] 'Fagel to Castlereagh, 10 January 1816', TNA, CO2/6.
[62] Löwenheim, 'British moral prestige', 40–1.
[63] 'Van Nagell to Van der Hoop, 24 January 1816', NL-HaNA, BuZa, 2.05.01, inv.no.31, doc.19.
[64] 'Van der Hoop to Van Nagell, 25 January 1816', NL-HaNA, Marine/Geheim Verbaal, 2.12.21, inv.no.4, doc.16.

from the invitees were lukewarm at best, which certainly had to do with British averseness to the initiative.[65]

Van Nagell had sent a copy of the projected articles of alliance to Castlereagh on 10 January 1816.[66] Tellingly, by the 29th of that very same month, the British Foreign Secretary was drafting instructions for a diplomatic mission to the Barbary Regencies. Even if British officials worked against the Spanish–Dutch proposal, the small-power plans for a general league helped prod Great Britain to take action. The commander of the British Mediterranean fleet, Admiral Exmouth, was tasked to sail to Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli and obtain declarations from each of the Regents that 'Christian slavery' would be abolished. 'Your Lordship', the orders read,

> is aware of the very general spirit of indignation that exists throughout Europe at the unrestrained system of piracy and violence, carried on under the pretext of war by the Barbary Powers [. . .] and there is no feature of this system so revolting to the general feeling as the mode in which their captives are thrown into, and retained in slavery.[67]

The wording of the instructions displays a threat perception of the Barbary Regencies and their 'system of piracy' that was centered on the issue of slavery, posing the matter as an affront to a supposedly shared European morality. In the same breath, this labeling of the Regencies as piratical also questioned those powers' legitimate rights as belligerents. Ambivalently enough, Exmouth was also tasked to clarify that the British government in no way intended to deny the Barbary Regencies 'their just right of war as independent states'.[68] Treaties could also still be concluded, which shows that the delegitimation of the North African states was a gradual and sometimes conflicting process.[69]

Admiral Exmouth sailed up and down the North African coast in the spring of 1816, visiting Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli, and then touching at Algiers again. In Tunis and Tripoli, agreements were signed quickly and without much haggling, but Dey Omar Agha of Algiers did not comply with British wishes right away.[70] The Dey only promised to consult with Constantinople first and then take the matter of abolition into consideration. During the negotiations, Exmouth and Omar were involved in heated debate. The two discussed the particularities of the 'European practice' of keeping captives as prisoners of

[65] For a detailed analysis of the Spanish-Dutch pact: N. van Sas, *Onze natuurlijkste bondgenoot. Nederland, Engeland en Europa, 1813–1831* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1985), 117–23.

[66] 'Fagel to Castlereagh, 10 January 1816', TNA, CO2/6, fp.7–14.

[67] 'Castlereagh to Bathurst, 29 January 1816', TNA, FO8/2, fp.19.

[68] Ibid., fp.21.

[69] For treaties as constituents of international hierarchies, see E. Keene, 'A case study of the construction of international hierarchy. British treaty-making against the slave trade in the early nineteenth century', *International Organization*, 61:2 (2007), 311–39, especially 320–30.

[70] 'Exmouth to Lord Melville, Tunis Bay 17 April 1816', TNA, FO8/2; 'Abstract of dispatch from Exmouth, Tripoli 30 April 1816', TNA, FO8/2.

war and, at one point Exmouth even threatened to resort to violence. In the end, however, the Admiral settled for the Regent's proposal and sailed back to England.[71]

Besides obtaining declarations from the Regents of Tunis and Tripoli, Exmouth had also concluded peace treaties and ransomed captives on behalf of Sardinia and Sicily. Moreover, he arranged that citizens of Hanover and the Ionian Islands would possess 'all the rights and security which British subjects enjoy' – solidifying the British hold on its new imperial gains.[72] The Admiral was optimistic and jubilantly stated that his efforts had 'finally smoked the horrors of Christian slavery'.[73] Such appraisals of the expedition were at odds with its results. While the instructions (and Exmouth's writings) were steeped in universalist rhetoric, the treaties and ransom deals only concerned subjects of the British Empire and the Italian states Sardinia and Sicily.[74]

Upon Exmouth's arrival in England, it turned out that his diplomatic mission had actually done little to dampen the 'general spirit of indignation'. The British government faced mounting domestic and international critiques. Henry Brougham, an opposition MP in the House of Commons, demanded that the documents relating to Exmouth's negotiations be made public.[75] He argued that the treaties concluded on behalf of Hanover, the Ionian Islands, Sardinia and Sicily would only lead the Regencies to redirect their corsair activities to target other, unprotected powers. The British government thus would tacitly sanction continued robberies. 'In what other light can the affair be viewed by the rest of Europe?', he wondered.[76] And indeed, journals on the continent lamented that this 'forbearance' was what had come of 'the hopes that Europe had vested in the Congress'.[77] One anonymous commentator in the British weekly *The Independent Whig* argued that any treaty concluded

[71] 'Exmouth to Croker, Algiers 18 June 1816', TNA, CO2/6, ff.168–78. At their first meeting, the Dey objected to Exmouth that he could not agree to peace treaties without tributes as it would lead him to be 'cut off from all his supplies, and exposed to extreme danger', 'Exmouth to Croker, Algiers 6 April 1816', TNA, FO8/2.

[72] A concise discussion of the treaties is in R. Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom. Annals of the British Relations with Algiers Prior to the French Conquest* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1884), 253–4. For the rights and security of British subjects, 'Castlereagh to Bathurst, 29 January 1816', TNA, FO8/2, fp.25.

[73] C. Northcote Parkinson, *Edward Pellew Viscount Exmouth. Admiral of the Red* (London: Methuen & Co., 1934), 429.

[74] Sardinia and Naples had enjoyed protection against Barbary when they were under French occupation and looked to Britain for a continuation of these privileges. 'Castlereagh to Bathurst, 29 January 1816', TNA, FO8/2, fp.20–1.

[75] Brougham's motion is discussed in *Edinburgh Review,* XXVI:LII (June 1816), 451–6 and 'Fagel to Van Nagell, 21 June 1816', NL-HaNA, Gezantschap Groot-Britannië, 2.05.44, inv. no.27, doc.87.

[76] *Edinburgh Review,* XXVI:LII, 455–6.

[77] *Arnhemsche Courant*, 21 May 1816, 1–2, which cites an article from *Journal de Francfort*.

with 'the Prince of Ruffians at Algiers [...] the ringleader of a banditti of Corsairs' was 'quite a farce' anyway.[78]

Questions of Barbary state legitimacy went hand in hand with calls for violent action against Algiers. The public indignation behind such appeals only increased when news reached Europe of a tragedy in Bona, a coastal town about 600 kilometers east of Algiers. On 23 May 1816 an order by the Dey to arrest the members of a Sardinian fisher community under British protection had resulted in violence. About two hundred people were killed or wounded in what become known as the 'Bona massacre'.[79] Tragically enough, the Dey had tried to reverse his orders but these commands did not reach the town in time. The event provoked a new wave of transnational outrage as it was discussed and denounced in newspapers all over Europe.[80]

Castlereagh had long fended off critiques of Exmouth's mission by stating that violent action against Algiers would be a breach of treaty.[81] The other powers of Europe could complain all they want, he argued, but until they were prepared 'to purge themselves of the taint of the Slave Trade' they had little reason to condemn 'piracy' on the Mediterranean.[82] After Bona, however, Castlereagh's stance changed profoundly. He instrumentalised the 'Bona massacre' to reframe the use of force as an act of retaliation, rather than as a suspension of the peace that was in place between Britain and Algiers. In a new set of instructions to Exmouth, the statesman now posed the 'outrages which had recently been committed' as the main incentive for another expedition. This time, Exmouth was to proceed to Algiers, declare war and demand that the Dey sign a declaration renouncing 'Christian slavery' forever.[83]

Most notably, an addendum to his instructions stated that the Admiral was to cooperate with the Dutch Mediterranean squadron. The orders held that 'no opportunity should be lost of reviving in the two countries those ancient habits of naval & military cooperation, by which the liberties of Europe have heretofore been so happily upheld'.[84] After more than two years of repeated diplomatic calls for assistance, the Dutch government finally got the British cooperation it had so persistently striven for. On 10 August 1816, Admiral

[78] Parkinson, *Edward Pellew*, 429.

[79] 'McDonell to Bathurst, Algiers 30 June and 21 July 1816', TNA, FO3/18.

[80] *The Times,* 24 June 1816, *Rotterdamsche Courant*, 25 June 1816 and *Overijsselsche Courant*, 5 July 1816, each referencing Italian and French newspapers. For the Dey's position: 'McDonell to Bathurst, 21 July 1816', TNA, FO3/18.

[81] 'Fagel to Van Nagell, 31 May 1816', NL-HaNA, Gezantschap Groot-Britannië, 2.05.44, inv. no.27, doc.77.

[82] 'Castlereagh to Cathcart, 28 May 1816', TNA, FO65/102, fp.9.

[83] 'Croker to Exmouth, 18 July 1816', NL-HaNA, Gezantschap Groot-Britannië, 2.05.44, inv. no.59.

[84] 'Bathurst to the Admiralty, 17 July 1816', TNA, FO8/11; 'Fagel to Van Nagell, 13 August 1816', NL-HaNA, Gezantschap Groot-Britannië, 2.05.44, inv.no.27, doc.108.

Exmouth met his Dutch colleague in the Bay of Gibraltar.[85] Their composite fleet totalled twenty-one warships, frigates and corvettes, as well as numerous smaller vessels.[86]

Rumours of the impending attack had been circulating in Algiers since June, when the Dey wrote to Constantinople about 'an allied fleet of the Christian nations' on its way with 'evil intentions'.[87] Those intentions became clear within hours of its arrival. Of the ensuing bombardment, Exmouth later wrote how his Dutch collaborators had displayed great 'energy and zeal; from the youngest Midshipman to the highest rank, all seemed animated by one soul'.[88]

In the clamour and clouds of battle it may have been hard to imagine how much haggling, bickering and hesitancy had preceded this cooperative attack. The security culture did not work in a self-evident manner: the fact that the powers of Europe attempted to create a new order of peace and stability by convening to discuss shared security issues did not necessarily signify that shared action would follow. Cooperative security efforts, as in the case of the Anglo-Dutch bombardment of Algiers, could require lengthy processes of negotiation. If anything, the dynamics leading up to 27 August 1816 indicate that the security culture was characterised by disagreement, by divergent notions of what security was and how it should be attained. But at the same time, the episode illustrates how these differences could be mediated, how ideas of vital interests and representations of threat could be made to fit different policy agendas.

Conclusions: The Links and Their Consequences

The very linkages between the festivities at the Augarten in 1814 and the flames at Algiers in 1816 can help us conceive how historical actors made sense of the order created at Vienna, how they used the Congress as a call for action and how these calls could have considerable consequences on non-European ground. The Congress of Vienna did not directly cause the bombardment of Algiers, and the years 1815–16 were characterised by diplomatic bargaining and various failed attempts at cooperation. Still, the peace did create the circumstances in which violent security efforts could result.

Despite the destruction that the bombardment wrought, the authorities of Algiers managed a rather quick recovery. By the year's end its coastal fortifications were largely rebuilt and the first new corsair ships were out at

[85] 'Correspondence between Van Capellen and Exmouth, Bay of Gibraltar, 10 August 1816', Ibid., inv.no.59.
[86] Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs*, 280–2. [87] Ibid., 284; Temimi, 'Documents turcs inédits', 115.
[88] *The London Gazette*, 15 September 1816, NL-HaNA, Gezantschap Groot-Britannië, 2.05.44, inv.no.59, doc.1791.

sea again.[89] Even so, the legacy of the bombardment would prove to be long-lasting. If anything, the Anglo-Dutch victory had made asymmetries of power between the European and North African states blatantly clear. The Barbary Regencies would no longer appear as menacing as they once had, though they remained on the international security agenda. Over the course of the subsequent years, Barbary corsairing became the focus of more institutionalised forms of cooperation. Later in 1816, a series of ambassadorial conferences commenced in London that continued to treat the slave trade in unison with the Barbary corsairs.[90] Up until the French conquest of Algiers, the North African Regencies were the subject of continuous diplomatic deliberation.[91]

In this longer historical process, the Congress of Vienna primarily stands as an important moment of international agenda setting. Its main significance lies in providing a platform on which Barbary corsairing could be presented as a shared threat, where the Regencies could come to be delineated as a common European enemy. The fact that delegates from the German and Italian states, as well as the transnational 'Knights Liberators', had publicised the issue certainly helped strengthen the notion that this topic was of European significance. Even then, it still took lengthy debate and the overcoming of disagreement before proposed norms of action began to take shape. Agitated pamphleteers called for the outright destruction of the Barbary Regencies, and while Dutch diplomats urged a concerted display of force, British statesmen initially preferred to stick to diplomatic negotiations.

The discussions on how to act against Barbary corsairing made clear that there were considerable differences in threat perceptions and interest demarcations between various groups of actors. What smaller maritime powers such as the Netherlands considered a threat to the security of their navigation and commerce did not resonate with British government officials. The latter did not consider the security of other powers' maritime commerce a vital British interest. This British stance changed when the threat of corsairing was framed differently and 'Christian slavery' came to be the main concern. By mirroring the 'white' to the 'black' slave trade, historical actors managed to connect the Barbary threat to British abolitionist policies.

The allegedly smaller powers of Europe played a prominent part in setting the international agenda, framing the Barbary corsairs as a common European threat and bringing about concerted security efforts. The Royal Navy only came to attack Algiers as a result of the incessant efforts of smaller powers, augmented by public critiques in Britain and elsewhere. Averseness to the

[89] 'McDonell to Bathurst, Algiers 10 November 1816', TNA, FO3/18.
[90] See Chapter 6 by Vick in this volume.
[91] J. Swain, 'The struggle for the control of the Mediterranean prior to 1848. A study in Anglo-French relations', PhD diss., University of Philadelphia (1933), 63–5.

proposed general maritime league of Spain and the Netherlands, combined with a sense of commitment to the Italian allies Sardinia and Sicily, helped to bring about British involvement. As such, the Anglo-Dutch bombardment of Algiers illustrates that smaller powers and non-state actors could take active part in the security culture, at times even contributing to the formation of great power policies.

Additionally, the 1816 case illustrates how contemporaries understood the new European order founded at Vienna. The source materials on the months between June 1815 and August 1816 are rife with indications of how the Congress of Vienna informed perceptions of international security. The notion that the Vienna Acts laid the basis for a peaceful and secure Europe, supported by moral and legal imperatives, came to shape the way in which European powers engaged with the Mediterranean 'beyond'.[92] Contrasting the continent to its Barbary neighbours, contemporaries constructed Europe as a community of moral righteousness, legality and peace. Lines of exclusion from this community followed the delineations of shared threat perceptions, and violence lay at the limits of the European order of peace and tranquillity. There, on these margins, the 'Saturnian reign' could wreak destruction – to that, the battered walls of Algiers and the bodies floating in its bay could attest.

[92] Glenda Sluga states that the Congress of Vienna 'enabled new ways of thinking about the universal relevance of morality and politics enacted in a sphere that was imagined as international – albeit from a European perspective'. G. Sluga, 'Madame de Staël and the transformation of European politics, 1812–17', *The International History Review*, 37:1 (2015), 142–66, 143.