

CONGRESS OF VIENNA 2015

IN SEARCH OF
PRINCIPLES FOR A STABLE
WORLD ORDER

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BRIEFING NOTES

Two hundred years ago European leaders met in Vienna to reestablish order on a continent devastated by decades of warfare. The conservative order reestablished by agreement in 1815—which valued stability above all else—prevented another major European war for a hundred years. However much the decisions taken by those statesmen have been criticized in the intervening years, what is remarkable is the determination of those who gathered in Vienna to establish workable rules and principles that would guarantee a long-lasting peace.

The Congress of Vienna 2015 is being convened to engage experienced and informed individuals from around the world in a discussion of three major challenges to peace and stability in our day: noncooperation among the major powers, forced migration, and economic inequality. Our aim is to encourage fresh thinking regarding the principles and rules governing the conduct of the major powers in order to develop durable solutions to the problems we face in a time of significant demographic, economic, and geopolitical change.

The Congress agenda is focused on dialogue and cooperation among the major powers in part to set a more manageable scope for this discussion. This is accorded priority because an absence of conflict among the major powers is an essential precondition for achieving world order. What each major power does has a significant impact. What they do collectively has a dominant influence. Further, these larger, more powerful, and globally engaged states can potentially bring their weight to bear to minimize regional and local conflict, particularly by acting in concert. The Congress is composed of participants from around the globe to ensure that, in our interdependent world, the perspectives and potential roles of all regions and states are considered; mid-sized and smaller states may have a meaningful impact on the course of events, even more so by acting collaboratively. Such states inherently lack the power to ignore international principles and rules, which inclines them to be willing to enter into dialogue in search of accommodation. And together they have a global reach.

It is our hope that this forum will help us understand our differences, focus on what unites us, and prove to be a precursor, in the words of Henry Kissinger, of “an effective mechanism for the major powers to consult and possibly cooperate on the most consequential issues.” The Congress

of Vienna brought decision-makers together for an extended period of dialogue and personal interaction. Can a modern day counterpart be found to permit genuine—and politically safe—exploratory dialogue?

Congress Proceedings

The discussions will take place in the historic Congress Hall in the Federal Chancellery in Vienna—the site of the original Congress of Vienna that met in 1814–15—beginning on October 22, 2015. In addition to the invited delegates to the Congress, an advisory group of leading academics and practitioners from government and nongovernmental organizations will be in attendance and able to participate in informal discussions with the delegates. An international group of postgraduate students gathered at the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna, with a facilitator, will also participate in the proceedings through an off-site live feed.

A day will be devoted to the discussion of each of the major issues under consideration: the management of major power relations; forced migration; and economic inequality. In a final session, delegates will be asked to consider paths toward greater cooperation among the major powers. Attention will be given to appropriate principles and rules for our time, including their implementation and enforcement. Even identifying a process by which progress toward a durably stable and peaceful world order could be realized would be a significant achievement. Each session will be led by an expert moderator well versed in the topic under discussion.

In the months leading up to the Congress, the Chumir Foundation for Ethics in Leadership has prepared the ground for the discussions in Vienna. In collaboration with a number of leading policy organizations and university centers, the foundation commissioned seventeen papers by international experts setting out the best thinking on topics relevant to the discussions. It hosted nine workshops to solicit a range of perspectives on the issues and papers themselves. And it recently convened a student congress at the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna to gain the perspective of the next generation on the issues under discussion. This background work informs the questions to be put to the delegates. The written materials will be made available to all participants.

The results of the Congress will be presented at a public session at the United Nations in the spring of 2016.

Global Challenges

The Management of Major Power Relations

The central question for the Congress is how to identify realistic, implementable principles and rules to govern the behavior of the major powers—the United States, the European Union,

China, Japan, Russia, and India—so that their competing interests are managed without conflict and their shared interests are brought to the forefront. Chief among the latter are the avoidance of armed conflict, achievement of global financial stability, access to needed supplies and markets, economic viability, a healthy environment, and an end to terrorism.

Questions before the Congress (the discussions will address specific important bilateral, regional, and multilateral disagreements and conflicts):

How Does Each of the Major Powers Seek to Shape the World Order?

- Do the changes sought amount to new principles and rules?
- Are there specific concessions (political, economic, territorial, rhetorical) that individual major powers should make to promote greater cooperation?
- What better tools for conflict prevention and resolution might be realized?
- Do differences in values and ideologies prevent shared responses?
- What are the consequences of potential developments among the major powers for other regions and states?

What Are the Fundamental Issues of Agreement and Disagreement among the Major Powers?

- How can the major powers manage their competing interests more effectively?
- Are the major powers limited to dealing with individual issues, such as climate change and regulation of financial markets, or can they agree on the terms of broader security cooperation? If not, can they at least agree on a process that, over time, promises to develop a capacity to deal with such issues?
- What are the fundamental contentious issues that divide the major powers? These appear to include: claimed spheres of influence versus the right of self-determination; the maintenance of the status quo in the world order versus the demands for change by the emerging powers; domestic political narratives as an impediment to international cooperation; and differing values and ideologies, which fuel distrust and impede joint initiatives. Are there any other such prominent issues?
- Does economic interdependence reduce rivalry and conflict between the major powers?
- Is the proliferation of regional trade and investment agreements creating nascent geopolitical blocs that will be counterproductive with respect to stability among the major powers? Can mutually beneficial economic agreements reduce confrontation and ease the task of security agreement?

How Do We Move toward Greater Cooperation and Stability?

- What are the impediments to agreement on principles and rules for security? What process might help over time to remove those obstacles?

- What state groupings are most suitable for advancing stability? Are they regional for Europe and Asia separately; wider for Europe, Eurasia, and China; global among the major powers?
- What lessons can be learned from regional bodies (e.g., ASEAN, OSCE, the African Union, NATO, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization) in considering a global forum?
- Non-state actors, both “good” and “bad,” erode the power of states. What is the appropriate role for such actors? Should the major powers collaborate to try to limit their influence?
- Is it possible to have a candid dialogue among the leaders of the major powers to advance the objective of cooperation?
- By what means might a genuine dialogue of the major powers be achieved?

Forced Migration and Its Challenges

Global population displacement is at an all-time recorded high. According to UNHCR’s most recent estimate, 60 million people are currently forcibly displaced. Of these, 20 million are cross-border refugees and over 38 million are internally displaced within their country of origin. The international system is struggling to cope with the 42,500 people forced to leave their homes each day. Over half of all refugees are children. Recent headline-grabbing tragedies in the Mediterranean mask the reality that most forced migrants seek refuge in the Global South. Fully 86 percent of refugees are in developing nations, with 3.6 million in the least developed countries. In 2014, only 126,800 refugees returned to their home countries, the lowest level since 1983, and only 105,200 were resettled, in 26 countries. The vast majority of forced migrants are unlikely to be repatriated to a peaceful and stable home country or resettled in a country other than the one to which they fled initially.

While it is obviously a first order priority to resolve the root causes of forced migration, policy must be made on the premise that a large number of people will be forced to leave their homes because of conflict and persecution, in addition to the large numbers of those fleeing terrible economic conditions and those who may be forcibly displaced by the consequences of climate change. Therefore, while sustainable global solutions to the mounting forced-migration crisis—such as repatriation and resettlement—are being sought, efforts must be made both to help refugees become self-reliant and to assist hosting states. This means that forced migrants need the opportunity, in the first instance, to achieve economic self-sufficiency, something now often denied them. At the most basic level, forced migrants need opportunities to work lawfully in their host countries and to have access to education and job training. Beyond economic opportunities, a robust solution must eventually include elements that restore and permit viable lives for forced migrants. Because hosting states view the presence of large numbers of refugees as problematic—economically and socially—the international community must participate in burden-sharing by, for example, providing additional financial support to hosting states or enhancing resettlement programs. Adoption of a new development-based approach (with appropriate international support) would see refugees not as a threat to hosting communities, but as a potential economic benefit. Leaving forced-migrant communities socially alienated and

discriminated against is a recipe for discontent and future instability, if not, over an extended period of deprivation, a risk for recruitment to antisocial causes and activities.

Questions before the Congress:

Sharing the Burden

Do all the major powers, including those where the immediate impact of forced migration is low (China, Japan, Russia, the United States) have an interest—apart from humanitarian concerns—in seeking long-term solutions to the problem of long-term displacement?

If so, how can the major powers help alleviate the burdens on the receiving countries, including giving forced migrants the opportunity to lead productive lives wherever they find themselves?

How can programs of international humanitarian assistance be supplemented by—or transformed into—policies of inclusion and integration?

The Role of Development

Can the perceived challenges occasioned by displaced populations be reformulated as one of economic development, even as an opportunity for the receiving countries, which are largely in the Global South, to experience growth from added population? Is there a means by which those who are willing to take in forced migrants can be assisted in their economic development?

Technology, Innovation, and Economic Inequality

While economic growth has brought tremendous benefits to the world's wealthiest, over one billion people—one in seven of all individuals alive today—live on less than \$1.25 a day. While many have been lifted out of extreme poverty in recent decades, the measures of the distribution of wealth, income, and opportunity between and within countries reveal increasing levels of inequality. Wide disparities hurt everyone. A high level of income inequality harms social and health outcomes, heightens political polarization, stunts economic growth, and increases the chance of violent conflict both within countries and across borders—all of which make for a less stable world. There is now widespread concern that technological innovation—a tide that was expected to raise all boats—has in fact contributed to the problem of economic inequality by further concentrating wealth among those fortunate and best-equipped—by accident of birth, education, and location—to live amidst and take advantage of technological advances and their economic spinoffs. There is a need for creative policy solutions to redress global technological and innovation-fueled disparities.

Questions before the Congress:

Innovation and Inequality

Do the dynamics of inequality suggest directions of policy response?

What role does technological innovation play in the current dynamics of inequality? How can the benefits of technological innovation be more broadly and fairly distributed, while innovation itself continues to be stimulated?

What Can Different Actors Do to Address the Problem?

What actions can transnational corporations, national governments, and international organizations take to reduce innovation-related inequalities?

Might international agreements among the major powers, or more universal ones, play an ameliorating role?

An Effective Mechanism for Implementation

Have the Congress discussions led to some proposed new and workable principles and rules? If so, what is the best method to implement them and assure compliance? If not, is there a process that might lead to improved cooperation?

How can a serious and solution-oriented dialogue among the major powers on challenging issues be stimulated? Is a retooled or new forum needed to expose common aspirations, reconcile competing interests, and curb excessive nationalism? And can the major powers make room for the voices of the less powerful?