

isolation of Great Britain from continental Europe.¹⁵¹ As the best means of overcoming this mutual suspicion, Grenville suggested that France should lay her terms of peace before Great Britain in a confidential communication, authentic but not official, since the failure of such steps, if official, placed a British Government under the necessity of laying the correspondence before Parliament. If the Government at Paris felt sufficient confidence in the London Cabinet to take the step suggested, Great Britain, Grenville declared, would welcome it, and if the terms offered were consistent with her engagements to her allies and with her own naval interests, she would discuss the matter at Vienna and bring it to a point where a general congress, if convened at all, would be a mere formality.

§ 3. Great Britain threatened by Russia and the Armed Neutrality. Bonaparte reverses his policy toward Great Britain.

Auckland embodied this answer in a letter to Perregaux, which the latter laid before the French Government. Bonaparte took no notice of it.¹⁵² A sufficient explanation of this might perhaps be found in the circumstance that Grenville in his reply had again suggested a general peace—a proposal which was without hope of acceptance at Paris; but there was an additional and weightier reason for Bonaparte's silence.

¹⁵¹ This feeling was not an idle suspicion. See the interesting passage in Bonaparte's Bulletin of the Army, 18 June 1800, *Corr. Nap.*, VI, 4927: "La Belgique fera partie du territoire du grand peuple. La Batavie et l'Espagne réunies d'intérêts et de passions, redoubleront d'efforts contre les tyrans des mers, et l'Anglais, exilé six mois de l'année sur son île, devra attendre que l'Elbe soit débarrassé de ses glaces pour avoir des nouvelles du continent. L'Angleterre deviendra, par son arrogance, sa vénalité, sa corruption, l'opprobre et le mépris du Français, comme de l'Autrichien et du Russe." Also Bonaparte's letter to the Emperor of Russia, 27 Feb., 1801, *Corr. Nap.*, VII, 5417: "Si Votre Majesté tient la main à ce que les Anglais ne fassent aucun commerce avec les puissances du nord, si le corps de M. de Sprengporten se porte dans le Hanovre pour ne mettre aucune espèce de doute à la fermeture de l'Elbe et du Weser, un corps d'observation que j'ai envoyé à Bordeaux forçant le Portugal à fermer ses ports à l'Angleterre, et ceux de Naples et de la Sicile leur étant également fermés, les Anglais n'auront aucune communication avec l'Europe."

¹⁵² Letters from Auckland to Grenville, 5 Jan., and 3 Feb., 1801; from Perregaux to Auckland, 16 Jan., 1801. Appendix B, II, III, IV, pp. 76-78 *infra*.