

EUROPEAN PEACE AS NATIONAL INTEREST:
THE ROLE OF THE GERMAN CONFEDERATION
IN BRITISH POLICY, 1814—1832

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Using selected examples (the phase of establishing the Confederation, 1814—1820; conflict between absolutist and constitutional states in the Confederation, 1831—1832; the Belgian-Luxemburg question), analyzes the German Confederation's role in the Pax Britannica in the period before the Revolution of 1848. The analysis throws light on the determining factors of British policy which resulted from the interaction of elements of domestic policy, social development, foreign policy, the economy, alliance constellations, and the international system. The prime goal of British national interests was to secure and preserve European peace as a prerequisite for a policy allowing a free hand for tackling the domestic political problems of a society in transition and for securing the global political and economic interests of the world and commercial power, without overextending its own forces. The functional role of the German Confederation as a „keystone“ in securing European peace and the resulting British „appeasement“ policy aimed at stabilizing the European center had far-reaching consequences for the political and economic development of Germany in the 19th century.