His claims on the attention of the Directors had been strengthened by his reading two papers before the French Institute, the first on the commercial relations between England and the United States (in the sense referred to above), and the second on the advantages to be derived from new colonies. In the latter there occurred the suggestive remarks that, whereas revolutions made men prematurely old and weary, the work of colonization tended to renew the youth of nations. France, he observed, needed the spur to practical energy which the Americans had at hand in the effort to subdue the difficulties placed in their way by nature. Similar efforts would tend to make Frenchmen forget the past, and would at the same time supply an outlet for the poor and discontented. The practical statesmanship contained in these papers raised Talleyrand in public estima­tion; and, thanks to the efforts above named, he gained the post of foreign minister, entering on his duties in July 1797.

Bonaparte by his victories over the Austrians in Italy and Styria had raised the French republic to heights of power never dreamed of, and now desired to impose on the emperor terms of peace, to which the Directors demurred. Talleyrand, despite the weakness of his own position (he was as yet little more than the chief clerk of his department), soon came to a good under­standing with the general, and secretly expressed to him his satisfaction at the terms which the latter dictated at Campo Formio (17th of October 1797). The *coup d’état* of Fructidor (September 1797) had perpetuated the Directory and led to the exclusion of the two “ moderate ” members, Carnot and Barthélémy; but Talleyrand saw that power belonged really to the general who had brought about the *coup d’état* in favour of the Jacobinical Directors headed by Barras.

After the rupture of the peace negotiations with England, which resulted from the *coup d’état* of Fructidor, the policy of France became more warlike and aggressive. The occupation of Rome and of Switzerland by the French troops and the events of Bonaparte’s Egyptian expedition (see Napoleon I.) brought about a renewal of war on the continent, but with these new developments Talleyrand had little or no connexion. His powers as minister were limited, and he regretted the extension of the area of war. Moreover, in the autumn of 1797 his reputa­tion for political morality (never very bright) was overclouded by questionable dealings with the envoys of the United States sent to arrange a peaceful settlement of certain disputes with France. The investigations of the most recent of Talleyrand’s biographers tend to show that the charges made against him of trafficking with the envoys have been overdrawn; but all his apologists admit that irregularities occurred. Talleyrand re­fused to clear himself of the charges made against him as his friends (especially Madame de Staël) urged him to do ; and the incident probably told against his chances of admission into the Directory, which were discussed in the summer of 1798. A year later he resigned the portfolio for foreign affairs (20th of July 1799), probably because he foresaw the imminent collapse of the Directory. If so, his premonitions were correct. Their realization was assured by the return to France of the “ Con­queror of the East ” in October. The general and the diplo­matist soon came to an understanding, and Talleyrand tact­fully brought about the alliance between Bonaparte and Sieyès *(q.v.)* (then the most influential of the five Directors) which paved the way for the *coup d’état* of Brumaire (see French Revolution and Napoleon I.).

Talleyrand’s share in the actual events of the 18th, 19th Brumaire (9th, 10th of November) 1799 was limited to certain dealings with Barras on the former of those days. About midday he took to Barras a letter, penned by Roederer, re­questing him to resign his post as Director. By what means Talleyrand brought him to do so, whether by persuasion, threats or bribes, is not known; but on that afternoon Barras left Paris under an escort of soldiers. With the more critical and exciting events of the 19th of Brumaire at St Cloud Talleyrand had no direct connexion; but he had made all his preparations for flight in case the blow failed. His reward for helping on the winning cause was the ministry for foreign affairs, which he held from the close of December 1799 on to the summer of 1807. In the great work of reconstruction of France now begun by the First Consul, Talleyrand played no unimportant part. His great aim was to bring about peace, both international and internal. He had a hand in the pacific overtures which Bona­parte, early in the year 1800, sent to the court of London; and, whatever may have been the motives of the First Consul in sending them, it is certain that Talleyrand regretted their failure. After the battle of Marengo an Austrian envoy had come to Paris in response to a proposal of Bonaparte, and Talleyrand persuaded him to sign terms of peace. These were indignantly repudiated at Vienna, but peace was made between the two Powers at Lunéville on the 9th of February 1801.

As regards French affairs, Talleyrand used his influence to help on the repeal of the vexatious laws against *émigrés,* non- juring priests, and the royalists of the west. He was also in full sympathy with the policy which led up to the signature of the Concordat of 1801-2 with the pope (see Concordat); but it is probable that he had a hand in the questionable intrigues which accompanied the closing parts of that complex and difficult negotiation. At the end of June 1802 the pope removed Talleyrand from the ban of excommunication and allowed him to revert to the secular state. On the 10th of September 1803, owing to pressure put on him by Bonaparte, he married Madame Grand, a *divorcée* with whom he had long been living.

During the meeting of Italian notables at Lyons early in 1802 Talleyrand was serviceable in manipulating affairs in the way desired by Bonaparte, and it is known that the foreign minister suggested to them the desirability of appointing Bonaparte president of the Cisalpine Republic, which was thenceforth to be called the Italian Republic. In the negotiations for peace with England which went on at Amiens during the winter of 1801-2 Talleyrand had no direct share, these (like those at Lunéville) being transact ed by Napoleon’s eldest brother, Joseph Bonaparte *(q.v.).* On the other hand he helped the First Consul in assuring French supremacy in Switzerland, Italy and Germany. In Germany the indemnification of the princes who lost all their lands west of the Rhine was found by secularizing and absorbing the ecclesiastical states of the empire. This unscrupulous proceeding, known as the Secularizations (February 1803), was carried out largely on lines laid down by Bonaparte and Talley­rand; and the latter is known to have made large sums of money by trafficking with the claimants of church lands.

While helping to establish French supremacy in neighbouring states and assisting Bonaparte in securing the title of First Consul for life, Talleyrand sought all means of securing the permanent welfare of France. He worked hard to prevent the rupture of the peace of Amiens which occurred in May 1803, and he did what he could to prevent the sale of Louisiana to the United States earlier in the year. These events, as he saw, told against the best interests of France and endangered the gains which she had secured by war and diplomacy. Thereafter he strove to moderate Napoleon’s ambition and to preserve the European system as far as possible. The charges of duplicity or treachery made against the foreign minister by Napoleon’s apologists are in nearly all cases unfounded. This is especially so in the case of the execution of the duc d’Enghien (March 1804), which Talleyrand disapproved. The evidence against him rests on a document which is now known to have been forged. On the assumption of the imperial title by Napoleon in May 1804, Talleyrand became grand chamberlain of the empire, and received close on 500,000 francs a year.

Talleyrand had rarely succeeded in bending the will of the First Consul. He altogether failed to do so with the Emperor Napoleon. His efforts to induce his master to accord lenient terms to Austria in November 1805 were futile; and he looked on helplessly while that Power was crushed, the Holy Roman Empire swept away, and the Confederation of the Rhine set up in central Europe. In the bargainings which accompanied this last event Talleyrand is believed to have reaped a rich harvest from the German princes most nearly concerned. On the 6th of July 1806 Napoleon conferred on his minister the