Felix Austria?: Cold War Security Policy between NATO, Neutrality, and the Warsaw Pact, 1945-1989

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Abstract

Following the Third Reich’s defeat in 1945, officially “liberated” Austria found itself under a quadripartite occupation similar to that of its northern neighbor, Germany. Contrary to official Austrian historiography immediately following the conflict and public pronouncements of the four occupying powers from the anti-Hitler coalition, Austria was far less the “first victim” of German aggression and much more of a willing participant in Nazi crimes than Austrians or privately suspicious Allied leaders cared to admit.

As the Cold War developed, Austria faced the twin dangers of Communist subversion and national division along East-West occupation zone boundaries as would occur in Germany. Austria’s clear rejection of Communism and establishment of a unified government, as exhibited in the Social Democratic-Christian Democratic Grand Coalition produced by national elections in November 1945, was of central importance in combating these dangers. Nonetheless, some form of neutrality to forestall any anticipated adherence of an independent Austria to Western military alliances emerged as a precondition for Soviet evacuation of Austria and occupation’s end.

Not necessarily adverse to the foreswearing of military commitments after several military misadventures in recent Austrian history, Austrians paid the political price in 1955 of agreeing to adopt permanent neutrality as the policy of a sovereign Austria, thereby paving the way for occupation’s end with the State Treaty of that year. Subsequent decades would show, though, that Austrian aversion to all things military meant that Austrians never seriously applied themselves to the fulfillment of neutrality’s own military commitments. Austria’s Second Republic, meanwhile, developed as a member in good standing of the Western world, thoroughly integrated in all but the military sense with the European and transatlantic community.

As such, Austria became de facto dependent upon NATO for protection against the only real security threat facing Austria, namely the Communist bloc on Austria’s eastern borders. Events such as the Soviet invasions of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 as well as transits of American transports in 1958 repeatedly demonstrated this state of affairs. Analysis of Austrian neutrality shows that neutrality has only limited utility in special circumstances and is ultimately unworkable in the modern world.
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Obsolete Neutrality

What Austrian “Neutrality” Wrought

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The Threat that Never Was?: Assessing the Soviet Bloc’s Danger
Introduction, Outline, and Acknowledgements

This dissertation thematically explores the little understood themes surrounding the obligations of permanent neutrality and their practical application in the specific case study of Cold War Austria. This dissertation analyzes questions pertaining to the nature and obligations of permanent neutrality, how postwar Austria came to choose permanent neutrality as a foreign policy, and what was the historical record of permanent neutrality in Austria during the Cold War. In a concluding evaluation of permanent neutrality, this dissertation weighs the merits of Austrian permanent neutrality in comparison with a hypothetical membership of Austria in the NATO alliance during the Cold War.

Ultimately, this dissertation reaches the conclusion that permanent neutrality is of limited utility and is justified only where (past) special circumstances have required some form of “neutrality” as a “price” paid in pursuit of important national objectives. In the Austrian example, this price was Austrian abstention from NATO in return for Soviet agreement in 1955 to an end of quadripartite occupation of Austria. The question present throughout the dissertation whether permanent neutrality is a prudent and practical national policy in its own right receives a clear negative answer.

By definition, neutrality demands that a (small) country defend itself without recourse to the synergies (and collaborative decision-making) of a military alliance in which countries can band together in a “one for all, all for one” manner while taking account of a division of labor in defense matters. In the case of Austria amidst Cold War Europe’s overwhelming concentrations of military power, moreover, specific factors of history, culture, and geography hindered the development of a true Austrian commitment to credible national defense, an essential requirement of (armed) neutrality under
international law. Austrian history clearly shows that credible neutrality can only be the result of a country’s natural development.

In Austria (and elsewhere), these limitations of neutrality ultimately induced policymakers to shape security policy on the basis of a de facto alliance with Austria’s all-too-obvious friends in the Western world. The end result in military matters of Austria’s neutrality-for-independence bargain with the Soviet Union, therefore, was merely to weaken (and to introduce costly friction into) a logical Austrian-NATO relationship in the face of a Warsaw Pact that showed little intention of respecting Austrian “neutrality” in any bloc confrontation. Austria thus found itself neither enjoying fully the benefits of NATO, particularly during Cold War crises on Austria’s borders, nor the (presumed) benefits of neutrality.

Like all case studies, the pages that follow analyze not only the implementation of permanent neutrality specifically in Austria, but also Austria’s wider implications for neutrality policies as a whole. In light of the Austrian experience, the dissertation’s conclusion explains how only a few, small countries can even attempt a policy of permanent neutrality, and even then usually only in an environment of non-neutral nations. Under the realities of international relations emerging since at least the beginning of the Cold War, meanwhile, the actual implementation of permanent neutrality has become practically impossible. With an analysis that any adherent to the Realist School of international relations would understand, this dissertation clearly delineates the various national interests that underlay and ultimately obviated the legal regime of Austrian permanent “neutrality.”

Although much discussion of Austrian neutrality has taken place within Austria, this dissertation does something no one inside or outside of Austria has yet attempted.
Originally intended to encompass the entire 50-year history beginning in 1955 of Austrian neutrality in all of its facets, both military and political, this dissertation is now “abbreviated” to a “mere” 840 pages covering the military and strategic aspects of Austrian permanent neutrality during the Cold War. Nonetheless, this dissertation reviews decades of Austrian history in a vast array of pertinent literature and primary sources in order to synthesize a complete and comprehensive view of Austrian Cold War security policy. Even in abbreviated form, the resulting dissertation is a mixture of military strategy and tactics, diplomatic maneuvering, political calculation, espionage, history, economics, and international law. In all, this dissertation befits the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy’s multidisciplinary approach.

A comparable consolidated review of a country’s policy of permanent neutrality is only available in the many volumes of the late Swiss historian Edgar Bonjour, the acknowledged chronicler of his country’s permanent neutrality. The fact that an American observer of Austrian neutrality wrote this dissertation has, it is hoped, brought the internationally little-known story of Austrian neutrality to a wider audience. An American, moreover, brings an outside perspective to this historical review with the possible benefit of revealing insights not previously considered in Austria.

In order to understand Austrian neutrality, this dissertation begins with an *in medias res* introduction of the 1955 Austrian State Treaty and constitutional neutrality law followed by an historical prologue (“Springtime in Vienna: The State Treaty amidst Shadows from Austria’s Past”) examining how Austria experienced Anschluß with Großdeutschland in 1938 and the Third Reich’s subsequent war of conquest and extermination. Themes featured in this prologue are the Anschluß’s popularity in Austria, Austrian complicity in Nazism, various understandings of Austria’s role in the Third
Reich among the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition, and largely successful postwar Austrian attempts to construct a historical narrative of Austria as an unwilling victim of the Third Reich. This chapter shows that although postwar Austria was largely able to escape public identification both at home and abroad as a participant in the Third Reich’s crimes, there remained an historic reality of Austrian complicity in Nazism that would influence the postwar quadripartite occupation, the drafting of the State Treaty, and subsequent perceptions of Austrian permanent neutrality, as documented by subsequent chapters.

The initial chapter (“Nation out of the Ashes: The Rise of the Second Republic”) describes the ten-year Austrian struggle under quadripartite occupation to regain national independence and unity. Dominant in this chapter are Austrian struggles against Communist subjugation and an impending national division similar to that which ultimately resulted from Germany’s four-power occupation. Notable in the case of Austria as opposed to Germany is the rapidity by which Austria established a unified national government in free and fair elections already before the end of 1945. Austrian national unity embodied in both the Grand Coalition government formed in 1945 and the popular will to defeat the fall 1950 Communist strike movement were of immense benefit to Austria during the trying years of occupation. Combined with a relative disinterest in Austria’s division by the four occupying powers, this national unity helped Austria emerge whole and free already in 1955 at the Cold War’s beginning.

The second chapter (“Austrian Neutrality: The Origins, 1945-1955”) discusses the political maneuvering that took place in both Austria and abroad on the road to the State Treaty. This chapter examines the development of permanent neutrality as an essential Soviet precondition for any agreement to end the occupation and release Austria
into independence. The Soviets would only abandon their occupation zone in Austria in exchange for a weakening of NATO through Austria’s abstention from this alliance.

Examined as well in this chapter is Austrian reticence in accepting neutrality, something that prevented Austria’s full integration into the Western transatlantic community with which Austria shared so much in common. For Austria, a thoroughly Western country whose character made Austria a logical choice as a founding member of NATO, permanent neutrality was an historical innovation. This chapter shows that, despite attempts to present Austrian neutrality in a continuum with Austrian history, permanent neutrality in 1955 Austria was a largely new phenomenon.

The third chapter (“Neutrality’s Advocates and Adversaries: The Strategic Calculations behind Austrian Neutrality”) discusses the various advantages and disadvantages of Austrian permanent neutrality for the State Treaty’s signatory powers. Who benefited from Austrian neutrality and how? Far from being “neutral” in its effects, Austrian neutrality was the product of considerable partisan calculations on both sides of Europe’s Cold War divide.

Successful conclusion of the 1955 State Treaty on condition of Austrian neutrality was in the Soviet interest as the Austrian settlement became the prime example of the more conciliatory Soviet image presented on the world stage by the Soviet leadership under Nikita Khrushchev. Khrushchev sought détente after the aggressively confrontational policies pursued by Soviet dictator Josef Stalin until his death in 1953 only provoked a renewed Western resolve to contain communism, with attendant strains upon the Soviet Union. In contrast, Soviet leaders hoped that the example of a neutral Austria would entice other nations, West Germany in particular, to abstain from military alignment with the West. The Soviet Union also gained in strategic terms from the
Austrian settlement by abandoning a small, relatively unimportant, and easily reconquered occupation zone in exchange for denying NATO a geographically important member situated astride the Brenner Pass across the Alps between (West) Germany and Italy.

The Western powers, meanwhile, desired freedom for Austria and could not hope to maintain the friendship of the Austrian people while denying the fervent Austrian desire for independence. The Western powers had to recognize these facts even if a neutral Austria divided NATO’s key central and southern fronts from each other, forced a Western withdrawal from advanced positions in Europe, and weakened Western access to a potentially allied Yugoslavia. The West, however, could derive political advantage from the subversive effect of a Soviet withdrawal from Austria upon East European peoples who would also desire to emulate the Austrians and live free from Soviet subjugation. The Hungarian revolt in the year following the Austrian settlement would validate Western desires in this regard only too well. Western leaders, meanwhile, could hope that an Austrian military armed by the West would act as a “secret ally” in any crisis and actually better defend Austria than the weak Western occupation forces withdrawn in 1955.

The fourth chapter (“Arms and the Nation: The Story of Austrian Rearmament”) examines the interrelated topics of permanent neutrality’s military requirements and the creation of the Austrian Second Republic’s military. The historical understanding of permanent neutrality as indicated by the primary documents in international law on neutrality, Hague Conventions V and XIII from 1907, is that a permanently neutral state must be an armed state. Only with military force can a state deter and defend against the incursions of warring powers onto the territory of a neutral state, thereby upholding its
neutrality. As historical examples such as Cambodia show, without sufficient military force neutrality often becomes an empty phrase as combatants turn a neutral state into a theater of conflict.

Prominent in this chapter is the disparity between Western interest and Soviet disinterest in Austrian armament. Aside from a few token supplies of Soviet armaments, the Austrian Federal Army or Bundesheer was basically a Western, indeed American creation. In fact, the Bundesheer had its origins in a variety of ultimately not-so-secret Western rearmament programs undertaken in an occupied Austria officially disarmed according to a quadripartite occupation decree made in December 1945. While Austrian armament served Western interests, the Soviet Union expressed its disinterest in Austrian armament through a longstanding refusal to allow a modification or interpretation of the State Treaty’s Article 13 so that Austria could purchase modern defensive missiles.

This missile prohibition, moreover, was one of many military provisions in the State Treaty reflecting concern with Austria’s recent Nazi past but carried over into Austria’s neutral present. Although a lack of tactical missile weapons was a critical impediment to Austria’s neutrality-mandated self-defense efforts, some evidence suggested that Austrians shared the Soviet disinterest in missile armament for the Bundesheer. Missiles were, after all, expensive and Soviet opposition to Austrian missile purchases allowed Austrians to avoid considerable military expenditures.

In evaluating how successful the Austrians were throughout the Cold War in meeting permanent neutrality’s requirements for national defense, Chapter Five (“Armed Neutrality: A Pledge Redeemed?”) shows that Austrian reticence in procuring guided weapons was not an exception. Throughout the Cold War (and beyond), Austrians have spent very little on national defense. Austria’s limited military efforts were particularly
manifest in an almost nonexistent air defense. This chapter examines the historical and societal reasons for such low spending and examines why Austrians were not the best candidates for armed defenders of neutrality, particularly when compared to other neutral nations like Sweden or Switzerland.

After having suffered numerous costly defeats in various conflicts throughout their history, the Austrians after World War II had anything but confidence in their small Bundesheer standing amidst the armed camp of Europe in the Cold War. The inherent indefensibility of key areas of Austria such as populated eastern Austria, including the capital of Vienna, only added to Austrian pessimism in all matters military. Additionally, the historical use of Austrian soldiers in non-democratic, even criminal regimes, sometimes against the Austrian people themselves, created unavoidable societal reservations in Austria towards the military. If Austria’s anemic defense efforts were not problematical enough, practically unstoppable weapons such as cruise missiles demonstrated the growing difficulty of maintaining neutrality in the face of modern technology.

Chapter Six (“Advantage out of Necessity?: The Spannocchi Doctrine and Universal National Defense”) evaluates Austrian efforts from the 1970s on to maintain a credible armed neutrality even with limited resources. As attempts to abolish the Bundesheer in favor of legally questionable “disarmed neutrality” demonstrated, the Bundesheer’s lack of credibility neared crisis proportions in the early 1970s. Did Austria, this chapter asks, finally formulate a successful defense policy on the cheap with General Emil Spannocchi’s plans to fill Austria with lightly armed infantry fighting in relatively small groups? Or were his plans ultimately flawed attempts to defend Austria with too little? This chapter concludes that not even an innovative (yet flawed) strategy
could rescue Austrian national defense from the disadvantages of inadequate support and
deficient armament. Even if the Spennocchi Doctrine had received adequate support, it is
questionable whether a quasi-guerrilla strategy corresponded to Austrian national
characteristics and whether Austrians would have fought merely to make Austria
unattractive for combatants using Austria as a thoroughfare.

Chapter Seven (“Aligned Neutrality: Austria’s not so Neutral Relationship with
the West”) examines just how “neutral” Austria, a free society sharing everything with
most of NATO’s members except defense obligations, was during the Cold War. This
chapter reveals that in a variety of ways Austrian actions during the Cold War were in
violation of the spirit, and sometimes even the letter, of permanent neutrality law. Both
during and after the occupation, Western governments prepared Austria for covert
operations in case of a Soviet bloc invasion, at least sometimes with the knowledge of the
Austrians themselves.

While Austria, moreover, was a key arena for Cold War espionage, the Austrian
government cooperated with NATO in intelligence matters. Austria also participated in
Western peacetime embargoes of the Communist bloc, violating at least the spirit, if not
the letter, of neutrality’s obligations, just as the Austrian economy became irrevocably
integrated with the Western world, a source of potentially unavoidable economic
dependence and coercion. Diplomatically, Austrian behavior in the Council of Europe
and elsewhere was often indistinguishable from other Western countries. Accusations of
Austria being a “secret ally” of NATO during the Cold War therefore have considerable
merit.

Chapter Eight (“Armed but not Neutral: The Bundesheer in the Cold War”) extends the analysis of the preceding chapter to the Austrian military. Analysis of the
Bundesheer reveals grave doubts whether this fighting force could have ever opposed anything other than a Warsaw Pact invasion. From its origins, the Bundesheer’s armament, training, war plans, and ideological orientation all revealed a clear bias in favor of NATO. Limited resources devoted to national defense also forced Austria to concentrate its military efforts on the most realistic threats such as those emanating from the Warsaw Pact. Thus the Spannocchi Doctrine in practice took on a rather anticommunist nature.

Chapter Nine (“In Name Alone?: The Reality behind ‘Voluntary Neutrality’”) seeks to discover just how valid references to “voluntary” neutrality in Austria’s constitution were. Both contemporary interviews and historical primary documents illuminate a debate over the desirability of neutrality in 1955 Austria. The historical consensus indicates that neutrality was a de facto price paid to the Soviets for the State Treaty. Most Austrians, though, did not necessarily see this political neutrality deal as a burden given an evident Austrian desire to escape the responsibilities of power politics. Public and private comments by Austrian leaders during the occupation, though, indicate a thoroughly conditional understanding of neutrality in an Austria seeking to remain as close to the West as possible. Most likely, Austria would have joined NATO (and European Union’s predecessor organization, the European Economic Community) absent postwar Soviet occupation.

Both Chapters Ten and Eleven (“Armed Neutrality in Action,” Parts One and Two) examine practical applications of the various themes discussed in the preceding sections. These chapters relate the history of the various Cold War events or “crises” in which the maintenance of Austrian neutrality became relevant. Studied are the Soviet invasions of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, revealed Warsaw Pact plans
for a possible invasion of Austria, and the American military air transports across Tyrol en route to Lebanon in 1958. The events examined in these chapters reveal just how fragile Austrian neutrality was, even in times of relative European peace and without any particular foreign interest in invading Austria.

The 1956 Hungarian Uprising, for example, found Austria just beginning to establish a national military after one year of restored sovereignty. Militarily incapable of defending itself against direct attack, Austria nonetheless rigorously observed the obligations of neutrality (or even exceeded them) while publicly showing solidarity with the Hungarian people. While Austrians experienced a few fearful moments during the Soviet suppression of Hungary’s revolt, the Soviet Union ultimately showed no interest in attacking Austria. After having helped precipitate the Hungarian upheaval by example, “neutral” Austria demonstrated its usefulness to the West once again by acting as a conduit for Hungarian refugees fleeing towards freedom. Proposals in America and elsewhere, meanwhile, to extend the concept of permanent neutrality to Hungary and other Communist bloc countries found no support among Communist leaders, thereby demonstrating that Austrian neutrality was hardly exportable.

Two years after the Hungarian revolt, Austria’s cozy but largely covert relationship with the West became all too overt. The central element in this relationship was quiet Austrian acquiescence after the settlement of 1955 in both rail and air transports by NATO forces across the key Brenner Pass, even as Austria vigorously protested Soviet bloc infringements of Austrian airspace. However shocking to the Austrians, it was therefore not surprising when the Americans assumed Austrian approval as U.S. Air Force transports escorted by American jet fighters transited Tyrolean airspace.
without prior clearance while flying American troops to the crisis region of Lebanon in 1958.

In contrast to previous NATO transports intermixed among civilian rail traffic or flown under conditions of limited visibility, the brazenness of American military aircraft crossing Tyrol in broad daylight in full view of Austrians on the ground provoked a public neutrality crisis. In a rather poorly-managed muddle of mixed messages, Austrian officials during the crisis tried to simultaneously emphasize continued friendship with America while declaring a desire to defend neutrality in order to avert Soviet protests (or worse). The aftermath of the overflights led to Austria’s closure of Tyrol to NATO transits in the name of neutrality along with a subsequent cooling in Austro-American relations.

A decade later, another Soviet bloc invasion of an East European country trying to break free of Communist control raised the specter of a violation of Austrian neutrality. Like the 1956 invasion of Hungary, the Warsaw Pact’s suppression of the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia in 1968 raised the possibility of armed conflict encompassing Austria. Correctly warned in early 1968 by Austrian intelligence to expect a Soviet invasion in Czechoslovakia (and fearing an extension of this invasion to Austria in light of suspicious Soviet covert activities in Austria), Austrian officials prepared a contingency plan for the <em>Bundesheer</em> and police. In case of a Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, <em>Bundesheer</em> and federal police units were to strengthen their presence along the border in order, among other things, to disarm any Czechoslovakian military units that might flee before the Warsaw Pact into Austria.

Despite advanced planning, Austrian indecisiveness led to delays in <em>Bundesheer</em> deployment and a holding back of army units 30 kilometers from the Austro-
Czechoslovakian border. The sight of Warsaw Pact forces reaching Austria’s border with Czechoslovakia before the *Bundesheer* left its barracks and of the *Bundesheer* staying 30 kilometers away from the border even as no mobilization of army reserves took place was devastating in public perceptions. Repeated Soviet reconnaissance flights over northeastern Austria, tardily excused by Soviet diplomats as “mistakes” and against which Austria’s obsolete fighters were impotent, also did nothing to assuage the Austrians. If Austria’s military reputation suffered in 1968, its diplomatic reputation suffered as well given Austria’s more conciliatory response to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in comparison to the Austrian response towards the Soviet invasion of Hungary more than a decade earlier.

Austrian concerns about Soviet bloc actions took place against a background of indeterminate American responses to covert Austrian entreaties for support in case of a Soviet attack. Combined with the blatant Soviet air reconnaissance campaign, such hesitancy raised the concern among Austrians that the superpowers could sacrifice Austrian interests in the name of Cold War détente. As in 1956, however, the Soviet bloc in 1968 ultimately demonstrated no interest in attacking Austria and the crisis passed with few Czechoslovakian citizens fleeing to the West. Austria’s hesitant *Bundesheer* deployment, though, made Yugoslav leaders like Tito nervous for the security of their northern border.

In the same year as the 1968 Czechoslovakian invasion a Czechoslovakian defector brought evidence to the West of Soviet contingency plans for an invasion of Austria. While some doubted the plans’ authenticity, other Austrians saw in them cause for concern. In particular, some of the plans were supposedly designed for a Warsaw Pact attack on Austria without reference to a wider attack on NATO. This raised the fear
that Austria’s weak defenses faced not just the problem of delaying, and thereby
deterring, an armed attack through Austria towards other combatants, but also the
prospect of being crushed under a Warsaw Pact attack not involving vital Western
interests, perhaps during a Soviet test of NATO resolve.

“Armed Neutrality in Action, II” concludes with a post-Cold War assessment of
the Warsaw Pact’s threat. Just what prospect was there for a Soviet bloc attack on the
West during the Cold War? While some Austrians questioned the intentions and
capabilities of the Communist bloc, war plans and other documents released from East
European archives after the Cold War showed that Communist rulers were certainly not
above considering an invasion of Western Europe, even if they had to lie to their people
about nonexistent NATO threats. However dangerous or not the Warsaw Pact was in
hindsight, Austrian defense preparations during the Cold War were irresponsible.

The final chapter (“Neutrality Assessed: Tertium non Datur”) offers concluding
observations on neutrality and its practice in Cold War Austria. This chapter explains
how varied and difficult the requirements for permanent neutrality are in light of the
Austrian experience. Neutrality is only conceivable for rather unimportant countries not
contested by the great powers and possessing stability in both their domestic societies and
international environments. The creditability of permanent neutrality, moreover, requires
that permanent neutrality and the conditions supporting it (not the least of which is
sufficient defense by the neutral state) exist over a long period of time.

These conditions by themselves are rare enough, but they imply that only small
democracies can be permanently neutral, for only democracies can possess the necessary
long-term societal stability to uphold permanent neutrality. Attempts, therefore, to
introduce permanent neutrality into the developing world have failed just like attempts to
make strategically important countries such as Germany neutral. In the modern, increasingly integrated world, though, the indivisibility of freedom ultimately causes free societies to gravitate towards one another in political, economic, and military realms, thereby vitiating neutrality in any practical sense. Like-minded trading partners facing commonly identified enemies simply cannot be neutral towards each other. Permanent neutrality is therefore impossible in the modern world, an obsolete holdover from a time when the few neutral democracies like Switzerland could remain aloof from their autocratic neighbors. As demonstrated by the Austrian case, moreover, forlorn attempts at permanent neutrality are inferior to alliance membership as a security policy.

Throughout the pages that follow, I seek to allow the Austrians to tell their own story through a broad collection of various views on numerous topics. Some of these views come from Austrians who gave generously of their time and hospitality to meet with me personally. What finally emerges in this dissertation is a tale of courage and cowardice, cunning and naiveté, humanity and brutality. In short, it is an Austrian story.

Credit for this dissertation goes not only to those Austrians who helped me understand their country, including the staff of the Austrian National Library and the ever hospitable Staub family of Vienna, but also to my parents who brought me into being and supported my studies. My mother, in particular, casually mentioned to me that legal residents of Virginia such as I may use the University of Virginia’s libraries in my mother’s home of Charlottesville, Virginia. What followed were years of research at Mr. Jefferson’s University, accompanied by numerous cups of coffee prepared by my mother and hours of relaxing cable television (above all, The History Channel) viewing after days of reading.
After additional research stops at Harvard University, the Library of Congress, the American National Archives, and, of course, Vienna, I appreciated the availability of various wireless internet cafes in Charlottesville such as Greenberry’s, Hot Cakes, Java Java, Panera Bread Company, and Milano. At these locales I also enjoyed the cheerful service and conversation of people such as Aaron (a great help with computers), Bill Bibb, Mark Cave, and Inga along with meeting fellow coffeehouse guests such as Robert Boyle, Jeff (Ph. D.), Larycia Hawkins (also well on her way to a Ph. D.), and the Vietnam veteran (Rangers) Steven. My fellow Amherst College ’92 classmate James Zuffoletti would also stop in at Greenberry’s at times and ask me how the writing was going. Throughout my stay in Charlottesville I also enjoyed the company of Marleigh Baratz, Dr. Enno Kraehe, Don Kruger, Lieutenant General Indar Rikhye, the Fraziers, and the Keegans. Pat Rusk also cheered me on, saying that she wanted to call me “Doctor.”

I must also thank my doctoral advisor at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Professor Alan Henrikson, and my readers, Professors Robert Pfaltzgraff and Alfred P. Rubin. They are all wonderful individuals whose erudition helps make the Fletcher School a world-renowned institution of scholarship and my many years at Fletcher would have been immensely poorer without them. Personal reflection also brings to mind the memory of one of my professors at Amherst College, Greek scholar John Petropoulos, who first suggested attending the Fletcher School to me. He passed on in 1999 during my odyssey at the Fletcher School, but I trust that this faithful son of the Greek Orthodox Church somehow still monitors my progress with satisfaction.

While credit is due these individuals, all mistakes in the following text are mine.

Andrew E. Harrod
Charlottesville, Virginia
March 2007
Prologue

Springtime in Vienna: The State Treaty amidst Shadows from Austria’s Past

May 1955 was a busy month for European diplomacy. In Paris, the foreign ministers of France, the United Kingdom, and the United States negotiated the entry of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) as a West German state in a divided Germany into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Following the successful conclusion of this conference, the ambassadors of these three Western powers to (West) Germany declared on May 5 the end of the occupation regime that had existed in Germany since the end of World War II. The process by which their three occupation zones had formed the new West Germany was now complete.¹

On May 7, meanwhile, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union annulled the British-Soviet Mutual Assistance Pact of May 26, 1942, and the December 10, 1944, Franco-Soviet Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Assistance, two pacts originally designed to preserve the wartime alliance against Germany after the Third Reich’s defeat. In the case of the Franco-Soviet treaty, initially valid for 20 years and thereafter indefinitely if not annulled, Soviet renunciation had perhaps a certain justification in light of the agreement in Article V by the “high contracting parties not to conclude any alliance and not to take part in any coalition directed against either of the high contracting parties.” Not to be outdone by NATO, on May 11 representatives of the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe, including the German Democratic Republic (GDR) formed in the Soviet zone of occupation in eastern Germany, met in the Polish capital to establish a

¹ Manfred Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei: Die Große Koalition in Österreich, 1945-1966 (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1987), 274. For more on NATO’s development, see the writings of Lawrence S. Kaplan, such as: Kaplan, Lawrence S. The Long Entanglement: NATO’s First Fifty Years. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1999.
Communist bloc military pact. Three days later their conference concluded with the Warsaw Pact Treaty.  

On that very same May 14, Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov left Warsaw for Vienna to meet with the foreign ministers John Foster Dulles (United States), Harold Macmillan (United Kingdom), and Antoine Pinay (France) arriving in Vienna from their meeting in Paris. The four powers represented by these individuals had not only administered a defeated Germany under quadripartite occupation following World War II, but also a “liberated” Austria. Now, though, these foreign ministers had arrived in Vienna to ensure that Austria would avoid the fate of Germany, Austria’s larger, culturally related neighbor to the north, at this moment solidifying what would be a four-decade long division along the fault lines of the Cold War. These four individuals intended to sign the following day, May 15, the Austrian State Treaty, the details of which had just emerged in an eleven-day conference beginning on May 2 among the ambassadors of the four occupying powers and Austrian representatives.  

These signatures, along with those of Austrian foreign minister Leopold Figl and the four Allied high commissioners for the occupation, set in motion a process whereby Austria in 1955 would enter the global community of sovereign states as a free and united country. On July 27, 1955, at 11:00 a.m. the ratification document of France, the last of

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3 Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 274.

4 A copy of the State Treaty is available at the website European Navigator, see: State Treaty (accessed December 3, 2005); available from http://www.ena.lu/mce.cfm. A German edition is also available at: Staatsvertrag betreffend die Wiederherstellung eines unabhängigen und demokratischen
the signatory nations to ratify the State Treaty, arrived in Moscow for deposit with the ratification documents of the other signatory countries, thereby bringing into force the State Treaty and its 90-day evacuation period for all foreign troops (Article 20).\(^5\)

Unfortunately for Hungary and Romania, however, Soviet troops would not be leaving these countries anytime soon. Observers such as the American Foreign Service officer William Stearman, who had been stationed in Vienna in the 1950s, noted that the 1947 peace treaties ending World War II for these two countries authorized the continued presence of Soviet forces in Hungary and Romania as long as Soviet occupation forces in Austria called for secure lines of communication across these territories. While the Soviets agreed to evacuate Austria on May 15, 1955, the Warsaw Pact signed the previous day gave a new legal basis for a Soviet military presence throughout Eastern Europe, Hungary and Romania included.\(^6\) Indeed, the formation of the Warsaw Pact’s Southern Group entailed, if anything, an increase of Soviet forces in these countries.\(^7\)

_Liberated, or Occupied and Liberated Again: The Status of Austria under the Allies_

Independence for Austria, meanwhile, fulfilled a promise made by the wartime anti-Hitler coalition, even if the Austrians had to wait out a ten-year occupation following World War II (“By the summer of 1952,” stated Richard Hiscocks, a British Council
representative in Austria during the late 1940s, “Austria had been occupied longer by its ‘liberators’ than by the Nazis.”). Meeting at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers, October 19-30, 1943, Anthony Eden, Cordell Hull, and the enduring Comrade Molotov, the foreign ministers of the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union, respectively, issued the Moscow Declaration. This concise (merely five sentences in length) but slightly inaccurate statement (the annexation or Anschluß of Austria occurred on March 13, 1938, as the preamble of the State Treaty later recognized) announced that

the Governments of the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and the United States of America are agreed that Austria, the first country to fall a victim to Hitlerite aggression, shall be liberated from German domination. They regard the annexation imposed on Austria by Germany on March 15, 1938 [sic], as null and void. They consider themselves as in no way bound by any changes affected in Austria since that date. They declare that they wish to see reestablished a free and independent Austria and thereby to open the way for the Austrian people themselves, as well as those neighboring states which will be faced with similar problems, to find that political and economic security which is the only basis for lasting peace. Austria is reminded, however, that she has a responsibility which she cannot evade, for participation in the war at the side of Hitlerite Germany, and that in the final settlement, account will inevitably be taken of her own contribution to her liberation.9

On November 16, 1943, the Free French Comité Française de La Libération Nationale in Algiers, Algeria, issued a statement concurring with the Moscow Declaration. Austrian historian Günter Bischof, however, noted that this declaration “was more positive and less ambiguous than the Moscow Declaration.” The Moscow Declaration in its opening sentence spoke of Austria on the one hand as “the first country

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8 Richard Hiscocks, The Rebirth of Austria (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 188.
9 Siegler, 5. A copy of the Moscow Declaration is also available online, see: The Moscow Conference; October 1943 (accessed December 3, 2005); available from http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/wwii/moscow.htm.
to fall a victim to Hitlerite aggression” but then “reminded” Austria in the closing sentence “that she has a responsibility which she cannot evade, for participation in the war at the side of Hitlerite Germany, and that in the final settlement, account will inevitably be taken of her own contribution to her liberation.” The Free French statement, in contrast, Bischof observed, “featured no ‘responsibility clause.’” For the rest of the war, therefore, the French treated the Austrians better than the Germans and the Free French under General Charles de Gaulle planned on treating Austria as a “pays ami” after the war.10

Austrians themselves have been among the sharpest critics of the Moscow Declaration’s ambiguity since its issuance in 1943. Speaking before the lower, directly-elected house of Austria’s bicameral parliament, the National Council (Nationalrat) on October 30, 1953, the second chancellor of the postwar Austrian republic, Julius Raab, indicated the “great contradiction of the Moscow Declaration” in relation to an Austria that had been “extinguished as an independent state.” “How can,” Raab queried, “the victim of a policy of aggression bear responsibility for an act of an aggressor?” Raab could only conclude “before the entire world with all decisiveness” (and with strong bipartisan applause from both the Christian and the Social Democrats) that the Austrians bore “absolutely no responsibility for Hitler’s war.”11

Austria’s first postwar foreign minister, Karl Gruber, also criticized this legal “Unikum” of the Moscow Declaration on the pages of his 1988 memoirs. The word “reestablished” in the declaration indicated that “Austria as a state was extinguished and

must be reborn. The unborn, however, seldom carry responsibility for the times in which they have not yet seen the light of day.”

In his memoirs in 1982, Austrian diplomat Hans Reichmann considered the Moscow Declaration not only “in formal legal terms nonsensical,” but also in “material terms, because the forced recruitment of Austrian citizens constitutes a painful consequence of occupation by foreign troops that justifies a special claim for damages but in no way defines a legally liable voluntary act.” Reichmann argued that the “same lack of logic” applied to Austrians serving in the German Wehrmacht would have entailed Luxemburg or even, to a certain extent, France (i.e. German annexation of Alsace and Lorraine) bearing responsibility for the military contributions to the Nazi war machine of their forcibly recruited citizens.

The various passages of the Moscow Declaration, difficult to reconcile with one another, and the declaration’s variance with the Free French statement in Algiers, highlight a question lacking a clear answer, then as now: did the Allies liberate Austria from Germany or occupy Austria like Germany? (And what should the Allies have done, anyway?) In answer to these questions the members of the anti-Hitler alliance had varying answers. Having suffered the ravages of Nazi occupation under Großdeutschland in full force, the Soviet Union sought reparations from Austria not just because of war damages, but also as a means of exercising control over the Austrian economy for Communist political purposes. Andrei Vyshinsky, the Soviet representative

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on the drafting committee for the Moscow Declaration, insisted on including the stipulation that “Austria bears full political and material responsibility for the war.”

It was Geoffrey Harrison, however, a diplomat in the British Foreign Office, who drafted the basis of the Moscow Declaration. Harrison, Bischoff wrote, had previously come to the conclusion in a Foreign Office memorandum that “the lessons of St Germain,” where Austria’s fate was decided after World War I, “were clear.” “Austria,” wrote Harrison to the Foreign Office under the title The Future of Austria, “will only survive if the United Nations are prepared not only to eschew penalizing her for her past misdeed but actively afford her sustained support and encouragement both in the political and economic field.” Harrison, though, did want a certain ambiguity in the Moscow Declaration to reflect, in Bischof’s terms, a “psychological warfare angle” designed “to remind the Austrians of their role in the Third Reich and to jolt them into resisting” (hence the Moscow Declaration’s taking into “account” for a “final settlement” of Austria’s “own contribution to her liberation”). These considerations along with the contradiction of demanding reparations from a “liberated” country caused the Western Allies to resist Soviet demands for reparations but to accept the final sentence of the Moscow Declaration as a compromise.

Nonetheless, this “fateful amendment” with its “responsibility” or “guilt” clause, in the words of Swedish diplomat Sven Allard, laid the basis for postwar Soviet claims against Austria. On July 27, 1945, Molotov raised the issue of reparations from Austria (along with reparations from Italy) again with the American secretary of state James

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15 Bischof, 24.
16 Bader, 32.
Byrnes at the Potsdam conference. While Byrnes argued that these countries were already dependent for their very well-being upon American aid, such that any reparations would come from American taxpayers, Molotov rejoined that the Austrians could not go “unpunished” for the damage done by Austrian soldiers fighting in the German Wehrmacht in the Soviet Union. As the American diplomat and historian William Bader noted, Molotov’s words and his juxtaposition of Austria with Italy clearly showed that he considered Austria a “defeated enemy power” despite the Moscow Declaration.\(^\text{18}\)

Molotov was by no means alone among high-ranking Soviet officials in his assessment. Austrian diplomat Ludwig Kleinwächter, later the first postwar Austrian ambassador to the United States, noted to American diplomats in Austria during a conversation on September 20, 1945, that the commander in chief of Soviet occupation forces in Austria, Colonel General Alexei Sheltov, “always represented the view that Austria was not a liberated but rather a subjugated country.”\(^\text{19}\) Therefore, according to Bischof, the Soviets “made the Austrians pay a heavy price” and “squeezed a maximum of reparations out of their Austrian zone.”\(^\text{20}\)

During ten years of quadripartite occupation, the Austrian people came to understand the vagaries of Allied views towards Austria first-hand. The Soviets, the first of the belligerent powers in the anti-Hitler coalition to reach Austria, issued a radio broadcast on April 9, 1945, via Radio Moscow to the Austrian people asserting that the Austrians were “joyfully awaiting” the Red Army “to liberate Austria…from the Hitlerite

\(^{18}\) Bader, 34.

\(^{19}\) Alfons Schilcher, Österreich und die Großmächte: Dokumente zur österreichischischen Außenpolitik, 1945-1955, Materialen zur Zeitgeschichte series (Vienna: Geyer Edition, 1980), 14. This quotation, like all other German (and French) language quotations in this dissertation, has been translated by the author.

\(^{20}\) Bischof, xi.
yoke.” Soviet troops, meanwhile, had instructions “to give assistance to the people of Austria” and the Soviet Union professed allegiance to the Moscow Declaration.21

Official niceties aside, Austrians endured the same desire for revenge visited upon many Germans in the defeated Reich by Soviet troops. “The subtleties of distinguishing between ‘Germans,’” wrote Bader, “were beyond most of them.” The only thing these Soviet troops knew for sure was “that their homeland was an open wound as the result of a German invasion that had few historical peers in brutality and wantonness.” Bader added that

there is little doubt that most Austrians, wearied of the war and bitter over Hitler’s distortion of the dream of Anschluß, were prepared in April 1945 to welcome the Russians as “liberators.” This predisposition disappeared with the arrival of the Russian troops. With brutal suddenness the Russian troops, many of them the most primitive of Mongolians, unleashed a holocaust of rape and looting that terrified and alienated the population.22

Contemporary reports estimated 70,000 to 100,000 cases of rape alone in the Vienna area. Given that many rapes went unreported, the true total could very well be higher.23 One group of Red Army soldiers, meanwhile, camped out in Vienna’s treasured Burgtheater during the city’s occupation. The fire they lit onstage developed into a conflagration destroying the largely undamaged theater in the absence of any firefighting service in the war-torn city. Immediately following the war, Viennese joked that Austria might survive a third world war, but not a second liberation.24

The predominance of Ukrainians in the Soviet units entering Austria only magnified the horror. Ukraine was one of the Soviet territories that bore the brunt of the

21 Siegler, 6.
22 Bader, 12.
23 Ibid, 33.
24 Hiscocks, 18, 24.
German invasion and many Ukrainians remembered the ferocity of the large numbers of Austrian soldiers fighting with the German Sixth Army across the Ukraine en route to Stalingrad (roughly a fifth of the Sixth Army’s 300,000 soldiers were Austrian). The infamous Babi Yar massacre of 33,000 Jews from Kiev in September 1941, for example, occurred in Sixth Army rear areas with the Wehrmacht willfully aiding Einsatzgruppen executioners. To further fuel Ukrainian rage, the Red Army liberated many Ukrainian slave laborers in the Nazi camps strewn across Austria.²⁵

Seen by many Austrians as adding insult to injury, Soviet troops began immediately after war’s end in May 1945 with construction of a Soviet war memorial in Vienna’s Schwarzenbergplatz, considerately renamed Stalinplatz by the Soviets during the occupation. This massive structure over 120 feet high features a towering bronze Soviet soldier with a submachine gun strapped across his chest holding high a Red Flag in his right hand and a shield in his left hand.²⁶

A public ceremony accompanied by the firing of hundreds of rockets dedicated the monument on August 19, 1945. Many Viennese, though, resented the monument’s spoliation of what Hiscocks called “one of the finest city views in Europe” in front of the Schwarzenberg Palace. Given the behavior of the Red Army in Austria at war’s end, the monument became known as the “Unknown Plunderer” in popular parlance.²⁷ Although the State Treaty (Article 19) obliges Austria to care for Allied war memorials, tour guides in Vienna today explain that the Soviet soldier alone among the monuments at

²⁵ Bischof, 14, 32.
²⁶ Bader, 91.
²⁷ Hiscocks, 38. “One day,” Hiscocks wrote, “it is hoped, the Russians will transfer it [the monument] to a more fitting site in the Prater, where the Red Army fought to free the city.” No such move to Vienna’s famed amusement park has taken place, and the monument is still at Schwarzenbergplatz.
Schwarzenbergplatz remains unlit at night while jets of water shooting up from a fountain in front of the monument help to obscure it.\textsuperscript{28}

Austrian relations with the Soviet Union’s fellow occupation power, the United States, ultimately developed in a radically different manner. Initially, American forces in Austria treated the Austrians much like the occupied Germans, although nothing the Americans did remotely approached the brutality of the Soviets. Paul R. Sweet, an officer in Austria with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), noted in a private letter on May 24, 1945, Austrian complaints that “our combat units are treating the Austrians just like the Germans.”\textsuperscript{29} In one instance, American troops of the Third Army under General George S. Patton entered Austria from Czechoslovakia with pamphlets describing occupation duty in Germany, complete with predictions of partisan resistance. Upon entering Linz, the suspicious Americans, fearing an ambush, cleared from the streets children waving hastily-made American flags during a welcoming celebration.\textsuperscript{30}

Like others throughout postwar Western Europe, though, Austrians quickly came to appreciate American munificence. In contrast to the Soviets, the Americans alleviated the suffering of war’s aftermath with food and interim aid, mere harbingers of the largesse to come in 1948 with the Marshall Plan. Aid packets from the Committee on American Remittances to Europe (CARE) left lasting impressions of American generosity throughout Europe, Austria included. The contrast with Soviet retribution and

\textsuperscript{28} A tour devoted to Graham Greene’s hit film noir, \textit{The Third Man}, begins in the Stadtpark every Monday and Friday and, among other things, tours Schwarzenbergplatz. For further information, see: \textit{Der Dritte Mann} (accessed December 6, 2006); available from www.derdrittemann.at.


\textsuperscript{30} I am indebted to M. Christian Ortner, a historian at the excellent Heeresgeschichtliches Museum (HGM) in Vienna, for providing this anecdote during a public tour of the museum on August 14, 2005.
rapacity led many Austrians to quip that “Russia milks the cow that America feeds.”31 Foreign Minister Gruber, meanwhile, directly compared during an address in Linz on October 7, 1952, the United States, which “had carried the main part of aid assistance for Austria,” with the Soviet Union, which “had erected the main barriers against our liberation.”32

Indeed, under the Marshall Plan fully $1.5 billion of the $13.6 billion poured into Europe in four years went to Austria. For the period July 1, 1948 to June 30, 1949, European Recovery Program (ERP) aid constituted 14% of Austria’s national income, a rate exceeded by no other Marshall Plan recipient.33 Along with Norway, Austria received $130 per capita, a rate second in the ERP only to Iceland ($209 per capita).34

On the other hand, between 1945 and 1960 the Soviet Union took from Austria unilaterally and under State Treaty obligations between $1.5 and $2 billion.35 Bischof has thus noted a “rough equivalency between American generosity and Soviet depredations.” Yet the political geography of the Cold War dictated an unequal distribution of blessings and burdens: “While the Western zones in Germany and Austria experienced their economic miracles, the oppressive Soviet presence set back these Eastern zones for decades economically.” Soviet takings from Austria, moreover, were

33 Bischof, 101-103.

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many multiples of the $150 million Stalin had demanded from Austria at the Potsdam Conference in 1945. Given the Austrian and Allied delineation of Austria as a “liberated” country, though, “official Austria never could make the argument that, in fact, the country paid a huge amount for the contribution of Ostmärker [Austrians] to Hitler’s war.”\textsuperscript{36}

In light of this contrast, Austrian diplomat Hans Thalberg considered representatives of Austria’s Second Republic (constituted after the November 1945 elections) in Washington, DC, to be Austria’s “most important rescue anchor in this time of hunger, deprivation, and political uncertainty.”\textsuperscript{37} Reflecting on this period during which he was in the Austrian Foreign Ministry, Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky wrote that

\begin{quote}
never before have the Americans had such an intimate relationship with democratic Europe as directly after the Second World War, and never before such a good relationship with Austria. There lay over everything that they did a great feeling of warmth. The Austrians had the best experiences with the American occupying power.\textsuperscript{38}
\end{quote}

All in all, OSS officer Edgar N. Johnson noted in a report on July 17, 1945, that it was “apparent from the conflicting actions of the Allied powers in Austria” that “in spite of these declarations there exists no common agreement on whether or not Austria is a liberated nation.”\textsuperscript{39} Nor did the Austrians did hide their disappointment. Karl Gruber, the Second Republic’s first foreign minister, titled the article he wrote for Foreign Affairs in 1947 Austria Infelix. “At Moscow,” Gruber complained therein,

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Bischof, 101, 150.}
\footnote{Hans J. Thalberg, \textit{Von der Kunst, Österreicher zu sein: Erinnerungen und Tagebuchnotizen}, Dokumente zu Alltag, Politik und Zeitgeschichte series (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1984), 177.}
\footnote{Bruno Kreisky, \textit{Im Strom der Politik: Erfahrungen eines Europäers} (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1988), 79.}
\footnote{Rathkolb, 169.}
\end{footnotes}
the Great Powers decided to reestablish Austria as a free and independent country. But the treatment actually meted out to her varies considerably from that accorded such really free countries as Belgium, Holland or Czechoslovakia, and more nearly resembles that given vanquished Germany.\footnote{Karl Gruber, “Austria Infelix,” \textit{Foreign Affairs} 25, no. 2 (1947): 233.}

The first federal president of the Second Republic, Karl Renner, pointed out in 1946 that upon the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy at the end of World War I, he, as the First Republic’s first chancellor, and other Austrian politicians waited a mere six months for an invitation to the peace conference for Austria in the Paris suburb of St. Germain. A peace treaty for a \textit{defeated} Austria, however disliked by the Austrians, was complete four months later. In contrast, Renner, who died on New Years’ Eve 1950, would not see the State Treaty for a “liberated” Austria.\footnote{Hiscocks, 24.}

Speaking to a reporter of the \textit{Wiener Zeitung} on New Years’ Day, 1949, Renner said of the Allies that

\begin{quote}
the advancing troops were greeted at first by the majority of the population as rescuers from chaos. There came as an uncomfortable surprise a fourfold occupation, completely foreign in language, foreign to the country, at first unapproachable and still filled with the understandable desire for revenge. Suspicion of our people was also predominate among the following waves of troops, completely excessive views of a general infection with Nazism and the imputation of war guilt and guilt for the atrocities of the Hitler regime dominated.\footnote{Karl Renner, \textit{Für Recht und Freiheit: Eine Auswahl der Reden des Bundespräsidenten Dr. Karl Renner} (Vienna: Österreichische Staatsdruckerei, 1950), 95.}
\end{quote}

Austrian exasperation with foreign occupation even found cinematic expression in Graham Greene’s 1949 film classic \textit{The Third Man}, filmed on location in war-damaged Vienna. Anna Schmidt’s landlady (played by the Austrian actress Hedwig Bleibtreu) protests when an inter-allied police patrol (one of the famous “Four in a Jeep” patrols in
Vienna’s central First District containing a military police officer from each of the four powers) exhaustively searches Anna’s apartment in the course of their duties. “I always imagined the liberation,” she complains, “completely differently [Die Befreiung hab’ ich mir ganz anders vorgestellt].”

Kreisky himself later clearly indicated what he thought of Austria’s position after World War II. In the second volume of his memoirs appearing in 1988, Kreisky referred to himself and Willy Brandt of (West) Germany as two exiles (both of them spent the war in Sweden) who later “were called to the highest offices as chancellors of defeated countries. I consciously say ‘defeated,’ because this determination corresponds to the reality.”

The twilight status of Austria ultimately reflected itself in the text of the State Treaty. Felix Ermacora, formerly of the Office for Constitutional Law in the Austrian Chancellery during the 1950s, recalled at a symposium held on April 29-30, 1980, in Vienna that

the text itself was, after all, never drafted by Austria. It was made by the same “draftmen” who prepared the 1947 Paris peace treaties with the Axis powers. The Austrian State Treaty was drawn up according to the same scheme: the same spirit, the same objective, the same concerns. A little punishment for cooperation with the Greater German confederation, breaking off of bridges with Germany, prevention of cooperation with a new Germany, and everything was designed according to second-class statehood, despite an emphasis on independence. This was true for the peace treaties with Finland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Italy, and it was true for the Republic of Austria.

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43 More information on The Third Man and Hedwig Bleibtreu is available at the Third Man Private Collection in Vienna. See: 3mpc (accessed August 19, 2006); available from http://members.aon.at/3mpc/start.htm.
44 Kreisky, Im Strom der Politik, 45.
Nevertheless, the four occupying powers agreed as early as 1947 during the negotiations over what became the State Treaty not to sign a peace treaty with Austria but rather adopted the Austrian suggestion of a state treaty. It was common practice among Western officials, however, following World War II to refer to an Austrian “peace” treaty. Sometimes Western diplomatic services used the more neutral term “Austrian treaty.” In practice as well, noted Bischof, Western leaders “habitually…lumped Austria with Hitler’s satellites.” The British, for example, “ended their state of war with Austria only on 1 September 1947 after the ratification of the satellite treaties.”

Austrian prodding, according to Bischof, helped move governing and diplomatic circles to accept the “legalese” of the “state treaty” and thus not “put Austria on the same level of culpability” as the Axis satellites. Gruber, after all, had argued on the pages of Foreign Affairs in 1947 that “any decision placing on Austria joint responsibility for Hitler’s war would surely be contrary to Justice.” Thus, United Nations (UN) Secretary General Trygve Lie wrote several times in the 1950 UN yearly report about an Austrian “peace” treaty. After an intervention by the Austrian ambassador to the UN, the UN legal department determined that henceforth only references to an Austrian state treaty would be acceptable.

The four powers, though, could not bring themselves to abandon an Austrian “guilt” clause in the future treaty, whatever its name. Once again with Soviet insistence, the “Big Four” agreed at the Moscow Foreign Minister Conference in the spring of 1947

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47 Bischof, 105.
48 Ibid.
49 Gruber, “Austria Infelix,” 232.
50 “Diskussionen,” in Neue Fakten zu Staatsvertrag und Neutralität, 229.
that the preamble of the treaty would contain such a clause.\textsuperscript{51} Later US foreign policy documents from the early 1950s in the National Archives reveal disputes between the various powers over Austria’s responsibility for World War II. The third paragraph of the draft preamble stated that Austria cannot avoid “certain [responsibility—
responsibilities—consequences]” for participation in the war. The Americans and the British, accepting at least officially the theory of Austrian annexation by the Third Reich, preferred the far more lenient reference to “consequences,” the French preferred “responsibilities” but were willing to accept the Anglo-American position, and the Soviets, tending “to regard Austria in the same category as ex-enemy states,” wanted “responsibility.”\textsuperscript{52}

The issue of references to Austrian war guilt in the State Treaty remained contentious right up to the Vienna Ambassadors Conference of May 2-11, 1955. The underlying historical dispute over Austria’s role in the Third Reich, meanwhile, ultimately became perhaps the most hotly-debated issue in the Second Republic. This ongoing debate centers on two questions: did Austrians welcome the union of Austria with a Greater Germany in 1938 (\textit{Anschluß}) and were the Austrians victims or perpetrators under Nazism?

\textit{Raped or Seduced: Did the Austrians welcome the Anschluß?}

The Moscow Declaration spoke of Austria as the Third Reich’s “first victim” and Austrians in the Second Republic were usually only too happy to accept such an

\textsuperscript{51} Neuhold, 169.
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Austrian Treaty—US Summary of Issues} (Separate Folder); Box 9; Entry 1284; Lot 58D223; Subject Files Relating to the Austrian Occupation and Peace Treaty, 1949-55; Miscellaneous Lot Files; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group (RG) 59; National Archives Building II (NA), College Park, MD.
exonerating theory of recent Austrian history. Objective observers, though, had their doubts from the very beginning in 1938, given the apparent Austrian enthusiasm for the Anschluß exhibited, for example, in public demonstrations documented in contemporary newsreels. Official circles in London, for instance, questioned whether Austria presented “a case of rape or seduction.” This sexual metaphor reappeared during negotiations over the State Treaty between Austrian and Soviet leaders at the Moscow Conference of April 11-15, 1955. An Austrian diplomat argued to his Soviet interlocutor that Austria had been “raped” in 1938; with typical Soviet dismissal of all Austrian claims to innocence in the Third Reich, the Soviet official replied that he had “until then never heard of a man raping his own wife.” In later years the description of the Anschluß as “rape by consent” emerged.

Understanding of the Anschluß as fundamentally consensual is understandable given Austria’s interwar history. Then chancellor Bruno Kreisky noted during a conference at Wilton Park, England, on May 24, 1973, that all parties in the constitutive assembly of the Austrian parliament in the First Republic expressed a desire for union with Germany. Accordingly, the provisional parliament in its first official act, the Gesetz über die Staats- und Regierungsform von Deutschösterreich (“Law concerning the Structure of the State and Government”), on November 12, 1918, declared that “German-Austria [Deutschösterreich]” was a “constituent part” of Germany (Article 2).

54 Klaus Emmerich, Anders als die anderen: Österreichs neue Rolle in Europa (Düsseldorf: ECON Verlag, 1992), 259.
55 Bischof, 9.
57 Deutschösterreich (accessed December 28, 2005); available from http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deutsch%C3%B6sterreich. This and other references to the online encyclopedia Wikipedia in this dissertation provide quick access to general information on a variety of
February and March of the following year, the foreign ministers of both Austria and Germany conducted secret unification talks in Berlin, which concluded with a secret protocol on March 2, 1919, calling for the union of both countries “with all possible speed.”

As the First Republic emerged from the breakdown of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, noted Kreisky, there was “hardly anyone” in Austria who could imagine “how things should go forward.” A “large part” of the population mourned the passing of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and another “large part” sought union with a German Reich. Any other assertion would be “a lie against the spirit of history.”

“Psychologically,” concurred Bischof, “most Austrians refused to abandon age-old mentalities of ruling the edifice of an empire; the new hut of a small state was definitely measly and hard to accept as a home.” Kurt Waldheim, meanwhile, who served as secretary general of the UN in the 1970s and a six-year term as Austria’s federal president beginning in 1986, wrote that there existed among many Austrians a “strong feeling of affinity” with Germans as the Austrians’ “ally in World War I, their sharers of fate through the centuries of history, and as their most culturally-related relatives.”

Kreisky emphasized on other occasions, though, that the willingness to abandon the small Austrian Republic in favor of a large German Reich had little to do with “fundamentally nationalist sentiment.” “The decisive factor,” Kreisky stated in 1978,


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58 Steiniger, 12.
59 Kreisky, Reden, vol.2, 301.
60 Bischof, 7-8.
61 Kurt Waldheim, Im Glaspalast der Weltpolitik, 3rd ed. (Düsseldorf: Econ Verlag, 1985), 36.
was that no one could imagine how to be able to live without the coal of the Czechs, without the mills of Moravia, without the cornfields of Hungary, without the meat of the from the Yugoslav territories. And this consideration overshadowed everything else. In that time of emergency it was really the economy that came first, only thereafter the political combinations.62

The example of Kreisky’s well-to-do family of assimilated Jews with business interests throughout the former Austro-Hungarian Empire made Kreisky write in 1986 that

here an empire broke down that was in reality an economic community more integrated and intense than any that exists today. For a long time yet the EEC [European Economic Community] will not represent for Western Europe what the monarchy in Central Europe and the neighboring countries in the east and southeast represented. In the beginning of the republic there was complete hopelessness. What should be made of this economic pile of rubble, in which there were only mountains and many Viennese? Vienna once had a sister city in Prague, a sister city in Budapest, and even Agram was somewhat comparable to Vienna. All at once Graz, Linz, and Salzburg were supposed to take over the function of these metropolises and form a counterweight to Vienna, cities in which there was only a petit-bourgeoisie that was in large part very Pan-German-nationalistic and the clericalists. Vienna was suddenly cut off from everything, it was a dead city, the hydrocephalus of Austria, as it was called.63

Renner’s printed views in 1945 paralleled Kreisky’s. During the time of the monarchy, he observed, Pan-German nationalists received only about a fifth of the seats in the Austrian parliament. The question of an Anschluß, quipped one politician in 1918, was “academic”: both because it was “impractical” and because it was a concern largely of interest to intellectuals. Economic concerns for the viability of a small, resource-poor, landlocked Austria vis-à-vis the industrial regions in Germany and the Czech territories,

in contrast, led working Austrians, many of whose ancestors had immigrated within recent memory to Austria from Slavic territories of the monarchy, to call for union with Germany. 64

Austria, Kreisky summarized, was “a state that no one really wanted,” a state that seemed neither politically nor economically “viable.” The majority, therefore, wanted “the status of a special federal state within the German Reich.” 65 Proposals circulating in 1919, Renner noted in 1945, called for Vienna as the second capital hosting several ministries of a democratic and federal greater Germany. 66

The victorious powers in World War I, though, would have nothing to do with any proposal increasing German power. Article 88 of the peace treaty signed with Austria on September 10, 1919, in the Parisian suburb of St. Germain-en-Laye declared that

the independence of Austria is inalienable otherwise than with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations. Consequently Austria undertakes in the absence of the consent of the said Council to abstain from any act which might directly or indirectly or by any means whatever compromise her independence, particularly, and until her admission to membership of the League of Nations, by participation in the affairs of another Power. 67


65 Kreisky, Zwischen den Zeiten, 40.

66 Renner, Denkschrift, 19.

67 For a copy of the Treaty of St. Germain, see: Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Austria (accessed December 6, 2005); available from http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/treaties/1920/3.html. Germany, for its part, had to undertake a parallel obligation to respect Austrian sovereignty in the Versailles Treaty. Article 80 therein stated:

Germany acknowledges and will respect strictly the independence of Austria, within the frontiers which may be fixed in a Treaty between that State and the Principal Allied and Associated Powers; she agrees that this independence shall be inalienable, except with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations.

Not wanting to bow to such a Diktat, the Austrians resumed secret unification talks with Germany in Berlin. A friend of Kreisky in the Austrian diplomatic service, however, related to him that these discussions already broke down over the appropriate exchange rate between the German Mark and the Austrian Krone.\textsuperscript{68} Practical difficulties aside, the idea of the Anschluß remained popular as a referendum on April 24, 1921, in the province of Tyrol showed: 98.75\% of the cast ballots called for a “fusion” with Germany.\textsuperscript{69} Pan-German sentiment also led to an Austro-German agreement for a customs union on March 19, 1931, before the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ) determined this agreement to be a violation of the Treaty of St. Germain’s Article 88 (and Article 88’s further delineation in the October 4, 1922, Geneva Protocol) in an eight-to-seven judgment on September 5, 1931.\textsuperscript{70}

The establishment of a dictatorship in Germany in 1933 under Adolf Hitler, though, put a damper on all thoughts of an Anschluß. All Austrian parties, according to Kreisky, turned away from the Anschluß, and the Social Democrats, noted Renner, expressly abandoned the Anschluß in their party platform in 1933.\textsuperscript{71}

Yet 1933 also saw the demise of Austrian democracy and the rise of Austrian dictatorship under Engelbert Dollfuß. Dollfuß and, after his assassination in a Nazi coup attempt on July 25, 1934, Dollfuß’ successor, Kurt Schuschnigg, robbed many Austrians of a desire for an independent Austria. Kreisky wrote in 1956 that German troops

\textsuperscript{68} Kreisky, \textit{Zwischen den Zeiten}, 44-45.  
\textsuperscript{69} Steiniger, 13.  
\textsuperscript{70} For English versions and translations of the Geneva Protocol, the Austro-German customs union agreement, and the September 5, 1931, PCIJ decision, see: \textit{Customs Régime between Germany and Austria (Protocol of March 19th, 1931)} (accessed December 4, 2006); available from \url{http://www.worldcourts.com/pciij/eng/decisions/1931.09.05_customs/}. Further discussion of this abortive Austro-German customs union is available in: Ernst Rudolf Huber, \textit{Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte seit 1789}, vol. 7, \textit{Ausbau, Schutz und Untergang der Weimarer Republik} (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1984), 831-840.  
advancing into Austria on March 13, 1938, “merely replaced one dictatorship with another.”  

72 The “Mussolini inspired fascist order” of Dollfuß-Schuschnigg, Renner wrote in 1945, “had to be even more hateful on the basis of political, economic, and social grounds” to most Austrians “than Hitler’s Fascism that could not steal anything more, which Dollfuß had not already stolen, but at least promised bread and employment.”  

Moreover, Kreisky noted, Schuschnigg consistently maintained (and only his opinion “mattered in these years of the Austro-fascist dictatorship”) that Austria was a second German state. How should the people understand this? A small German state and a large German state, dictatorship and tyranny in both. What sense did it have, so many thought, that this small German dictatorship should exist next to a large German dictatorship? Thus the idea of an Austrian state was robbed of its content years before the Anschluß. And thus the will for Austrian independence was in reality destroyed years before the soldiers of Hitler could do it.  

74 To the extent that there were proponents of an independent Austria, they were irreparably divided by differences having already expanded beyond the threshold of violence during the interwar period. “The National Socialists,” wrote Waldheim, “had a masterful understanding of how to exploit the civil war of those political groups that in principle were willing to support an independent Austria, namely the Christian Socials and the Social Democrats.”  

75 Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that the incorporation of Austria into the Third Reich went smoothly. Already on February 12, 1938, German military and economic threats moved Kurt Schuschnigg to agree to the inclusion of Austrian Nazis in his cabinet during a nocturnal meeting with Adolf Hitler at Berchtesgarten. It was these

73 Renner, Denkschrift, 20.  
74 Kreisky, Reden, vol. 1, 19-20.  
75 Waldheim, 36.
Nazis who informed Hitler of Schuschnigg’s last desperate act, the calling of a plebiscite for the affirmation of an independent Austria. To forestall a possible public vote of confidence in an independent Austria, Hitler ordered an invasion. Yet even before German troops crossed the Austrian border and were “enthusiastically welcomed by throngs of people in the streets,” according to Bischof, Schuschnigg had resigned on March 11, 1938, and the Austrian president had appointed from Schuschnigg’s cabinet the Nazi Arthur von Seyss-Inquart as chancellor. Local Austrian Nazis then began to take over provincial governments. The Anschluß, Bischof noted, occurred not just from without Austria, but also from within. “In this scenario Austria can hardly be considered a ‘victim’ of dark outside forces or having been abandoned by the great powers.”

On April 10, 1938, Hitler conducted a “polling” of his own throughout Großdeutschland. In a combined referendum-Reichstag election, voters received the question, “Are you in agreement with the March 13, 1938, reunification of Austria with the German Reich and do you vote for the list of our Führer Adolf Hitler?” In Austria there were 4,453,772 “Ja”-votes, 11,929 “Nein”-votes, and 5,776 invalid ballots, or 99.73% in favor (in Germany proper there were 44,362,667, or 99.02%, in favor and 440,429 against).

Of course, such electoral “successes” are the trademark of totalitarian regimes everywhere, from Adolf Hitler to Saddam Hussein. Without a free plebiscite such as the one Adolf Hitler forestalled, it is hard to determine to what degree the Austrians supported the Anschluß when it came. An Austrian scholar of international relations, Paul Luif of the Austrian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA, or Österreichisches

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76 Bischof, 8-9.
77 Steininger, 19.
Institut für Internationale Politik in German), for example, remarked during a 2005 interview that a policeman followed his rather recalcitrant grandmother into the balloting booth and assured the desired result. Luif also noted that the Germans dispatched 100,000 troops for the occupation of Austria and its seven million inhabitants while the Americans used approximately the same number for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003 in Iraq, a country with about 24 million people.\textsuperscript{78}

Fritz Molden, a former member of the Austrian resistance against Hitler and the publisher of the conservative Vienna daily newspaper Die Presse, meanwhile, questioned the importance of newsreels showing jubilant Austrian masses celebrating the Anschluß. Particularly well-known are images of Hitler addressing Vienna’s crowded Heldenplatz in front of the Imperial Palace (Hofburg) on March 15, 1938. Molden cited these images while speaking on May 21, 2005, with visitors to the exhibit Das Neue Österreich documenting the 50 years of Austrian independence following 1955 in the Oberbelvedere Palace, the site of the State Treaty’s signing. During his presentation, Molden asked, “How many people stayed home and wailed?”\textsuperscript{79}

Austrian historian Rolf Steininger, in contrast, believes that there was “no large-scale vote fraud” on April 10, 1938; “under the given circumstances this was, in fact, not even necessary.”\textsuperscript{80} Steininger’s colleague Karl Gutkas has argued that “even with an objective administration of this election a majority at this time would have voted for the Anschluß.” Gutkas noted, for instance, that, in addition to the 89,000 illegal Austrian Nazi party members, 500,000 Austrians after 1938 attempted to document their pre-

\textsuperscript{78} Paul Luif, interview by author in Luif’s office at the Austrian Institute of International Affairs on July 15, 2005.
\textsuperscript{79} Molden spoke as part of the exhibit’s Zeitzeuginnen- und Zeitzeugengespräche series.
\textsuperscript{80} Steininger, 19.
Anschluß membership in various Nazi organizations.\textsuperscript{81} The views of these historians accord with the estimates of Erich Reiter, one of Austria’s leading security studies scholars, who thinks that perhaps two-thirds or more of Austrians wanted annexation in 1938.\textsuperscript{82}

In Bischof’s view, Anschluß support was quite labile and shifted with the circumstances. Karl Renner, for example, despite his later misgivings about unity with Germany, was an “avowed German nationalist” whose “chameleon-like quality led him to publicly support the Anschluß” and later in 1938 even to write a pamphlet (ultimately unpublished) in praise of the Munich Agreement bestowing the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia on Germany. The American consul in Vienna in 1938, meanwhile, estimated that about 25% of the Austrians supported the Nazi regime, about 25% were against it, and the other 50% were indifferent. “Presumably,” wrote Bischof, “most would have voted in favor of Austria, had the Schuschnigg plebiscite taken place; after the Anschluß this vast pool of the apathetic voted in favor of the German Reich.”\textsuperscript{83}

Richard Hufschmied, a historian at the Heeresgeschichtliches Museum (HGM) in Vienna, agrees. According to the historical research analyzed by Hufschmied, those supporting, opposing, and indifferent to an Anschluß each claimed about a third of the Austrian electorate, but in the months preceding March 13, 1938, the majority simply sought an end to uncertainty in a Nazi takeover.\textsuperscript{84} Hufschmied’s colleague at the HGM, M. Christian Ortner, meanwhile, has analyzed that the Austrians could have fought the Germans if they had wanted, given not only the Austrian military but also the various

\textsuperscript{82} Erich Reiter, interview by author at Reiter’s office at the Austrian Defense Ministry’s Büro (und Direktion) für Sicherheitspolitik in Vienna’s Stiftskaserne on August 3, 2005.
\textsuperscript{83} Bischof, 9-10, 35.
\textsuperscript{84} Hufschmied led a tour of the HGM on July 3, 2005.
party paramilitary formations in Austria in 1938. The consensus of evidence and views seems to confirm Bischof’s conclusion. “In March 1938,” he wrote, “Austrians, like the Gadarene swine, rushed across the precipice to their own doom. Rarely in the annals of mankind has a country so eagerly collaborated in its own demise.”

This state of pan-German rapture did not last. Renner in 1945 wrote of his conversations with Soviet officers on April 3, 1945, two days after the Easter Sunday on which Soviet troops entered Renner’s residence in Gloggnitz, Austria. Renner explained to the officers that that the “large majority of Austrians took for a time a wait-and-see position towards Hitler after his promises and initial triumphal successes.” This attitude disappeared “relatively quickly” under the twin burdens of totalitarianism and war mobilization as the “overwhelming majority of the population turned away from the thought of the Anschluß filled with hatred.”

“Whatever enthusiasm for Anschluß existed,” confirmed Bader, was sorely put to the test by the Germans’ behavior. Many of those who voted for Anschluß in a plebiscite stage-managed by the Germans after the occupation soon discovered to their chagrin and horror that the Germans’ conception of what “union” implied was radically at odds with their own. To its Austrian supporters “Anschluß” meant entry into the Reich as a fully equal Federal State; some even nursed the dream of a Germany with two capitals—Vienna and Berlin. The Germans were not nearly so romantic. Austria was immediately subjected to a vigorous policy of economic and political integration aimed at destroying everything that was “Austrian.” The very name of Austria was eliminated; it was rechristened by Hitler as the East March (Ostmark), later as the Donau und Alpen Gaue.

Austrian interests, Hiscocks corroborated,

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85 Tour of the HGM led by Ortner on August 14, 2005, cited in footnote 30 above. Ortner also made the well-known historical observation that many of the July 20, 1944, bomb plotters envisioned a post-Nazi Großdeutschland.
86 Bischof, 7.
87 Renner, Denkschrift, 3, 5, 20.
88 Bader, 7.
were systematically subordinated to those of the Reich. The most important Austrian banks and industries were placed under German control. To most Austrians it was intolerable that Vienna should become a provincial city and each of the ancient provinces a Gau controlled from Berlin. The difference between Prussian totalitarianism and the Austrian spirit became clear as never before, and one Viennese spoke for many when he said it was only an accident that Germans and Austrians spoke the same tongue.\(^89\)

Reflecting on the recent past before the Austrian United Nations League (\textit{Österreichische Liga für die Vereinten Nationen}) on April 5, 1946, Renner recounted that the “small nation of six million Austrians” disappeared in the “ten times larger German Reich.” Austria “was once again merely part of a large empire, no longer as its heart, but rather merely a collection of appendages!”\(^90\) Bischof noted that the totalitarian nature of the Third Reich, whether Prussian or Nazi in origin, only made matters worse. “The Catholic Church was squeezed in an atmosphere of \textit{Kulturkampf}” and Heinrich Himmler’s “dreaded Gestapo descended on the Ostmark and threw the political opposition into concentration camps.”\(^91\)

Ultimately, the Anschluß paradoxically brought to the fore differences between Austrians and Germans. “Today there is,” stated Gruber in a postwar address on July 25, 1945, however, generally the feeling that between Austrians and the Prussian \textit{Einheitsmensch} there is a sea of difference. Every Austrian has learned in seven years of National Socialist oppression to understand and appreciate the uniqueness of his own people, even when he once followed Nazi slogans. If it is confirmed that before 1938 numerous Austrians were filled time and again with simplistic admiration for Prussian

\(^89\) Hiscocks, 8.
\(^90\) Renner, \textit{Für Recht und Freiheit}, 37.
\(^91\) Bischof, 12. One retired Austrian banker and former Fulbright Scholar who experienced the war as a boy in Vienna reflected on this period with this dissertation’s author at the opening reception of the photo exhibit \textit{Die junge Republik: Alltagsbilder aus Österreich, 1945-1955} in the Imperial Palace in May 2005. The Germans behaved simply “frightfully,” he said, so much so that he would oppose anything today bringing Austria closer to Germany, such as NATO membership.
organizational skill and capacity for achievement, today it is to be recognized that this myth is from now on forever destroyed.\textsuperscript{92}

Reviewing the \textit{Anschluß} in a State Department report on October 1, 1951, international relations scholar Hans J. Morgenthau summarized that the “German Nazis chose to treat Austria as a conquered colony rather than as an equal partner.” This “administration of Austria by Prussians brought to the fore the age-old animosity between two German-speaking types which have little more in common than language.” Ultimately, concluded Morgenthau, “the union with Germany, at the time widely acclaimed by the Austrians as the solution of their problem, demonstrated by war of contrast the national identity of Austria.”\textsuperscript{93}

\textit{Victim or Perpetrator: What Role did the Austrians play in the Third Reich?}

Austrian postwar acceptance of the Moscow Declaration’s assertion that Austria was the “first victim” of Adolf Hitler’s aggression not only questioned the popularity of the Anschluß, but also as a necessary corollary emphasized Austrian suffering under and resistance to, not participation in, the Third Reich. Even during the occupation period, however, some Austrian voices recognized the responsibility of their countrymen under the Nazis. Responding to complaints about various provisions of the State Treaty, an editorial in \textit{Die österreichische Nation} in 1955 proclaimed that “we have no right to place ourselves on a high horse in light of, at least, the tacit toleration of the crimes of the Hitler regime by large parts of our people.”\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{92} Gehler, \textit{Karl Gruber}, 55-56.
\textsuperscript{93} \textit{United States Policies in Austria: A Report Prepared by Professor Hans J. Morgenthau at the Request of the Department of State}; Box 2836; 1950-1954 Decimal File from 611.62B/4-1652 to 611.631/1-2550; RG 59; NA.
\textsuperscript{94} “Heimkehr zu Oesterreich,” \textit{Die österreichische Nation} 7, no. 6 (1955): 85.
Reiter speaks here of a “founding myth [Gründungsmythos]” of the Second Republic.\(^5\) In shaping an “occupation doctrine” for the explanation of recent Austrian history, Bischof wryly noted, Austrian officials “abided by Winston Churchill’s famous dictum ‘history will be kind to me for I intend to write it.’” This “Rip Van Winkle myth” of a “dormant Austrian statehood during the war” under German occupation “expunged Austrians’ complicity” in the Third Reich, thereby “unloading” on Germany all responsibility for the “Hitlerite war of aggression and extermination.” \(^6\)

This shifting of responsibility impressed least of all the Germans themselves. Konrad Adenauer, the founding chancellor of the FRG from 1949 on through the 1950s, mocked before his Christian Democratic (CDU) colleagues the Austrians who acted “as if they had been raped by us and actually had a right to reparations.” “Large areas of Austria,” maintained Adenauer, were “more National-Socialist than any part of Germany.” Alluding to Adolf Hitler’s origins in Braunau am Inn in the Austrian province of Upper Austria, Adenauer stated in 1953 that “Austria after all had sent us Hitler.”\(^7\)

Many in Allied councils probably saw through Austrian historical revisionism as well, yet, in the vein of Harrison’s comments in drafting the Moscow Declaration, did nothing to correct the historical record. “As the Allied powers marched into Central Europe towards victory,” wrote Bischof,

they were cognizant of Austria’s ambiguous international status. They were fully aware of the Austrians’ modest resistance record and culpability in Nazi war crimes. But they also knew that they needed to

\(^5\) Reiter interview.
\(^6\) Bischof, x-xi, 52.
\(^7\) Steininger, 146.
ignore some of Austria’s contributions to Hitler’s war of aggression, if they wanted to re-establish an independent and viable Austria.  

No amount of revisionism, though, could prevent embarrassing moments. As diplomatic teams gathered at London’s Lancaster House for the first round of negotiations over what became the State Treaty in mid-January 1947, the Yugoslavs “dropped a bombshell” (Bischof). Carinthian governor Hans Piesch, a member of the Austrian delegation, had to go home during the meeting when the Yugoslavs revealed his Nazi past.

What ultimately became long-maintained official fiction already began to take shape in the Proclamation of the Second Republic issued by Karl Renner and other Austrian politicians in Vienna on April 27, 1945, mere weeks after the end of hostilities in the city. The proclamation stated in a somewhat one-sided manner that the Anschluß did not result from “negotiations from state to state for the protection of all interests” as “goes without saying between two sovereign states,” but was imposed through various means of coercion upon a “people made helpless.” The proclamation then decried that the Germans dissolved the Austrian government, exploited the resources of Austria, and transferred the reserves of the Austrian national bank to Berlin. Moreover, the National-Socialist Reich government of Adolf Hitler…led the people of Austria, deprived of power and free will, into a senseless and hopeless war of conquest that no Austrian ever wanted, nor could have ever foreseen or sanctioned, to the end of subjugating peoples against whom no true Austrian had ever harbored feelings of hostility or hatred.

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100 Renner, Für Recht und Freiheit, 9-10.
The Governmental Declaration of the Provisional Government issued at the end of April 1945 continued in this vein. Therein the Austrian provisional government declared that it would “exert itself” to establish “peace and friendship treaties” with Austria’s neighbors, “with whom an independent Austria has never had hostile relations.” With these nations the “Austrian people through long centuries—despite all political disturbances of the past—had lived together and cooperated in economic and cultural exchange.” “The varied, often divisive disputes of earlier historical epochs,” continued the proclamation in complete exclusion of the recent horrors of World War II, “lie more than a generation in the past since the establishment of the republic in the year 1918, belong to the past and should be forgotten.”

In giving account of his actions as chancellor of the provisional government before the Austrian Nationalrat following the constitution of the Second Republic, Renner even extended the exculpation of the Austrians beyond World War II to World War I. Speaking before the Nationalrat on December 19, 1945, Renner described the Austrians as a people “involved in two world wars without their consent.”

For Bischof, the culmination of the “public relations campaign of selling the ‘victims doctrine’ at home” came in the Viennese public exhibition Niemals Vergessen (“Never Forget”). After the Soviets suggested this anti-Fascist exhibition, it appeared in the autumn of 1946 after a year of partisan dispute over its contents. In this “consensual purge of history” (Bischof), Austrian involvement in the Third Reich’s crimes

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101 Ibid, 16.
disappeared. Austrians were “deceived by Nazi lies and deceptions” and “victims of Nazi violence.”¹⁰³

In line with the recommendations of the Socialist newspaper *Arbeiter Zeitung*, *Niemals Vergessen* gave no “special status [keine Sonderbehandlung]” to the persecution of the Jews. *Niemals Vergessen* “obliterated all meaningful distinctions” between those Austrians who died fighting at Stalingrad in the *Wehrmacht* and those who were murdered in the Nazi camp system. “Aimed at comforting Nazi fellow-travelers,” *Niemals Vergessen* “attracted more than a quarter of a million visitors in only a few weeks, and acted as a public ritual of redemption for the ‘good Nazis.’” Thus, summarized Bischof, Austria became “a nation of victims and Austrian memory was purged of perpetrators.”¹⁰⁴

Such visions of immaculate Austrians were not just for domestic consumption. In his 1947 *Foreign Affairs* article, Foreign Minister Gruber wrote that Austrian Nazis before 1938 “were a dwindling and despised minority” who had “a certain number of sympathizers.” “The vast majority of Austrians, however,” Gruber protested, “were loyal. They abhorred the imperialist, warmongering intentions and machinations of the Nazis, and wished for nothing more fervently than to be allowed to live in peace and quiet in their beautiful alpine country.”¹⁰⁵

According to Bischof, the Austrian diplomatic service under Gruber helped propagate abroad “this invention of collective victimhood” in a “lawyers’ version of the past.” The “basic tool” of the *Ballhausplatz’s* “international propaganda campaign” was

¹⁰³ Bischof, 63.
¹⁰⁴ Ibid.
¹⁰⁵ Gruber, “Austria Infelix,” 230. Gruber cited the figure of about 80,000 pre-*Anschluß* party membership cards, which accords well with Gutkas’ previously cited estimates.
the *Rot-Weiβ-Ro- Buch* ("Red-White-Red-Book," after the colors of the Austrian flag) chronicling Austria’s suffering under, and opposition to, the Nazis. Published in December 1946, 100,000 copies were available by year’s end. With the slogan "*Gerechtigkeit für Österreich!* [Justice for Austria!]" on its frontispiece, the *Rot-Weiβ-Rot-Buch* sought, in the words of its forward, “to justify” Austria’s “claim to the status and the treatment of a ‘liberated state’ in the sense of the Moscow Declaration.” Among the *Rot-Weiβ-Rot-Buch*’s copious documents, for example, was the estimate from Austrian concentration camp survivor organizations of 25,080 Austrian political prisoners who spent more than six months in Nazi jails.

As if to personify this “occupation doctrine,” Gruber appointed to the legation in Washington, DC, two true victims of the Nazis: Ambassador Ludwig Kleinwächter, a former concentration camp inmate, and, as press attaché, Hans Thalberg, an Austrian Jew who survived the war in Swiss exile. Among other things, Bischof noted, the two of them “personally answered countless articles in the American press that attacked Austrians for vast complicity in Nazi war crimes.” In an embodiment of the words later applied by Austrian journalist Peter Michael Lingens to another Austrian opponent of the Nazis, Kreisky, these two individuals provided, “so to speak,” their “compatriots with a moral exile for the timeframe between 1938 and 1945.” Nonetheless, Gruber in his memoirs conceded that “it took years until we could overcome the revenge-impregnated spirit of the Moscow Declaration, particularly in England.”

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The truth of Austria’s role in World War II, though, was all too clear for contemporaries who wished to see it and only became clearer over time with advances in scholarly research. Of the roughly 17 million German military personnel during the war, 1,286,000 (8%) were Austrian. Austrians concentrated (1,075,000 or 80% of the total) in the army. Puzzling to historians is the discrepancy between the 242,000 Austrians who fell in the ranks of the Wehrmacht (19% of the total) and the four million Germans (29% of the total) who perished. Although predominately Austrian units such as the mountain troops deployed to the Balkans and Crete did exist early in the war, this regional homogeneity broke down under the massive losses on the Eastern front.\textsuperscript{111}

In all, the American diplomat and historian Bader wrote,

some 35 German divisions composed mainly of Austrians and officered partly by Austrians had been formed on Austrian territory….The Russians could ask with justice whether the French, who were also ‘liberated,’ had a field marshal in the German army and a number of major generals.\textsuperscript{112}

But what of the conduct of Austrian soldiers in World War II? “Did Austrian soldiers,” asked Bischof rhetorically, “commit war crimes on a smaller scale than their German counterparts? Probably not. Most Austrian soldiers were not considered slackers but rather strongly wedded to the ideological and racial goals of Nazi Germany.”

Little different from Germans, Austrians saw their “traditional Feindbild” in “barbarians in the East—Avars, Turks, Slavs and Communists,” especially in the Balkans. Such views, in turn, coexisted with Austria’s own anti-Semitism. “In their self-perception,” reviewed Bischof,

Austrians had been defending European civilization and Christendom for a long time against such “hordes from the East.” They had fought Serbs and

\textsuperscript{111} Bischof, 13.
\textsuperscript{112} Bader, 12-13.
Russians with great ferocity during the First World War; they felt gravely threatened by “Bolsheviks” after the Great War. Austrian Catholics had a long tradition of anticommunism. It is well known that the Austrian strain of Catholic anti-Semitism was as old as the German one and took a vicious turn towards racial categorization in late nineteenth-century Vienna.  

Bischof’s research places in doubt the rosy image of Austria offered for foreign consumption by Foreign Minister Gruber on the pages of *Foreign Affairs* in 1947:

In Austria, on the other hand, militarism never played a leading rôle. The officers of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire were recruited from 13 nationalities, most of them spoke a number of languages, and their training was directed toward promoting understanding among these several peoples. The amalgamation of many nationalities in one state developed a spirit of national tolerance and led to the rejection of racial theories. It was not mere chance that Hitler was unable to assert himself in Austria. The Austrian mentality filled him with hatred, as his book “Mein Kampf” made plain.

The empirical evidence of World War II tends to support Bischof. Holocaust historian Raul Hilberg has referred to an Austrian “territorial preserve” in occupied Serbia, given the overrepresentation of Austrians in the brutal military occupation there and throughout the Balkans. The Third Reich’s invasion of Yugoslavia on April 6, 1941, began with an air attack destroying Belgrade launched from airfields in the Ostmark and under the command of Alexander Löhr, an “ardent Austrian Nazi general” (Bischof). Löhr later directed the airborne conquest of Crete and specifically commended the performance of the Austrians involved. Löhr ended the war in command of Army Group E in the Balkans. Yugoslav authorities after the war executed Löhr for his role in the air attack on Belgrade, described by Austrian historian Anton Pelinka as “one of the most

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113 Bischof, 13.
115 Bischof, 14.
horrific bombardments of the entire Second World War.” Decades later, officers of the postwar Austrian army (Bundesheer) mounted a memorial tablet at Vienna’s Stiftskaserne honoring his role in the creation of an Austrian air force before 1938, but public outcry forced its removal.116

The Austrian Franz Böhme joined Löhr in the Balkans as commanding general of the Nazi occupation of Serbia in the years 1941-1942. Similarly, more than 60% of the soldiers and 50% of their officers in the Third Reich’s occupation of Serbia came from Austria. Bischof described such figures as resulting, in part, from the assumption that Austrians had “an intimate knowledge of the rebellious Balkans mindset going back to the Habsburg monarchy.” Particularly prominent among the Austrians were Carinthians and Styrians from the Austrian regions bordering Yugoslavia “with their long-standing animus against South Slavs.”117 Meanwhile, noted Pelinka, the SS named “not by accident” their division employed primarily in the Balkans Prinz Eugen, an allusion to “continuity” between the famous 18th century Habsburg field marshal and Austrian soldiers in the Third Reich who both fought in southeastern Europe.118 Given Nazi practices such as executing 100 hostages for every Wehrmacht soldier killed by partisans, the balance in Serbia at the end of 1941 was all too predictable: against 160 soldiers killed and 278 wounded, 15,000 to 18,000 Serb civilians were dead, including all adult Jews still within the occupation’s reach.119

Austrians were also prominent in the persecution and extermination of the Jews and others targeted by the Nazis. After the Anschluß, Jews in Vienna suffered numerous

117 Bischof, 14-15.
118 Pelinka, 152.
119 Bischof, 15.
abuses including the memorable humiliation of scrubbing sidewalks on hands and knees with toothbrushes. Their property, meanwhile, underwent a “feeding frenzy” of “forced transfers” into the hands of Austrian Nazis described by Bischof. Of 26,000 Jewish enterprises in Vienna, including some of Vienna’s best known, 5,000 became “aryanized” through transfer into non-Jewish hands and the rest underwent liquidation. About 70,000 apartments changed ownership overnight and even today the progeny of many “aryanizers” occupy dwellings of Jews murdered in the Holocaust or never returned from exile. Yet those Jews who escaped with their lives were actually the lucky ones; 66,000 of 190,000 Austrian Jews died in Hitler’s camps while 120,000 others scattered as refugees throughout the world. Among the murdered were 20 members of Kreisky’s family.\footnote{Bischof, 15-16, 19.}

Although Austrians constituted only eight percent of the population of \textit{Großdeutschland}, 14\% of all SS members, 40\% of concentration camp personnel, and three-fourths of all concentration camp commandants were Austrian.\footnote{Steininger, 23.} Parallel to the use of Austrians in the Balkans, Pelinka has argued that the leadership of the \textit{Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei} (NSDAP), and particularly the \textit{Reichssicherheitshauptamt} overseeing the Reich’s terror apparatus, “considered the Austrians as especially qualified for thrashing into the Slavic \textit{Untermenschen} the New Order.”\footnote{Pelinka, “Österreich und der Osten: Brücke oder Ausfalltor?”, 154.}

Many Austrians thus attained infamy in the Third Reich under the greatest Austrian Nazi of them all, Adolf Hitler. With a highly non-Teutonic name, the Carinthian Odilo Globocnic (the “Butcher of Lublin”) led the SS and police in the Lublin
district of Poland. Seyss-Inquart went from the Austrian Chancellery to become Nazi overlord in the Netherlands. Otto Wächter directed the Galician district of the General-Gouvernement in Poland. Walter Genewein from Salzburg was in charge of ghettos in Lodz and other East European cities. Adolf Eichmann (with a staff 80% Austrian) applied his “Viennese model” (Bischof) of expropriation and forced Jewish emigration to the rest of Nazi-controlled Europe and organized their transport to the death camps.

“Many of the death camps,” recorded Bischof,

were commanded by Austrians: Treblinka and Sobibor by Irmfried Eberl and Franz Stangl; the “model” Nazi concentration camp in Terezin had Austrian commanders; Schindler’s List featured the exceptionally cruel camp commander in Cracow, Amon Goeth from Vienna. Mauthausen, located in the Ostmark, happened to be the most brutal concentration camp in the territory of the Third Reich. It can be seen as a “precursor of the death camps”—some 100,000 people perished there in the 47 subcamps in the course of the war (while in 1941 16 per cent of the inmates of Dachau died, 58 per cent died in Mauthausen). Castle Hartheim, outside of Linz, became one of the principle killing centers of the Nazi euthanasia program (20,000 mentally disturbed people were gassed there). Austria also figured prominently in the Third Reich’s war production. Austrian oil production increased from 37,000 to 1.2 million tons in the period 1937-1944 while Moosbierbaum, Austria, became the site of a synthetic fuel plant. As a result, Austria became the second-largest oil producer in Europe after Romania. Austrian plants produced 20% of the locomotives and 52% of the Mark IV tanks in the Third Reich. The

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123 Bischof, 16, and Pelinka, 155. During a tour of the exhibit Das Neue Österreich on June 15, 2005 (Mittwochabend-Gespräch), Austrian historian Ernst Bruckmüller, responsible for the section “Neutralität und Vereinte Nationen,” pointed to a displayed photo of Globocnic and mocked him as the “Urdeutscher.”
124 Bischof, 16-17.
125 Ibid.
airplane factory in Wiener Neustadt south of Vienna was the Reich’s largest producer of fighters, assembling 29% of the famous Messerschmitt 109s.\textsuperscript{126}

The Third Reich later sought a haven in the Austrian Alps from Allied bomber raids and relocated high-technology production there. The test site for V-2 propulsion, for example, went to the Mauthausen satellite camp Redl-Zipf where 1,500 slave laborers worked to death.\textsuperscript{127} Austria suffered air attack as well, though, when American bombers came within range following the capture of Italian bases.\textsuperscript{128} In more than 100 attacks dropping some 50,000 tons, 20,000 Austrians died, 75,000 families lost their homes, and half of Austria’s railroad tracks disappeared. In revenge, some Austrians brutally lynched downed American airmen.\textsuperscript{129}

Although the Proclamation of the Second Republic described an Austria exploited by the Third Reich, according to Bischof, Austria actually benefited in some ways from Hitler’s strategically motivated “‘New Deal’ for Austria.” “Investments and modernization, rationalization and technological innovation,” he wrote, “benefited backward rural Austria.” By 1945, for example, 57% of Austrian industry and 83% of Austrian banks were in German hands (9% and 8%, respectively, before the Anschluß). Such investment produced results: with six new hydroelectric plants and initiation of the building of the huge hydroelectric complex in Kaprun, Salzburg province, Austrian

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid, 17-18.  
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{128} Austrians such as Ortner at the Heeresgeschichtliches Musuem often express thanks that American, and not area-bombing British, bombers attacked Austria, thus sparing Austrian cities from Dresden-like devastation.  
\textsuperscript{129} Bischof, 18.
electricity production doubled during the war, as did the Austrian industrial work force.\footnote{Ibid, 17. For more on Kaprun, see: \textit{Kraftwerk Kaprun} (accessed December 6, 2006); available from http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kraftwerk_Kaprun.}

“Like Americans who remember Roosevelt’s New Deal above all as giving them work again,” Bischof related, ordinary Austrians who lived through the \textit{Anschluß} era recall that Hitler gave them jobs. The Nazis brought electricity and telephones to backward areas and made the postal system more efficient. Streets and autobahns were built and Austrians were forced to drive on the right side of the road. Maybe the cheering of the Nazi invaders also meant welcoming modernization. Austrian farms started to be mechanized and improved their fertilizing techniques; the formerly poor farm hands found jobs in industries while forced foreign laborers from the East worked on the farms.\footnote{Bischof, 17.}

Austrian resistance to the Third Reich, however, deserves remembrance. Hiscocks noted passive sabotage in the form of military doctors declaring men unfit for military service and increasing convalescence leave for the sick and wounded. Foreign mail censors kept valuable information and incriminating letters from the government. Staff officers deliberately upset training programs and replaced German instructors with anti-Nazi Austrian instructors. During the last year of the war staff sabotage virtually wrote off a division reforming after losses on the Western front with repeated changes in rendezvous and misdirection of replacements and equipment. Ultimately, it reported for action with its personnel at half strength.\footnote{Hiscocks, 11-12.}

Passive resistance, according to Bischof, was also “widespread” in rural peasant areas, “especially among Catholics,” as shown by Nazi imprisonment of 724 priests in jails and concentration camps (one out of every five in the Nazi \textit{Gau} Tyrol-Voralberg).
Many opponents of the Third Reich (such as Communists), meanwhile, were among the 35,000 non-Jewish Austrians killed by the Nazis during the war in concentration camps and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{133} Outside of Austria, Austrians fought with the resistance in France and Italy while Marshal Tito’s partisan army formed an Austrian battalion. Many Austrian prisoners of war in Allied camps asked for the formation of a Free Austrian fighting force, but delays in Allied consent prevented this until it was too late in April 1945.\textsuperscript{134} Nonetheless, of the 130,000 Austrians exiled during the war, 1,500 served in the French Foreign Legion, 3,000 in the British Army, and 3,000-4,500 in the American Army.\textsuperscript{135}

As the Allies reached Austria, Austrian support for the Third Reich waned and resistance grew. By March 1945, 60,000 Austrians hid out in the mountains in order to avoid military service and whole units of the \textit{Wehrmacht} and the \textit{Volkssturm}, Hitler’s last-ditch militia, had simply abandoned their uniforms for civilian clothes. Before the Soviets finally captured Vienna on April 13, 1945, the Austrian resistance there provided deserters with refuge in cellars and civilian suits. Resistance members behind barricades even opened fire on the SS with rifles issued by an army officer from his stores.\textsuperscript{136}

Perhaps the most spectacular act of Austrian resistance occurred on May 2, 1945, in Tyrol. With the help of native son Karl Gruber, the resistance there captured the local German headquarters on the Hungerberg just outside Tyrol’s provincial capital, Innsbruck, along with a well-armed barracks inside the city. In the process, two German generals fell into the hands of the resistance. Most of Tyrol was under resistance control for about a day before the American Seventh Army arrived. The official report of the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{133} Bischof, 19.
\item \textsuperscript{134} Hiscocks, 12.
\item \textsuperscript{135} Bischof, 18-19.
\item \textsuperscript{136} Hiscocks, 13-14.
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103rd Infantry Division, noted Gruber, praised the efforts of the Austrians and stated that “not since the liberation of Paris had American troops received such a rousing welcome as they did at Innsbruck, the first of the larger Austrian cities which they entered.”

Kreisky wrote in 1963 that “a depiction of everything that was done by the Austrians for the liberation of their country remains the still uncompleted task of Austrian historiography.” Much time and research has passed since then, but the historical verdict on Austrian resistance has not been positive. Bischof in 1999 assessed that “today historians by and large agree that Austrian resistance against the Nazi regime was neither widespread nor effective.” Despite a politically motivated postwar “myth of the strong Austrian resistance,” it was actually “small, atomized, and highly incoherent.”

A variety of reasons explain this. Gruber in Foreign Affairs noted that “it was particularly difficult to build up an organized resistance movement in a country where the language was the same as that of the Nazi conquerors, where there were native spies, and where basic training was being given to many German military divisions.” In addition, conscription kept Austrian youth under control. Bischof conceded that “the Nazi supervision of society and suppression of dissidents was even more complete in the Ostmark…than in the rest of occupied Europe” and that “any Austrian resistance operated under extremely adverse circumstances.” Bischof, though, cited cultural factors hindering resistance as well:

Austrian political culture has always valued duty and subservience to the state (“Untertanenentugend”) over nonconformism and dissidence. This was also true when the Third Reich became “the state” demanding subservience. For the vast majority of Austrians the Nazi regime was

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137 Gruber, “Felix Austria,” 232, and Hiscocks, 15.
138 Bruno Kreisky, Die Herausforderung: Politik an der Schwelle des Atomzeitalters (Düsseldorf: Econ Verlag, 1963), 82.
139 Bischof, 19.
140 Gruber, 231.
legitimate, and resisting it was unpopular and illegitimate (even in the postwar popular perception of resistance). Fighting the Nazis actively with weapons amounted to betrayal, threatening civil war.\footnote{Bischof, 19.}

Once again, the contrast with Gruber’s views in Foreign Affairs, perhaps colored by the free spirit of his Tyrolean home, is notable. “The will to independence of little Austria,” Gruber wrote,

is deeply rooted in the past. Students of Austrian history know that as early as the fourteenth century free peasants were living in the Alpine countries; they had a right to name representatives to the Diet. On the other hand, de facto abolition of slavery did not occur in many parts of Germany until the nineteenth century.\footnote{Gruber, 232.}

“Austrians,” disagreed Bischof, “excelled more in passive grumbling about, than in actively opposing the Nazi regime,” as expressed in illegal Austrian reception of foreign broadcasters such as the BBC. In all, Bischof discovered little to distinguish Austria from the rest of the Reich:

Austrian popular opinion during the Second World War mirrored that of the rest of the Third Reich in general and Bavaria in particular. It depended on social milieu and religious background and generally reflected the ups and downs of the Third Reich’s successes and failures on the fighting fronts. Austrian excitement about the Nazi regime cooled down considerably in the course of the war. Austrians took pride in triumphs of the Hitler’s Wehrmacht (of which one-tenth were Austrian soldiers), when it routed most of Europe with its irresistible Blitzkrieg strategy. They cheered for Hitler, the ruthless empire builder. Until 1943 people had enough to eat, sufficient clothing and adequate housing (in Vienna as a result of “aryanizations”).\footnote{Bischof, 19.}

\footnote{Bischof claimed that when “B.B.C. broadcasters in German visited Austria afterwards they were received like popular heroes.” See: Hiscocks, 163. The Nazi defeat at Stalingrad in February 1943 particularly affected the Austrian mood. Not only did the destruction of the pocket of Stalingrad represent the first great battlefield disaster for the Wehrmacht, but Austrians particularly felt the loss of the encircled Sixth Army’s large number of predominately Austrian units. Ortner highlighted the importance of Stalingrad during his August 14, 2005 tour of the HGM and its prominent display devoted to the battle.}
In a lecture delivered on April 5, 2001, at the University of Minnesota’s Center for Austrian Studies, Pelinka noted that, given over 600,000 Austrian “card-carrying members of the NSDAP,” together with “family members and sympathizers, it can be argued that at least one-third of the Austrian population had not perceived the outcome of World War II as favorable.”\(^\text{144}\) Bischof concurred, seeing the Austrians at war’s end as “fatalistic,” incredulous that they could influence events and unwilling to risk carnage in Vienna on the scale that destroyed Warsaw during its 1944 uprising. “The vast majority of Austrians,” Bischof wrote, “supported Hitler’s cause to the bitter end. We will never be able to determine how many experienced the collapse of the Third Reich as defeat and how many welcomed the coming Allied armies as liberation.”\(^\text{145}\)

_Austria as Victim: The Success of a Doctrine, the Loss of Memory_

Chancellor Julius Raab was the first among Austrian officials to suggest that the Austrian delegation motion the removal of the “guilt” clause in the State Treaty’s preamble at the final session of the Foreign Minister Conference on May 14, 1955, in the Haus der Industrie (across from the Soviet monument at Stalin/Schwarzenbergplatz). Raab thought that particularly the Soviets had gone too far in negotiating a treaty to let it fail now and they would be willing to make a friendly gesture to the Austrians.\(^\text{146}\) Raab’s foreign minister, the concentration camp survivor Leopold Figl, then sought to remove the preamble’s third paragraph speaking of Austria’s “responsibility” in the Third Reich, arguing among other things that this clause went against the treaty’s spirit. Figl, along

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\(^\text{145}\) Bischof, 20.

\(^\text{146}\) Fritz Meznik, “Mittel und Wege, die Besatzung zu beenden,” in _Neue Fakten zu Staatsvertrag und Neutralität_, 50.
with his deputy Kreisky at the Office for Foreign Affairs in the Federal Chancellery (Bundeskanzleramt für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten or BKAAA; Austria did not yet have an independent foreign ministry), observed Bischof, “pushed the hard-nosed legal argument with all of its infelicity to the historical truth.” This pair once again demonstrated “the long-standing Austrian tactics of sending forward those who had suffered the most during the war in defense of Austrian innocence.”

In an article posthumously published in the May 15, 1965, edition of the Wiener Zeitung for the tenth anniversary of the State Treaty, Figl related that he demanded “at the last minute” on May 14, 1955, the striking of this “intolerable passage.” Even then some Austrian politicians did not share Raab’s assurance and were afraid of irritating the occupying powers “at the last moment” just as they were ready to end their ten-year occupation. While Molotov as the oldest of the foreign ministers held the chair of the conference, Figl motioned to remove the offending clause, citing in the process the well-known “paradox” of the Moscow Declaration, whose goal of an independent Austria the State Treaty would now fulfill.

Molotov was the first in voting to support Figl’s suggestion and the other foreign ministers followed his example. Figl attributed Molotov’s “change in mood” to the simple fact that Stalin’s original motive for a responsibility clause in the Moscow Declaration, namely to justify Austrian reparations, had disappeared with the final formulation of the State Treaty and its economic provisions. Thus, in the words of

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147 Bischof, 149.
148 Leopold Figl, “Zehn Jahre verhandelt—in drei Tagen perfekt,” in Neue Fakten zu Staatsvertrag und Neutralität, 244-245.
149 Ibid.
Lujo Tončić-Sorinj, one of Figl’s successors, this “defamatory assertion” disappeared the very day before the signing of the State Treaty.  

Austrian historians like Gerald Stourzh have argued that leading postwar Austrian politicians like Figl did indeed personally identify with Austria as a victim of the Third Reich. An opponent of the Nazis from the very beginning, Figl survived Dachau and Mauthausen before experiencing liberation in Vienna on the day of his planned execution. As chancellor, Figl formed the first Austrian government of the Second Republic after the elections of 1945. His cabinet of, on average, 17 members had 12 to 14 politicians who had suffered persecution under the Nazis.

It was historically fallacious, though, to maintain that Austria as a whole could share the biography of Figl and others. In the words of Kreisky, this “closing of the eyes before reality” created a “horrible living lie” of “reckoning oneself among the victors” of World War II. Later events such as the controversy over Kurt Waldheim’s candidacy for the Austrian presidency in 1986 would ultimately compel Waldheim’s country to face its past in a “cruel awakening” and abandon its “national mystification according to which we are something really special.”

Yet even in 2005, Paul Reichel, a security affairs advisor for the Austrian Green Party, complained that Austrian schoolbooks treat Austria in World War II as if it were “like Poland.” For decades following 1955, this Austrian “living lie” allowed many to easily shift from Nazi supporter or fellow traveler in the Third Reich to “victim” in the postwar years. The actress Paula Wessely, for example, starred in the 1939 Nazi

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150 Lujo Tončić-Sorinj, “Staatsvertrag und Neutralität im österreichischen Parlament,” in Neue Fakten zu Staatsvertrag und Neutralität, 162.
151 Steininger, 22.
152 Kreisky, Im Strom der Politik, 45.
153 Paul Reichel, interview by author in downtown Vienna’s Café Central on July 12, 2005.
propaganda film *Heimkehr* depicting the supposed plight of ethnic Germans in Poland as justification for the Third Reich’s invasion that year. After the war Wessely played a half-Jew who becomes a victim of the Gestapo in *Der Engel mit der Posaune*, a film chronicling a Viennese piano making family. Cynics in the late 1940s cracked that “the resistance to Hitler is getting stronger every day.”

For Bischof, a “successful *Übermalaktion*” in the small Lower Austrian town of Waidhofen “speaks volumes.” Waidhofen’s Nazi mayor commissioned a large town hall painting, a “*Heimat* apotheosis,” early in the war. “A Nazi careerist,” Bischof explained, painted the quaint town with plenty of swastikas flying and proud burghers donning their Nazi uniforms. This colorful “symphony of genuine Germandom” was finished by 1943, only to be a huge embarrassment barely two years later when the “1000 Year Empire” lay in ruins and those who had celebrated it needed to be concerned about their future. On 12 May 1945 the local Soviet commander who had liberated the town ordered the painting to be retouched. This was in line with the opportunistic Soviet policy of, at least on the surface level, wiping out all traces of Nazism without bothering too much about thorough denazification and not at all about re-education. Some local artist put on a new layer of paint, *instantly transforming brown flags into red-white-red banners*. These were the old and new national colors of the Republic of Austria. The burghers of this little town instantly switched from Nazi uniforms to traditional folksy costumes.\(^{155}\)

The Soviets were not the only ones suspected of opportunism when it came to denazification and reeducation. Hiscocks wrote that

the attitude to the Nazi problem of the Austrian Government and people in general was sensible, broad-minded, and Christian. Except in the worst cases they wanted as soon as possible to let bygones be bygones. They were unwilling to drive into implacable discontent the disillusioned and repentant party members who were ready to be converted in 1945 and had


\(^{155}\) Bischof, 52-53.
only become Nazis originally through a mixture of fear and economic necessity.\textsuperscript{156}

Hiscocks’ statement is open to different interpretations. The same is true for Kreisky’s assertion in his 1988 volume of memoirs that he wanted to “open for people the way back into democratic morality.”\textsuperscript{157} The AIIA policy analyst Luif also admonished that the creation of a democratic order in a society previously subordinated to a totalitarian ideology, whether in Austria after World War II or Eastern Europe after Communism, required forgiveness and the willingness to make a fresh start. Growing up in a town in the Austrian province of Burgenland, for example, Luif remembered his father indicating the man who pointed a rifle at the elder Luif while he was taken to prison under the Nazis.\textsuperscript{158}

The 2005 exhibit \textit{Jetzt ist er bös, der Tennenbaum: Die Zweite Republik und ihre Juden} at Vienna’s Jewish Museum, though, called into question whether Hiscocks and most Austrians understood a key tenet of Christianity. Forgiveness demands namely repentance, which in turn precludes forgetting. Along with things such as Austria’s shoddy record of restitution of Jewish property stolen under the Nazis, the exhibit documented recurring anti-Semitic, pro-Nazi statements from Austrian politicians of almost all parties down through the years.\textsuperscript{159}

Returning to Vienna for the first time after the war, the Jewish diplomat Thalberg criticized Austrian unwillingness to remember the Third Reich and personally belied the Austrian historical fantasies he himself had helped shape. Vienna, he wrote in 1984, was

\textsuperscript{156} Hiscocks, 63.
\textsuperscript{157} Kreisky, \textit{Im Strom der Politik}, 45.
\textsuperscript{158} Luif interview.
\textsuperscript{159} Heimann-Jelinek, 98-104.
“the city of my birth, yes. But the city of my home?” “Too deep was the chasm,” answered Thalberg,

that separated me from the people. I perceived this most clearly when I spoke with earlier or newer acquaintances about the recent past. Whenever they spoke of the “catastrophe,” they meant thereby 1945. For me the catastrophe occurred in 1938 and 1945 was the year of happy fulfillment. People whose political and personal integrity were above every reproach had somehow taken part *nolens volens* in the Hitler delusion, had shared the fate of Nazi Germany in good and bad times. Some had been occupation officers in Paris, Athens, or Brussels; convinced of their own innocence, they thoroughly naively talked about these good times, not realizing what a devastating impression such tales had to call forth from those who had experienced the war on the other side. Certainly, the matter was very complicated; it is not easy to celebrate the American bombs that destroyed the house over someone’s head as a step towards imminent liberation. But the complete lack of understanding with which—even today—Austrians identify with the fate of the German *Wehrmacht* in the war makes my blood run cold. People in Austria have quite evidently never seriously grasped what took place in these war years, how profound the hatred and loathing that the world senses for Hitler Germany and everything connected with it are. Right up to the present day I can more easily find common ground when this period is discussed with a Dutchman, a Norwegian, a Yugoslav than with my countrymen.160

*Austria is Free (and Neutral): The Beginning of a New Era*

As Bischof related, Figl at the Foreign Ministers Conference on May 14, 1955, justified the last minute editing of the preamble in part because a guilt clause for World War II “would constitute an unacceptable mortgage” for a country requested to implement what Figl described as “the political and moral tasks of a peaceful neutral.”161 Figl was referring to the promise undertaken by a delegation of leading Austrian officials in the Moscow Memorandum at the conclusion of the eponymous conference one month

160 Thalberg, 152-154.
161 Bischof, 149.
before on April 15, 1955. In this document heralding the end of Austria’s occupation, the Austrian delegation members pledged “in connection with the conclusion of an Austrian State Treaty” to “concern themselves with” bringing about a declaration of the Austrian federal government that “internationally obligates Austria to practice a perpetual neutrality of the kind practiced by Switzerland.” The federal government of Austria would also “undertake all expedient steps” in order to achieve an “international recognition” of this declaration and would also seek a “guaranty of the integrity and inviolability of Austrian state territory by the four Great Powers.”

The Austrian parliament, though, waited until all occupation troops had left Austria before passing a constitutional neutrality law. Long before the 90-day deadline in the State Treaty ran out on October 25, the Soviet embassy in Vienna announced on September 19, 1955, that all Soviet occupation troops had left the country. On October 15 the Americans handed over their Camp Roeder in Salzburg to the Austrians before the last American units left Salzburg on October 25. In contrast to the Soviets, Bischof noted that “many Salzburgers even hated to see the free-spending Americans leave.”

The British and French, meanwhile, had dramatically reduced their occupation forces after the Soviets ceased to demand Austrian payment for Soviet occupation troops from July 1, 1953, on. Given that the United States had already done this in 1947, this left the two West European powers as the only ones imposing occupation costs on Austria. To avoid unenviable publicity, the British and French had emulated the Soviets

162 Schilcher, 284-285. A copy of the Moscow Memorandum can also be found online, see: Moskauer Memorandum (accessed January 30, 2006); available from http://www.oesterreichistfrei.at/geschichte3_3_2.htm; and, in English translation, Moscow Memorandum (accessed February 27, 2006); available from http://www.ena.lu/mce.cfm.


164 Bischof, 154.
while constraining occupation costs, leaving only 15,000 Western occupation troops (mostly Americans) opposite about 50,000 Soviet occupation troops in Austria.\textsuperscript{165} Thus the few remaining French soldiers and gendarmes easily left Austria before the October 25 deadline and the British had no trouble removing their headquarters units and sole battalion in Austria.\textsuperscript{166} One British officer did, however, overstay the deadline before officially taking his leave in Klagenfurt, Carinthia, on October 29, 1955. Even after this date British and American officers often transited the border with little formality.\textsuperscript{167}

British officers or not, October 26, 1955, was officially the first day free of foreign occupation in the Austrian Republic. On this day the Austrian parliament in a sovereign act added the following two-paragraph (not counting the formal implementation clause of Article II) neutrality law to the Austrian constitution:

1. For the purpose of the lasting maintenance of her independence externally, and for the purpose of [maintaining] the inviolability of her territory, Austria declares of her own free will her perpetual neutrality. Austria will maintain and defend this with all means at her disposal.
2. For the securing of this purpose in all future times Austria will not join any military alliances and will not permit the establishment of any foreign military bases on her territory.\textsuperscript{168}

This neutrality law almost went too far in emulating its Swiss role model, as Rudolf Kirchschläger, a young Austrian diplomat at the time of the State Treaty and later a two-term Austrian federal president (1974-1986), recalled during an interview during

\textsuperscript{166} Rauchensteiner, “Staatsvertrag und bewaffnete Macht,” 155.
\textsuperscript{167} “Diskussionen,” 229.
the State Treaty’s 25th anniversary in 1980. As originally presented to the Nationalrat on July 19, 1955, the neutrality law declared itself to be “in the interest of maintaining domestic peace and order” as well as national independence and territorial integrity. As described by Kirchschläger, this indicated “how much we stood at the time under the impression of Swiss neutrality’s example. For Switzerland, neutrality in the year 1815 was also a means of holding together its cantons. For us this sentence had no meaning. It was thus stricken.”

Irrespective of the neutrality law’s formulation, Austrians could now finally say that, in Figl’s historic words at the signing of the State Treaty in the Oberbelvedere Palace, “Austria is free [Österreich ist frei]!” “Vienna has hung out its flags,” The Economist had previously written on April 23, 1955, immediately after the breakthrough at Moscow paving the way for the State Treaty, “and throughout the free world people are glad that Austria should see its deliverance at hand after seventeen years of ill-usage by two totalitarian regimes.” Recalling the State Treaty signing ceremony two days after the event, Dulles in testimony on May 17, 1955, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee recounted “tremendous enthusiasm” in Vienna the previous Sunday. “The day was not good but fortunately until about 1 or 2 o’clock no rain, so it was very crowded all the way in with flags and so forth, a very moving scene.”

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170 This phrase of Figl’s has gone down in Austrian history like other famous aphorisms worldwide (e.g. President Ronald Reagan and “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!”). The actual audio of Figl’s address in which he uttered these words is available online, complete with German subtitles. See: Discours de Leopold Figl vienne, 15 mai 1955 (accessed February 25, 2006); available from http://www.ena.lu/mce.cfm.


172 Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Report by the Secretary of State, 84th Cong., May 17, 1955.
Austria’s divided German neighbors to the north and other Europeans under Communism to the east were not so lucky. As many commentators have noted, the State Treaty “was not part of a general postwar settlement. Indeed, the middle 1950s witnessed the solidification of two antagonistic alliance systems, which accentuated the division of the European continent.”

Audrey Kurth Cronin, a student of the negotiations over the State Treaty, explained that “with the signing of the Austrian State Treaty in 1955, the U.S. and Soviet spheres of influence in postwar Europe were finally drawn.” This was “a watershed in the Cold War” that “separated the immediate postwar years of uncertainty from the clear East-West status quo” subsequently dividing Europe for over 40 years.

Noting the simultaneity of diplomatic events in the busy month of May 1955, the preeminent Austrian military historian Manfred Rauchensteiner challenged, “Who says the State Treaty was not a function of block politics!”

Not only did Europe’s military alliances form their Central European fronts during this period, but Western Europe prepared to take its integration a giant step forward. After the failure of the European Defense Community (EDC), the foreign ministers of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) agreed upon further steps of economic integration at the Conference of Messina, held June 1-3, 1955. Here began the road to the foundation of the European Economic Community (EEC) in the 1957 Treaty of Rome that would so influence neutral Austria in the years to come.

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175 Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 274.
For centuries Austria and Germany had followed parallel, during the Third Reich even convergent, paths in the middle of Europe. The territories of both countries had formed the heart of the Holy Roman Empire. Both countries had become the seat of leading European powers and both of these powers had contended for dominance within the German nation. Austrians and Germans had waged World War I together as allies. After the common turmoil of the interwar period, Austrians and Germans had marched together as aggressors into a new world war and the perpetration of multiple genocides.

Now in the bipolar postwar order Austrian and German paths would diverge, at least in the realm of security policy. While the Cold War camps would divide Germany, Austria would remain united in its historically unprecedented status of neutrality. Indeed, Kirchschläger analyzed that “the permanent neutrality of Austria was for the Soviet Union to a significant degree a strengthening of Article 4 of the State Treaty.”\(^{177}\) In this article, Austria had pledged not to “conclude any agreement with Germany, nor do any act, nor take any measures likely, directly or indirectly, to promote political or economic union with Germany, or to impair its territorial integrity or political or economic independence.”\(^{178}\)

“Fortunately for the Austrians,” noted Cronin, the emerging Cold War “status quo” would be “stable and prosperous.”\(^{179}\) While Germany and the rest of Europe entered a decades-long military confrontation, Austria had apparently fulfilled through diplomatic reconciliation the oft-cited motto attributed to Austria by the Hungarian king


\(^{178}\) *State Treaty.*

\(^{179}\) Cronin, 171.
Matthias Corvinus (1458-1490): “Bella gerant alii, tu felix Austria nube [Others may wage war, you happy Austria shall marry]!”\textsuperscript{180}

Given the novelty of neutrality in Austria in 1955, this status posed many questions, some of which remain unanswered today in Austria and elsewhere. To attempt to answer these questions requires, appropriately enough, beginning with the genesis of the Austrian Second Republic under Allied occupation in the decade between 1945 and 1955.

\textsuperscript{180} Alfred Missong, “Österreich und der Weltfriede,” in \textit{Neue Fakten zu Staatsvertrag und Neutralität}, 327. For information on King Corvinus, see: \textit{Matthias Corvinus} (Accessed December 28, 2005); available from \url{http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthias_Corvinus}. 
Chapter I
Nation out of the Ashes: The Rise of the Second Republic

A Government Forms

Perhaps most striking about Austria following the defeat of Nazi Germany is the celerity with which a unified national democratic government came into existence before the end of 1945, particularly compared to its German neighbor to the north. Germany had to wait four years until free federal elections took place in 1949 in the western zones of occupation and over four decades until national elections occurred in a united Germany.

A central character in the reemergence of a representative Austrian government is Karl Renner. Described by Austrian historian Günter Bischof as the "quintessential survivor in the dramatic turnarounds of twentieth-century Austrian politics," Renner "emerged once again as the pater patriae" just as he had done after World War I. A moderate Socialist, Renner won election to the Austro-Hungarian parliament in its first democratic elections in 1907. Renner remained a people’s representative through the monarchy and the First Republic until he resigned in 1933 as the president of the last freely elected Austrian parliament and the Dollfuss regime forced him into retirement.¹

The Soviet High Command (Stavka) under Josef Stalin ordered officers of the 3rd Ukrainian Army to find Renner as it entered Austria in late March. "Perhaps," speculated Bischof, "Stalin felt the old socialist would be easily coopted for a Soviet-style ‘people’s democracy,’ since his well-known support of the Anschluss made him vulnerable." Renner, though, found the Soviets first in the village of Gloggnitz an hour south of

¹ Günter Bischof, Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-55: The Leverage of the Weak, King’s College Cold War History Series (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 34-35.
Vienna where he lived in retirement. Appalled by the depredations of the Soviet “liberators,” Renner approached their local commander and rebuked him for his troops.²

With Soviet support, Renner arrived in Vienna on April 21, 1945, a mere week after the fighting had ended there. He quickly negotiated the formation of a provisional government with the reconstituted leadership of his own Socialist party (SPÖ), the conservative, Christian Democratic People’s party (ÖVP), and the Communist party (KPÖ), whose leaders flew directly from their Moscow exile or came from Yugoslavia where they had fought alongside Tito’s partisans. Although the “Red Army did not intervene directly on behalf of the Austrian Communists,” wrote Bischof, it “obviously loomed large in the background as their protector.”³

The ÖVP politician Alfred Maleta recalled in 1980 that the resulting government “unilaterally formed by the Soviets” without consultation from the Western Allies had a 1:1:1 composition of SPÖ, ÖVP, and KPÖ. There was, accordingly, “in the West a deep mistrust of this government that claimed to be a government for all of Austria.”⁴ In particular, Bischof added, “the Communists insisted on the Interior and Education portfolios for themselves.” These posts “controlled the police and propaganda…central to communist takeovers in Eastern Europe. Was Austria heading towards becoming a ‘people’s democracy’ like Bulgaria and Rumania?”⁵ Bruno Kreisky noted in Foreign Affairs in 1959 that “the prevailing opinion in the West—not surprisingly—was that such a government could be only a puppet regime subservient to the Russians.”⁶

² Ibid, 35.
³ Ibid.
⁵ Bischof, Austria in the First Cold War, 36.
Yet unnoticed by much of the outside world, Renner had craftily given every minister in his cabinet two undersecretaries from the opposing parties. This somewhat bloated arrangement exposed all decisions to broad-based scrutiny. So constituted, this provisional government possessing only Soviet backing in their zone proclaimed Austrian independence on April 27, 1945, conducted its first cabinet meeting two days later, and announced its composition and program to the world on May 1.\footnote{Bischof, \textit{Austria in the First Cold War}, 36.}

Already at the first meeting of the four commanders in chief of the occupation troops on August 23, 1945, the Soviets pressed for an immediate extension of the provisional government’s authority to all of Austria. A suggestion by Renner overcame Western reluctance on this point. In a memorandum from Renner discussed at the September 20, 1945, Allied Council meeting, he advocated a conference in Vienna with representatives from the Austrian provinces in order to broaden the composition of the provisional government.\footnote{William B. Bader, \textit{Austria between East and West 1945-1955} (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1966), 40.}

This \textit{Länderkonferenz} met September 24-26 in Vienna. Renner, noted Bischof, “once again put his craftiness to good use” and “parried pressure from western Austrian representatives to reduce communist influence. Rather than upsetting the Soviets he enlarged his already big Cabinet with seven new appointees.” These were “mostly conservatives from the provinces” like Karl Gruber from Tyrol, the new undersecretary for foreign affairs (i.e. foreign minister) in the Federal Chancellery.\footnote{Bischof, \textit{Austria in the First Cold War}, 51.}

“As a result of this conference,” the American diplomat and historian William Bader recalled, “the Allied Council on October 1 recommended to their respective
governments that the Provisional Government be recognized, with the provision that the elections be held no later than December 1945.” On October 20, 1945, the Renner Provisional Government received formal recognition subject to the conduct of free elections by December 31. All parties quickly agreed to an election date of November 25.10

In the words of Richard Hiscocks, a British diplomat posted in Vienna from 1946 to 1949, the elections on November 25, 1945, “passed off in a most orderly manner” with “93% of the electors casting valid votes” in a vote generally viewed as free.11 “The results,” noted Bader, “speak for themselves.” The ÖVP received 1,602,227 votes (49.80%), the SPÖ 1,434,898 (44.60%), and the KPÖ 174,255 (5.42%). “After the tortuous process of proportional representation had run full course,” wrote Bader, the ÖVP received 85, the SPÖ 76, and the KPÖ a mere four seats in the Nationalrat.12

The results for the Communists were clearly disappointing. Sven Allard, the Swedish ambassador appointed to Vienna in 1954, noted that judging from their later remarks, the Communists did not expect a majority but did believe they would win at least twenty-five per cent of the vote. With such a sizeable minority, the Soviet occupation forces could demand greater Communist representation in the coalition government and pave the way for an eventual takeover by a slow step-by-step infiltration.13

Hiscocks noted that some Communists were even “convinced that they would obtain 40 per cent of the votes.” Such confidence explains why “the Russians and the

10 Bader, 40.
12 Bader, 45.
Austrian Communists cooperated to carry out the elections with reasonable fairness and had little temptation to do otherwise.”\textsuperscript{14}

To observers such as Bader the reasons for such misplaced confidence were not “completely clear.” To begin with, the Communists “were clearly convinced” that they had become a “third force” in Austria after the SPÖ and ÖVP and that “any election would demonstrate this new political reality.” Since the Communists “already controlled the Ministries of Interior and Education—albeit under the watchful eyes of the other parties—they were certainly optimistic enough to believe that their electoral mandate would be large enough to at least retain these two key posts.” The Communists, moreover, “respected the organizational skills of the Socialists” and “may have thought it was tactically wiser to have an election before the Socialists could completely reorganize their party apparatus.”\textsuperscript{15}

Lastly, “and perhaps most important” in the eyes of Bader, in late September 1945 when the decision for elections transpired “the appeals of communism as expressed in free elections” remained untested in those countries overrun by the Soviets. Given elections in Great Britain, France, Norway, and Denmark, “all that was known was that in Western Europe the current was very strong to the left.” “The Austrian Communists made a great point of playing up these victories and were apparently convinced” that Austria would be no different. Thus the Communists forewent “a test of strength in the Eastern zone,” but “chose to go all the way” in elections for a government controlling Austria in its entirety. Instead of emulating Western Europe, though, Austria followed

\textsuperscript{14} Hiscocks, 42.
\textsuperscript{15} Bader, 41.
the path set by its neighbor Hungary on November 4, 1945, when the Small Landowners party trounced the Hungarian Communists in national elections.\(^\text{16}\)

The electoral defeat of the Austrian Communists is often attributed to the behavior of Soviet troops during Austria’s “liberation.” “There is no doubt,” Hiscocks observed, “that the Austrian workers, after their experiences under Dollfuss in 1934 and during several years of Nazi domination, were ready for a complete change and genuinely welcomed the Russians as liberators.” In contrast, the brutality of Soviet troops in Austria prompted the concern that if such things were the result of the Communist experiment it was an experiment the Austrian people had no wish to make. Dr. Renner once remarked that Stalin had made only two mistakes: he had shown Central Europe to the Russians, and he had shown the Russians to Central Europe.\(^\text{17}\)

Bischof confirmed that the Soviets’ “raging soldateska” as well as the Soviet teams in their wake tasked with removing Austrian industrial plants as war booty “left an indelible mark on the Austrian population and eerily reconfirmed the anticommunism preached by Nazi Greuelpropaganda.” Soviet behavior “forever immunized the population against communism.” Austrians “came to see their ‘manifest destiny’ once again as the bastion against Eastern barbarism—after Avars and Turks, this time it was the containment of communist infidels.”\(^\text{18}\) A “fact that certainly magnified the electoral impact of Soviet misbehavior,” Bader contended, was that 64% of the 3.5 million Austrians voting in November 1945 were women.\(^\text{19}\)

\(^{16}\) Ibid 41, 44-45.  
\(^{17}\) Hiscocks, 44.  
\(^{18}\) Bischof, Austria in the First Cold War, 30, 34.  
\(^{19}\) Bader, 46. Another characteristic of the Austrian electorate in November 1945 was that due to war losses and disenfranchisement of former Nazis under Allied denazification measures, about 670,000 or 20% fewer voters cast ballots in 1945 than in the last pre-war elections in 1930.
Bader observed additionally that the Soviets rarely apologized for their brutality, but “one important exception” involved Oskar Helmer, Austria’s interior minister (home secretary in Anglo-Saxon parlance) in the new government following the November elections. Helmer had discovered soon after the fighting had ended that his brother had died in the attempt to defend his wife from repeated assaults of Soviet soldiers. She then “took just enough poison to die a slow and painful death.” Once Helmer entered office, Bader recounted, the Soviets “sent an officer to apologize for the incident. The apologies were not accepted.”

Soviet deputy premier Anastas Mikoyan later confirmed to Helmer during a state visit to Austria in April 1957 that his anticommunism had made him “well-known to the Russian people unfortunately as the Austrian McCarthy.”

Renner officially dissolved the provisional government on November 28 and Leopold Figl, the recognized leader of the dominant party, the ÖVP, began to construct a government both reflecting the election and pleasing to the Allies. With Figl as chancellor, the resulting cabinet had six ministers and one undersecretary from the ÖVP, four ministers, one undersecretary, and the vice-chancellor (Adolf Schärf) from the SPÖ, and two independents. In a “tactical gesture to the Communists,” Bader explained that the Communist Karl Altmann had a “makeshift” Ministry of Power and Electrification created for him. The Communist Franz Honner, meanwhile, lost his post at the Interior Ministry to Helmer and Dr. Felix Hurdes of the ÖVP assumed the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs from the Communist Ernst Fischer. The sole Communist in the

21 Memorandum of Conversation between Oskar Helmer, Minister of Interior, and Alexander C. Johnpoll, U.S. Embassy, April 25, 1957; Austria-U.S.S.R., 1958 Folder (601.06); Box 2; Entry 3092; Decimal Files Related to Italy and Austria, 1953-1958; Office of Western European Affairs in the Bureau of European and British Commonwealth Affairs; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group (RG) 59; National Archives (NA) Building II, College Park, Maryland.
22 Bader, 46.
government, Altmann, did not last long but rather resigned on November 20, 1947, whereupon his cabinet position disappeared.\textsuperscript{23}

The Allied Council approved the new government on December 18, 1945. The next day Renner gave an account of the provisional government under his stewardship before the Nationalrat. The Nationalrat and the Bundesrat (Federal Council, the provincially appointed upper house of the Austrian parliament) then elected Renner federal president on December 20, 1945.\textsuperscript{24}

\textit{The Grand Coalition: Government by Proporz}

Given their electoral performance, the ÖVP and the SPÖ between them formed what is known in European parliamentary governance as a \textit{Grand Coalition} of the major parties. This “permanent coalition government” described by Bader outlasted the Allied occupation until 1966 when the ÖVP won a clear electoral majority and chose to form the Second Republic’s first single-party administration. For the distribution of cabinet and administrative posts, the two parties arranged a proportional system (Proporz) based upon the electoral strength shown in the previous national election. In light of unflattering characterizations as “government by party cartel” or “two-party dictatorship,” these coalition pacts remained shrouded in great secrecy from 1945 on, with their very existence denied until press leaks in 1956 forced publication by the two parties.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{23} Heinrich Siegler, ed., \textit{Austria: Problems and Achievements since 1945} (Bonn: Verlag Für Zeitarchive, 1969), 147-48, and Bader, 46.
\textsuperscript{24} Siegler, 10. As in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and other parliamentary systems, the federal president in Austria has a largely representative function similar to the sovereign in a constitutional monarchy.
\textsuperscript{25} Bader, 50-51.
The criticisms of the Proporz–based red (SPÖ) and black (ÖVP) Grand Coalition cited by Bader are easy to understand. This “government by an oligarchy of top party leaders” effectively bypassed the national parliament “in the formulation of major decisions.” In the administration, each party exercised control over the other with a “double veto,” whereby “the man in the top position has a ‘watchdog’ from the other party as his second in command.” That this system can cause inefficiency and abuse due to a “lack of genuine political opposition” is obvious. Many Austrians quipped “that there are three men for every government job—‘a Red and a Black and the man who does the work.’”

The great strength of any Grand Coalition, of course, is its ability to mobilize a society behind stable consensuses. This was of particular importance to Austrians under Allied occupation facing the twin dangers of Cold War partition as in Germany or Communist takeover as in Eastern Europe. Austrians faced these dangers, moreover, against the backdrop of the First Republic in which an often three-way civil strife between conservatives, Socialists, and pan-German nationalists robbed Austria of any ability to survive in an increasingly hostile environment.

Many Austrian Socialists and conservatives then had to learn cooperation the hard way as fellow prisoners in the Third Reich’s concentration camps. “Such cohabitation helped overcome traditional prejudices,” noted many Austrian scholars such as Bischof, “although this ‘spirit of Dachau’ is sometimes exaggerated.” Whatever the cause, though, “Austria’s political elite had learned the lessons from the First Republic—class

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26 Ibid, 51.
warfare might easily descend into lingering civil war between the political Lager. Achieving consensus became the overriding objective.”\textsuperscript{28}

Along with the exigencies of the occupation period, the Austrian federal constitution carried over from the First into the Second Republic also favored a Grand Coalition. According to the Austrian legal scholar Felix Ermacora, the Austrian constitution is “coalition-friendly” in complete opposition to, for example, the “coalition-hostile” American constitution. This “legal-philosophical phenomenon” in the words of Austrian historian Manfried Rauchensteiner results most likely from the fact that the Austrian constitution of 1920 itself was the product of a Christian Democratic and Socialist Grand Coalition. Similarly, the 1929 constitutional reform was also the work of these partners. Because constitutional laws require a two-thirds majority in the Nationalrat and therefore the de facto consent of both major parties, there also exists a “silent” Grand Coalition in important affairs of state even during single-party administrations.\textsuperscript{29}

Despite “its many faults,” observers such as Bader believe that the Grand Coalition along with Proportz “served Austria well” during the occupation. The coalition partners could “function as a team” and exclude Communists from government simply by indicating their poor electoral performance. Absent this Grand Coalition, the only remaining political alternatives would have been a Socialist-Communist coalition or later a coalition between the ÖVP and the pan-German influenced Union of Independents (Verband der Unabhängigen or VdU) that emerged in the 1949 elections.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{28} Bischof, Austria in the First Cold War, 36, 56.
\textsuperscript{30} Bader, 51.
Bader has noted that in Germany and Austria “the Four-Power occupation machinery was almost identical,” but that in Austria “inter-Allied control actually functioned.” “An inter-Allied Control Council,” he explained, met at frequent and fixed intervals. This Council was backed up by a support committee composed of the deputies of the Allied Commanders and known as the Executive Committee in Austria and the Coordinating Committee in Germany. This Committee was charged with preliminary discussions of issues submitted to it by internal security, traffic, legal, and other Allied directorates. The similarity went as far as calling the inter-Allied commands in Berlin and Vienna the inter-Allied *Kommandantura.*

One important difference between the German and the Austrian occupations lay in Vienna. As in Berlin, the occupation divided Vienna into sectors under the control of each of the four powers, but Vienna’s inner city in the First District (*Bezirk*) formed an international zone jointly administered by the Allies in rotation. The international zone, Bader emphasized, was “much more than a symbol.” Postwar Austrian governing authorities “were physically located in an area where it was difficult for anyone power to apply direct pressures” and thus had “great freedom of action.”

The clearest public manifestation of this joint administration was the “Four Men in a Jeep [*Vier im Jeep*]” military police patrols shown in newsreels of the occupation and portrayed in *The Third Man.* With an American military policeman driving an American-supplied jeep (replaced actually relatively early in the occupation with Dodge automobiles), military policemen from each of the other three occupying powers patrolled the inner city of Vienna. Their positions in the patrol vehicle rotated in

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31 Ibid, 57.
32 Bader, 59.
accordance with the rotation of the chairmanship in Vienna’s inter-Allied Kommandantura, with the officer from the presiding power sitting next to the American driver.³³

Perhaps the greatest contrast between the occupation of Germany and the occupation of “liberated” Austria was the revision of Allied control occupation measures in the Second Control Agreement signed by the Allies on June 28, 1946. Under the agreement, the Allies retained control over matters such as war criminals, care of United Nations property, the disposal of “German assets” in Austria, prisoners of war, and travel into or out of Austria until Austrian controls were established.³⁴

Most noteworthy in this agreement, though, was the “reverse veto” (Bader) in Article 6(a). Henceforth the occupying Allied powers could only veto Austrian non-constitutional legislation unanimously, otherwise the measure would take effect within 31 days of receipt at the Allied Secretariat. Additionally, the Austrian government could conclude bilateral agreements with any occupying power subject only to notification of the other three. Soviet acceptance of this provision has often led to puzzlement. “To Westerners,” Bader remembered, “long familiar with the effective use the Soviet Union has made of its veto prerogatives—whether it be at the Security Council of the United Nations or on the German Control Commission—the very idea that the Russians would voluntarily give up such a powerful weapon is astounding.”³⁵

Ambassador Allard suggests that this decision, “surprising indeed,” occurred because the Soviets

³³ The “Four Men in a Jeep” play a prominent role in the tours in Vienna dedicated to The Third Man beginning in the Stadtpark every Monday and Friday. The tour guides note, for example, that the American officer shown driving (on a set) in the film is actually an Australian actor who did not know how to drive. See Der Dritte Mann (accessed December 6, 2006); available from www.derdrittemann.at.
³⁴ Hiscocks, 55.
³⁵ Bader, 65.
did not realize the full significance of the concession. Unfamiliar with Western legal terminology, they did not understand the difference between fundamental law and other legislation. And, in practice, they could always prevent the enforcement of unwelcome laws in their zone. When the Austrian government, for example, tried to nationalize certain so-called German assets in Austria which Soviet authorities had seized as reparations, the Soviet representative on the Allied Council asserted that the nationalization law was, in its nature, a fundamental law and, consequently, subject to Soviet veto. After the majority had rejected his claim, he finally declared that the law could not be applied in the Soviet zone.36

Austrian constitutional laws, in contrast, required unanimous consent from the four powers to take effect. Fritz Bock, who became the Austrian trade minister in the 1960s, remembered at a conference in 1980 how the Austrians could get around this obstacle. “I am not betraying any secret,” he stated, “when I say that during the time of the occupation there were laws in which one or the other paragraphs must have been properly declared a constitutional provision; one could think of, say, the agricultural laws.” The Nationalrat, however, simply “forgot” this and was thus able to achieve certain constitutional changes.37 Similarly, Austria joined the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) on April 16, 1948, with a mere administrative decision instead of legislation in the Nationalrat and thereby avoided the Control Agreement.38

The Second Control Agreement was not the only alleviation of the occupation regime in Austria. By 1947 all four occupying powers had extended diplomatic

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36 Allard, 100-101.
recognition to the Austrian government. By 1950, the three Western governments had
substituted diplomats for military commanders as high commissioners.\textsuperscript{39}

Even during the Berlin blockade the occupation of Austria remained distinct from
the occupation of Germany. Bischof recalled that during “their first partial blockade
around Berlin in April 1948” the Soviets “also tested Western resolve and restricted road
and rail access to Vienna,” surrounded, like Berlin, by a Soviet zone of occupation.
Western Allied Council protests, though, quickly ended this “cat-and-mouse” game and
Vienna remained undisturbed during the comprehensive Berlin blockade begun in June.\textsuperscript{40}
Rauchensteiner confirmed that there was “no crisis in the Allied Council” during this
time and that the Soviet occupation commander General Vladimir Kurasov invited his
American colleague, Lieutenant General Geoffrey Keyes, “to a consultation in which
both confirmed their intention to avoid tensions and incidents.”\textsuperscript{41}

The British diplomat Michael F. Cullis recalled during a 1980 scholarly
symposium in Vienna for the State Treaty’s 25\textsuperscript{th} anniversary that “at the height of the
Berlin crisis in 1948, there was never any serious attempt to interfere with traffic to, from
or within Vienna.” Cullis, who was responsible for Austrian affairs at the Foreign Office
from 1945 to 1950, noted that the Soviets during this time also indicated a desire in State
Treaty negotiations “to keep the Austrian situation fluid, distinct from the German one,
and to preserve the negotiations in being, even when hardly any progress was being made
at them.”\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{39} Hiscocks, 60.
\textsuperscript{40} Bischof, \textit{Austria in the First Cold War}, 117.
\textsuperscript{41} Rauchensteiner, \textit{Die Zwei}, 122.
\textsuperscript{42} Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung and the Institut für Zeitgeschichte der
American intelligence reports of February 1949, meanwhile, considered a Vienna blockade “unlikely.” Such a Soviet move “would imply denunciation of the Moscow Declaration” and “would open the USSR to more severe UN censure than did the Berlin blockade.” It would also lead to partition of Austria, something which was “economically” speaking “probably to the benefit of the West” and of “doubtful” interest to the Soviets (discussed in detail below). Reluctant to risk war over Vienna, the Kremlin could only hope to enhance “Soviet prestige among the Satellites” and to diminish “confidence among Western European nations in US protection with the possible consequent growth of unilateralism rather than cooperation in US defense plans.”

It was just as well that the Soviets never tried to blockade Vienna. In contrast to Berlin, airfields used by the Western Allies in Vienna were all outside the city limits in the Soviet occupation zone. To try to rectify this situation, the renowned World War II bomber commander, General Curtis LeMay, visited Keyes in Vienna shortly before becoming chief of the Strategic Air Command (SAC). LeMay and Keyes identified two suitable sites for emergency airstrips (one in the Simmering neighborhood along a canal with a 6,000-foot runway, another one in the Schönbrunn Palace Park, with a 3,600-foot runway) in the British sector of Vienna. The American Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) approved the stockpiling of 900,000 square feet of pierced steel-plank runway for these two airstrips in case of emergency. At the same time the Americans prepared lists including Figl, his cabinet, and other leading Austrians for emergency air evacuation to

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to the Western zones of Austria. “Unlike 1938,” wrote Bischof, “the continuity of Austrian
government was to be secured.”

During the summer of 1948, meanwhile, the Americans initiated the accumulation
of a 90-day emergency relief supply in Vienna in preparation for a partial blockade like
the one that had actually occurred in April. Codenamed *Squirrel Cage* and *Jackpot*, 21
facilities throughout the American sector of Vienna stored 64,000 tons of food supplies
designed to provide the Viennese 1,550 calories daily for 84 days. Warehouses in the
port of Trieste housed additional supplies for Vienna. Until the program’s abandonment
in 1953, periodical restocking of perishable goods among the supplies resulted in sales of
foodstuffs to the Austrian government (initially ignorant of the program due to American
security concerns), whence they made their way onto the open market. The program cost
about $20 million, two-thirds supplied by the American Military Assistance Program
(MAP) and one-third from diverted Marshall Plan funds. When the Western powers
appointed civilian high commissioners in the autumn of 1950, the State Department
assumed the financing.

Despite these efforts, Bischof related that “American planners realized that the US
could not maintain a presence in Vienna for long in case of a total blockade.” Nor would
the United States ultimately use force and thereby risk a general war to maintain access to
Vienna. “Only diplomacy,” Bischof concluded, “could resolve a total blockade of
Vienna.”

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Austria could thus count itself fortunate in comparison to Germany both with respect to a milder occupation and to the formation of representative government. Austria enjoyed such fortune in part because the Allies were far less willing to relinquish power in Germany, whose importance was much greater than Austria’s. In addition, Bader observed that “many of the most important events of Austria’s postwar history, i.e., the establishment of the Provisional Government, the elections of November 1945, and the Second Control Agreement…took place before the late summer of 1946—that is to say, before the general deterioration of East-West relations.”

Austria’s fortune gave it a relatively good chance of avoiding one of the greatest Austrian fears during the occupation: national partition along Cold War, zonal boundaries like that which finally occurred in Germany.

_Austria Faces the Occupation, I: The Danger of Division_

Bruno Kreisky wrote in a 1956 brochure that “a great danger hovered during the ten-year occupation over our country, and this danger filled everyone who felt responsible for our country’s destiny with dread: It was the phantom of division.” The publisher and former Austrian resistance member Fritz Molden thought in 1946 that there was “truly little hope” that eastern Austria could avoid the fate of Austria’s eastern neighbors given the Soviet desire to create a “cordon sanitaire” of Communist satellites.

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_Bader, 58._

Developments in the Soviet zone of Germany, later the German Democratic Republic (GDR), seemed to be a possible “example for later measures in eastern Austria.”

The Austrian journalist and writer Helmut Andics, meanwhile, related during the State Treaty 25th anniversary symposium that there were “clear tendencies” in the western provinces of Salzburg and Tyrol as the occupation went on that they had “more or less resigned themselves to a division of Austria—at least de facto.” People like Andics, based in Vienna during the occupation, going into western Austria from the eastern provinces were “sort of written off.” One incident in 1953 in particular gave Andics a feeling of “fear and horror.” A German-speaking American from New York with a tourist group in Innsbruck professed his assumption to Andics that Austria had already been divided like Germany and had a Communist government in eastern Austria.

The July 20, 1954, Geneva settlement for Vietnam “evoked very mixed reactions in Austria,” according to the scholar Audrey Kurth Cronin. Although this armistice in the Vietnam conflict signaled a “slight relaxation” of East-West tensions, Austrian officials worried that the division of Indo-China at the 17th parallel would set a precedent for Austria. Austrian vice-chancellor Adolf Schärf curtly responded to the announcement of the Geneva accords that any partition solution of the Austrian question would risk a new war.

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50 25 Jahre Staatsvertrag, 70-71.
Although the prospect of partition was daunting enough, many Austrians questioned whether Austria could survive division in the long run. Appearing again on the pages of *Foreign Affairs*, Foreign Minister Karl Gruber in 1948 wrote that the greater part of Austria’s economic assets are to be found in her eastern regions. Indeed, it is not too much of an exaggeration to say, in the current Viennese witticism, that the Russians have Austria’s industry and the western Powers have the scenery. In the case of Germany, division into zones is a misfortune but not fatal injury. The center of the German economy lies in the Ruhr; German cultural life is focused in the west; and the great majority of Germans have their homes there. The present truncated body of western Germany could at least exist. But in Austria the cow is, so to speak, standing the other way round: the economic and cultural centers of Austria lie in the eastern part of the country.52

Writing later in 1988, Gruber declared that without the “industrially highly developed ‘workshop’” of eastern Austria, Vienna would have become the “tourist resort of Germany.”53 “Without Vienna, Lower Austria, and parts of Upper Austria [i.e. the Soviet zone],” concurred the Austrian historian Michael Gehler in 2002, “the country would probably have not been viable, Bonn, however, could have gotten by without Berlin, Brandenburg, Saxony, etc.”54

Gruber questioned in 1948 whether an Austrian nation could live on in its non-Communist areas following partition. Austria, he wrote, “is not so much the home of a distinct race as it is an individual entity molded by the past thousand years. The soul of Austria is in her tradition and way of life. Such a country cannot be chopped into pieces and survive.”55 The “essence of Austria,” Gruber added in 1975, was

55 Gruber, “Austria Holds On,” 480.
really much less an ethnically clearly circumscribed nation than an entity comprised from a cosmopolitan tradition which could not have survived for very long the separation from its international function. Even after a hundred years the parts of Germany would still form a nation, in Austria the regions with different historical experiences could have very easily become appendages of the neighboring groups.\textsuperscript{56}

Cronin confirmed that

Western analysts believed that Austria, unlike Germany a culturally fragmented nation, would never survive partition. A truncated eastern Austria would quickly be swallowed into the Soviet system and be a continual fount of unrest and refugees to the West. Western Austria would probably dissolve under the strains of provincialism, with the central provinces drawn toward Germany, Vorarlberg toward Switzerland, and Carinthia toward Yugoslavia. The result would be dangerous instability on the continent and a possible rebirth of the kinds of tensions that had already helped bring about two major wars.\textsuperscript{57}

Any division, of course, would have consigned the Soviet zone in Austria to a future of Communist oppression. Even under the occupation, Soviet totalitarianism was already making itself felt. On December 6, 1949, for example, Chancellor Figl sent the Allied Council a memorandum listing 11 murders and robberies recently committed by men in Soviet uniform and requested police powers for the Austrian police with respect to the Soviet military. Although the Western powers had already granted this authority, the Soviets refused.\textsuperscript{58}

Along with acts of violence on the part of Soviet soldiers, individuals suspect in the eyes of the Soviets faced arrest and even deportation to the Soviet Union with perhaps no return. “A summons to the Kommandantur,” remembered the Austrian journalist Karl Heinz Ritschel, “meant a fearful shivering over whether the person in question

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{56} Karl Gruber, “Österreich 1945,” \textit{Zeitgeschichte} 2, nos. 7-8 (October 1974-September 1975): 171.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{57} Cronin, 155.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{58} Karl Heinz Ritschel, \textit{Österreich ist frei!: Der Weg zum Staatsvertrag 1945 bis 1955} (Vienna: Buch- und Kunstverlag, 1980), 11.}
\end{footnotes}
would come home.” Rail passengers crossing the Soviet zonal boundary “became
deadly still, when the train stopped at the control point.” Controlling Soviet soldiers
issuing “harsh words” such as “Du mitkommen” portended an “uncertain fate.”

Gehler accordingly noted the paramount importance of national unity among
Austrian leaders as opposed to the willingness in West Germany to accept national
partition in the name of transatlantic integration. “Even Gruber,” wrote Gehler, “often
characterized as unequivocally pro-American and a ‘Cold-Warrior,’ did not give
unconditional support to an Adenauer-style policy of Western integration at the expense
of national unity.”

Fortunately for the Austrians, the four occupying powers did not show much
interest in partition, either. “Given Stalin’s aversion to withdrawing from any Soviet-
conquered territory,” wrote Cronin, “partition may have seemed a logical outcome in
terms of Soviet interests.” Yet as a rump Austrian state the Soviet zone, already
dependent upon western Austrian power plants built with American aid for electricity,
could have obtained electrical power and, in addition, raw materials only from the
“overburdened economies of the Soviet satellites.” While noting the Soviet disinterest
in Austrian partition at a diplomatic level, Austrian-born Stanford University professor
Kurt Steiner concluded that an East Austria “would have been economically even less
viable than was the whole of Austria during the interwar years.”

59 Ibid.
60 Michael Gehler, “Austria and European Integration, 1947-60: Western Orientation, Neutrality
61 Cronin, 112.
62 Kurt Steiner, “Negotiations for an Austrian State Treaty,” in U.S.-Soviet Security Cooperation:
Achievements, Failures, Lessons, eds. Alexander Dallin, Philip J. Farley, and Alexander L. George
Speaking at the State Treaty 25th anniversary symposium, the American historian William Lloyd Stearman recalled in 1980 that during his 1955 posting at the American embassy in Vienna most embassy personnel feared an Austrian partition because of Soviet public statements in March 1955. “The Soviet Union,” he argued, “was conducting a campaign that appeared to us to be leading up to partition.”63 Writing in 1962, though, Stearman recognized not only that an East Austrian state “would have been more of an economic liability than an asset to the Soviets,” but that it would have also only contained 27% of Austria’s 7,000,000 anti-Communist inhabitants (35% including the Soviet sector of Vienna).64 Thus Bader concluded that “Eastern Austria was never more than a territorial enclave” incapable of being “organized into an economic and political entity.”65 The Soviet zone in Germany, by contrast, contained 18 million people in addition to its significant industrial resources.66

Austrian scholars such as Gerald Stourzh also found it difficult to “perceive any national interest on the part of the Soviet Union purposely striving for Austrian partition.” Although a crisis such as the Berlin blockade “originating outside Austria might get out of hand and impose partition,” in any partition “the larger part of Austria would inevitably have been driven to a closer relationship (under American auspices) with West Germany, and a new edition of ‘Anschluß’ was certainly what Soviet policy wanted to

63 25 Jahre Staatsvertrag, 106. Stearman added that “the only person I knew in the American Embassy at that time that did not share this fear was my colleague Alfred Puhan, whom you all heard yesterday, who incidentally was one of my ‘Vorgesetzter’ when I was there at the Embassy. I don’t know any other officer at the Embassy who did not fear partition.” Puhan, in contrast, recollected at the conference that “to most of us in the Embassy it appeared unlikely that such a division would take place, for very little would have been gained by those undertaking such a process.” See: 25 Jahre Staatsvertrag, 36.


65 Bader, 208.

avoid.” Concurrently, observed Molden, “the remaining free part of Austria could have done nothing else but join NATO” with a resulting “deterioration of the strategic situation for the Soviets.”

Yet the Soviets, according to Austrian historian Reinhard Meier-Walser, wanted to avoid “the development of a new NATO state united in West Germany-West Austria” at “almost any price.” Austria, observed Rauchensteiner, had “a function similar to East Germany. Both served the containment of the West German zones.” Soviet interests would “hardly have been served” in a partition, because Austria would have lost its “character as the antipode of West Germany.”

Strategists such as the French general Marie-Emile Béthouart, one-time commander of French occupation troops in Austria, noted the importance of the Austrian real estate accruing to the any Western military alliance such as NATO in partition. NATO would have received the “entire alpine massif” and could have turned it into an “inextinguishable citadel.” The Soviets knew, observed Béthouart in 1966, that in conventional warfare “whoever controlled the Austrian Alps controlled Europe.”

Béthouart was not alone in his views. The Soviet deputy high commissioner Semyon Kudriavzev expressed as much to Ambassador Allard at a cocktail party in December 1954. Asked by Allard why the “Soviets not earlier dropped the iron curtain along the demarcation line at the river Enns,” Kudriavzez cited the fear of an “an

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68 Molden, 167.
immediate reaction by the United States followed by the development of fortified bases in Salzburg and the Tyrol.”

An earlier analysis of the Joint Strategic Plans Committee in the American Department of Defense from October 1953, meanwhile, discussed the importance of western Austria in threatening any Soviet advance along the “Munich plain.”

An anonymous August 1958 article in the Austrian Catholic publication Die Furche later publicly presented such analysis. Rauchensteiner also affirmed, moreover, that the American National Security Council (NSC) did indeed seriously consider including western Austria in any Western alliance in case of partition.

Soviet partition of Austria would not only have been disadvantageous but difficult. Writing for the State Department, Hans J. Morgenthau confirmed on October 1, 1951, that both the international zone in Vienna and the existence of a cohesive Austrian national government prohibited any clean division of Austria.

All in all, Foreign Minister Gruber dismissed the possibility of imposed partition, however much he feared it. In a radio address on February 2, 1952, Gruber claimed to have “always opposed the nonsensical rumor” that “the famous Iron Curtain would one day rattle down on the Enns.” The “minor advantages” resulting from partition for the Soviets “could really not outweigh the enormous disadvantages in an economic and a political-military sense, to say nothing of the reaction that such an unheard of provocation

73 Joint Strategic Plans Committee Directive: U.S. Objectives and Policies with Respect to Austria, October 21, 1953; Folder CSS 388.1 Austria (6-8-46), Sec. 12; Box 11; Geographic File, 1951-1953; Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218; NA.
74 “Neutralität und Weltstrategie: Die Rolle der beiden Alpenstaaten zwischen den Machtblöcken (Teil II),” Die (österreichische) Furche, August 16, 1958, 4-5.
75 Rauchensteiner, Der Sonderfall, 244-245.
76 United States Policies in Austria: A Report Prepared by Professor Hans J. Morgenthau at the Request of the Department of State; Box 2836; 1950-1954 Decimal File from 611.62B/4-1652 to 611.631/1-2550; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
would have to unleash in world opinion and the shortly following total mobilization of the free world.”

Recently released Soviet documents such as the protocol of a conversation between Secretary General Friedl Fürnberg and Chairman Johann Koplenig of the KPÖ and the foreign policy director of the Soviet Communist party, Andrei A. Ždanov on February 13, 1948, sustain Gruber’s hunch in hindsight. Against the advocacy of division on the part of the Austrian Communists, Ždanov listed the abandonment of western Austria to the Western powers and the dependency upon Soviet support of a Communist state half the size of an administrative district in the USSR.

The Austrian historian Oliver Rathkolb confirmed in 1998 that “a division of the country or an occupation ad infinitum seems—so far as the presently released documents show—never to have been considered.” Rathkolb rather saw Soviet disinterest in partition conforming to Austria’s designation as early as 1944 “as the periphery of the Soviet zone of interest and influence such that already at this time neutralization appeared desirable.” Given this disinterest, Bischof agreed that “Soviet postwar planners never intended to incorporate Austria in Russia’s postwar security sphere.” Indeed, Bischof found it “striking” that “Soviet postwar planning” parallel to American and French thinking “produced the notion of a future independent Austria that would be neutral.”

Reviewing Soviet planning during World War II for a postwar Austria, the Austrian historian Wilfried Aichinger explained that Austria, in contrast to other

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80 Bischof, Austria in the First Cold War, 26. Emphasis in the original.
countries subjugated by the Communists, had “no common border with the Soviet Union” and “did not possess the strategic importance of, for example, the later Soviet occupation zone in Germany.” Significantly, Austria did not even appear in the “percentage bargaining” over postwar influence in occupied Europe that occurred in the well-known October 1944 meeting between British prime minister Winston Churchill and Soviet dictator Josef Stalin. According to Aichinger, “Moscow saw Austria as a political buffer that without abandonment of strategic positions could serve as proof that arrangements between West and East were to be found.” Rather than aggressively partitioning Austria, the Soviet Union hoped through the presentation of Austria as an area of common responsibility of the Allies to give an example of a Soviet Union ready to make concessions and compromises in order to thereby weaken the increasing criticism in the West of Soviet behavior in Poland, Rumania, and other areas occupied by the Red Army.81 Like the Soviet Union, the Western powers also did not favor partition.82 The British diplomat Cullis declared in 1980 that whatever fears and misgivings may understandably have existed in Austria itself on the subject, I can say with absolute assurance that the prime aim of British post-war policy towards Austria, from top to bottom, was to maintain the integrity of the country, which was even more important to us than getting a treaty and the end of the occupation. [Foreign Minister Ernest] Bevin felt very strongly about that, and so indeed did the rest of us. Nor do I think that American or French policy was materially different on that issue.83

82 Cronin, 104.
83 25 Jahre Staatsvertrag, 74.
Both the British and the French shared concerns similar to the Soviets about a growth in German power resulting from an Austrian breakup.\textsuperscript{84} For this reason, noted Gehler, “France, the weakest of occupying powers,” did not object to Austrian neutralization, objections from some French officers aside, and “French diplomacy considered Soviet security interests more seriously with respect to Austria than the British Foreign Office and the State Department did.”\textsuperscript{85} François Seydoux, French ambassador to Austria in 1955, stated at the State Treaty symposium in 1980 that the position of succeeding French governments “had been perfectly clear and perfectly simple. We considered that it was necessary to safeguard the unity of Austria as far as possible. We were completely hostile to the idea of a dismemberment of this country.”\textsuperscript{86}

The Western Allies also did not want to lose the socioeconomic potential of Austria, particularly its capital, Vienna. At a Woodrow Wilson Center conference, Ambassador Hans Thalberg considered that a western Austria in NATO would have benefited alliance north-south communications between Germany and Italy. “But can anybody doubt,” Thalberg questioned, “that the loss of Vienna, with its industry and trade—not to mention its symbolic value in Eastern Europe—would have been an enormous loss to the West?”\textsuperscript{87} Lastly, the Western Allies could not ignore the overwhelming desire of the Austrian people for a free, united nation. Any noticeable Western stalling in the pursuit of the goal publicly announced in the Moscow Declaration


\textsuperscript{86} 25 Jahre Staatsvertrag, 79-80.

would have weakened the pro-Western sentiments among the Austrians and in public opinion worldwide.\textsuperscript{88}

Assessing quadripartite occupation in Austria, Rauchensteiner concluded that the Cold War “in Austria remained platonic.” There was “all possible planning” for the contingency of Austrian partition, including Austrian plans to establish a new, more conservative government in Salzburg and French opinion surveys asking the inhabitants of Tyrol whether they would rather join Bavaria or Italy, but all this remained speculation. Although some “hunted and still hunt after the shadow” of East-West confrontation in occupied Austria, there was “simply no crises in Allied relations.” Rauchensteiner considers it “wrong to equate nervousness in a country, around which the Cold War was waged, with the Cold War.” Even as “war was talked and written about in London, Paris, Washington, and Moscow,” the Soviet high commissioner in Vienna proposed in the Allied Council prohibiting the Allied press from dealing with war dangers. This was merely one of several “small indications” that no one, “particularly the Soviets,” wanted a rupture in Austria.\textsuperscript{89}

The Allies’ behavior in Austria, analyzed Rauchensteiner, “differed so strongly from the classical theaters of war of the Cold War, that it is probably not permissible to term Austria as a theater of this conflict,” not even as a “sideshow.” In Austria, the Grand Coalition’s “political landscape” reflected itself in the “East-West relationship.” Austria was “most comparable with that house at Panmunjon on the 38\textsuperscript{th} parallel where East and West and above all both Koreas since 1953 negotiate: a house which has a front

\textsuperscript{88} Steiner, 73.
\textsuperscript{89} Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 123-124.
on every side, in which hard words are spoken and yet meetings and negotiations still take place.”

Austria Faces the Occupation, II: The Danger of Subversion

As the Cold War heated up (or entered a deep freeze, depending on the metaphor) Austrians became increasingly concerned about a Communist takeover. Even if Western occupation troops prevented an outright Soviet invasion, there still existed the possibility of Communist subversion. Already on March 29, 1946, Karl Gruber warned in an address to ÖVP officials that given the increasing Communist subjugation of Austria’s neighbors they should prepare themselves for “surprises.” Recalling the imprisonment of Austrian Socialists under both the Dollfuß and Nazi regimes, a high-ranking Socialist leader had mused to Gruber whether he would have to lead his party “for yet a third time into the concentration camp.”

Vienna experienced a foretaste of this danger following the harsh winter of 1946-1947, during which shortages of food, electricity, and heating fuel compounded the misery in a time of deprivation. UN food shipments ended in May 1947 and Marshall Plan aid did not begin arriving until the next year, although Austria did receive two installments of American relief aid before then. Capitalizing on this bitter mood and Austrian disappointment over the failure of the recently concluded Moscow Foreign Ministers Conference, Austrian Communists on May 5, 1947, staged a food riot with about 5,000 demonstrators besieging the Chancellery near the Hofburg in downtown Vienna. The rioters forced Chancellor Figl to receive a delegation led by the Communist

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90 Ibid, 124.
91 Gehler, Karl Gruber: Reden und Dokumente, 116.
vice-president of the Austrian Trade Union Federation (Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund or ÖGB).\textsuperscript{92}

This was a tense situation for the Austrian government. Everyone in Vienna knew that Communist infiltration and Allied Council decisions limiting armament made the police basically ineffective. Particularly disturbing were the Soviet officers, including the assistant to the Soviet occupation troops commander, who observed the demonstration to the crowd’s cheers. The crowd, meanwhile, threatened at one time to take the Chancellery by force. Although the government counted on Socialist trade union leaders to oppose Communist actions such as a general strike, Cronin wrote that “for several anxious hours it was unclear whether the demonstrators might overthrow the government.”\textsuperscript{93}

The Austrian government appealed to the Allied Council in its desperation for help. This apparently compelled the Soviet Union, unwilling to risk a possibly military confrontation with the Western powers, to “abort the putsch,” according to Cronin. Austrian officials later reported to the British that a Soviet officer spoke to demonstration leaders after the Austrian plea for help to the Allied Council. Before the council even met the crowd was already dispersing. Cronin observed that “it has never been proved that the Soviet government had a direct hand in inciting the rioters, but Soviet leaders certainly encouraged and supported them.” The historical evidence also does not conclusively answer “just how serious a threat the uprising posed to the Austrian government.”\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{92} Cronin, 51.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid, 51-52.
Similarly disputed is a detailed 40-page plan for a Communist takeover of Vienna, dated November 15, 1948, which came into the hands of French military intelligence. Involving 17,000 activists, the plan covered the seizure of public buildings such as banks and telephone exchanges and the arrests of individual leaders such as Figl and Schärf. Bischof has termed this “elaborate putsch scenario…unrealistic in the sense that it grossly exaggerated Communist strength in Austria, expecting resistance from the Socialists but none from the Western powers.” Bischof, though, has not assumed that this plan is a fake.

Bischof’s Austrian colleagues Oliver Rathkolb and Christian Stifter, in contrast, were more skeptical. Rathkolb noted the reference in the plan’s letterhead to a Viennese provincial Communist party office even though Vienna at the time had only a city party office. Stifter, meanwhile, questioned the “hardly conspiratorial” nature of this document with its detailed listing of names, including academic titles, and party numbers.

Given the correlation of forces in Austria, though, Austrian fears were not invented. The Soviets had namely established factory militias (Werkschutz) in the firms claimed by them as “German assets” and operated under the USIA conglomerate in the Soviet zone. Founded in the spring of 1946 and quickly expanded in 1948, this “work
security” organization had in its arsenal rifles, pistols, and light machine guns. The Werkschutz also possessed trucks for transport and its members received paramilitary training. Their actual numbers of 1,500 to 2,000 were well below the exaggerated fears of 12,000, but were nonetheless quite sufficient to brush aside the effectively disarmed Austrian police, particularly if an occupying power, such as the Soviets were wont to do, hindered police movement and functions. It was thus understandable that Austrian leaders such as Vice-Chancellor Adolf Schärf viewed 200 men as sufficient to seize the governmental district.100

The coup d’état in neighboring Czechoslovakia during the latter part of February 1948 did nothing to alleviate Austrian fears. The Soviet Vienna daily Österreichische Zeitung hailed the Prague putsch in its headlines on February 26, 1948, as “ein großer Sieg der Demokratie.”101 Hiscocks recalled that the KPÖ’s slogan “It is only 60 kilometers to the People’s Democracies” acquired in light of such events “a new and sinister meaning.”102

Stearman recalled that Austrian leaders hastened to preclude any subsequent “great victory of democracy” in Austria. “Increasing differences between the coalition parties,” he wrote, “especially on wage-price policies, were quickly buried or suspended, and the coalition became stronger than ever.” Despite Communist and even Soviet opposition, the Nationalrat passed two bills providing for substitutes in case the federal and the three Nationalrat presidents were “hindered” in their mandates. The Socialist-dominated ÖGB prevented Communist formation of worker’s “action committees” like

100 Rauchensteiner, Der Sonderfall, 228-229. USIA stood in Russian for Uprawlenje Sowjetskim Imuschestwom w Awstriy, or Administration of Soviet Property in Austria. For more information on USIA, see: USIA (accessed March 24, 2007); available from http://aeiou.icm.tugraz.at/aeiou.encyclo.p/a974842.htm.  
101 Stearman, 114.  
102 Hiscocks, 225.
those used in the Czech coup and quelled strikes and work stoppages owing partly to Communist exploitation of impoverishing price-wage disparities.\footnote{Stearman, 114.} Abroad, meanwhile, the Austrians prepared to finance an exile government and the ÖGB shifted funds to the US.\footnote{Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 118.}

The closest Austria ever came to Czech-style coup was in the fall of 1950 when Marshall Aid cutbacks forced the Austrian government to increase food, coal, and electricity prices approximately 30% while wages rose only some 13%. “This reduction in the standard of living,” wrote Cronin, came “without warning and without any preparation of Austrian public opinion.”\footnote{Cronin, 108.} The Communists responded with a call for a general strike demanding the repeal of this fourth in a series of Austrian wage-price agreements.\footnote{Reinhard Meier-Walser, Der Streikputsch der KP Österreichs und seine internationalen Hintergründe: Die kommunistischen Streikaktionen vom September/Oktober 1950 im besetzten Österreich vor dem Hintergrund der sowjetischen Machtexpansion in Osteuropa nach dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges, Tuduv-Studie Politikwissenschaften series (Munich: Tuduv Verlag, 1986), 166.}

The Communist protests began on September 26, 1950, with 6,000 Communist-led demonstrators overwhelming police equipped with fire hoses in downtown Vienna and marching on the Chancellery. There the protestors stoned 400 police guards while Figl pled for American assistance. The Americans responded with an alert of their troops in Vienna and called an Allied Council meeting, but the Soviets did not attend. Following the meeting, British and French troops in Vienna also went on alert but Western troops took no further action. While Figl called for Western assistance three

\footnote{Stearman, 114.}  
\footnote{Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 118.}  
\footnote{Cronin, 108.}  
more times, Interior Minister Helmer assured Figl that the Austrian police could control the situation. After a few hours the Communists called off the demonstration.\(^{107}\)

In an ultimatum to the Austrian government on September 27, Communist shop stewards threatened a general strike if the fourth wage-price agreement remained. Major factories in several cities were already striking. Calls by the government and Socialist leaders to resist strikes, though, brought many back to work the next day.\(^{108}\)

Communist shop stewards finally declared a general strike on October 4, 1950. Scattered local strikes broke out across Austria, being particularly serious in Vienna and the Soviet zone of Austria. Workers from USIA factories in the Soviet zone rode trucks to non-striking factories and pressured employees there to lay down their work. For several days once again, some Austrian officials feared that Austrian police could not control the situation and the Western powers, aside from public declarations of support, hesitated to intervene. By October 6, however, the strike had ended without outside intervention and order returned.\(^{109}\)

Given that the United States and its allies were involved in the Korean War at this time, it is understandable that the Western powers wanted to avoid any greater involvement in Austria. Bader remembered that “the United States was at this moment engaged in the most uncertain stage of the Korean War, with the fate of the Pusan perimeter still in doubt.”\(^{110}\)

Although American troops in Vienna practiced street fighting and prepared signs reading “Halt! Fire will be opened! \([\text{Halt! Es wird geschossen!}]\),” General Keyes

\(^{107}\) Cronin, 108-109.  
\(^{108}\) Ibid.  
\(^{109}\) Ibid, 109-111.  
\(^{110}\) Bader, 166.
expressed to Austrian leaders an American desire to stay out of Austrian unrest. Speaking with Figl, Schärf, and Helmer on September 29, 1950, the American high commissioner recommended that the Austrians utilize all governmental and non-governmental resources in order to mobilize the populace in the name of public order. Keyes, though, considered the use of Western troops to be a last resort and a measure likely to entail Soviet intervention as well. Additionally, Keyes in his conversations with Austrian officials warned that the American troops’ small numbers could very well force them to rely on their weapons, thus provoking bloodshed. Although Bischof conceded that the Western powers would not have abandoned the Austrian government in a crisis, American documents do not say and circumstances never showed “where exactly the line was drawn between intervention in favor of the Viennese government and retreat in case of danger of an international escalation.”

The Soviets, for their part, gave some support to the Communist strike movement, but by and large joined the Western powers in abstaining from, and even restraining, the unrest. The Soviet military commander in Vienna, Colonel Pankratow, for example, prohibited on September 25, 1950, all police in the city districts of the Soviet sector to leave the sector without Soviet permission, thus hindering the movement of large reserves of Austrian police. The next day a Soviet tank blocked a Vienna access road and a Soviet officer appeared among the demonstrators before the Chancellery on the Ballhausplatz.

111 Rauchensteiner, Der Sonderfall, 295-296.
112 Cronin, 109-110.
113 Bischof, “Austria looks to the West,” 193.
114 Cronin, 110.
115 Bischof, “Austria looks to the West,” 192.
Again on October 3, Soviet commanders in Lower Austria ordered Austrian police to stay off the streets the next day and thwarted Minister Helmer’s transfer of police from the central gendarmerie school in Mödling to Vienna.\textsuperscript{116} Rumors of Soviet tanks moving toward Vienna, low-flying Soviet aircraft approaching the border, and Czech troops concentrating there circulated during the unrest. Although the KPÖ was weak, Cronin noted that the Romanian Communists had been even weaker when the Soviets placed them in power.\textsuperscript{117}

Soviet support remained limited for the strikers, though. Wild rumors of invasion aside, most Soviet troops remained concentrated during this period at the maneuver grounds of Allentsteig-Dollarsheim for fall exercises, with only normal garrison duties occurring in Vienna. According to Rauchensteiner, Soviet high commissioner General Vladimir Sviridov remained almost “demonstratively” away from Austria during the critical period while being represented in the Allied Council by his deputy, General Zinev.\textsuperscript{118}

Indeed, the Soviets even urged Austrian Communists to break off the strike. That strikes occurred again on October 4 was probably due to a KPÖ desire to save face.\textsuperscript{119} Rathkolb has suggested that Soviet opposition to the strikes stemmed from production losses at USIA firms.\textsuperscript{120} In the words of Rauchensteiner, the “great strike,” the “putsch,” the “assault on Austria” failed “not in spite of the Russians having supported it, but rather

\textsuperscript{116} Bader, 177.
\textsuperscript{117} Cronin, 110.
\textsuperscript{118} Rauchensteiner, \textit{Der Sonderfall}, 297.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid, 295.
\textsuperscript{120} Oliver Rathkolb, interview by author in Rathkolb’s office at the \textit{Demokratiezentrum Wien} on August 3, 2005.
because the Russians had not supported it, because the Soviet Union just as much as the West was not interested in allowing a new source of conflict to develop.”

Absent Soviet support, the Austrian Communists achieved nothing better than a desultory strike. “The extent of the failure,” observed Stearman, “can best be illustrated by the number who actually heeded the Communist strike call.” From September 26 to September 30, 120,000 employees engaged in various strikes, including the USIA’s 40,000 workers. In the “general strike” from October 4 to October 5, 35,000 (mostly USIA) workers stopped or had to stop their work. By contrast, trade union members alone in 1950 numbered over a million, not counting large numbers of unorganized laborers.

Anticommunist Austrian workers, meanwhile, took matters into their own hands and literally helped the beleaguered Austrian police beat back attempts to combine strikes with violent upheaval. The chairman of the Austrian woodworkers and builders union (Gewerkschaft Bau-Holz), Franz Olah, led gangs of workers armed with clubs through Vienna in order to stop Communist factory closures and public works seizures. Interior Minister Helmer later praised the efforts of Olah and others as a “living dam formed at that time by the workers and employees, the people and the executive” that rescued Austria from communism.

The very title of Helmer’s journal article, “Als Österreichs Kommunisten putschten,” raises a long-standing debate concerning the goals and therefore the

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121 Rauchensteiner, Der Sonderfall, 297. Emphasis in the original.
122 Stearman, 126.
123 For Olah’s description of his activities during the fall of 1950, see: Olah, 131-141.
importance of Communist actions in the fall of 1950. Not only Helmer but also other observers such as Cronin have cited *expressis verbis* the thesis of a putsch at least somewhat analogous to the 1948 Czechoslovakian coup.\(^{125}\) Stearman and others have been quick to note, though, that “although the Communist disturbances of September and October 1950 were frequently described as a ‘Putsch attempt,’ the inciters of these disorders knew full well that the presence of the Western Occupation Powers made it impossible directly to overthrow the Government.” Stearman saw the upheaval in the fall of 1950 as “an ill-conceived gamble” hazarded by a “normally impotent party” to “seize control of the trade unions” as an “instrument” for creating a “People’s Democracy.”\(^{126}\)

Yet Kreisky expressed on the pages of *Foreign Affairs* in 1959 the belief that the Communist “aim” was “to turn eastern Austria into a ‘popular democracy’ oriented toward East Germany.” The Communists in Kreisky’s eyes sought through “wildcat strikes,” disruption of “key industries,” and clashes with police to launch a “determined frontal assault against the security organs of the state.” The Soviets then would have “the obligation under the quadripartite occupation statute to restore order” and national partition could take place.\(^{127}\)

Olah, who rejected the tendency of some “contemporary historians” to “minimize” in “the terminology of the Communists” the events of the fall of 1950 by calling them a “mass strike” instead of a “putsch attempt,” held views similar to Kreisky’s. Although the Communists could not take over the Western zones of occupation, Olah felt that the KPÖ wanted to win influence in the unions and the government through subversion. The resulting Communist-influenced government in

\(^{125}\) E. g. Cronin, 111.
\(^{126}\) Stearman, 125, 225.
\(^{127}\) Kreisky, “Austria Draws the Balance,” 271.
Austria would not enjoy the support of the Western powers. “The process of ripping Austria into two parts would have begun,” Olah concluded. “We would have received a State Treaty only forty years later.”

Austrian scholar Meier-Walser also uses the terms “putsch” and “seizure of power” in his writings. The KPÖ, Meier-Walser has written, wanted a “fundamental change of the economic and political circumstances” in order to turn Austria into a “people’s democracy [Volksdemokratie].” Similar to Olah, Meier-Walser has argued that a successful strike would have “inflicted on the government a perceptible loss of prestige that under the circumstances would have had as a consequence the entrance of one or more Communists into the federal cabinet of Chancellor Leopold Figl.” A State Treaty and troop withdrawal “would have been under the circumstances, however, from the point of view of the interests of the three [Western] powers beyond discussion.”

Meier-Walser’s views, though, present the KPÖ as divided over the question of Austrian partition, even as the Soviets opposed it. While some Austrian Communists were not ready to go beyond “pure demonstrations,” others argued for “radical measures.” They hoped that “acts of violence and sabotage” would provoke a Soviet intervention, thereby giving birth to a “Volksdemokratie Ost-Österreich.”

Other Austrians who have studied these events, by contrast, tend to minimize their importance. After having left the KPÖ in protest of the Soviet suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968, Ernst Fischer dismissed in his 1973 memoirs a “putsch attempt in a fourfold occupied country” as an “absurd adventure.” Even if the KPÖ had wanted to

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128 Olah, 142.
129 Both works by Meier-Walser cited in footnotes 68 and 105 refer to “putsch” and “Machtergreifung” in their titles.
131 Ibid, 104
risk a coup in 1950, Fischer noted that the “essence of a putsch is surprise.” Indecision and hesitancy, in contrast, marked the on-and-off strike actions in September and October of 1950. “Wonderful Putchisten they are,” scoffed Fischer, who instigate a putsch with pauses, a putsch in installments, who wait for days, then present a delayed ultimatum, then wait once again, in order to finally throw the remains of a broken strike into a lost battle! The putsch was an invention of anticommunist politicians, for whom it was convenient to make believable a non-existent “Communist threat” in Austria.132

Michael Gehler’s research supports Fischer. “The representatives of the Western powers,” observed Gehler, “considered the strike movement in Upper and Lower Austria and in Vienna to be not a putsch and a thereby resulting endangerment of inner security but rather ‘disturbances.’”133 In the “Anglo-American literature—most recently by Audrey Kurth Cronin,” agreed Gehler’s peer, Rathkolb, “misestimates of Soviet intentions with respect to Austria in the 1950s are again and again made” while American President Harry Truman and State Department officials in the 1950s had a far more sober view of Austrian affairs. Concerning the fall 1950 agitation in particular, Secretary of State Dean Acheson referred to “Recent Communist Riots” in a briefing paper for Truman and explained that the Americans would only intervene if Austrian security forces could not keep the situation under control. “There was no ‘Communist putsch attempt’ in 1950 in Austria,” concluded Rathkolb.134 In his view the strikes were merely

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133 Gehler, Karl Gruber: Reden und Dokumente, 24.
a KPÖ attempt to gain support by riding a wave of popular discontent but were “completely without plan” and went “completely out of control.”

The late secretary general of the KPÖ, Friedl Fürnberg, clearly expressed to Rauchensteiner that the Austrian Communists in the 1950s did strive for “a radical change in the economic and also political circumstances.” Nonetheless, Rauchensteiner concluded that “it is hard to say whether the Communist actions really presented a serious danger or not. Many strike bystanders never perceived the situation as threatening.”

Whatever their danger, the strikes had lasting political effects. Olah recalled that the “memory of this will for defense” demonstrated in the fall of 1950, “this feeling, that Austria could not be swallowed by the Communists at the first opportunity,” was later “important when it was a matter of convincing our friends in the West to support the State Treaty because Austria was ready and capable of defending itself.” Rathkolb, meanwhile, rated the role of Olah and his club-wielding, street-fighting union members in suppressing the Austrian Communists in 1950 as “somewhat exaggerated.” The actions of these SPÖ workers, though, formed the “capstone” in Socialist efforts to establish the SPÖ as a democratic party and disassociate it from its Marxist relative, the KPÖ.

Remarkably, Austrians in the early years of four-power occupation had established a stable democracy and had shown in 1950 that the Second Republic could survive division and/or subversion absent a foreign intervention disadvantageous to the occupying powers themselves. What Austrians needed now was an end to occupation and a determination of independent Austria’s international status.

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135 Oliver Rathkolb, interview by author in Rathkolb’s office at the Demokratiezentrum Wien on August 3, 2005.
136 Rauchensteiner, Der Sonderfall, 295, 299.
137 Olah, 143.
138 Rathkolb interview.
Neutrality for Austria: A Second Switzerland?

Writing in 1953, the British diplomat Richard Hiscocks felt that “the role Austria is best suited to play in Europe is that of a cultural Switzerland. Like Switzerland, Austria is a country of great natural beauty, ideally fitted to be a tourist centre.” Because Austria was not very powerful and did not have any natural resources to entice foreign invaders, Hiscocks believed that, analogous to Switzerland, Austria’s “interests and characteristics mark her out for a neutral part in international affairs.”

Hiscocks was not alone in his advocacy of neutrality for Austria. The Austrian journalist Andreas Unterberger has noted that in the years leading up to the State Treaty there was a “confusing cornucopia of statements and ideas in both political camps [i.e. ÖVP and SPÖ], which through the years were on the one hand skeptical of (especially Schärf), on the other hand positive towards neutrality.” These statements and ideas, moreover, were “hardly consistent.” Yet Unterberger finds it “amazing” that “practically all politicians essentially favored conceptually that which was understood as neutrality.” The only exception was Undersecretary Ferdinand Graf, organizer of the future Austrian military from his position in the Interior Ministry, who once advocated a future NATO membership for a rearmed Austria.

Karl Heinz Ritschel, a predecessor of Unterberger’s during the occupation period, agreed. “Yes,” observed Ritschel, “were one to comb through all parliamentary and party speeches of the first years of the Second Republic, one would come upon surprisingly

many statements that could be interpreted as proneutral.”⁷ “Neutrality,” Bruno Kreisky agreed in retrospect, “as a foreign policy maxim of a liberated Austria was in one form or another under discussion.”⁴

Neutrality, concluded the Austrian historian Hellmut Andics in 1981, was “hardly a stroke of genius” on the part of Austrian leaders like Kreisky at Moscow in 1955. Indeed, leading Austrian political figures exiled to places such as America and London thought of Austrian neutrality even before World War II ended.⁵ Writing from his American exile in 1944, the Austrian Socialist Julius Deutsch argued that the foreign policy of any newly independent Austria would “have to be strictly and scrupulously neutral.” Deutsch believed that due to Austria’s “geographical position—long-stretching border lines which are hard to defend—she cannot afford to enter into litigation with even one of her neighbors.” “Unlike most other states,” Austria was thus “compelled to maintain friendly relations with all her neighbors. A policy of peace is therefore the only possible policy for Austria.” Deutsch also believed that the “economic interests of Austria,” “essentially an industrial country,” pointed “in the same direction” towards nonpartisan free trade with all comers.⁶

Deutsch accordingly proposed a symbiotic relationship between these Austrian necessities of neutrality and any postwar world security organization’s need to maintain impartiality. Deutsch namely suggested that what became the United Nations should

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establish its headquarters in Vienna. Deutsch proffered Vienna not only on the basis of its Central European location, but also because of its rich cultural ambiance.⁷

Deutsch maintained his belief in Austrian neutrality after the war while observing the developing Cold War divide between East and West. Writing in the Socialist journal (Die) Zukunft in May 1946, Deutsch pleaded for maintaining the independence of Austria by “holding it outside of the conflict of rival power groups” and pursuing a foreign policy in the “spirit of genuine, forthright international cooperation of the nations.” Although “temporary advantages” were possible by joining “one or the other power group,” Deutsch felt that “in the long run any Austrian foreign policy is false that leaves—even temporarily—the ground of absolute neutrality.”⁸

Among postwar Austrian thoughts of neutrality, the analogy with Switzerland was a recurring motif. The official Austrian observer of the Nuremberg trials, Wolfgang Lassman, for example, had reported to his superiors on July 28, 1946, that the “attitude of the occupation powers towards Austria is marked by mistrust.” Lassman suggested as a solution an Austrian attempt “to achieve an internationally recognized and stipulated neutralization” like that of Switzerland. Lassman thought that this could be a provision of any future Austrian state treaty.⁹

Ernst Urbas in the office of the Austrian federal president also looked to Switzerland for guidance. In a memorandum given to the Bundeskanzleramt für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten (BKAAA) on January 18, 1947, Urbas argued that one

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⁷ Ibid, 16-20.
⁸ Eva-Marie Csáky, ed., Der Weg zu Freiheit und Neutralität: Dokumentation zur österreichischen Außenpolitik, 1945-1955, Schriftenreihe der österreichischen Gesellschaft für Aussenpolitik und internationale Beziehungen series (Vienna: Österreichische Gesellschaft für Aussenpolitik und internationale Beziehungen, 1980), 77. This journal has vacillated throughout the years in its use of the definitive article “die.” For simplicity’s sake, this dissertation will refer to Zukunft.
could not refuse recognition of the fact that Austria has played out its role in history in a political-active sense. Austria has arrived at the place where the Swiss cantons had come at the time of the Vienna Congress. Thus, just like at that time for the Swiss Confederation, permanent neutrality with a guaranty by the powers presents itself as the natural solution for our country.\textsuperscript{10}

President Karl Renner presented the Switzerland analogy to the Austrian public in an editorial on January 19, 1947, in the \textit{Wiener Zeitung}. Renner claimed for the Austrian Republic “for all future a role and destiny similar to that of the Swiss Confederation.”

“Just as Switzerland,” he explained, lies between the three great nations of Western Europe, so lies the territory of Austria between the five nations of Central Europe, and their connecting thoroughfares transit this territory. It is the common interest of these five nations that this connecting area should be free for all and remain free, that no one monopolizes it for themselves and against others or even makes it into a springboard for military aggression….This concrete relationship presents a perfect parallel with Switzerland. Both republican polities create together a complete bridge of nations across Central Europe, whose maintenance guaranties not only the free interaction of its peoples in peace, but also a healthy separation in case of intended wars and, what concerns us above all, the possibility that our people can finally find rest just like Switzerland after the Congress of Vienna.\textsuperscript{11}

Renner continued to advocate the Swiss example of neutrality in later statements. Speaking before a SPÖ educational institute in November 1947, Renner declared that he and fellow Austrians wanted to “remain among ourselves and have only one goal, to take care of ourselves, to be a serving member of the United Nations in peace, to be no one’s enemy and a good friend of all neighbors, to be a second Switzerland in the heart of

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid, 153.
Europe.”12 “Small is beautiful” was once again the subtext of Renner’s editorial in Neues Österreich on October 9, 1949, the day of the Second Republic’s second national elections. “However much global problems concern us,” opined Renner,

our country is too small, too impotent, in order to give in to the dangerous error that a decisive or important duty to solve the questions of the day is incumbent upon us! It is the concern of the great powers of this earth to master the confusion of the world and thereby determine the future of the Occident. We want to remain modest and limit ourselves to organizing and renovating our own house and not rip ourselves apart with problems we are not able to solve.13

Renner’s successor as federal president, Theodor Körner, echoed Renner’s sentiments while commemorating the 30th anniversary of Burgenland province on November 11, 1951, in Eisenstadt, the provincial capital. In an address sometimes attributed to the pen of his then political advisor, Kreisky, Körner announced that

no one can impute to our small state the suicidal megalomania of wanting to address and engage in the controversies of the world powers. A free, independent Austria, divorced from all rivalries, not unilaterally bound in any direction, devoted solely and alone to the issue of peace, will be a gain for Europe, for the world.14

One month later Körner referred to Switzerland as an example for Austria in an address to the Swiss people, later published in the February 23, 1952, issue of Journal de Genève. “Switzerland,” he wrote,

whose economy gives us an example of how strong initiatives can be combined with clever solidity, will also give an ultimately liberated

12 Ibid, 74.
14 Csáky, Der Weg zu Freiheit und Neutralität, 225. The Austrian journalists Paul Lendvai and Rischel attributed the authorship of this well-known address of Körner’s to Kreisky, who was at the time Körner’s political advisor. See: Paul Lendvai, and Karl Heinz Ritschel, Kreisky: Porträt eines Staatsmannes (Düsseldorf: Econ Verlag, 1972), 121. Former SPO Foreign Minister Erwin Lanc, by contrast, has contended that Kreisky personally denied to Lanc having written this address. See: Erwin Lanc, “Außenpolitik als Existenzsicherung: Von der Moskauer Deklaration 1943 zum Memorandum 1955,” International, nos. 3-4 (2005): 11.
Austria an example of the political wisdom in having good friends everywhere but not being unilaterally bound to one side.\textsuperscript{15}

The party of Körner and Renner, the SPÖ, wrote their convictions into the party platform in 1947. A commission under the chairmanship of Deutsch drafted a party platform distributed by party chairman Adolf Schärf to the SPÖ convention meeting from October 23 to October 26, 1947, in Vienna. Adopted unanimously by the convention, the platform called for, among other things, the accession of Austria to the United Nations, the “most intimate political, economic, and cultural cooperation with all of Austria’s neighbors” in the UN, and, under the headline of “Austria free and neutral,” an “international guaranty of Austria’s neutrality.”\textsuperscript{16}

As in the SPÖ, neutrality received the official sanction of the ÖVP. Writing in the 1949 book \textit{Programm Österreich: Die Grundsätze und Ziele der österreichischen Volkspartei}, the ÖVP politician Alfred Kasamas argued that “for Austria, which lies in the middle of Europe and forms a fulcrum point of global politics, there is no ‘orientation’ towards any compass direction but rather only this: alignment with the entire world and friendship towards all sides.” Kasamas rejected Austrian participation in “aggressive endeavors, irrespective of whether their initiators were to be found in the East or in the West.”\textsuperscript{17}

Kasamas asserted that Austrian participation in the Marshall Plan had “solely economic significance” and that it would be “highly unwise” to reject this help “without which Austria could not live in the near future” for “ideological reasons.” If there existed

\textsuperscript{15} Csáky, \textit{Der Weg zu Freiheit und Neutralität}, 225.
\textsuperscript{17} Alfred Kasamas, \textit{Programm Österreich: Die Grundsätze und Ziele der österreichischen Volkspartei} (Vienna: Österreichischer Verlag, 1949), 105-106. Emphasis in the original.
the “appearance” that Austria “looked rather to the West than to the East,” this was merely because Austria “during the last years could find more understanding for its difficult situation in the West than in the East.” Kasamas, meanwhile, regretted that the devastation of war as well as “certain structural changes” in the economies of Eastern Europe had interrupted “centuries-old economic relations” between Austria and the Danube area, forcing Austria to find new sources of raw materials and foodstuffs outside of Europe. Kasamas hoped that trade with the Danube area would resume its prewar volume and that “intensification of economic relations would result in an improvement of the political relationship with these mostly Popular Democratic [volksdemokratisch] states.”

However much Foreign Minister Karl Gruber from the ÖVP was known as a Cold Warrior, meanwhile, he clearly declared before the Nationalrat on October 20, 1947, that Austrians “would in no way approve of any crusade against our neighbors, emanating from no matter what motive. Any active participation in such an endeavor would, of course, come even less into question.” Austria instead would “avoid all political alliances, irrespective of whether it was a question of a Western block, an Alpine block, or a Danube block.” Furthermore, the Austrian government desired “friendship with all peoples” and was ready to work for “the mediation of all disputes.”

Writing to foreign audiences in 1948 on the pages of Foreign Affairs, Gruber affirmed that

Austria will not—indeed she cannot—tread the path of political adventure. Her ambition is to prove to the world that a country with a strong cultural

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18 Ibid, 106. Emphasis in the original.
tradition and a sound way of life can live on respectable terms with other nations—in short, can “live and let live.” The pursuit of this ambition will always put her foremost among those nations which desire a greater degree of world unity. Disregarding the reactionary slogans which can be heard from certain quarters, the Austrian people are convinced that only a speedy advancement of international collaboration, the reduction of economic barriers, and the creation of a real world organization in which every nation takes part according to its abilities can inaugurate a new period of progress.  

Addressing the Nationalrat again on April 2, 1952, in the name of the ruling Grand Coalition, Gruber flatly declared that

a state treaty that would force us to abandon our neutrality and align ourselves entirely with one of the two power groups is for us intolerable and unacceptable. I hope that we can find in the strength of our tradition a desirable compromise and ally ourselves neither with the East or the West. For us there can be no eastern orientation, for us there can be no western orientation, for us there can only be an Austrian orientation!  

The Austrian historian Gerald Stourzh found Gruber’s April 2, 1952, statement particularly notable because it occurred precisely during “a time of the most intense Cold War when Austria’s relationship with the Soviet Union had reached a low point and the relations with the Western powers and the USA in particular had achieved a special degree of heartiness.” Moreover, the speakers of both ruling parties and of the rightwing opposition party VdU approved of Gruber’s position.  

Like Gruber, Julius Raab, who became the Second Republic’s second chancellor on April 2, 1953, following the elections of February 22, was from the ÖVP. Raab had ample opportunity to learn about Swiss neutrality given that his Swiss-resident brother

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21 Csáky, *Der Weg zu Freiheit und Neutralität*, 254.
Heinrich, in the words of Austrian military historian Manfried Rauchensteiner, “bombarded” Julius with “foot-long letters about the merits of Swiss neutrality.”

Dr. Heinrich Raab, the younger of the brothers, had been a Gymnasium history professor and mayor of Sankt Pölten before he immigrated to the Swiss homeland of his wife following the Anschluß. After the war, Heinrich remained in Switzerland and functioned at various times as Austria’s cultural attaché and press attaché in Bern.

Already in a 1945 memorandum mailed to Julius, Heinrich outlined the reasons for neutrality. “The Great Powers Russia, France, England, and the United States,” wrote Heinrich,

have a vital interest that this Austria really is neutral and is not again attracted by the related sphere of Germany. Just as Switzerland lies on a neurological point of Europe as a bridge between three old cultured nations, Austria is also only conceivable as an honest broker between East and West in the heart of Europe. It is therefore in the interest of all the powers and above all in that of the peace-loving Austrian people, who want nothing more than to peacefully work and to be a friend and helper to all neighbors, that the Austrians, like the Swiss confederation, can pursue their task as a mediator of the nations and their cultures without being disturbed. Austria can only do this when it, like Switzerland 130 years ago, is declared an integral state withdrawn from all external influences.

Heinrich Raab foresaw Switzerland and Austria together forming the two chambers of a European heart in which peace and freedom would have their home. Just as Switzerland has succeeded in bringing about a modus vivendi between Romance and Germanic elements, Austria wants to build a lasting bridge to all the peoples of the Danube area and beyond in the East and the West. Austria will thereby make a modest contribution to making an eternal peace reality.

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26 Ibid, 238-239.  
Heinrich did not just rely on letters to influence his influential brother. Julius had the habit of spending his vacation in Obladis, Tyrol, from whence he usually traveled for a few days to his brother in St. Gallen, Switzerland. On these occasions Heinrich always arranged nightly meetings for his brother with notables of the city, particularly after Julius became chancellor. Fritz Meznik, a former assistant to Chancellor Raab, noted in 1980 that “perhaps by 1952, certainly though by 1953, these evenings also had a special purpose.” Heinrich, himself a “recognized expert of Swiss history and the Swiss constitution,” invited Swiss constitutional experts to come speak with Julius Raab, thus giving him a “very detailed picture of Swiss neutrality.”

If later statements by Julius Raab are any measure, brother Heinrich did not fail to have an effect. Raab before the Nationalrat on October 30, 1953, the tenth anniversary of the Moscow Declaration, proclaimed that “a free Austria will attune its policies to the necessity of international cooperation.” Austria wanted to “take its place as an equal partner at the consultation table of the United Nations” and contribute to “the maintenance of peace and the elevation of living standards.” Presenting Austria once again as history’s suffering victim, Raab added that Austrians could “never permit that Austria would be misused as a springboard for any kind of military actions. Two world wars in which we were victims both times have forcefully taught us to appreciate the precious value of peace.”

Later on March 27, 1954, Raab explained to a gathering of European Christian Democratic youth (Nouvelles Équipes Internationales) that Austria would only

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participate in Europe’s socioeconomic integration. “The Austrian,” stated Raab, “has much understanding for the usefulness of cooperation between the European peoples and is ready to contribute his part to the realization of this idea. In the process, Austria has not the slightest intention of joining military organizations that could form within a European community.”

**Austrian Neutrality’s Character, I: Out of the Past...?**

Both during and after the occupation, Austrians have often presented neutrality as historically grounded in the character of a country centrally located between Europe’s different cultures and nations. Kreisky wrote in 1986 about this polyglot nature of Austria in the first volume of his memoirs: “The Viennese telephone book lists even today a large number of Slavic and other foreign names and whenever the Austria-Czechoslovakia soccer game takes place no one knows when they look at the list of players which team is Austrian and which team is Czech.” Similarly, former Austrian vice-chancellor and minister of trade and reconstruction Fritz Bock indicated in 1982 the understanding of Eastern Europe provided by Austria’s past. Travelers to the lands of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy, noted Bock,

still encounter evidence of, and witnesses to, this past, and Austrian visitors are still approached on the subject of that past—not only by older people in these nations, but also by young people. The result of all of this is that the Austrian of today has a far better knowledge and understanding of what is taking place in that wide geographical area, despite all the dimetrical differences in sociopolitical approaches. The Austrian knows the mentality of the peoples he lived with for centuries better than other Europeans do, and can therefore offer some good advice.

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30 Ibid, 34.
Accordingly, the British diplomat Hiscocks observed in 1953 that “diplomatically Austria is best suited to be a conciliator.” Given that Austrian power added “to either side would not be sufficient to prevent hostilities” and that “in any war between East and West” Austria would be among “the first to suffer,” the Austrians are deeply convinced that their true role in Europe is to mediate between East and West. The conviction is based on historical, political, economic, and diplomatic considerations. It has been held and expressed by most of Austria’s leading statesmen in the Second Republic. The Habsburg dominions were held together by a policy of conciliation. Vienna, once a Roman frontier fortress and later an outpost of Western Europe against the Turks, could never have become the centre of a cosmopolitan Empire, comprising Germans, Slavs, and Magyars, had the Habsburgs not practiced toleration and compromise. Conciliation, which for the rulers was a matter of expediency, serving a strictly dynastic purpose, was adopted by their subjects as a habit and an ideal. The Austrian people’s belief in it was intensified by events between the two World Wars, when uncompromising nationalism led to world disaster.33

Previously cited allusions by Heinrich Raab and Karl Renner to Austria as a “bridge” and by Karl Gruber on April 2, 1952, to the “strength of our tradition” are but a few references to Austria’s presumed “calling” as a neutral country. An early postwar conservative political grouping in Tyrol affiliated with Karl Gruber, for example, called in its May 15, 1945 platform for an independent Austria to pursue the “maintenance of friendly relations with the neighbors and an effective participation in a peace serving organization of the nations with particular consideration of the historic mission of Austria.”34 In his May 1946 Zukunft article, Deutsch also perceived “Austria’s mission” as being “one of the supports of world peace.”35

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33 Hiscocks, 233-234.
34 Gehler, Karl Gruber, 38.
35 Csáky, Der Weg zu Freiheit und Neutralität, 77. Emphasis in the original.
According to many Austrians, therefore, neutrality merely involved pouring old wine into new wineskins. The Austrian diplomat Manfred Scheich argued on November 23, 1968, at an Austrian scholarly seminar commemorating the 50th anniversary of Austria’s First Republic that the “Austrian state always had in the course of its history a transnational mandate; a mandate in the sense of European universalism.” Given Austria’s well-known status as “one of Europe’s most important crossover points,” this mandate “was not so much consciously chosen but rather flowing of necessity from the geopolitical situation.” The various cultures surrounding the “area which is called Austria” have “not only collided here, but have also attempted to find a modus vivendi, indeed to integrate themselves into a new unity.” “Reconciliation, order, and stability” thus defined “Austria’s historic duty in Europe.”

Scheich saw the Austro-Hungarian monarchy fulfilling this duty until 1918 “with success, as recognized today by the historiography of those countries that were once opponents of a powerful Austria.” The breakup of this Austrian Ordnungsmacht “did no favor to Europe’s security and to its inner balance” and “led to disintegration, critical disruptions, and ultimately European disputes conducted with violence.” After 1945, though, Austrian neutrality derived “downright logically” from the “geopolitical situation of our country, its historic duty, and the global political constellation of the moment.”

Scheich was not the first to see continuity between Austria’s imperial past and the neutral present. The Austrian historian Ernst Joseph Görlich felt in his appropriately named 1959 book Österreichs Weg zur Neutralität that an overview of Austrian history from the Middle Ages to his time showed that “the neutrality of Austria is indeed
formally new but lies in line with an older Austrian development. Austria has always been concerned with mediating contradictions and reconciling conflicting elements.”

Writing two years earlier in an Austrian journal, Kreisky seemed to agree: “The old Austria assumed a bridge position between East and West, the neutral Austria could fulfill, like Switzerland and Sweden, another, under the circumstances no less important, foreign policy function.”

Rauchensteiner has noted that the “old idea of a bridge function between East and West” received special attention right after the war in 1946 during the celebrations of “950 years Austria.” Perhaps this celebratory mood explains the origins of arguably the purplest prose praising Austria’s presumed propensity for neutrality. Writing in July 1946 on the pages of the ÖVP-affiliated Österreichische Monatshefte, the diplomat Alfred Missong saw “a talent for peacemaking” as the “historic inheritance” of the Austrians “that became outright our political calling.” Missong believed that the “peace motto” (“Bella gerant alii, tu felix Austria, nube!”) of King Corvinus “had served Austria through the centuries as a palladium. Austria acquired its once important position in the European human family not by way of wars of conquest but via a fortunate politics of marriage.” The “historic destiny” of Austria then “appointed” it as the “guardian of transnational peace in the Danube area.”

The thereby resulting “constant Commercium and Connubium with the many other nations of this area” appeared to Missong as “an act of grace” offering Austrians “a

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40 Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 129. Austrian historiography commonly dates the existence of Austria from the first documented reference to the Austrians in 996 A. D.
41 Alfred Missong, “Österreich und der Weltfriede,” in Neue Fakten zu Staatsvertrag und Neutralität, 327.
work of self improvement” whereby they “were able to obtain a comparative advantage as makers and preservers of peace.” “What a foreigner finds conspicuous in Austrians,” asserted Missong,

what he particularly appreciates, is really nothing other than the fruit of this acceptance of the foreign, this traditional respect of difference, this joy in the peaceful cooperation of the nations, this through experience hardened consciousness of the interconnected solidarity and mutual dependence of all national cultures of the Occident.42

When the “great Danube empire,” though, “took up the sword in 1914,” the Austro-Hungarian monarchy abandoned “the blessing that its vocation of peace had secured.” Missong felt that Austrians could reacquire this “blessing” if they returned to their “true essence” as a “natio pacifica.” Austrians possessed “a fund of transnational moral and intellectual culture” that “only waited to be used.” Austrians could make this their contribution “to the peaceful framework of the United Nations.” “We Austrians,” exulted Missong with biblical fervor, “understand our talent for peace. Today less than ever we want to bury it, but rather receive interest on it—as a blessing for humanity, to whom we know ourselves no less obliged than to our own Austrian nation!”43

Those who saw Austria as a natural neutral often cited proposals for neutrality from Austria’s recent past. Ambassador Hans Thalberg noted at a seminar in November 1984 that “the status of neutrality has been a topic in one form or another for almost 100 years in Austria. Even in the monarchy, neutrality was occasionally mentioned as one of the possibilities for the multinational Empire, wedged as it was between Germanic and

42 Ibid.
43 Ibid, 327, 329. Missong’s claims for the rest of humanity in 1946 were no less extraordinary. Missong considered it “certain” that the “entirety of cultured humanity—apart from a small group of desperados and bloodthirsty fools who might still exist—has tacitly taken the oath: Never again may there be a war! The fame is reserved to Hitler of having unleashed the greatest but also the last war!” Missong had “no doubt that the will of all those who today bear decisive responsibility is the best conceivable. This forms the security deposit of our hope, our pacifist optimism.” See: Ibid, 325-326.
Slavic cultures.” Heinrich Lammasch, the last prime minister in the monarchy, for example, “made neutrality the subject of serious political considerations.”

Austrian scholars such as the legal expert Stephan Verosta saw the interwar period between 1918 and 1938 in particular as a “prehistory” of the neutrality established in 1955. In the westernmost province of Austria, Vorarlberg, for instance, 80% voted in a May 11, 1919, referendum to join Switzerland. Both the provincial government of neighboring Tyrol and the Austrian delegation at the St. Germain peace conference, meanwhile, proposed neutrality for Tyrol under various guises (independent state, autonomous area, neutralized area). It was hoped that this would persuade Italy to forego a strategically-motivated annexation of German-speaking South Tyrol with its border on the Brenner Pass controlling a key invasion route from the north.

Reporting from St. Germain on the activities of the peace delegation to the Austrian government, Renner himself argued that “German-Austria can in the situation in which it finds itself hardly live and therefore even less conduct an effective foreign policy, helping friends and spiting enemies.” Renner felt that Austria could do “nothing more than give itself over with confidence to the League of Nations and its decisions.” Austria, which needed “rest” and did not wish “to become involved in the affairs of Europe,” would pursue “purely a League of Nations policy.”


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During the same period, the French newspaper *Le Temps* printed a series of editorials beginning on February 22, 1919, concerning Austria. The first editorial, “La crise de l’Autriche Allemande,” warned Austria of an Anschluß with Germany and proposed a Swiss-modeled status of permanent neutrality. In the eyes of observers like Verosta, these editorials “show such an expert knowledge with respect to political, historical and international legal affairs” that these articles “are to be considered as inspired by higher quarters.”

Verosta even considered Article 88 in the Treaty of St. Germain as a kind of protoneutrality. Analogous to the State Treaty’s Article Four, this article, along with the similar Article 73 in the Treaty of Trianon for Hungary, mandated independence for Austria and Hungary in the name of the “balance of power and therefore the security and peace of Europe.” Thus “the international status of Austria since 1919 had much in common with a conditional, treaty-imposed neutrality.” The interwar Socialist politician Otto Bauer considered this status as “neutralization” and Verosta believed “in fact” that Article 88 was a “replacement for an unaccepted neutrality.”

Otto Bauer was also among the SPÖ party leaders and parliamentarians who passed an SPÖ resolution on May 13, 1933, calling for Austrian neutrality. Bauer saw in neutrality “the greatest possible security against being dragged into military adventures

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and becoming a theater of war for neighboring states” in “this Europe in which it reeks of war more than at any time since 1914.”

These developments of the interwar period moved Chancellor Raab to declare on October 26, 1955, that “since the breakup in 1918 of the Danube monarchy many lines of a natural development” led to the neutrality law of that day. After “two decades of painful experience” the Austrians had “recognized the historical decision” of the “special international status” of Austria under the Treaty of St. Germain as being “essential for the European balance of power.” Once again the Austrians were ready to take up their “European function for the maintenance of peace.”

Similarly, the Sozialwissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft’s study Wie alt ist die österreichische Neutralität? concluded in 1965 that the “factual existence of a neutrality policy in the First Republic was provable” and that the appearance of neutrality as a proposed policy after World War II was “easily understandable.”

Austrian Neutrality’s Character, II:…Or a New Era?

Like the “occupation” and “victim” theories concerning Austria in the Third Reich, historical theories of Austria as a proto-permanent neutral do not necessarily stand up to scrutiny. Many Austrians such as former foreign minister Peter Jankowitsch have appreciated the merits of Austria’s historic interaction with diverse European peoples without necessarily equating this with neutrality. Interviewed in Vienna on July 28, 2005, Jankowitsch, like Missong and others, alluded to neutrality corresponding to the

50 Hummer and Maryzedt, 88.
“Austrian character” of a polyglot nation that is “consensus-oriented,” “always in search of harmony,” and desirous of “indirect” approaches. Jankowitsch sees this Austrian character exhibited domestically in the long history of Grand Coalition governments. “We don’t want to fight,” says Jankowitsch. Yet while he was Austria’s representative at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris before he became foreign minister, Jankowitsch wrote in 1981 that the newly independent Austria in 1955 “was entering largely uncharted territory. There was little tradition its foreign policy could rely on.”

Most observers of Austrian history recall the less-pacific side of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the corresponding novelty of neutrality in 1955. The American political scientist Joan Johnson-Freese flatly contradicted the views of Missong and others, writing that “neutrality in Austria has no historical roots prior to World War II. To the contrary, a far greater portion of Austrian history is concerned with the country as a great power, shaping world events with France, England, Prussia, and Russia, than with it as a small, neutral country.” Writing on the pages of *Foreign Affairs* in 1948, Federal President Renner also invoked this imperial past:

> Austria bears a name which once stood for the greatest Power in continental Europe. The capital city, Vienna, was for centuries the seat of the emperors of the “Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation.” It was at Vienna in 1529, and again in 1683, that the vanguard of the attack of the Orient upon Europe—of Islam against Christianity—was hurled back.

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52 Peter Jankowitsch, interview by author in Jankowitsch’s office at the Österreichisch-Französisches Zentrum on July 28, 2005.


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Otto von Habsburg presented in 1991 precisely this defense of Europe against foreign attack, and not any form of “neutrality,” as Austria’s historic mission. This son of Karl von Habsburg, the emperor who saw the end of the Austro-Hungarian empire in 1918, felt that whoever “maintained the big picture will perceive that Bavaria and Austria always had the same calling: they were Europe’s bulwark in hard times. The great invasions of our part of the world have penetrated almost without exception into our area.”

Alfons Gorbach, an ÖVP Nationalrat member who became chancellor in 1961, agreed with Otto von Habsburg. Speaking before the Nationalrat on June 7, 1955, the day that the Austrian parliament approved a resolution calling for Austrian neutrality, Gorbach announced that a “new historic hour” was beginning for Austria, placing the “national and state existence” of Austria on a “completely new basis.” “Through the centuries,” continued Gorbach,

the raging force of the peoples who again and again surged forth against Europe from the Near East and the depths of Asia broke apart upon a combative Austria. Through further centuries this Austria, in which once the sun never set, was the towering great power of the Christian Occident. The Austrian monarchy was therefore the most important economic, military, and cultural pillar of Eastern Europe, and the monarchy’s influence reached far beyond its borders.

The ÖVP Nationalrat member and subsequent foreign minister Lujo Tončić-Sorinj even saw in 1956 Austrian neutrality as a continuation of this defense mission. “It was always,” he wrote,

the task of Austria for many centuries to keep the Danubian center of Europe away from the grasp of the great powers, whether it was Turkey, Russia, Prussia, or Italy. Austria could fulfill this task based upon its

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former position as a great power in the interest of the peoples of the Danube, but also in the interest of the European balance of power. Austria threw back Turkish rule and prevented the advance of Asia….Austria has returned in a novel and modest form with neutrality to its old orbit. Having become small, the territory entrusted to Austria, still lying in the center of the continent, shall remain independent and free from the grasp of other powers….Austria, however, thereby serves the Western world and is a bulwark of occidental freedom hard on the border of the Iron Curtain.  

That this Austrian past contained considerable warfare goes without saying. The commander in chief of the Austrian Army, Bundesheer commandant Emil Spannocchi, concluded that “the geographic position of Austria condemned it to a bloody and partisan history.” Appearing in the same 1981 volume with Jankowitsch, Spannocchi, dismissed the possibility of the Habsburg monarchy surviving in conflict-ridden Central Europe merely with Corvinus’ maxim:

Holding and maintaining its position were generally only possible through defense, using every military strategy. It would never have been possible by merely following the famous motto attributed to Habsburg policies, Tu felix Austria nube…The West German news magazine Der Spiegel was wrong only with respect to motivation when it mockingly wrote, years ago, that Austria was the most militant country in Europe. For example, the country did not have ten years of peace during the 17th century—not because it did not want peace, but because it had no choice. Even the most tired man will not get any sleep at the main entrance to a major railway station.

The American scholar Thomas O. Schlesinger emphasized the extent of the transition from “Great Power” to “minor peripheral state” represented by Austria’s past and present:

60 Emil Spannocchi, “Defense Policy from the Austrian Point of View,” in Modern Austria, 382.
A generation before the end of World War II, Vienna had been the hub of an empire, a multi-nation state, and above all a Great Power. As recently as 1866, the statesmen at the Ballhausplatz had had a perspective on world politics not entirely incomparable to that which now reigns at the Kremlin or the White House. They knew that their decisions might well influence men the world over.\textsuperscript{61}

Ambassador Thalberg has indicated that 1955 was merely one watershed in Austrian history. “The history of our country,” he explained, “evinces especially deep historical ruptures: from a global empire with world wide interests to the European great power of the Danube monarchy to the First and finally the Second Republic of Austria.”\textsuperscript{62}

The Austrian international relations scholar Hanspeter Neuhold noted that “the principle of non-involvement in international conflicts constituted the third attempt at defining Austria’s identity in the course of this century, after she had failed as the center of a multinational Great Power and had been drawn into another World War after the \textit{Anschluß} by the Third Reich.”\textsuperscript{63}

Indeed, Neuhold observed at a seminar on November 23-24, 1984, that “Austria is the European neutral with the most recent Great Power tradition” in comparison with the three other states “nowadays practicing one form of permanent neutrality or another on the ‘Old Continent.’” Finland “attained its independence as late as 1917” and “never

\textsuperscript{61} Thomas O. Schlesinger, \textit{Austrian Neutrality in Postwar Europe: The Domestic Roots of a Foreign Policy} (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller Universitäts-Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1972), 3.
aimed at a Great Power status.” Switzerland and Sweden, in contrast, “had to abandon their ambitions to this effect in the 16th and 18th centuries, respectively.”

Chroniclers of modern Austria like Gordon Shepherd, meanwhile, put neutral claims for Austria’s polyglot past in perspective. “In defiance of Austria’s past,” wrote Shephard, Austria in 1955 became neutral in law without ever having been neutral in fact. With the one exception of the Crimean War, her people had fought in almost every European conflagration of modern times, and if ever proof were needed of the dangers of standing aloof from Europe’s quarrels, the diplomatic isolation which followed her ill-advised Crimean policy provided it. Geographically, Austria has always been as exposed to the rest of the Continent as Switzerland has been sheltered. Culturally, she is a long chapter of that European story to which Switzerland is but a footnote. Spiritually, her deep and militant Catholicism is itself the negation of neutrality.

Shephard saw Austria’s “only natural qualification for the role of a neutral” in “that habit of compromise which has traditionally underlain her policy” cited so often and fervently by individuals like Missong. But even this was an Imperial rather than a Republican quality. It was one thing to mediate among subject races, all of whom looked to Vienna for prestige and protection, and quite another for a small and politically still maturing state to preach tolerance to a company of angry giants. This contrast between Austria’s ancient loyalties and her recent obligations has forced her to grope for entirely new formulae to define her role on the international stage.

The overwhelming majority of opinions share Shephard’s estimate of Austrian neutrality as an historical innovation. Even Chancellor Raab qualified his remarks on October 26, 1955, by stating that “the idea of neutrality,” which was “after all, new in its

66 Ibid.
form for our people,” had “asserted itself” in “a surprisingly short period of time.”

In between having been Austria’s foreign minister and becoming United Nations secretary general, Kurt Waldheim wrote in 1971 that “neutrality is something completely new for the Austrian.” The Austrian historian Reiner Eger confirmed ten years later that neutrality “was without precedent” in Austria’s “over one-thousand year history” and that “for the concept of neutrality every tradition and historical custom was lacking.”

Rauchensteiner concluded that Austria “stumbled into neutrality.”

In line with these views, most analysts of Austrian history reject viewing the interwar period as a prelude for Austrian neutrality. Swiss scholar Jürg Späni-Schleidt contended that “the thought of an existing neutrality in the First Republic that formed the preliminary of a permanent neutrality chosen in 1955 is basically to be treated with caution.” Such “continuity from the ‘quasi-neutrality’ of the First Republic and the internationally codified neutrality of the Second Republic” existed “at most in a general framework.” Although a “Swissification [Verschweizerung]” came into consideration, it

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70 Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 322.
was never “consequently applied because of domestic and foreign policy considerations.”

Austrian legal scholar Felix Ermacora expressly cited in contradiction the views of the Sozialwissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft and his colleague Verosta. A “continuous neutrality policy of Austria…since the year 1918” could not exist because “Austria as a state never at any time before 1938 expressed to the world community a conclusive will in international law to practice a policy of neutrality” despite individual appeals. The chronicler of ÖVP views towards neutrality, Helmut Wohnout, meanwhile, has noted that references to neutrality in the First Republic such as on the part of Christian Democrats like Chancellor Ignatz Seipel merely entailed a “policy of non-alignment,” not an “internationally anchored neutrality.” According to Wohnout, no Austrian government in the First Republic sought a “permanent neutrality similar to that of Switzerland.” Indeed, the Austrian legal scholar Alfred Verdross reminded that interwar Austria could not be considered neutral because, as a member of the League of Nations, Austria was bound under Article 16 of the League’s charter to apply military sanctions (e.g. transit of troops) against an aggressor state, a requirement from which the permanently neutral Switzerland had exempted itself before joining the League.

Analysts such as Stourzh have dismissed “well-meaning attempts” to link neutrality proposals “ultimately on the margins” in the First Republic with the Second

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72 Späni-Schleidt, 34, 40.

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Republic’s neutrality precisely because “the self-affirmation of the Austrians as an essential precondition of a genuine neutrality policy was to a high degree lacking.”

Ambassador Thalberg confirmed that “neutrality became more topical in the First Austrian Republic” and “appeared as a realistic possibility” with “voices advocating for Austria a status similar to Switzerland.” Nonetheless, “a close association with Germany in one form or another seemed to be uppermost on everybody’s mind.”

Neuhold concurred that “the idea of Austrian neutrality had been voiced sporadically in the interwar period” but that the “Anschluß was the leitmotiv of discussions about Austria’s international position.”

Many Austrians like the historian Christine Stöckl considered it “quite consequential” that Austrian neutrality “was not the product of a long historical development and therefore a learning process like in the case of Switzerland.” Neuhold confirmed that “the neutral status of Austria, unlike that of Switzerland and Sweden, did not have time to ripen during many decades and even centuries.” Both Neuhold and Stöckl speak of neutrality as a “bolt from the political blue” and a “Blitz aus heiterem Himmel,” respectively. Austria’s Moscow Memorandum role model, Switzerland, in contrast, was, in the words of Shepherd, “neutral in fact long before she became neutral in law.” When the Congress of Vienna first recognized Swiss neutrality on November 20, 1815, it “merely recognized an established condition and gave formal international recognition.”

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80 Neuhold, “Background Factors of Austrian Neutrality,” 44.
status to a record of isolation from Europe’s conflicts which had already lasted since the end of the 17th century.”

Consequently, scholars such as Eger agreed that neutrality “confronted the Austrian people with a status for which they were not prepared” even as “differences of opinion about its interpretation existed among politicians and scholars.”

Neuhold concurred that “most Austrians were not prepared for nor [sic] aware of the far-reaching consequences resulting from this new orientation of Austrian foreign policy.” In his reporting from the Nuremberg trials in 1946, meanwhile, Lassman predicted that the “goal of making a second Switzerland out of our country” would demand “a kind of spirit and character that is still for the most part lacking in our people.”

Waldheim agreed that “a people accustomed through the centuries to taking an active stand in almost all conflicts in Europe cannot imagine at first becoming suddenly neutral without further ado.” Yet in Waldheim’s 1971 estimate over 15 years after the adoption of neutrality, the Austrian people “still had to master” a “mental process” for which “other neutral states had claimed years or centuries.” “Despite the fact that the Austrian people are becoming more and more familiar with the international status of the country,” Waldheim admonished, “it appears necessary to further deepen the understanding of neutrality policy.”

82 Shepherd, 265-266.
83 Eger, 20.
85 Schilcher, 149.
86 Waldheim, Der österreichische Weg, 12, 241.
**Neutrality: Initial Soundings**

Historically grounded or not, Austrian proposals for neutrality following World War II did not lack for logic. The four-power, East-West occupation of Austria during the emerging Cold War made an international status denying, at least in a military sense, Austria to either side (and thereby preventing a foreseeable accession of Austria to NATO) self-explanatory. Whatever other contentious issues required resolution before the occupation could end, the Austrian historian Hanns Haas has concluded that already by the spring of 1948 “the block freedom of Austria would have been a political precondition for Soviet approval of a State Treaty.”

Several Soviet soundings occurred to this effect in the early 1950s. The Austrian embassy in Washington, DC, for example, reported on September 23, 1952, that on the previous September 11 Nikolai K. Grigorev of the Soviet embassy had invited the Legation Secretary Wilfried Platzer to lunch for the following day. Meeting in a small restaurant near the Austrian embassy, Platzer learned from Grigorev that the Soviet Union wanted all foreign troops to leave Austria. When Platzer interjected that the Austrians had demanded exactly this on several occasions, his Soviet interlocutor added that the Soviet Union also did not want Austria to be protected by others after the occupation. Austrian embassy reports from Washington, DC, on September 26, 1952, concerning follow-up conversations indicated a Soviet concern that an independent Austria could join NATO and Soviet preference for a “strict policy of neutrality similar to Sweden, Switzerland. Clear declarations to this effect and a long expected indigenous Austrian initiative would presumably change the situation.” The Soviet ambassador to

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the United States, Georgi Zarubin, himself suggested a neutrality “deal” again over six months later on April 13, 1953, during lunch with another Austrian official from the Washington, DC, embassy. 88

Similarly, the Austrian embassy in Bern reported on November 19, 1952, that the previous day Nikolaus Basseches, an Austrian journalist residing in Schaffhausen, Switzerland, had met with a Soviet TASS-correspondent at an official banquet for the foreign press. Considered by Basseches to be expressing the views of “Moscow official circles,” the TASS reporter suggested that Austria could gain independence through neutrality. 89

Austrian foreign minister Karl Gruber responded in kind with an initiative on June 19-20, 1953, when he met with the Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the Indian ambassador to the Soviet Union, Schiwasnakara Menon, in a hotel on the Bürgenstock near the Vierwaldstättersee. Gruber had Nehru had already met earlier that month in London during the coronation ceremonies for Queen Elisabeth II. Gruber asked of the Indians to send out feelers in Moscow inquiring how the Soviet Union would react to Austrian pledges not to join an alliance and not to host foreign troops. 90 Following the Indian consent to this initiative, Gruber and his undersecretary Kreisky drafted a memorandum concerning Austrian “nonalignment [Allianzfreiheit]” later given to the Indian consul in Vienna. Because Communist propaganda of this era on the part of the KPÖ and other Communist organizations had propagated “neutrality” as entailing

88 Schilcher, 156, 158,166.
89 Ibid, 158-159.
abstinence from ideological struggle, the memorandum, according to Austrian historian Michael Gehler, “consciously” avoided this term.\textsuperscript{91}

Unfortunately, the Austrian ambassador to Moscow, Norbert Bischoff, reported on July 1, 1953, that Ambassador Menon had not had any success while meeting with Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov the previous day. Menon had asked Molotov, “supposedly spontaneously, whether it would be useful if Austria made any official declaration of neutrality.” Molotov replied that “this would certainly be useful, but not enough. Declarations can be made today and tomorrow revoked.”\textsuperscript{92}

\textit{A Soviet Thaw and Raab’s Change of Course}

Events in 1953 such as the Bürgenstock initiative took place against the background of a thaw in Austro-Soviet relations. Right before Raab’s election as chancellor, Joseph Stalin died on March 5, 1953. The following months saw an alleviation of the Soviet occupation regime: the Soviets abandoned controls at zonal borders and postal censorship in their zone, transferred the Danube power station Ybbs-Persenbeug to Austrian control, and elevated the status of the Austrian and Soviet diplomatic missions in Moscow and Vienna from political representatives to embassies.\textsuperscript{93} As previously indicated, the Soviets also assumed payment for their occupation costs during this time.

In this situation, Raab, in the words of Austrian historian Oliver Rathkolb, decided to pursue a “new, more autonomous line of foreign policy.” Despite “great

\textsuperscript{91} Gehler, \textit{Karl Gruber}, 26.
\textsuperscript{92} Schilcher, 178.
skepticism” on the part of the Americans and British, Raab believed that “the conclusion of the State Treaty would only be possible through direct, bilateral negotiations with the Soviet Union” aiming at “military non-alignment” as unsuccessfully ventured at Bürgenstock.  

In this respect, Ludwig Steiner, a diplomat who accompanied Raab to the Moscow Conference in 1955 as his secretary, noted that for Raab, a conversation with Austria’s Ambassador Bischoff was of “great importance.” Bischoff, who by 1953 had been ambassador to the Soviet Union for six years, made an official visit to Vienna at the end of May and beginning of June 1953. As Steiner related, Bischoff was “known for his leftist ideas” and the Austrian Foreign Office did not always appreciate his “somewhat unusual style” of reporting. Nonetheless, Raab felt that Bischoff had “in the substance correctly seen many things from Moscow’s point of view,” including the fact that the Soviet Union wanted a state treaty if only Austria would agree to neutrality.  

Accordingly, Austrian contemporary historiography remembers Raab as seeking accommodation with the Soviet Union irrespective of past animosities. In particular, Raab’s radio address of June 12, 1953, has passed into Austrian history with its aphorism that “it does not serve any purpose to pinch in the tail again and again with bombastic Sunday speeches the Russian bear that is standing in the middle of the Austrian garden.” In order to end the “unworthy condition” of the occupation, Raab considered it “far more efficacious” for the “public and the Austrian press” to avoid “superfluous barbs.”

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95 Ludwig Steiner, “Erlebnisbericht über die Moskauer Verhandlungen vom April 1955,” in *Neue Fakten zu Staatsvertrag und Neutralität*, 34.

96 Kunz, 40.
Meznik, who drafted Raab’s biweekly radio addresses, recalled that the bear-in-the-garden reference originated with Raab as an “indirect reproach” of those, in particular, like Interior Minister Oskar Helmer and his undersecretary Ferdinand Graf, who “in their Sunday addresses attacked the Soviets again and again particularly hard.” Raab answered Meznik’s concerns that his “some of his ministers” would find “no great joy” in this analogy with the remark that “ministers have it easy, nothing happens to them, they go back home, but the people who listened and live in the Soviet zone must then withstand the Soviet pressure.”97 Rauchensteiner, meanwhile, noted that Raab’s “bon mot” aimed not only at Helmer and Graf, perhaps the “most famous Sunday speakers” of the era, but, with the reference to the Austrian press, also at the anti-Soviet Socialist newspaper Arbeiter Zeitung.98 Indeed, Steiner remembered that Raab’s comments provoked the Arbeiter Zeitung to “howl.”99

Within this picture of Austro-Soviet rapprochement, Foreign Minister Gruber remained a source of contention. Meznik recalled that Raab “could hear out of conversations with the Soviet high commissioner that the Soviets viewed the person of the Austrian foreign minister Dr. Gruber as an obstacle for better relations.” The Soviets saw Gruber as too pro-Western, especially with respect to the Americans.100

Steiner explained that Raab “had the feeling that Gruber—rightly or wrongly—was marked for the Soviets too much as America’s man.” The Soviets felt this probably because Gruber “was a determined opponent of any dictatorship” who had “no illusions about the nature and unalterable political goals of the Soviet leadership of these late

97 Meznik, 48.
98 Rauchensteiner, Der Sonderfall, 201.
99 Steiner, “Erlebnisbericht über die Moskauer Verhandlungen vom April 1955,” 34.
100 Meznik, 48.
Stalin years.” Gruber was in addition “marked by many disappointments and negative experiences with the Soviet Union on the one hand and the success of his open and mutually trust-based relationships with the Western powers, particularly the Americans.” The outlook of Gruber, a “determining factor” in Austrian foreign policy under Chancellor Leopold Figl, soon resulted in a “certain relationship of tension” with Raab who “intended to rethink impartially the relationship to the Soviet occupying power and therefore to Moscow without concern for his often bad experiences with the Soviets in the past.”

Although Raab wanted to replace Gruber, Meznik believed that Raab could not do this under Soviet pressure without raising suspicion against his policies among the Western powers. Gruber’s book Zwischen Befreiung und Freiheit: Der Sonderfall Österreich, though, brought tensions in the ÖVP to a head and offered an excuse for his dismissal with its critical passages concerning former Chancellor Figl. The leader of the Viennese ÖVP, Polcar, demanded on behalf of his constituents in a letter to Raab dated November 8, 1953, not only Gruber’s dismissal as foreign minister, but also the renunciation of his Nationalrat mandate and his dismissal from the ÖVP. Raab then replaced Gruber with former chancellor Figl, a man who enjoyed, in the words of Wohnout, “high respect” among all the occupying powers. Wohnout noted that this replacement also “compensated” Raab’s friend “of many years” for having lost the chancellorship.

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102 Meznik, 47.
103 Steiner, 216.
104 Wohnout, Die Haltung der Österreichischen Volkspartei zum Neutralitätsgedanken, 22.
Setback in Berlin

No improvement in relations could bring the Austrians a state treaty at the Berlin Conference of the “Big Four” beginning on January 25, 1954. For Austria, the conference was highly significant even though it did not handle the third point of the agenda, the Austrian question, until the 17th plenary meeting. The Austrian historian Eva-Marie Csáky recalled that from February 12-18, 1954, Austria took part in State Treaty negotiations “for the first time as an equal partner.” On the third day of state treaty negotiations, February 14, Raab’s predecessor as chancellor and Gruber’s successor as foreign minister, Figl, read a prearranged declaration stating that

the Austrian people wish to live in peace and friendship with all states. Beyond that I can here with all formality emphatically repeat the determination of the federal government and the Austrian people’s representatives that Austria does not have the intention of joining any military alliances.

While secretary general of the Council of Europe in Straßburg, the ÖVP politician Franz Karasek recalled in 1980 just how seriously the Raab government took this declaration. Later during 1954 Chancellor Raab received an official invitation to make an extensive three-week tour of America. While visiting a navy base in Key West, Raab surprised the local commanding admiral by refusing to attend a naval review at sea. Raab apparently wanted to emphasize with this demonstrative gesture of military abstinence Austria’s future neutrality.

105 Bruno Kreisky, Die Herausforderung: Politik an der Schwelle des Atomzeitalters (Düsseldorf: Econ Verlag, 1963), 93.
106 Csáky, “Der Staatsvertrag,” 208.
107 Kreisky, Die Herausforderung, 97.
Molotov dashed Austrian hopes again. Similar to his position expressed to the Indian ambassador in Moscow, Molotov demanded the formal inclusion in the State Treaty of a prohibition of Austrian membership in any alliance directed against a state that had “liberated” Austria from the Third Reich (e.g. the Soviet Union). In addition, though, Molotov also demanded “effective measures” preventing a new Anschluß. Recalling his experiences in Berlin, Kreisky later recounted that “already in the first session” of State Treaty negotiations Molotov “emphasized the connection between the Austrian State Treaty and the peace treaty with Germany.”

It was exactly in this context that Molotov dropped a bombshell on February 12 with a “decisive suggestion for change in the State Treaty draft.” Molotov proposed that troops of the four occupying powers remain in Austria until the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany. Molotov attempted to appease his Austrian audience with the assurance that these troops would evacuate Vienna along with the disbanded Allied Council and would no longer function as occupation forces. They would exercise no occupation functions and would not interfere with Austrian administration or public life. Molotov’s proposal provoked that day the emphatic response from the American secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, that a state treaty “could be signed here and now.” In the words of Kriesky, Dulles argued that “the Austria problem demanded an immediate solution” and considered Molotov’s suggestions as “putting off of the State Treaty until an uncertain future.”

Austrian reaction the next day, February 13, was no better. Citing the State Treaty’s provisions for Austria to pay the Soviet Union for the reacquisition of Soviet-

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109 Kreisky, Die Herausforderung, 93.
110 Ibid, 94.
controlled “German assets” in Austria, Figl questioned “what a State Treaty should mean that imposes upon the Austrian people heavy burdens but then withholds the decisive advantage of finally once again being the master of one’s own house after the withdrawal of occupation troops.” Molotov’s linkage with a German peace treaty “meant in the final analysis nothing other than that the destiny of Austria would be tied to one of the world’s most difficult political problems, upon whose solution Austria itself is not able to take any influence.” French foreign minister Georges Bidault supported Figl and even considered Molotov’s proposal “worse than the present situation in which the existence of the Control Agreement actually gives serious guaranties to the Austrian government and prevents any unilateral pressure upon it.”

Austrians such as Kreisky reflected Bidault’s concerns and remained skeptical of Molotov’s assurances that post-State Treaty foreign forces would not interfere with Austrian affairs. Writing just after the Berlin Conference, Kreisky warned that “those are indeed golden words, but only for those who thoughtlessly believe promises and have forgotten everything that happened in the last 15 years!”

Kreisky later added during an address in 1967 that even accepting Molotov at his word meant the stationing of a proposed 5,000 Soviet troops along with presumably an equivalent number from each of the other occupying powers. The result would be “four Gibraltars in Austria” as the four powers “dug themselves in” and from their positions would “control the policies of the federal government.” Austria “would be no free state” and “practically nothing would change.” Although Kreisky saw in Molotov’s position “a completely hopeless situation,” objections from the Austrian delegation merely made

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111 Ibid, 94-95.
Molotov “very ill-tempered” and prompted his comparison of “our policy of ‘all or nothing’ with Ibsen’s Brand.”¹¹³

Yet it seems that Molotov lacked the willingness to compromise. On February 14, Dulles suggested that all still-disputed State Treaty articles be drafted in favor of the Soviet Union. Thus Dulles believed that no disputes would hinder the signing of the State Treaty at the end of the conference on Thursday, February 18. Bidault and British foreign secretary Anthony Eden agreed with Dulles on behalf of their governments. “For a moment,” remembered Kreisky, “the signature of the State Treaty seemed to have come within reach.” While Molotov accepted the Western concessions, he insisted upon the continued stationing of troops in Austria until a German peace treaty. Thus the Berlin Conference ended without resolution for Austria.¹¹⁴

A Passage to Moscow

Yet a later meeting between Austrian and Soviet diplomats in Vienna seemed to indicate a more conciliatory Soviet tone. On October 13, 1954, the young diplomat Dr. Heinrich Gleissner (son of Upper Austria’s governor) of the BKAAA responded to a dinner invitation of the Soviet embassy’s third secretary, G. V. Gorinowitsch, and its Press Attaché, a Mr. Belezkij. The meeting took place in a restaurant on the Kahlenberg outside of Vienna, followed by aperitifs in a bar well past midnight.¹¹⁵

Gleissner reported that the conversation “circled initially around trivialities, but I really had the impression that the two gentlemen wanted to transmit to me certain political suggestions under higher orders.” That the “accent of Molotov’s suggestions in

¹¹³ Ibid, 730.
¹¹⁴ Kreisky, Die Herausforderung, 94-95.
Berlin was falsely placed in the Austrian press and the declarations of official Austrian positions” emerged as the “cardinal thought” of the Soviets’ statements. The Soviet diplomats declared that the “Soviet Union had no strategic interest in the continued presence of its troops in Austria.” By contrast, the Soviet diplomats felt that “it must be clear to every open-minded person that the stationing of American troops in western Austria is for them from a strategic standpoint much more valuable.”116

Foreign troops in Austria after the State Treaty would have “solely the purpose of guaranteeing the maintenance of the Austrian promise of neutrality.” The diplomats added that “a concession of the Russians” concerning the forces’ “strength and stationing” would be “thoroughly possible.” “Molotov,” Gleissner reported the diplomats saying “had declared himself ready to sign the State Treaty if Austria committed itself to neutrality.”117

Gorinowitsch then explained that according to the Soviet Union “bases would not be the only panacea” to guaranty Austrian neutrality. The Soviet Union, for example, had withdrawn its troops from Finland, leaving only a single base there, and from Persia (Iran). Gleissner reported that “in this context one of the two gentlemen remarked as well that the Persian treaty of February 1921 did indeed function poorly, but was thoroughly correct, however, in its basic idea (concession of the right to move troops into agreed zones in case the other treaty power also established bases in the country).”118

This Soviet diplomat “did not want to exclude the possibility that by way of this idea a resolution could be found for the dilemma troop withdrawal (Austrian demand)

116 Schilcher, 233.
117 Ibid.
118 Ibid, 233-234.
and guaranty of Austrian neutrality (Russian concern).” “In this context,” reported Gleissner,

he said approximately literally that the chances for a solution other than the leaving of troops for securing Austrian neutrality would be greater to the extent that effective guaranties could be created that Austria would not (either by its own will or under pressure) revoke its neutrality obligation with the indication that circumstances had changed.\textsuperscript{119}

The first official announcement that Austria could free itself of foreign troops without waiting for a German peace treaty came four months later in an address of Molotov before the Supreme Soviet on February 8, 1955. In his comments devoted to Austria, Molotov declared that

the Soviet Union attaches great importance to the resolution of the Austrian question, the question of the complete restoration of the independence of a democratic Austria, according to the interests of the maintenance and strengthening of peace in Europe. The Soviet Union considers further delay in the conclusion of a state treaty with Austria to be unjustified.\textsuperscript{120}

Yet Molotov clearly continued to view Austria in connection with Germany. “It must be taken into account above all,” he admonished, “that the resolution of the Austrian question cannot be treated without the context of the German question, particularly in light of the plans for the remilitarization of West Germany that strengthens the danger of the absorption—the Anschluß—of Austria.” Thus, at the conclusion of a state treaty “a solution must be found which excludes the possibility of a new German Anschluß of Austria.” Molotov also declared that “it is necessary for the sake of a quick solution of the Austrian question that a Four Power conference, during which the German question as well as the question of the conclusion of a state treaty with Austria would be treated,

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid, 234.
\textsuperscript{120} Kreisky, Die Herausforderung, 99.
be called without delay.” Citing the October 1954 NATO agreements to admit a sovereign West Germany to NATO, Molotov also warned that “a serious danger for the independence of Austria would develop in the event of the ratification of the Paris accord, which prepares the way for a revival of militarism in West Germany.”\(^{121}\)

Molotov also reiterated the Soviet interest in Austrian neutrality. “Austria,” he declared, “must assume the obligation not to join any coalition or military alliance directed against any state that participated with its armed forces in the war against Hitler-Germany and in the liberation of Austria and not to allow the creation of foreign military bases on Austrian territory.” In addition, Molotov wanted the Four Powers to assume the obligation to respect this neutrality. One sentence of Molotov’s, though, announced a significant change from his position in Berlin. Molotov indicated that if the Four Powers and Austria could find appropriate means of preventing a new Anschluß, “the withdrawal of troops of the Four Powers from Austria could take place without waiting for the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany.”\(^{122}\)

Molotov’s Austrian audience, though, did not initially notice this variation. Students of Austrian history such as the Swiss historian Christian Jenny note that “the linkage of the German and the Austrian questions was emphasized so strongly in the comments of Molotov that it was difficult to recognize behind Molotov’s formulations, which still contained much old and confusing, the new that he now offered.”\(^{123}\) Kreisky and the journalist Ritschel both later commented independent of each other that “at first glance [\textit{auf den ersten Blick}]” Molotov had offered “nothing new [\textit{nichts Neues},” even

\(^{121}\) Ibid, 99-100.  
\(^{122}\) Ibid, 100.  
\(^{123}\) Jenny, 134.
though the length of the section of Molotov’s February 8 address devoted to Austria was for Ritschel “conspicuous.”

“Once again,” Kreisky noted, “the connection of the Austrian question with the German problem was emphasized and particularly underlined by the demand for a Four Power conference during which the German and the Austrian questions would be treated together.” “Closer study,” though, revealed to Kreisky and others “a few new aspects…albeit in coded form” in Molotov’s comments that could “possibly offer a starting point for a new discussion between the Soviet Union and Austria.”

The historian Csáky noted that February 8, 1955, marked “a turning point in Soviet Austrian policy. The tying of the State Treaty with the German question did indeed remain, but no longer, however, the linkage *German peace treaty-troop withdrawal from Austria.*”

In case Molotov’s address left the Austrians confused, Molotov summoned Ambassador Bischoff to him on February 25, 1955. Molotov repeated the contents of his February 8 remarks concerning Austria. In the process, he emphasized that Austria could obtain a state treaty and complete evacuation of foreign troops even before a German peace treaty if Austria could offer effective assurances against a new *Anschluß.*

Subsequent “lively diplomatic contacts” described by Csáky resulted in a Soviet invitation on March 24, 1955, for an Austrian delegation to visit Moscow for direct negotiations. In accepting the invitation, the Austrian government agreed upon a politically evenly-divided delegation consisting of, among others, Chancellor Raab.

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124 Kreisky, *Die Herausforderung*, 100, and Ritschel, 46.
127 Waldheim, *Der Österreichische Weg*, 75.
(ÖVP), Vice-Chancellor Adolf Schärf (SPÖ), Foreign Minister Figl (ÖVP), and his
undersecretary Kreisky (SPÖ).  

Not everyone warmly received the news of bilateral Austro-Soviet negotiations. Ambassador Thalberg, then a member of the Austrian embassy in Washington, DC, remembered that “the reaction of Washington was at first anything but enthusiastic” and that the Austrian government’s decision “met with little understanding.” Austrian historian Günter Bischoff explained that “Western diplomacy never quite trusted Raab, and feared that the inexperienced Raab was operating from a dangerously weak base.” Secretary of State Dulles “personally warned” Gruber, whom Raab had dispatched to Washington, DC, as ambassador following his resignation as foreign minister, that Moscow was “a dangerous place to go alone.” Bischoff’s colleague Rathkolb confirmed that “American-Austrian relations reached an all-time low” with reports of the Moscow mission. Among other things, the Americans, along with the British, feared the repercussions any Austrian example of neutrality might have on the final stages of West German military integration.

While Dulles threatened “to withdraw his hand from Austria,” Thalberg had to confront other ominous predictions. Thalberg’s friends at the Washington Post were “completely serious” in the belief that “Raab would disappear in the Lubliyanka prison and the Austrian delegation would never return to Vienna. This was supposedly the

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130 Günter Bischof, Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-55: The Leverage of the Weak, King’s College Cold War History Series (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 144.
The beginning of a long-feared Soviet coup attempt in Austria, the CIA had dependable information!"\(^{132}\)

Kreisky recounted similar fears in various publications during the 1980s. On the one hand, there was speculation that the Soviets wanted to negotiate “the preconditions of a state treaty.” On the other hand, there were “fears…nurtured by Austrian Communists” that the Western integration of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) would provoke “from the Soviet side ultimatums to the Austrian federal government” whose refusal could have entailed the division of Austria.\(^{133}\) Basseches, the Kremlin correspondent for the Neue Freie Presse, reported to the Austrian embassy in Switzerland that the Soviet Union was going to mark a “turning point” in its policies with an Austrian state treaty. Richard Neumann, meanwhile, a Communist editor acquainted with Kreisky from his Swedish exile, confessed years later to a chancellor Kreisky in Vienna’s famous downtown Café Landtmann that his editorial board had hoped that the Soviets would “place the Austrian delegation against the wall” and force “at least a Communist participation in the government.”\(^{134}\)

Only after flying to Moscow on April 11, 1955, could the uncertainty find resolution one way or the other. Kreisky recalled in the first volume of his memoirs in 1986 that the Soviets picked up the Austrian delegation in Vienna with a machine that was grotesquely furnished—Persian rugs on the floor, stitched rugs on the walls, and red cushy furniture. The airplane itself made, however, a rather run-down impression; as we started down the runway at Vöslau [airport], it hardly left the ground. Like the railroad conductor who once upon a time always had to look outside until the last car had left the station, the steward, a Russian NCO, leaned out the open

\(^{132}\) Thalberg, Von der Kunst, Österreicher zu sein, 210-211.
\(^{133}\) Bruno Kreisky, Politik braucht Visionen: Aufsätze, Reden und Interviews zu aktuellen weltpolitischen Fragen (Königstein: Athenäum Verlag, 1982), 55.
\(^{134}\) Kreisky, Zwischen den Zeiten, 458.
door during takeoff and, so it seemed anyway, closed the door only as the plane took off. During the flight large amounts of vodka and caviar were served and our table was still full of vodka bottles as we arrived in Moscow. Until then I had never experienced a landing with covered tables and what the pilot brought about bordered on a miracle: there was merely a light clinking of glasses.\textsuperscript{135}

In Moscow the Austrian delegation exited the plane according to seniority. Kreisky recalled that

practically the entire Central Committee Presidium had assembled at the airfield—however without Khrushchev, who was at an agricultural conference in Leningrad. The diplomatic corps stood in a long row, which was customary in Moscow whenever special attention was shown to a visit. The Moscow guard battalion had assembled and a massive band played the national anthems with a verve that I had until then never experienced with Austrian bands….I whispered to Schärf: “If we are greeted with such a big parade, we will not be able to leave without a big parade.”\textsuperscript{136}

The widow of Ambassador Bischoff, Holda Bischoff, recounted to Ritschel that her husband was “very excited” when he greeted the Austrian delegation at the airport. Bischoff noted that the Austrian delegation had landed at Moscow’s Central Airport, reserved for guests of honor. Bischoff “immediately” said to Raab, “We are going to get the State Treaty!”\textsuperscript{137}

\textit{Neutrality at the Moscow Conference: What is in a Word?}

Austrian neutrality became perhaps the most contentious issue in the subsequent negotiations. Steiner recalled two Soviet diplomats encouraging him during the Moscow talks to say to Raab that “neutrality” was “the magic word for the negotiations,”

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid, 467.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid, 467-468.
\textsuperscript{137} Ritschel, 53-54.
something which Steiner thought Raab already knew.\textsuperscript{138} Saying this word, though, posed a number of problems. Although the Austrians were thoroughly willing to renounce military commitments, the term “neutrality” was ill-defined and subject to misuse. As previously indicated, Austrians feared, in the words of historian Reinhard Bollmus, that this term “could commit Austria to ‘neutralism,’ the internal and external renunciation of public support for a concept of democracy in a Western-liberal-democratic form.”\textsuperscript{139} Even Julius Raab later confessed that he had to undergo a “rethinking” process in his neutrality discussions with his brother Heinrich, whereby Julius had to abandon an equation of neutrality with a lack of conviction.\textsuperscript{140}

Wohnout notes that although in the large Austrian parties “the thought of neutrality” had receded, “in Communist propaganda the term of neutrality played an ever larger role.”\textsuperscript{141} Rathkolb states that the Austrian public had come to the conclusion that “whoever was for neutrality was a Communist.”\textsuperscript{142}

Communist use of this term, of course, had nothing to do with international norms of neutrality but, in Wohnout’s words, entailed rather “an ideological neutralization of the country.” The result of “such a reinterpretation often intentionally produced in conscious polemics” was a “negative connotation” among “wide circles of the population.” By the early 1950s, the sentiment that had caused 78% of respondents in a 1947 American poll to call for Austrian neutrality along the Swiss pattern had given way to the “pale

\textsuperscript{138} Steiner, “Die Außenpolitik Julius Raabs als Bundeskanzler,” 241
\textsuperscript{139} Reinhard Bollmus, “Zur österreichischen Konzeption für einen Staatsvertrag,” in Neue Fakten zu Staatsvertrag und Neutralität, 120.
\textsuperscript{140} Christine Mitterwenger-Fessl, “Julius Raab und das Bundesheer der Zweiten Republik,” in Julius Raab: Eine Biographie in Einzeldarstellungen, 308
\textsuperscript{142} Oliver Rathkolb, interview by author in Rathkolb’s office at the Demokratiezentrum Wien on August 3, 2005.
aftertaste” of neutrality as a “lack of conviction.” Ritschel remembered that in public discussions the “word neutrality, which many shied away from saying for a long time, seldom appeared because it sounded so fatally like neutralism.”

Skepticism of “neutrality” was particularly strong among the SPÖ. Rauchensteiner noted that the Socialists feared that the Western powers would not accept a neutrality deal and that neutrality represented a turning away from European integration. The main reason for SPÖ opposition to neutrality, though, was the vagueness of a term that “even with a reference to Switzerland offered a number of interpretative possibilities.” According to Bollmus, both Schärf and Kreisky at Moscow “would have preferred the status of nonalignment [Bündnisfreiheit] and would have ultimately gladly avoided the chosen term [of neutrality].” Steiner recalled that a few days before the departure for Moscow the Socialist Arbeiter Zeitung had written an editorial rejecting neutrality in favor of “Bündnisfreiheit.”

Kreisky himself later recalled in his 1986 memoirs that in contrast with the Soviets, who “absolutely wanted to bring the word neutrality into the memorandum,” he “wanted instead the expression ‘alliance-free [Allianzfreiheit],’ which only had to be defined.” Kreisky wrote earlier in 1980 that “to accept neutrality simply undefined seemed particularly to me unacceptable and I pressed during the negotiations for a definitional limitation in order to avoid having the definition of neutrality become a matter for Soviet international law experts.” Kreisky “represented the viewpoint that the

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144 Ritschel, 68.
145 Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 270.
146 Bollmus, 120.
148 Kreisky, Zwischen den Zeiten, 471.
Austrian policy would be defined as one without military commitments. That means that Austria may not place its territory at the disposal of any foreign power for the establishment of bases and may not enter any military alliance commitments.”¹⁴⁹ Kreisky and Schärf argued to the other members of the Austrian delegation on April 12 that such a policy would be similar to that of the Swedes who “declare their own policy as one of Allianzfreiheit” and whose “foreign policy praxis corresponds to a de facto neutrality.”¹⁵⁰

The anticommunism of the SPÖ reinforced its skepticism of undefined “neutrality.” One scholar, Konrad Helmut, recalled that “certainly by the time the Marshall Plan began to be implemented, if not before, the Austrian Social Democratic party was recognized as the most reliably anticommunist and most conspicuously pro-American of the Austrian parties.”¹⁵¹ Ritschel noted that there were good reasons for this, given that the SPÖ “was engaged particularly in the state-run enterprises in a hard defensive battle against the Communists,” the Austrian unions had strong contacts with Western unions, and many SPÖ leaders had spent the war in the United States or United Kingdom. In domestic politics, moreover, the SPÖ was concerned about “having to demarcate itself to the left” as the case of Central Secretary Erwin Scharf in 1947 showed, whom the SPÖ expelled because he wanted to make common cause with the Communists.¹⁵² The ÖVP historian, Karl Pisa, meanwhile, noted that such fears of “ideologically fuzzy borders” were foreign to the “genuinely anti-Marxist” ÖVP.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Kreisky, Politik braucht Visionen, 59.
¹⁵² Ritschel, 71-72.
The SPÖ’s anticommunism was not without practical effect. The SPÖ, in the words of Rauchensteiner, “vehemently” distrusted “Raab’s Ostpolitik.”\textsuperscript{154} One chronicler of Julius Raab, Johannes Kunz, has observed that the SPÖ often stopped just short of calling Raab “crypto-Communist” and dismissed him as “russophil.”\textsuperscript{155} Perhaps most symbolic of this anticommunism was an SPÖ prohibition upon official visits to the Soviet Union by SPÖ functionaries upon pain of expulsion from the party. This had the consequence in 1954 that a representative of the Socialist Working Farmers League (Arbeitsbauernbundes) could not accompany Minister of Agriculture Ludwig Thoma from the ÖVP when he received the invitation to attend an all-Soviet agricultural exhibition. Schärf and Kreisky themselves needed a special exemption in order to attend the Moscow conference.\textsuperscript{156}

The dispute over neutrality came into the open during the Moscow Conference. Raab even recounted later in 1963 that Schärf threatened to leave the conference three times if Raab persisted in offering the Soviets Austrian neutrality, twice during negotiation pauses and once before going to bed. Although Schärf and others in the SPÖ like Helmer had originally supported Austrian neutrality, they had failed to win over the SPÖ and feared a threatened expulsion from the SPÖ for advocating neutrality against a decision of the party leadership.\textsuperscript{157} Other scholars of the Moscow Conference like Karl R. Stadler, though, have disputed this version of events and fail to find on the basis of

\textsuperscript{154} Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 232.
\textsuperscript{155} Kunz, 229-230.
\textsuperscript{156} Ritschel, 230, and Steiner, “Erlebnisbericht über die Moskauer Verhandlungen vom April 1955,” 35.
documents such as Schärf’s postcards to his wife during the conference any sign of crisis on the part of Schärf.\textsuperscript{158}

The negotiations had begun in Molotov’s office on the afternoon of April 12, 1955. Afterwards Molotov hosted a reception during which Figl reminded Molotov that the Soviet Union had not just been a victim of the Third Reich. As Steiner later recounted, Figl expressed to Molotov “how much his name had impressed him [Figl] from his youth on. Molotov and Soviet power were always one.” But Figl “had been particularly impressed when once during his concentration camp time he had to assemble with all of his fellow inmates and then suddenly Molotov’s voice rang out from a loudspeaker as he arrived in Berlin on this day in late fall 1940 in order to visit Hitler.” Although Steiner feared that Figl’s cheek would lead to a “great éclat,” Molotov brushed aside Figl’s remarks “merely with da, da, da.” To Steiner, though, “it was very clear that Molotov well understood what the point was: in a time when Austrians were in concentration camps, along with thousands of others, there was a formal Soviet visit to Hitler and even friendship treaties.”\textsuperscript{159}

More germane to the conference, meanwhile, Molotov during the reception noted the day’s negotiations and asked Kreisky that “that, which you offer, is neutrality, why do you not use the right word for it?”\textsuperscript{160} This question remained following a dinner hosted by the Austrian embassy that night. Steiner recounted his presence at a conversation between Raab, Schärf, Kreisky, and Bischoff “in a small salon of the embassy” after all the guests had left. “Discussed was again the question of neutrality—and that after a long, demanding day during which the sumptuous hospitality had also brought some

\textsuperscript{158} Stadler, 417-427.
\textsuperscript{159} Steiner, “Erlebnisbericht über die Moskauer Verhandlungen vom April 1955,” 40, 42.
\textsuperscript{160} Stadler, 442.
labors.” Although close to the SPÖ, Bischoff criticized the Socialist delegation members “with harsh words” for “their hesitancy to pronounce the word neutrality.”

In the subsequent “fairly stormy conversation,” Raab “emphasized again and again that a final success could presumably only be expected if they were to pledge themselves to neutrality even now and clearly pronounce the word here in Moscow.” In the end, Schärf made one of his warnings to Raab that the Socialist delegation members would leave Moscow if neutrality became an issue and the conversation ended without a decision. Yet Raab remained undaunted and said to Steiner while leaving the embassy, “You will see, before the rooster crows three times tomorrow, we will have declared our neutrality.”

Bollmus later observed that Raab was more open to neutrality probably because he “knew how to properly read the signs of the times.” Raab recognized that “it was not at all the intention of the Soviet leadership” to demand “an ideological obligation.” The Soviet “understanding of reality” prohibited the raising of a “demand completely impossible to implement with respect to the broad majority in Austria.” Raab, moreover, most likely received confirmation of this pragmatic Soviet willingness to accept domestic opinion in a military neutral country from his confidential conversations with Finnish President Urho Kekkonen in 1953.

According to Walter Kindermann, Raab’s personal translator, Molotov the next day asked “whether the Austrian delegation had come to a definitive view in the question of Austria’s future foreign policy.” The chancellor read in response a written declaration

162 Ibid.
164 Bollmus, 120.
prepared the previous day. Kindermann remembered that “there were formulations by which an essentially neutral foreign policy was outlined but the declaration did not contain the word ‘neutrality.’”

Although Kindermann recollected the word “neutrality being concretely used” in the following discussion, “who spoke it first escaped him.” Kindermann nonetheless had “the impression that it was Molotov” who “did not understand why the Austrian delegation recoiled in horror before this word.” Raab, “as usual, very calmly” replied that “he had already emphasized yesterday that there is for Austria according to the structure of things no other policy than that of neutrality.” Raab was reticent to use this word “merely because it had come somewhat into discredit these days in international usage and he feared that the use of this word could possibly form a stumbling block for the other interested powers.”

Molotov replied that even Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had considered neutrality acceptable. At the Berlin Conference on February 13, 1954, Dulles had stated that “Switzerland has chosen to be neutral, and as a neutral she has achieved an honorable place in the family of nations.” Raab then requested to interrupt the session for a quarter hour in order to confer with his advisors. Kindermann believed that Raab “had recognized from the very beginning the complex of questions and only unwillingly fought a forlorn battle. He also certainly always had the intention to not let these negotiations fail because of words or an abstract concept.”

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165 Walter Kindermann, Flug nach Moskau (Vienna: Verlag Ullstein, 1955), 53.
166 Ibid, 54.
quickly agreed to the subsequent formulation of the Moscow Memorandum that Austria would “practice a perpetual neutrality of the kind practiced by Switzerland.”\(^{168}\)

The Moscow Memorandum’s reference to Switzerland brought to fruition an initiative by Kreisky. Just as Switzerland had figured in Austrian domestic discussions as a model of neutrality, Kreisky had already suggested to Soviet diplomats before the Moscow Conference Switzerland as a pattern for Austria to follow. Kreisky had held a dinner on March 17, 1955, for the Swedish ambassador Allard, Vice-Chancellor Schärf, Josef Schöner (the chief of the Political Department in the BKAAA), the French chargé d’affaires, and two Soviet diplomats, including the Soviet deputy high commissioner Semyon Kudriavzev. According to Allard, Kreisky asked Kudriavzev three times during the evening “to explain the real meaning of Molotov’s demand for ‘guaranties’ against an Anschluss.” As Kudriavzev repeated for the third time that it was up to the Austrian government to tell the Soviet Union what kind of guaranties it could accept, Kreisky stepped over to a bookshelf and took out a volume which contained the diplomatic documents signed at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. In a loud voice he read the declaration in which the permanent neutrality of Switzerland was recognized and collectively guaranteed by the eight powers which had participated in the war against Napoleon. He then turned to K. [Kudriavzev] and asked if the Soviet Union would consider permanent neutrality after the Swiss model an adequate guaranty against a new Anschluss.\(^ {169}\)

As Kreisky himself later realized, Soviet assent to Austrian independence demanded Swiss-style neutrality given that the suggestion by him and other Austrians

\(^{168}\) Kindermann, 55.
that Austria merely refrain from hosting foreign military bases and joining military alliances was “too little for the Soviet side.”\textsuperscript{170} Stourzh confirmed that the substance of neutrality along the Swiss pattern—Molotov cited during the negotiations Federal President Körner as well as John Foster Dulles, who at different times had presented Switzerland as an example for Austria—was the central concern of the Soviet negotiating partners. Neutrality, not merely \textit{Paktfreiheit}, was the basis of the agreement at Moscow.\textsuperscript{171}

Austrian political scientist and international law expert Waldemar Hummer noted that while the Moscow formula of Swiss neutrality emphasized for the Soviets the “permanence” of Austrian neutrality, the “Swiss prejudice…clearly rooted” neutrality in “the basis of classical neutrality law” and excluded “the arbitrariness of Soviet argumentation.”\textsuperscript{172} Csáky argued that this “example of Switzerland help to overcome the resistance of above all Vice-Chancellor Schärf, who according to the customary practice of the SPÖ since the beginning of the 1950s preferred the more concrete term of ‘\textit{Paktfreiheit}.’”\textsuperscript{173} Most likely considering the certain Soviet \textit{droit de regard} later characterizing \textit{Finlandization}, Stourzh noted in addition that “the Swiss model contained more favorable conditions for Austria than the Finnish model, which in previous conversations sometimes had been mentioned.”\textsuperscript{174}

The sudden Austrian agreement to neutrality at Moscow initially still worried some in the SPÖ. Interior Minister Helmer, for example, took aside his long-standing

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\textsuperscript{170} Kreisky, \textit{Politik braucht Visionen}, 59.
\textsuperscript{171} Gerald Stourzh, “Die Sicherung der österreichischen Unabhängigkeit als Thema der Staatsvertragsverhandlungen,” \textit{Zeitgeschichte} 2, nos. 7-8 (October 1974-September 1975): 188.
\end{flushright}
friend Steiner right in the middle of the reception for the returning Austrian delegation at Vöslau airfield on April 15, 1955, and asked how Raab could have agreed to neutrality without a prior authorization. Nonetheless, the Moscow Memorandum quickly won acceptance across the Austrian political spectrum and laid with its ultimate promise of Austrian neutrality the foundation for the State Treaty one month after the Moscow Conference. As the next chapter shows, though, foreign assessments of Austrian neutrality were far from unanimous.

175 Steiner, “Erlebnisbericht über die Moskauer Verhandlungen vom April 1955,” 43.
Chapter III
Neutrality’s Advocates and Adversaries: The Strategic Calculations behind Austrian Neutrality

The Soviet Union’s New Look

Many like the American diplomat and historian William Bader have described the ten-year quest for an independent Austria as “an all too familiar story of Western frustration and Soviet temporizing.”¹ The Austrian journalist Andreas Unterberger considered the Soviet Union to be “for the longest time the strongest and often single obstacle for the reacquisition of sovereignty.”²

Thus Bader recalled that “the Western world was baffled” by Molotov’s February 8, 1955, address decoupling the Austrian question from a German peace treaty, “thereby removing what had become the major obstacle to a settlement.”³ Kreisky as well later described the subsequent Soviet invitation to talks in Moscow as a “sensational turn” in Soviet policy.⁴ “Even more startling” to Bader “was the pace at which this sudden reversal of Soviet policy translated into action.” Following Molotov’s March 1955 invitation to the Austrians, Austrian and Soviet delegations meeting in Moscow in April “had settled the remaining details of the German assets and reparations questions” and had agreed to Austria’s future international status “in the space of a few days and fewer pages of text.”⁵

³ Bader, Austria between East and West, 185.
⁴ Bruno Kreisky, Die Herausforderung: Politik an der Schwelle des Atomzeitalters (Düsseldorf: Econ Verlag, 1963), 101.
⁵ Bader, Austria between East and West, 185.
The question of the “German assets” controlled by the Soviets in their USIA holdings had been a notably intractable issue during the previous years of State Treaty negotiations. Under the original State Treaty terms in Article 22, the Soviet Union was to “receive for a period of validity of thirty years concessions to oil fields equivalent to 60% of the extraction of oil in Austria for 1947, as well as property rights to all buildings, constructions, equipment, and other property belonging to these oil fields.” The Soviets were also entitled to “60% of all exploration areas located in Eastern Austria that are German assets…and which are in its possession at the present time.” In these areas the Soviet Union had “the right to carry out explorations…for 8 years and to subsequent extraction of oil for a period of 25 years beginning from the moment of the discovery of oil.” The Soviet Union would also obtain in Austria “oil refineries having a total annual production capacity of 420,000 tons of crude oil.”

Outside of the oil industry, the Soviet Union was to maintain ownership of “the assets of the Danube Shipping Company (D.D.S.G.), located in Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria; and, likewise…100% of the assets of the Danube Shipping Company located in Eastern Austrian.” Austria, meanwhile, would “pay the Soviet Union 150,000,000 United States dollars in freely convertible currency within a period of 6 years” for the rest of the “German assets” in Austria. The Western powers in Article 22, for their part, transferred “to Austria all property, rights and interests held or claimed by or on behalf of any of them in Austria as former German assets or war booty.”

The State Treaty’s Article 22 seemed to make a mockery out of the immediately preceding Article 21 claiming that “no reparation shall be exacted from Austria arising

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7 Ibid.
out of the existence of a state of war in Europe after 1st September, 1939.”

When the State Treaty negotiators had first agreed to these provisions in 1949, President Karl Renner had responded that he would declare the day of the treaty’s signing as a national day of mourning. Kreisky in September 1953, furthermore, expressed the view that such economic demands would keep Austria in a “condition of half colonial dependency” already overthrown by countries of the Middle and Far East. Nonetheless, the Austrian government in 1949 and later had been willing to sign this treaty, something the Austrian historian Eva-Marie Csáky explained with “the harshness of the material and moral burdens of the occupation regime, the always threatening danger of national partition as long as Allied troops were stationed in the country, and the situation of tension from the East-West conflict in Central Europe.”

At the 1955 Moscow Conference, though, Soviet negotiators surprised Kreisky as being “not only friendly, but also ready to make concessions,” such that “the most oppressive economic conditions of the State Treaty were considerably lightened.” The May 19, 1955, National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) of the United States agreed that the terms accepted by the Soviets at Moscow “involve important concessions as compared with positions previously held.” The Soviets had agreed to accept the payment of $150 million in Austrian goods instead of precious American foreign exchange and to relinquish Soviet holdings in the Austrian oil industry for ten annual deliveries of one

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8 Ibid.
10 Bruno Kreisky, Politik braucht Visionen: Aufsätze, Reden und Interviews zu aktuellen weltpolitischen Fragen (Königstein: Athenium Verlag, 1982), 56.
11 The Implications of the Austrian Treaty for the Policies of the USSR and other States, May 19, 1955; Folder 77; Box 2; Entry 29; National Intelligence Estimates concerning the Soviet Union, 1950-1961; Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, Record Group (RG) 263; National Archives (NA) Building II, College Park, MD.
million tons of oil (subsequent Soviet concessions meant that only six deliveries actually transpired). The Soviets also agreed to transfer the property of the DDSG in eastern Austria into Austrian hands for $2 million.\footnote{Alfons Schilcher, ed., Österreich und die Großmächte: Dokumente zur österreichischen Außenpolitik, 1945-1955, Materialien zur Zeitgeschichte series (Vienna: Geyer Edition, 1980), 286-287. For a copy of the Moscow Memorandum online, see: Moskauer Memorandum (accessed January 30, 2006); available from http://www.oesterreichistfrei.at/geschichte3_3_2.htm; and, in English translation, Moscow Memorandum (accessed February 27, 2006); available from http://www.ena.lu/mce.cfm. Kreisky noted the importance of the Marshall Plan in enabling Austria to fulfill Soviet demands, declaring in an address on April 21, 1955, that if it was possible for us to offer in Moscow six-year long goods deliveries in the amount of $150 million, we could only do this because we knew that the Austrian production apparatus was able to completely fulfill such an obligation. That the Austrian production apparatus is able to do this today is due first and foremost to the generous help which the American people shared with us in the framework of the Marshall Plan. See: Bruno Kreisky, Reden, vol. 1 (Vienna: Österreichische Staatsdruckerei, 1981), 13.} Annex II of the State Treaty effectively replaced Article 22 with the laconic statement that

on the basis of the pertinent economic provisions of the April 15, 1955 arrangements between the Soviet Union and Austria, the Soviet Union will transfer to Austria within two months from the date of entry into force of the present Treaty, all property, rights and interests to be retained or received by it in accordance with Article 22, except the Danube Shipping Company (D.D.S.G.) assets in Hungary, Rumanian and Bulgaria.\footnote{State Treaty (accessed February 27, 2006); available from http://www.ena.lu/mce.cfm. Article 36 (“Forces of Annexes”) of the treaty gave “provisions of the Annexes…force and effect as integral parts of the present Treaty.”}

This “contrast to all the tortuous negotiations that had gone before” formed for Bader and others the “lingering enigma” of “Soviet withdrawal from Austria in 1955.” Bader noted in 1966, moreover, that this withdrawal “marked the first and thus far the only time” that the postwar Soviet “line of advance” in Europe had retreated.\footnote{Bader, vii-viii, 185.} The American scholar Audrey Kurth Cronin, meanwhile, remarked that “the Moscow memorandum was the first official Soviet document to recognize and confirm Swiss neutrality.” Earlier in World War II the “Soviet Union had repeatedly denounced” the
Swiss as “pro-fascist” and “cowardly.”\(^\text{15}\) Given scanty access over the years to Soviet archives, Bader and others have had to speculate what motivated these unusual Soviet actions in 1955.

Many like Kreisky ascribe the Austrian withdrawal to the “gradual success” of the “policies of containment.” Confronted with this success, the successors to Stalin in the Soviet power apparatus wanted to make a “widely visible act of ending the Stalinist foreign policy” just as Khrushchev would “in a spectacular manner” call for the end of Stalinism domestically at the 20\(^{\text{th}}\) Party Congress of the Soviet Communist party in 1956.\(^\text{16}\) Bader in particular noted that, similar to later generations of Soviet leaders, Khrushchev was then discovering Cold War confrontation with the West to be a costly endeavor. A “period of East-West détente,” though, would give the Soviet Union an opportunity “to overcome economic deficiencies” while “Soviet military technology coped with the Western advantage in aircraft-delivered hydrogen weapons.”\(^\text{17}\)

The May 19, 1955, NIE validates Kreisky and Bader. “Soviet policy, even prior to Stalin’s death,” the NIE stated, “had apparently recognized the need for some relaxation of international tensions, partly to arrest the growing cohesion of Western alliances, and partly to slow the pace and reduce the burden of the arms race.” The NIE even speculated that the Soviets feared an outbreak of Sino-American hostilities and sought a relaxation in Europe that “would not only place the USSR in a favorable position to prevent its own involvement in such hostilities, but would also increase its


\(^{16}\) Kreisky, *Die Herausforderung*, 102.

\(^{17}\) Bader, *Austria between East and West*, 202.
ability to influence the European powers to try to restrain US actions against communist China.”

The Austrian historian Reiner Eger agreed that the “balance of power” built by containment made the achievement of Communist goals by military force “hardly possible” and restricted ideological struggle to the “level of nonmilitary activities.” Hemmed in by Western resistance, Soviet leaders had to “overcome the political and economic isolation in which the Soviet Union had come in the last years through Stalin’s policies with strategic and structural reforms.” The “new Soviet strategy” called for renunciation of military threats, facilitation of commercial and cultural contacts, establishment of new and expansion of existing relations through state visits; all measures that on the part of the Soviet government were not thought of as true concessions and a willingness to compromise, but were evaluated however by the people and in part by the governments of the Western states as a sign of Soviet willingness to negotiate and love of peace and therefore did not miss their propagandistic purpose.

Accordingly, the Austrian-born former American ambassador to Afghanistan (1966-1973), Robert G. Neumann, emphasized in 1982 that the Soviet Union was willing to accept the Austrian State Treaty, not because it had softened or had become more “peace-loving,” but because it saw a definite advantage to its long but persistent course towards the rectification of the international imbalance, which at that time favored the West.

“Khrushchev’s view of the dangers and opportunities on the international horizon,” analyzed Bader, made him expect significant diplomatic advantages from

Austrian withdrawal. Just when the “Warsaw Pact consolidated security arrangements within Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union sought to lessen Western military pressures by initiating a campaign against military alliances and for ‘disarmament’ and ‘neutralism.’”

Soviet actions in Austria “were all part of the same diplomatic offensive” including various “public relations junkets of Khrushchev and [Soviet Premier Nikolai] Bulganin” during this time, Soviet support for the April 1955 Bandung Conference of Afro-Asians, Soviet disarmament proposals on May 10, 1955, and a Soviet offer to conclude a Japanese peace treaty.21 During 1955 the Soviet Union also withdrew from its naval base in Porkkala, Finland, and established diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) following the visit to Moscow of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in September 1955. Austrian historian Gerald Stourzh commented in 1980 that “1955 was a year of great new impulses for détente in Europe.”22

One manifestation of détente that followed almost directly from the State Treaty was the July 1955 Geneva Summit. “Here,” wrote Bader, “the Austrian hostage played a major role.”23 In his “Chance for Peace” address of April 16, 1953, before the American Society of Newspaper Editors, President Dwight David Eisenhower had listed the “Soviet Union’s signature upon an Austrian treaty” as one of the “clear and specific acts” that could demonstrate Soviet “sincerity of peaceful purpose” as a precondition for better relations.24 Although the Geneva Summit was, according to Rathkolb, a “flop,” it was

21 Bader, Austria between East and West, 202.
23 Bader, Austria between East and West, 202.
nonetheless of “symbolic” importance in meeting the Soviet Union’s desire for international recognition.25

One “junket” of Khrushchev and Bulganin in particular led them to Belgrade, Yugoslavia, on May 26, 1955, a mere 11 days after the State Treaty’s signing. This “pilgrimage to Canossa,” in the words of Austrian international relations scholar Hanspeter Neuhold, and the ensuing talks until June 2 sought reconciliation with Tito’s renegade national Communist regime.26 The Soviet leadership under Khrushchev was, in the words of Stourzh, “intent on healing the breach between Stalin and Tito which had occurred in 1948 and which had led Yugoslavia, in the early fifties, even closer to an association with western oriented nations.”27 The British historian Hugh Seton-Watson even saw a “causal” relationship between the State Treaty and improved Soviet-Yugoslav relations, given that the State Treaty removed Soviet forces from Austria and thereby limited the Soviet encirclement of Yugoslavia.28

As Neuhold noted, Soviet withdrawal from Austria was also useful in softening the “aggressive image of the USSR” in the “Third World.” To the end of winning these nations for the Soviet camp, Khrushchev and Bulganin extended their travels to an Asian tour in November and December 1955.29 The itinerary of state visits included Afghanistan, Burma, and India.30

30 Cronin, Great Power Politics and the Struggle over Austria, 162.
Cronin noted that “the Berlin blockade and the Prague coup had poisoned the cause of Soviet communism west of the Berlin Wall, but the peoples of the less developed countries, many of them alienated from their former imperialist masters, were more receptive to new ideas.” “Unlike Western Europe,” Cronin observed, “many young countries still reserved judgment on Soviet communism.” The Chinese Communist victory in 1949, meanwhile, had captured “the admiration of many nonaligned countries” as “an exciting successor to the Bolshevik Revolution.” Coupled with the Soviet Asian tour’s “flamboyant denunciations of Western ‘colonialism’” and aid offers, the example of Austrian neutrality “added a new touch of reasoned conciliation to post-Stalin Soviet ideology” and seemed to acknowledge “a third way between East and West” for the developing world. This was needed as communism “had begun to seem little more than ancient Russian expansionism.” “The unprecedented success of Soviet Third World policies in subsequent years” demonstrated the merit of Khrushchev’s policies.  

Foreign Minister Gruber remembered that the “uncommitted nations” were particularly important in the Soviet Union’s “peace offensive” of the era. This campaign was an “important political means in world politics” of “freezing the use of atomic weapons at least long enough so that the East could achieve parity in armament.”  

In this Soviet strategy of détente, Austria went from enduring an often harsh Soviet occupation to being an international showcase of Soviet munificence. Kreisky pointed out in an address in Berlin on December 1, 1958, “the particular heartiness” that greeted an Austrian governmental delegation in Moscow the previous July and “provoked general astonishment in the international public.” “The reasons for this heartiness,”
Kreisky explained, “might not be justified alone by the need of the Soviet Union to develop good relations with Austria, but rather evidently in the wish to show in a very spectacular manner how efficacious every policy of neutrality is for the improvement of relations with the Soviet Union is.”\textsuperscript{33}

\textit{Neutralizing NATO: An Austrian Model for Germany and Beyond?}

Austrian neutrality also offered prospects for compensating the Soviet Union’s strategic weakness in Western Europe. The historian Eger noted that Soviet advocacy of détente “was supposed primarily to hinder or weaken European unity efforts, disintegrate the Western alliance system by excluding the United States from European affairs, and move the American government toward the abandonment of its bases and the withdrawal of its armed forces from the European continent.”\textsuperscript{34} The “bigger stakes for which Moscow is playing,” agreed \textit{The Economist} on April 23, 1955, is “Germany and, ultimately, Europe.”\textsuperscript{35} This “reduction of the American troop presence in the world” was especially “a long range goal of Soviet policies” because, as the Austrian journalist Karl Heinz Ritschel observed, “in 1955 the nuclear superiority of the Western powers was clear” and the Soviets realized that “the centers of their armament lay in range of American intermediate missiles.”\textsuperscript{36}

“Austria,” recalled Gruber, “seemed in these considerations to present that knot, through whose cutting the structure of the overseas engagement of the USA could be loosened.” There was “good reason for the assumption that Germany and perhaps also

\textsuperscript{33} Kreisky, \textit{Reden}, 76.
\textsuperscript{34} Eger, 17.
\textsuperscript{35} “Bluebird from the Vienna Woods,” \textit{The Economist}, April 23, 1955, 265.
other areas could from now on make use of the presented model in the near future.”

Bader agreed that “the most compelling justification for Khrushchev’s action” was the “long-term calculation that the Austrian settlement would serve as a model—an inducement for some to accept demilitarization, for others to point up the advantages of staying out of military alliances.” The “most immediate objective” for this “Austrian example” was to act as “a temptation to those in Italy or West Germany who for ideological or practical reasons were hesitant about NATO.” “With Austria and Finland as showpieces,” explained Bader,

it is likely that the Soviet Union envisioned in 1955 a band or corridor of neutral states running from Sweden and Finland in the north through West Germany and Austria in the center, to Yugoslavia and Italy in the south. The advantages to the Soviet Union of such a corridor would have been enormous, particularly for strategic considerations, in pushing the West’s military forces back from the Warsaw Pact frontier.

Stourzh agreed in 1988, writing that

Austria should fulfill a function similar to that of Sweden, Finland, Switzerland and Yugoslavia. In other words, there clearly emerged the intention of creating or enlarging neutral belts between NATO and Eastern bloc nations. One was to emerge in Scandinavia, and it is important to be aware of the fact that the Soviet Union in September 1955 announced its readiness to give up its naval base in Porkkala, Finland, the withdrawal to be effected by the end of the year. A second belt of neutral, or at any rate alliance-free, nations was to emerge in central and east central Europe.

Given its importance, Germany formed the center of all such speculations.

Considering the parallels between the two occupied and divided countries of Germany and Austria, an independent and neutral Austria could not help but raise hopes for similar

37 Gruber, Meine Partei ist Österreich, 169.
38 Bader, Austria between East and West, 205-207.
developments in Germany. German polls from 1955 showed that a plurality (44%) believed that Chancellor Adenauer should accept for Germany a status similar to Austria’s, even though most (50% versus 21%) did not consider this possible. The German journalist Karl-Heinz Janßen recalled 25 years after the State Treaty on May 16, 1980, in the Hamburg weekly *Die Zeit* that

it is hardly imaginable today what pipe dreams of German reunification were awoken in these parts in May 1955 when the four victorious powers of the Second World War signed the Austrian State Treaty in Belvedere Palace. Not only Social Democrats, then still in the opposition, but also bourgeois publicists like Paul Sethe saw in the Viennese Compromise—withdrawal of all occupation troops and territorial unity in exchange for neutralization and nonalignment—a model case for the solution of also the German question.

Writing two years after the State Treaty, the Austrian Ernst Karl Winter substantiated Janßen’s views. “A wave of sympathy,” wrote Winter,

breaks upon the Austrian who visits Germany today, not only, as before, whenever he represents the cultural individuality of Austria, but rather, above all, because he as a representative of today’s Austrian political individuality brings the idea of neutrality to life. The Austrian *homo politicus* abroad today embodies, without saying much about it, the presently unique success of a policy that, while having the strongest cultural and economic affinity with the West, is able to hold open both the window for the small Eastern peoples looking toward the West and also the gate to the East’s power politics interest system. Austria’s historical function and mission lies today again in this characteristic middle position. It is no wonder therefore, that particularly those Germans who still have preserved the historic-political memory of German in a mediating position between West and East speak of Austria with inner respect, as the visitor gladly and again and again discovers.

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In the early months of 1955, the Soviets sought to capitalize upon neutralist sentiment and reunification desires in Germany with, in the words of Austrian historian Michael Gehler, a foreign policy “remarkably free of propaganda and concentrated on behind-the-scenes informal diplomacy.” Although the Paris Agreements providing for German rearmament and Western integration in NATO received the signature of Western leaders in October 1954, the accords still faced ratification in various national parliaments. “Kremlin diplomacy hoped to derail the ratification process,” Gehler analyzed, with the “Austrian solution…carefully presented as a model for resolving the German question and for stopping German rearmament and Western integration in its tracks.”

43 The historian Adam B. Ulam believed that, although the Soviets were unwilling to expose their fears, especially the prospect of a nuclear armed Germany prompted the Soviets to entice the Germans with Austrian neutrality.

Thus Austrian officials returning from Moscow in April 1955 confidentially related to the French ambassador to Austria, François Seydoux, official Soviet statements that, according to Gehler, “if West Germany remained outside NATO, the Soviet Union would be prepared to make generous proposals in favor of reunification.” British diplomats, meanwhile, recorded Foreign Minister Leopold Figl’s understanding of talks with Soviet diplomat Vladimir Semyonov that the whole Russian change of tactics [vis-à-vis Austria] was aimed at creating a precedent and example for Germany; that the Russians already had proposals on Germany ready; and that these proposals (which might include an invitation to Adenauer and [SPD leader Erich] Ollenhauer to make a joint visit to Moscow) would probably be made even if there were a hitch over the conclusion of the Austrian Treaty.

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44 “Symposium über den internationalen Hintergrund,” 173.
Soviet efforts did not go unnoticed. “The benign treatment accorded to Herr Raab last week,” analyzed the April 23, 1955, issue of *The Economist*, “was well designed to make Germans as well as Austrians see Russia as the great potential benefactor of tomorrow rather than as the merciless withholder of yesterday.” In particular, the conjunction of occupation’s end with the “prospect that the Austrian prisoners will be home this year stimulates intense personal longings among thousands of Germans.”

“*Pravda* and other Soviet organs,” *The Economist* summarized, have laid out a simple, engaging pattern: Austria should follow Switzerland along the path of comfortable neutrality, and Germany should follow Austria. The German Social-Democrats have lost no time in leaping to the conclusion they were meant to reach. Their spokesmen attribute Austria’s success to the fact that it had not bound itself to the west, and it is further argued that Austria has shown the impossibility of securing both national reunion and allies. As well as the Social-Democrats, many other Germans are clearly inclined to think along the same lines; some of them are members of the coalition parties, and the BHE [*Bund der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten*] (refugee) party is particularly rent on the issue of *Bündnislosigkeit*, or freedom from alliances.46

Cronin also considered Molotov’s call in his February 8, 1955, address for a four-power conference to treat both the German and Austrian questions as part of this derailment strategy:

By holding out the prospect of an Austrian treaty but requiring that a four-power conference on Germany and Austria meet first, the Soviet leaders calculated that the Austrians would pressure the Western powers to agree to a conference. Ideally, German rearmament would then be buried in Allied squabbles over the Western negotiating position.47

46 “Bluebird from the Vienna Woods,” *The Economist*, April 23, 1955, 266. The BHE concerned itself with those Germans expelled from German territories in Eastern Europe. These refugees would have been particularly sensitive to any possibility of German unity combined with a return to their homes. For more information on the BHE and German refugees, visit the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung’s website and see: *Die Vertriebenen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (accessed September 12, 2006); available from http://library.fes.de/library/netzquelle/zwangsmigration/41intro.html.

47 Cronin, *Great Power Politics and the Struggle over Austria*, 146.
Molotov’s linkage showed that presenting a neutral Austria as a model for Germany merely represented the second Soviet strategy for preventing German rearmament. The first, in the words of Cronin, had been to hold “an Austrian treaty hostage to developments in West Germany.” The Soviet Union could have had a state treaty in November 1949 with its original economic provisions far more favorable to the terms stipulated in the April 15, 1955, Moscow Memorandum. Soviet diplomats at the time, though, had brought negotiations to a halt with trivial objections such as a demand for Austrian payment for Soviet food supplies provided to Vienna’s people in the summer of 1945 amidst the chaos of war’s end (i.e. the “pea debt” or Erbsenschulden question).48

Austrian military historian Manfried Rauchensteiner interpreted Molotov’s emphasis at the Berlin Conference on the dangers of a new Anschluß in this manner. “Now it probably represents an underestimation of the judgment capacity of Soviet politicians,” he wrote in 1979, “if one wanted to assume that they actually believed in the revival of an Anschluß danger.” More likely is the explanation of Austria as a “demonstration piece” that could show that “the West was not at all disposed to revise its own [German] plans in favor of Austria.”49

Anything that could have led to German neutrality provoked the disfavor of the Western powers. Accordingly, the three Western foreign ministers coolly greeted the Austrian declaration on neutrality at Berlin. Told of it in advance, the Western statesmen Georges Bidault, John Foster Dulles, and Anthony Eden called Foreign Minister Figl and his deputy Kreisky to the residence of the British high commissioner in Berlin on

February 10, 1954, and urged the Austrians to abandon issuing such a declaration in light of its possible effects on Germany.  

Kreisky remembered that the Western foreign ministers argued “without interruption,” but the Austrians were only willing to make the concession of not making the declaration at the start of the talks over Austria. Reports of opposition from the Western high commissioners in Austria to Austrian neutrality simultaneously reached Figl’s delegation in Berlin.  

Later in 1955, the sous-directeur leading the Eastern European Department of the Quai d’Orsay, Soutou, according to Austrian historian Rolf Steininger, “painted a gloomy picture” of the Kremlin’s Austrian diplomacy seen as “essentially directed toward Germany.” Soutou thought that the Russians were out to create in Austria an artificial neutralized paradise, to serve as what the French call a miroir aux alouettes to daze the eyes of the neighboring western Germans. Thousands of German tourists would see how agreeable it was to be neutralized, prosperous and courted by both sides.  

British observers joined the French in their concern for Austrian neutrality’s influence on Germany. The April 23, 1955, issue of The Economist reported that at a conference of the Deutsche-Englische Gesellschaft the preceding weekend in Königswinter, a Rhine village near Bonn, “neutralism was much in the air,” having been “strengthened but not caused by the ‘triumph’ of Herr Raab in Moscow.” The Economist described the “shock felt by the British members of parliament” visiting Königswinter as “considerable.” One British guest “remarked bitterly that he had heard of rats leaving the

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sinking ship, but never of them deserting one that has just been launched. But that was the impression gained by the British from the Germans at the meeting—that they were planning to leave the western alliance before the ink on it was dry.” The British recognized

German desire for reunion, and sympathized with it, but had not realized that there was any considerable sentiment for a deal with the Russians in which Germany would accept not only neutrality or neutralization, but also not-quite-free elections. They heard with some indignation German arguments that they must contract out of Western European defense, while somehow keeping cultural and political affiliation with the West.53

The West German government under Adenauer was, if anything, even more disturbed by Austrian neutrality. Kreisky recalled West German diplomats at Berlin “exerting themselves to sabotage coming State Treaty negotiations” because of the possible effects of a State Treaty-neutrality package upon Germany. “The State Treaty,” wrote Kreisky in 1988 in his second volume of memoirs, “did not fit into Adenauer’s concept.”54

Adenauer’s opposition remained constant throughout the following months. Vice-Chancellor Schärf told the SPÖ party leadership on April 1, 1955, that the Adenauer government was doing everything “in order to move the Western powers to not permit any negotiations over Austria.” Adenauer’s press secretary, Felix von Eckhardt, openly declared during a Vienna visit that “Austria united and, in addition, free would call forth unpleasant comparisons in Germany with the policy of Adenauer.”55

54 Bruno Kreisky, Im Strom der Politik: Erfahrungen eines Europäers (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1988), 9-10.

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ÖVP secretary general Alfred Maleta remembered that the effect upon German-
Austrian relations when Austria ultimately agreed to neutrality in the Moscow
Memorandum was “catastrophic,” with Adenauer being “literally ‘sour.”” Maleta
recalled that “a representative of the Germany embassy was with me once every week
and declared to me what a mistake we had made with our policy of neutrality.” Raab
finally decided to send Maleta secretly to Bonn via Switzerland in order to try to ease the
concerns of the CDU leadership in direct talks.⁵⁶

Nothing, though, could ever fully reconcile Adenauer to what he saw as “die
ganze österreichische Schweinerei.” Bonn recalled its ambassador from Vienna the day
before the signing of the State Treaty and subsequently omitted sending any
congratulations for the occasion. When President Eisenhower told a Le Monde
correspondent at a May 18, 1955, press conference that he had “not closed the door” on
the idea of a north-south line through Europe of neutral states armed like Switzerland,
Adenauer went into a rage.⁵⁷

As the historical record now shows, however, attempts to neutralize Germany
were ultimately of no avail. “The SPD,” wrote Gehler, “indeed recognized the dramatic
Soviet concessions in Austria as a tool to challenge Adenauer” and “behind the
scenes…asked their socialist brethren on the Austrian delegation to Moscow to test the
ultimate Soviet intentions towards the German question.” All too conscious of past
troublesome linkages between the German and Austrian questions, “the Austrian SPÖ

⁵⁶ Alfred Maleta, “Persönliche Erinnerungen auf dem Weg zum österreichischen Staatsvertrag,” in
Neue Fakten zu Staatsvertrag und Neutralität, 86.
⁵⁷ Christian Jenny, Konsensformel oder Vorbild?: Die Entstehung der österreichischen
Neutralität und ihr Schweizer Muster, Schriftenreihe der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Aussenpolitik
series (Bern: Verlag Paul Haupt, 1995), 229. For Le Monde’s report of this press conference, see: Henri
leaders refused to endanger a breakthrough in the Austrian question by raising any German issues” and “strictly refused to keep their German Genossen fully appraised of the Soviet position.”

By the time of the Moscow Conference, however, the Paris Accords had obtained the assent of both the French and German parliaments. Thus, Cronin observed, “Austria lost its usefulness as a hostage against Western behavior.” Even the Soviets had to concede that, in the near term at least, developments in Austria could not stop German integration in NATO. Kreisky preserved in his notes of the Moscow Conference Premier Bulganin’s toast at the dinner hosted by the Austrian embassy in Moscow on April 12, 1955. “The Austrian question,” Bulganin announced to Molotov’s approval,

Net Neutrality: Was Germany too Large to be Neutral?

Assessing this Soviet failure to stop West German rearmament, Cronin found it interesting to speculate about what might have happened had the Soviet Union agreed to grant Austria neutral status and withdraw the troops one year earlier. Molotov’s refusal to conclude such an agreement at the Berlin conference of 1954 may have been a tactical error. A well-timed Soviet diplomatic gesture in the months before Germany’s inclusion in the

59 Cronin, Great Power Politics and the Struggle for Austria, 161.
60 Stadler, 443.
Western alliance might conceivably have nudged volatile French and even German public opinion away from support of a rearmed Germany.⁶¹

As it was, Cronin wrote, “the Soviet volte-face over Austria occurred only after it was apparent that the Western alliance was gathering strength.” This “timing” was “very fortunate” for Western alliance unity as “the Soviet withdrawal from Austria could be hailed as a success for Western diplomacy without seriously threatening Western defense goals in Europe.” Yet even now, according to Cronin, Austrian neutrality might “convince the West Germans that only military neutrality could bring about German reunification.” Although neither prospect pleased the Soviets, “a neutral, reunified Germany was a slightly less undesirable prospect than an anti-Soviet, Western-supported West Germany.”⁶²

Many, though, have doubted whether the Soviets would have ever gone beyond proposals of neutrality as a spoiling measure and actually allowed Germany to unify on the basis of neutrality. A telegram from the Austrian embassy in Bonn on April 18, 1955, advised that the embassy “was of the opinion that alone the size and the geographic position of Germany would probably exclude the same solution as the one striven for in the case of Austria.”⁶³ Gottfried Heindl, who became editor in chief of the ÖVP press service on March 1, 1955, and thereafter had almost daily contact with Julius Raab, recalled as well that the chancellor almost without exception consistently denied, both in public and in private, that Austrian neutrality could serve as a pattern for Germany.⁶⁴

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⁶¹ Cronin, Great Power Politics and the Struggle for Austria, 167.
⁶² Ibid, 151-152, 167.
⁶³ Schilcher, 292.
⁶⁴ Gottfried Heindl, “Die Entwicklung der außenpolitischen Vorstellungen Julius Raabs,” in Neue Fakten zu Staatsvertrag und Neutralität, 51-52. Heindl cites as one exception a meeting of Christian Democratic youth from the Nouvelles Équipes Internationales (NEI) in Salzburg in September 1955. One
Kreisky himself received the same impression in Moscow. Kreisky recalled Molotov “clearly” ruling out neutrality for Germany in a conversation with Schärf. First Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan, meanwhile, explained to Kreisky in light of the population size of Germany (70 million) and Austria (seven million) that the “neutrality of a small state could be proclaimed with a piece of paper but never the neutrality of a large state.” “Mikoyan’s rhetorical question” to Kreisky was “whether war should be waged if perhaps a united, neutralized Germany renounced its neutrality.”

Writing in Foreign Affairs four years after the State Treaty, Kreisky considered “the widespread opinion” of the State Treaty as a Soviet “model for a subsequent solution of the German problem” to be “quite erroneous.” “The difference in the relative importance of the two countries,” Kreisky argued, “means that the two cases can never be equated. It would even be fair to say, perhaps, that a solution applicable to Austria is almost by definition inapplicable to the German problem.” Commenting on this issue in 1963, Kreisky pointed out that “propaganda” advocating an Austrian solution for Germany was not “incommodious for the Soviet government” and indeed was even promoted by the Soviets. Yet there existed no statement by a Soviet politician according to which “the neutrality of Germany would be a path to reunification.”

Gruber in his memoirs published in 1988 agreed with Kreisky. “Neutrality,” he wrote, “like Austria declared for itself, presents a hardly sustainable formula for a great power like Germany.” “A state the size of Germany,” Gruber explained, is able, by uniting its weight with one of the rival sides, to become very easily a decisive factor in any confrontation. It is therefore the great

evening Secretary General Maleta had a reception in his house, during which Raab met with the CDU/CSU delegation. Afterwards Raab said, “I would have gladly given the Germans their state treaty.”

65 Kreisky, Politik braucht Visionen, 57, and Reden, 148.
67 Kreisky, Die Herausforderung, 114.
individual weight of such a state that blocks for it some paths which are still passable for a small state. Because war and peace, life or downfall of an entire group of nations or a dominant way of life can depend upon the decision of a state like Germany, one of the two rival camps will hardly be satisfied with mere declarations or with promises. Particularly not when one of these camps [i.e. the Soviet bloc] would have to give up a real bargaining chip [i.e. East Germany] for such a declaration.68

Writing three years before Gruber, the former Austrian foreign minister and United Nations secretary general and soon-to-be Austrian federal president Kurt Waldheim agreed with Gruber that attempts to apply an Austrian “model” to Germany were “rather naïve.” In addition to balance of power considerations, Waldheim did not believe that “Moscow would have been ready to renounce a Communist East Germany.”69 For Bader, such considerations vitiated through the years any attempt on the part of Henry Kissinger or others to apply the “lessons” of Austria to Germany. Bader saw “nothing really comparable about the two situations, except perhaps the incompatibility of the population and communism.” Compared to Austria’s “scant strategic value to the Soviet Union, particularly after 1948,” East Germany was “a viable political and economic unit” and “an area of the highest strategic concern to the Soviet Union—not only because of East Germany’s size and position, but because a united Germany, unlike a unified Austria, could become an acute threat to Soviet security.”70

Khrushchev himself substantiated the analysis of Gruber, Waldheim, and Bader. As a young diplomat, Rudolf Kirchschläger took part in a diplomatic visit to Moscow in 1959 with Kreisky, who was by then foreign minister in an independent Foreign Ministry, and Schärf, who had become federal president. In response to a member of the

68 Gruber, Meine Partei ist Österreich, 245-246.
69 Kurt Waldheim, Im Glaspalast der Weltpolitik, 3rd ed. (Düsseldorf: Econ Verlag, 1985), 54.
70 Bader, Austria between East and West, 208.
delegation asking whether Austria’s status had any applicability for Germany, Khrushchev spontaneously responded, “Are not 50 million Germans [i.e. roughly the population of West Germany] enough?” In contrast to eastern Austria, Khrushchev added that

in Germany the matter is completely different. There a portion has given its allegiance to socialism….We will not abandon a people which has once given its loyalty to us in the fight against counterrevolution, from them we will not allow the progressive achievements of socialism to be taken, by no one! With this people we will stand for ever, no matter the price!?

Aside from worries about keeping a large country like Germany neutral or Soviet unwillingness to let go of East Germany, “progressive achievements of socialism” or not, it was doubtful whether a united Germany could have ever been neutral in the Cold War. Like Kreisky, the Austrian journalist Viktor Reimann noted that the Soviets “demanded the neutralization of Germany at every opportunity.” Yet Reimann actually believed that the Soviets had little appreciation for this possibility so unsettling to Western diplomats and that a neutral Germany “stood outside of every political possibility.” “Even with the assumption of a neutrality statute,” wrote Reimann, “a reunited Germany, as a consequence of its economic and cultural ties, would represent a power increase of the West.”

“After all,” the German scholar Klaus Larres noted, by the spring of 1953 it must have been obvious to Moscow—in view of the GDR’s deep unpopularity in East and West Germany—that the establishment of a neutral reunited German state would have entailed German neutrality ‘on the western side’ and Germany as a ‘secret ally’ of NATO (as would be the case with Austria after 1955).

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Analyzing Soviet policy, the German historian Bruno Thoß concluded that “the abandonment of the Soviet linkage [between Austria and Germany], the lack of subsequent offers, and the public shift to the two-state theory lead the Vienna success away from the German case.” For Thoß, Austria formed not so much a “precedent for Germany but rather a test case for détente.” Kreisky believed that this example of détente was not meant so much for Germany but rather “was intended to serve as a model for some of the smaller NATO countries.” Several of these countries, Kreisky noted in Foreign Affairs in 1959, contained important NATO bases and thus had the unenviable status as potential targets of Soviet atomic attack. Bader in 1966, meanwhile, analyzed that “more recently Moscow has portrayed Austria as the model of the policy of ‘atomic neutrality,’ one that should be emulated by such countries as Japan, Italy, and Norway.”

With the hindsight of 1982, Bader concluded that “there is little evidence that Austria became a model for nations with neutral ‘tendencies.’” Yet Soviet calculations were not entirely misplaced, at least for a period; the former American diplomat William Stearman recalled that Austrian neutrality and the related Spirit of Geneva began to have some effect on NATO. Iceland which was considered to be the bell-weather of any deterioration of NATO resolve, after the Geneva conference sent us a note stating that in light of “the changed international situation” they would like for us, the U.S., to withdraw forces from Iceland. This was a rather important base, Iceland represents a rather important base for the U.S., and this was considered the first blow to NATO resulting from the Spirit of Geneva. No one knows

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75 Kreisky, “Austria Draws the Balance,” 277-278.
76 Bader, Austria between East and West, 207-208. The May 19, 1955 NIE also mentioned the possibility of Japanese neutralization. See: The Implications of the Austrian Treaty for the Policies of the USSR and other States, May 19, 1955, NA.
how much farther the unraveling of NATO might have progressed had it continued. But the Hungarian revolution actually ended the 1955/56 détente period, and so this question becomes moot.\textsuperscript{78}

Accordingly, Rauchensteiner noted that Austria did not lack for Western criticism of its neutrality. This criticism often expressed the fear that Austria could have such a signal effect for states like Belgium, Holland, or Luxemburg, that is to say the smaller NATO states, that the wish for neutrality, above all the wish for a withdrawal from NATO, would also be voiced there, since this would lead indeed to a considerable reduction of defense budgets. Why should Belgium have high defense spending when Austria, it seemed, got by with a very small defense budget?\textsuperscript{79}

Such concerns emerged during the meeting of a certain Mr. Penfield from the Vienna embassy with Raab and Schärf on June 8, 1955. In what must have been the first of many later expressions of Western worries concerning insufficient Austrian defense efforts, Penfield warned of a “military vacuum” in Austria “which would make nonsense of neutrality policy and would vitiate Austria’s voice in world councils.” Moreover, Austrian “failure to carry its fair share of free world defense burden would also have serious effect on defense efforts of other small European nations, thus starting a deterioration which might have most unfortunate results for us all.”\textsuperscript{80}


\textsuperscript{80} Incoming Telegram of June 8, 1955; Folder 763.342/6-756; Box 3582; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 763.13/3-2455 to 763.5/10-1056; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
Dividing NATO: The Strategic Implications of Austrian Neutrality

Writing in 1971 after having recently ended a term as Austria’s foreign minister, Kurt Waldheim argued that the State Treaty

was in the interest of the maintenance of the international balance of power. Expressed in a simple formula this means: while until 1955 the balance of power of the Great Powers remained assured by the fourfold occupation of Austria, this balance was maintained by the conclusion of the State Treaty in the manner that all occupation troops simultaneously left Austria. The military balance of power did not therefore change because of the State Treaty.\(^{81}\)

Most observers, though, have not embraced Waldheim’s superficial strategic assessment. When considering “the alternative to the State Treaty viewed from Moscow,” German Die Zeit publisher Marion Gräfin Dönhoff determined that “all other solutions would have been less favorable for the Soviets.” A neutral Austria was “decisively to be preferred” to leaving “the Americans for an unlimited time in Vienna and the rest of Austria…thus on the periphery of the Soviet empire and in closest proximity to the dissatisfied East Europeans.”\(^{82}\) In “the strategic realm,” concluded Rauchensteiner, the “‘Socialist camp’ not only lost little through the neutralization of Austria, but rather in contrast made considerable gains.”\(^{83}\) Kreisky agreed that in a “strict and honest” assessment the State Treaty “amounted to an abandonment of the military interests of the West.”\(^{84}\)

Erich Reiter, perhaps Austria’s leading security studies scholar, confirmed in 1993 that “according to the unanimous expert military assessment the strategic and operational advantages from the evacuation of the former occupation zones and the


\(^{82}\) “Symposium über den internationalen Hintergrund,” 137.

\(^{83}\) Rauchensteiner, *Der Sonderfall*, 322.

\(^{84}\) Kreisky, *Im Strom der Politik*, 107.
neutralization of Austria are greater for the Soviet Union and/or Warsaw Pact” than NATO. Throughout the years analysts like Reiter have pointed in particular to the separation between Germany and Italy, the central and southern fronts of NATO, created by Austrian neutrality denying NATO the use of Tyrol with its strategic Brenner Pass. 85

“For the Russians,” Cronin wryly commented, “it was hardly a sacrifice to split NATO’s northern and southern flanks.” 86 Gruber remembered from his time as ambassador to America that “a high ranking officer” once said to him, “Today we fly from Munich to Milan in 20 minutes and tomorrow it will be perhaps two hours.” 87 Stearman quipped that the neutrality of Austria combined with the accession of Germany to NATO meant that “what the Paris Agreements had joined together, the State Treaty, at least partly, put asunder.” 88 British historian Gordon Shephard confirmed that Austrian neutrality “cut the whole of NATO into two. The Austrian Alps were added to the Swiss Alps to form a 300-mile granite bolt shutting off North from South. The Brenner was no longer a Western gateway but a Western frontier-post.” 89

“With the neutralization of Austria,” Bader noted in 1966, “the lines of communication and supply between two of the most important NATO countries—West Germany and Italy—must now pass through France” with resulting “logistic problems” and “difficulties of moving men and supplies from the Elbe to Verona.” 90 As Bader

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85 Erich Reiter, Österreichische Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik: Aufsätze und Essays, Rechts- und sozialwissenschaftliche Reihe series (Frankfurt: Verlag Peter Lang, 1993), 152.
86 Cronin, Great Power Politics and the Struggle for Austria, 153.
90 Bader, Austria between East and West, 204.
reviewed in 1982, Austria’s neutral geography hindered American responses to the 1958 Lebanon crisis (analyzed in detail later) and the 1973 October War.\footnote{Bader, “Austria, the United States, and the Path to Neutrality,” 95.}

In the year Bader first wrote about Austrian neutrality, 1966, moreover, France withdrew from NATO’s integrated command structure. Bader thus worried that “if France’s withdrawal of its military forces from NATO is eventually followed with a denial of French territory to NATO activities, the North Atlantic Treaty area would be split by a neutral belt, a situation that would have serious military implications for the West.”\footnote{Bader, Austria between East and West, 204.} Indeed, Thomas O. Schlesinger, an American scholar who spent the last years of the Austrian occupation in Austria as an American army intelligence officer, speculated “whether the United States would have agreed to Austrian neutrality as readily, after all American military installations, lines of communication and command and control facilities had been removed from France.”\footnote{Thomas O. Schlesinger, The United States and the European Neutrals, Studien zur Politischen Wirklichkeit series of the Instituts für Politikwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller Universitäts-Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1991), 41.}

As reported by the Swedish ambassador to Austria, Sven Allard, only Llewellyn Thompson, the American ambassador in Vienna, seemed to see Austrian neutrality with a silver lining in Tyrol. “The Austrians,” recalled Allard,

had long feared that the United States would, under some pretext, delay the signature of the State Treaty because it would break the link between Germany and Italy and prevent direct communications between the two countries in case of war. My conversations with Ambassador Thompson proved, however, that these fears were groundless. He was convinced that, in the event of war, the Soviet Union would be the first to violate Austrian neutrality. In such a case the United States would be entitled to intervene in defense of the country and to maintain the link at the Brenner Pass. On the other hand, should no violation take place, the advantage of

\cite{bader1966austria}
Austrian neutrality for the West would more than outweigh the disadvantage.\textsuperscript{94}

According to Reiter, the neutrality-imposed absence of Austria from NATO also denied the alliance a coherent, contiguous defense across the eastern Alps.\textsuperscript{95} “With only a small army,” moreover, Western security analysts, in the words of Cronin, worried that “an independent Austria without any additional Western troops or security guarantees would tempt Soviet invasion.”\textsuperscript{96}

A June 2, 1955, State Department memorandum concerning the redeployment of American forces to Italy, for instance, cited the exposure of northern Italy to Soviet attack and its separation from NATO forces in Germany following the end of the Austrian occupation. “The Italian government,” stated the memorandum, “has already informally expressed its concern to the United States and has asked NAC [North Atlantic Council] for assistance to meet this new military situation.” According to the memorandum, absent the transfer of American troops from occupation duty in Austria to Italy, neutralist sentiment could grow in Italy that “would greatly weaken or nullify Italy as a NATO partner.” The memorandum worried that the Allied withdrawal from Austria combined with existing Italian internal neutralist tendencies which are encouraged by the current Soviet attitude, not only profoundly changes the defense posture of Italy but also poses a political threat to her internal stability which could carry her into the neutralist camp. If in fact what are already taken in Italy as signs of Russo-Yugoslav détente do [sic] develop into a rapprochement, this would further affect Italy’s position.”\textsuperscript{97}

\textsuperscript{95} Reiter, 152.
\textsuperscript{96} Cronin, \textit{Great Power Politics and the Struggle over Austria}, 121.
\textsuperscript{97} \textit{U.S. Department of State (EUR) Memorandum concerning Redeployment of USFA Forces to Northeastern Italy, June 2, 1955}; Austria (601) Folder; Box 6; Lot 58D71; Subject Files Relating to Italian Affairs, 1953-1956; Records of the Officer in Charge of Italian and Austrian Affairs; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
Reiter also saw strategic disadvantages from Western withdrawal in eastern Austria. The removal of British troops from Carinthia and Styria meant “a considerable pullback of forward NATO positions from the east.” While the Warsaw Pact remained ensconced in East Germany and Czechoslovakia, NATO’s forward positions fell back almost 200 kilometers to the Bavarian Forest. The British withdrawal also reduced the line of contact between NATO territories and a nonaligned but potentially pro-Western Yugoslavia by about two-thirds (Carinthia, Styria, and Italy during the Austrian occupation, only Italy afterwards), thereby reducing NATO’s deployment possibilities.\(^\text{98}\)

An October 8, 1953, Joint Strategic Survey Committee report to the American Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), for example, worried that “the loss or severe neutralization of Austria” would not only expose NATO’s flanks in Italy and Germany but also “render exceedingly difficult protection by NATO forces of the left flank and rear of the Yugoslav Army” defending the Ljubljana Gap in Yugoslavia.\(^\text{99}\) A May 25, 1955, memorandum from JCS chairman Admiral Arthur William Radford to Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson, meanwhile, “desire[d] to emphasize” that these Yugoslav forces along with Italy’s national defense forces and the occupation troops in Austria had helped to defend “the southern flank of NATO.” Even before the State Treaty, the JCS had considered “the capability of holding that flank” by these forces “to be extremely marginal,” particularly given “Yugoslav reluctance to make even covert commitments to the West or coordinate any effective planning with the Allies.” Additionally, this “neutralization of Austria…coupled with the general Yugoslav tendency toward

\(^{98}\text{Reiter, 152.}\)

\(^{99}\text{Report by the Joint Strategic Survey Committee to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on U.S. Position with Respect to Austria, October 8, 1953; Folder CSS 388.1—Austria (6-8-46), Sec. 11; Box 11; Geographic File, 1951-1953; Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218; NA.}\)
neutrality and possible rapprochement with the Soviet Bloc” had closed “a primary source of extremely important intelligence on the adjacent areas.”

Ambassador Thompson’s calculations aside, the strategic disadvantages of Austrian neutrality combined with its previously examined effect upon alliance cohesion did not make Austrian neutrality popular in NATO circles. Gruber in Washington, DC, saw “delegations arrive daily from states that saw their own military security threatened by the evacuation of Austria. A West German parliamentary delegation, in particular, met with Secretary Wilson and brought to his attention the dangers flowing from Austria’s division of NATO.”

Reflecting the almost uniformly negative position of official circles in Bonn towards Austrian neutrality, meanwhile, one German Foreign Ministry official suggested on November 9, 1955, that West Germany not even diplomatically recognize this policy. This official argued that in the case of a general East-West bloc conflict “unavoidable military reasons” would demand a reassertion of NATO control over the Brenner corridor. Any reoccupation of western Austria, though, would involve first and foremost West German troops, thereby exposing the FRG to the reproach that “it had broken an obligation of international law as in the case of Belgium.” The Foreign Ministry did not follow this advice.

The Swiss scholar Christian Jenny considered Belgian foreign minister Paul Henri Spaak to have been an “especially vehement opponent of Austrian neutrality,” although

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101 Gruber, Meine Partei ist Österreich, 175.
he understood that “Austria could hardly have done anything else.” Jenny suggested that this was historically understandable. Belgium had “consciously anchored its international position in collective defense organizations and multinational organizations” such as NATO in 1949 after two periods of neutrality/nonalignment had ended in German conquest in two world wars. Spaak himself had been Belgian foreign minister in 1936 when Belgium abandoned a post-World War I alliance with the United Kingdom and France in favor of nonalignment after these two powers had shown themselves indecisive in confronting a resurgent Germany. Jenny thought that Spaak’s “especially marked antipathy” towards neutrality “is very well to be found in the failure of his own policy.”

In the end, the only way Austrian neutrality could strategically benefit the West would have been if the Austrians would prove unfaithful to neutrality, however proclaimed, and align with NATO in wartime. Soviet deputy high commissioner Semyon Kudriavzev expressed precisely this fear of Austrian neutrality actually benefiting the West to Ambassador Allard at a December 1954 cocktail party. “The Austrian government and people have a clearly pro-Western outlook, which you know as well as I do,” Kudriavzev stated. “So what would prevent the United States from making a secret agreement in which Austria pledged itself to prepare suitable bases? In case of war, American units would have supplies, quarters, and air fields waiting for them.”

Kudriavzev brushed aside suggestions by Allard that Soviet troops in Hungary could threaten Austria with invasion in case of covert neutrality violations. “If the

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103 Jenny, 260-262.
104 Allard, 148.
Austrian government ignored a more or less covert American violation of the State Treaty,” the Soviet diplomat argued,

it would, of course, never consent to the return of the Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia or Hungary to Eastern Austria. After the Austrian sovereignty has been restored by the State Treaty, Soviet military measures without such consent would be considered aggression under international law. For the United States, however, the situation would be completely different. The American government can easily—because of the pro-Western outlook of the country—induce Austria, for its own use, to establish military bases which American troops could occupy immediately in case of a threat of war. True, this would in fact violate the State Treaty, but it wouldn’t be aggression under international law. We could only protest but not retaliate with military countermeasures. This is what I referred to when I said that a withdrawal from Austria would cost the Soviet Union more than it would the United States.\textsuperscript{105}

Thus Cronin has noted that even when the Austrians proposed neutrality at the Berlin Conference, “Molotov evidently deemed such an offer of neutrality worthless.” Given that the Austrians were “economically and politically oriented toward the West,” Cronin asked, “what good were promises easily circumvented by secret basing and transit agreements operative in times of war?” With “only a small amount of pressure from the United States,” Western forces could reestablish themselves in Austria. The Soviet Union, by contrast, “could enter Austria only by force. A Western presence might be a treaty violation, but a Soviet presence would be an invasion.”\textsuperscript{106} Allard added that the “danger” of an independent Austria being “in fact, if not in form, politically, militarily, and economically integrated in the Western bloc” would only “increase as West Germany rearmed and regained its earlier predominant political influence in Central Europe. This

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid, 149.
\textsuperscript{106} Cronin, \textit{Great Power Politics and the Struggle over Austria}, 144-145.
is what the Soviets had in mind when they were talking about the danger of a new *Anschluss.*”¹⁰⁷

Given the prospect of pro-Western, even unfaithful neutrality, Rathkolb even considered Austrian neutrality as a strategic benefit for the West. Soviet hardliners like Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov wanted to maintain the Soviet occupation of Austria (discussed below), in part, because they considered eastern Austria a good jumping-off point for any offensive westwards. For NATO, by contrast, the end of the Austrian occupation meant that a pro-Western Austria would create its own army that could easily hold western Austria in the service of the alliance in any conflict. Even a small Austrian military would be superior to the few Western occupation troops remaining in Austria in 1955.¹⁰⁸

Raab himself stated in a private conversation “on about 24 October 1953” that was reported to the State Department “through a prominent Austrian journalist from an untested source” that Austria with a national army “would be able to make a more substantial contribution to Western security” than by remaining occupied.¹⁰⁹ President Eisenhower in turn, wrote Rathkolb in 1997, “trusted on the basis of his own knowledge in the ideological and economic pro-Western orientation of Austria.” Eisenhower thus “thoroughly understood the military neutrality of Austria as a strategic strengthening of the NATO flank in Austria,” with a *Bundesheer* created by the West providing “a gain in time for the formation of a NATO defense” in case of conflict with the Warsaw Pact.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Allard, 150.
¹⁰⁸ Rathkolb interview.
¹⁰⁹ Chancellor’s Raab’s Views on Austrian Contribution to Western Defense, October 24, 1953; Neutrality Folder; Box 9; Entry 1284; Lot 58D223; Subject Files Relating to the Austrian Occupation and Peace Treaty, 1949-55; Miscellaneous Lot Files; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
“The truth was,” agreed the American scholar James Jay Carafano in 2002, a well-organized post-treaty Austrian army could offer far more resistance to a Soviet invasion than the meager Western occupation forces stationed there. In some respects, it could be argued that NATO’s southern flank would be more secure with an Austrian army in the field and the occupation troops redeployed to shore up other critical areas. In truth, there was little advantage in attempting to co-opt Austria into a Western defensive regime. From a strategic viewpoint, the country could at best offer only a marginal contribution to NATO’s defense. The southern flank could have been held at the Italian and Germans borders, both of which were adequately defensible. From a strategic standpoint, given the alliance’s many commitments, arguing for Austria’s inclusion in the Western security Zone was a proposal of questionable value.\(^\text{111}\)

What the Soviets left behind in Austria: Was the Price Right?

Austrian historian Günter Bischof has observed that when the Russians spoke of *Anschluß*, they thought presumably not merely about Germany, but rather also quite specifically about the Western powers. The secret rearmament of the Austrian western zones could not remain hidden to Moscow; it was therefore desired to hinder an Austrian “*Anschluß*” on a Western defensive alliance under all circumstances.\(^\text{112}\)

Because, Bischof added, this trend towards rearming the Western zones of Austria, and fully integrating them into NATO defense planning, would only have strengthened over time, it seemed like a prudent decision by the Kremlin masters to stop this creeping military integration of Austria into Western European defense and neutralize the country. The Soviets had little to lose and much to gain.\(^\text{113}\)

\(^{111}\) James Jay Carafano, *Waltzing into the Cold War: The Struggle for Occupied Austria*, Texas A&M University Military History series (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 195-196.


Weighed against these gains and the advantages stemming from a Soviet policy of
détente exhibited in Austria, meanwhile, the cost of abandoning Soviet control over
eastern Austria has appeared small to most observers. Bader argued that “the Austrian
move as an integral part of a long-term effort to turn the concept of ‘neutralism’ to the
Soviet Union’s advantage” entailed “in fact giving up very little” for the Soviets. The
British diplomat Michael Cullis recalled in 1991 that, as previously noted, for the Soviets
“Austria was never to be more than an issue of secondary importance…: a foothold to be
retained as long as it suited them, and to extract as much benefit from as they could, but
not a major interest for its own sake.” Given Soviet disinterest in partition and the
creation of a Communist East Austrian state, the Soviet’s

part-occupancy of an Austria that preserved its basic “occidentation” thus
took on essentially the character of a bargaining counter vis-à-vis the
West: something not to be lightly relinquished, but which could in certain
circumstances be traded for advantage elsewhere. And with the passing of
time it must have become increasingly evident to them that it was a
wasting asset which produced only diminishing returns, as well as
growing obloquy in world opinion.

Revelations from a secret July 1955 plenary meeting of the Soviet Communist
party’s Central Committee indicate that Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev agreed with
Bader and Cullis. In reference to the Austrian settlement, Khrushchev cited the strategy
of Lenin who “accepted temporary losses with a higher goal in view.”

Despite the views of Soviet officials like Molotov, Austrian international legal
scholars Waldemar Hummer and Hans Maryzedt have noted that in contrast to the
importance of the Western occupation zones in Austria for NATO, “the area of Austria

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114 Bader, *Austria between East and West*, 200.
116 Rauchensteiner, *Der Sonderfall*, 322.
occupied by the Soviet Union was of limited military value.”\textsuperscript{117} The Austrian historian Karl R. Stadler compared “the significant military disadvantage for the NATO alliance” resulting from Austrian neutrality with the fact that “Soviet troops would only have to withdraw to the territory of their alliance partners [i.e. Hungary and Czechoslovakia] several dozen kilometers to the East.”\textsuperscript{118} “The evacuation of 40,000 Red Army troops from Austria simply meant, in military terms,” wrote Shepherd in 1957, “that the seat of the Russian Central Group of Forces and their extreme south-western fringe of radar stations and fighter bases moved an hour’s car drive to the East—where it stayed poised on the same rail, road and river complex.”\textsuperscript{119} “The Czechoslovakia border provided a more defensible military line” for the Soviets, anyway, thought Bader.\textsuperscript{120}

As anyone who has ever visited Austria can attest, moreover, Vienna and its environs in eastern Austria are practically indefensible. Thus Cronin observed in 1986 that

Austria’s topography rendered it logistically easy for the Soviet Union to reoccupy the eastern zone in time of war. Unlike the mountainous regions to the west, Eastern Austria is a wide, open plain, extremely difficult to defend. Even today Austrian officials unofficially admit that the Soviet Union could reclaim the Soviet zone in half a day.\textsuperscript{121}

Eastern Austria was also by 1955 of little economic value to the Soviets, even though the May 19, 1955, NIE had judged “Soviet takings from the Austrian economy, although constituting only a minor factor in the economy of the USSR as a whole,” as

\textsuperscript{118} Stadler, 409.
\textsuperscript{119} Shepherd, 272.
\textsuperscript{120} Bader, \textit{Austria between East and West}, 204.
\textsuperscript{121} Cronin, \textit{Great Power Politics and the Struggle for Austria}, 153.
“probably highly valued during the USSR’s postwar recovery.” According to Bischof, the Moscow Memorandum represented “a favorable settlement for Moscow” in which Austria bought back “the exhausted USIA factories” of the Soviet “German assets economic empire in Eastern Austria.” Considering that the Soviets “had squeezed the maximum of reparations out of current production from these enterprises and had not reinvested in them,” the Soviet “annual reparations-take…was diminishing.”

In the words of Cronin, “what little capital was available in the USSR after the war was consigned to industries within the Soviet Union,” whose “leaders obviously planned to extract as much from Austria as they could.” “Poor management” of USIA “by Communist party functionaries who rarely had any technical expertise” only compounded the problems. Already by 1947, the Austrians secretly estimated for the Americans that Austrian management could easily increase the current total production under the Soviets from $61 million to $109 million.

Thus, as described by Bader, “Austria had become by 1955 an economic liability, thereby removing one of the major reasons for continued Soviet occupation.” In this year, Cronin explained, “the USIA industries were operating with a deficit of about 40 percent of their total production” and “bankruptcies had become commonplace.” Thus USIA “could not compete with neighboring Austrian factories, and even a system of illegal black market USIA stores dealing in smuggled East European goods failed to salvage the network.” Therefore, concluded Cronin, “it was hardly against Soviet interests to agree” to the Moscow Memorandum’s sale of “the entire USIA complex for

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123 Bischof, Austria in the First Cold War, 150.
124 Cronin, Great Power Politics and the Struggle for Austria, 154.
125 Bader, “Austria, the United States, and the Path to Neutrality,” 95.
$150 million worth of goods,” a “figure almost four times the estimated worth of $40 million (not including necessary repairs and investments).”\textsuperscript{126} According to Bader, “the massive rehabilitation job necessary after 1955” attested to USIA’s condition.\textsuperscript{127}

Soviet relinquishment of Austrian oil production was also, according to Cronin, “not a major concession.” The Moscow Memorandum’s allotment to the Soviets of ten annual million-ton oil deliveries represented “one-third of total capacity if the high production rate could be continued (which was doubtful).” “By 1955, moreover,” continued Cronin, “the Russians had developed their own domestic oil industry to the point where they no longer particularly needed Austrian oil.”\textsuperscript{128} Indeed, observed Bader, the Soviets “by this time had enough domestic oil to threaten the world markets of the West.”\textsuperscript{129}

After the “radical political changes” in Czechoslovakia and Hungary following World War II, Rauchensteiner also felt that the Soviets could dispense with their one “true strategic goal in Austria,” namely the “shielding” of Communist developments in these countries against exposure to the West.\textsuperscript{130} Bader agreed that “Khrushchev probably thought that his Eastern European political house was in order by 1955 and an insulating zone such as Stalin used in 1949-50 was unnecessary.” Due to events in Hungary and elsewhere, though, “a year later he would not have been so sure.”\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{126} Cronin, \textit{Great Power Politics and the Struggle for Austria}, 154.
\textsuperscript{127} Bader, “Austria, the United States, and the Path to Neutrality,” 95-96.
\textsuperscript{128} Cronin, \textit{Great Power Politics and the Struggle for Austria}, 155.
\textsuperscript{129} Bader, “Austria, the United States, and the Path to Neutrality,” 95.
\textsuperscript{130} Rauchensteiner, \textit{Der Sonderfall}, 227.
\textsuperscript{131} Bader, \textit{Austria between East and West}, 204. In addition to the ideological “insulation” effect of eastern Austria, the May 19, 1955, NIE also addressed the value of Vienna as a host city for Communist front organizations. See: \textit{The Implications of the Austrian Treaty for the Policies of the USSR and other States, May 19, 1955}.
The writer Manfred Sell argued in 1965 that, if anything, Soviet troops in Austria “were constantly in danger of being ‘infected’ in a non-Communist sense. The East could not accept this risk for an unforeseeable time.”\(^\text{132}\) As for the Communist bloc, Bader noted that “as long as the Soviet Union had control of an area where political dissent was openly expressed, and apparently tolerated by the Russians, there was always the possibility that this pocket of discontent could begin to affect the rest of Eastern Europe.”\(^\text{133}\)

Because Austria had remained non-Communist, the German political commentator Wolfgang Wagner noted that the Soviets there “could withdraw without having to sacrifice a Communist regime and thereby lose their face.” In contrast to Khrushchev protestations of abiding support for East Germany, the Soviets in Austria “did not abandon a country which they had revolutionary transformed in their view but rather merely lifted the military occupation of a territory that was subordinate to a democratic government. Their prestige suffered no damage.”\(^\text{134}\)

“For the Soviets,” Bader agreed, “there was no particular ideological problem involved in the release of Austria.” The Austrians “remained, in Soviet eyes, ideological infidels—a condition certainly more acceptable to the Soviets than if the Austrians had first embraced and then attempted to renounce communism. In 1956, the Hungarians were to learn how the Soviets deal with converts who consider apostasy.”\(^\text{135}\) Thus, Edgar Faure, French prime minister in 1955-1956, contended in the second volume of his memoirs published in 1984 that the existence of a Communist regime in East Germany


\(^\text{133}\) Bader, *Austria between East and West*, 205.


\(^\text{135}\) Bader, “Austria, the United States, and the Path to Neutrality,” 96.
made the Soviet understanding of Austrian and German unity “not just dissimilar, but
symmetrically opposed.”136

However favorable the Austrian settlement of 1955 was to the Soviet Union,
according to numerous accounts the decisions of 1955 still met with Soviet opposition,
particularly, as previously indicated, from Foreign Minister Molotov. The Austrian
diplomat Ludwig Steiner, for example, recalled that “Khrushchev said to me later, twice
at the beginning of the sixties, that he alone had provided for the coming into being of the
State Treaty, Molotov was against and was only brought with great trouble to concluding
the negotiations in a positive manner.”137 Cronin, meanwhile, thought that the oft-noted
“inconsistent” nature of Molotov’s February 8, 1955, address resulted “probably because
Khrushchev forced some last-minute editing upon him.”138 Kreisky even believed that
without the efforts of Khrushchev, “the great man in the background,” the Austrians
would “not so easily” or “perhaps not at all” have received the State Treaty.139

Kreisky in his memoirs, for instance, remembered Chancellor Raab asking
Khrushchev during a Moscow visit in 1958 “how it came to the State Treaty.”
Khrushchev replied that the State Treaty emerged in Soviet Communist party Central
Committee discussions as “the most suitable example” for making the post-Stalinist “new
line” visible in foreign policy. Asked by Kreisky why the Soviet Union had not
displayed its new policy of rapprochement earlier at the Berlin Conference, Khrushchev
replied that he had to overcome the objections of Molotov in Central Committee
Presidium discussions. Molotov had argued that “no Russian would understand” the

136 Edgar Faure, Mémoires II: Si tel doit être mon Destin ce Soir... (Paris: Plon, 1984), 319.
137 Ludwig Steiner, “Erlebnisbericht über die Moskauer Verhandlungen vom April 1955,” in Neue
Fakten zu Staatsvertrag und Neutralität, 46.
138 Cronin, Great Power Politics and the Struggle over Austria, 145
139 Kreisky, Im Strom der Politik, 104.
abandonment of “territory conquered in war” such as Austria, in which “tens of thousands of Rotarmisten” had fallen during World War II.\(^{140}\)

Kreisky’s memoirs also explained that many military officials “were of the opinion that not a single foot of ground conquered by the Soviet Union could be given up.”\(^{141}\) Hence, the Soviet position at Berlin represented an attempt to achieve the State Treaty “without the relinquishment of Soviet military positions.” Only after Austria proved unwilling to accept a treaty under these conditions did Soviet leaders reassess their Austrian policy.\(^{142}\)

Khrushchev also claimed credit for the State Treaty during Vice-President Richard Nixon’s 1959 visit to the Soviet Union. Meeting with, among other Americans, Nixon and Ambassador Thompson at Ogorofo on July 26, Khrushchev in the presence of Soviet officials such as First Deputy Premier Mikoyan and General Yuri Zhukov “said that he would reveal another, internal secret of the Soviet Union.” Khushchev stated “that the Austrian State Treaty had been concluded at his own initiative.” When Molotov argued that a “peace treaty with Austria” was “impossible,” Khrushchev had replied, “If you want war, then all right, we should keep our positions in the West; however, if we want no war, then why not sign a peace treaty with Austria?” After “the question had been discussed at length within the Soviet Government,” the “decision to sign a peace treaty with Austria had been approved by every member except Molotov.” Khrushchev explained to the Americans “that the Soviet Union had gained by this; it has the best

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\(^{140}\) Bruno Kreisky, Zwischen den Zeiten: Erinnerungen aus fünf Jahrzehnten (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1986), 472.

\(^{141}\) Kreisky, Im Strom der Politik, 107.

\(^{142}\) Kreisky, Die Herausforderung, 102-103.
possible relations with Austria, even better than with Finland, which are also very good, and all this in spite of the fact that both countries have bourgeois regimes.”\textsuperscript{143}

Waldheim recounted a similar episode during Khrushchev’s visit to Austria in the summer of 1960. During a dinner at the former imperial palace of Schönbrunn, Khrushchev pointed to an old, white-haired man sitting in the corner of the room and asked Austrian chancellor Alfons Gorbach if he knew the elderly individual. Waldheim related that “it was Vyacheslav Molotov, whom Khrushchev had removed from the post of foreign minister in 1957.” After the Netherlands had refused to accept him as ambassador, he became ambassador to Mongolia before arriving in Vienna as Soviet representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Khrushchev stated to Gorbach that “this man was against your State Treaty. He is not your friend. I had great difficulties convincing him and my military officials to approve of the State Treaty. If I had not so emphatically insisted, the State Treaty would not have come into being.”\textsuperscript{144}

The only account of Molotov being in agreement with Khrushchev comes from Rauchensteiner, who related that “the joy over the discovered path was written upon the face” of Molotov as the Austrian delegation left the Moscow Central Airport following the Moscow Conference. After the takeoff, Molotov congratulated the ambassadors of Finland and Sweden upon “the entry of a new member into the family of neutrals.” Molotov told the ambassadors, “The Austrians seem to be satisfied with the results of the visit, we are \textit{very} satisfied.”\textsuperscript{145}

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\textsuperscript{144} Waldheim, \textit{Im Glaspalast der Weltpolitik}, 58. In 1962, the Soviet Communist Party expelled Molotov.
\textsuperscript{145} Rauchensteiner, \textit{Der Sonderfall}, 322. Emphasis in the original.
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Alfred Puhan, an American diplomat in Austria for four years beginning in 1953, stated at a May 1980 Vienna conference commemorating the State Treaty’s 25th anniversary that “I have never heard the view advanced in my country that Austria was to be included in some Western military or political organization.” Puhan, however, seems to have been in a distinct minority. Neuhold has noted that “the enthusiasm of the Western powers” for the Moscow Memorandum’s “bargain” of Soviet troop withdrawal-Austrian neutrality was “rather limited” given the arrangement’s strategic implications. The historian Shepherd has termed Austrian neutrality “a new and artificial laboratory product made to a formula inspired by the East and completed with the grudging cooperation of the West.”

Rather than a neutral Austria, Western policy makers would have much rather preferred to see Austria join NATO. Ambassador Allard, for example, wrote that the United Kingdom and the United States “had from the very beginning evidently hoped that Austria, some time after the restoration of its sovereignty, would of its own free will adhere to the Western alliance or at least establish close political and—maybe—military relations with the powers belonging to this group.” The Austrian scholars Rudolf G. Ardelt and Hanns Haas similarly argued that “US policies in 1948,” the year plans for NATO took shape, “were not at all ready to renounce in any way the long-term

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147 Neuhold, “Der Staatsvertrag als Grundlage der Österreichischen Außenpolitik,” 163.
148 Shepherd, The Austrian Odyssey, 266.
149 Allard, 117.
integration of Austria into the West. All political and economic measures aimed solely at paving the way for this total (including military) Western integration.”

Cronin, meanwhile, has written that “American defense planners had, it seems, long envisioned the small country as a nominal member of NATO, unlikely to be a major participant in joint military exercises but vital to the organization simply by virtue of geographic location.” “In fact,” Cronin argued, “especially after the Eisenhower administration took office, the American fear that Austria would be ‘lost to Communism’ was replaced by the fear that it would be ‘lost to neutralism.’”

Several documents from the 1948 volumes of the *Foreign Relations of the United States* bear witness to Western desires to integrate Austria into any future transatlantic military organization. The State Department’s Policy Planning Staff on March 23, 1948, recommended that the United States encourage the five-member Western European Union (WEU), formed six days before, “eventually to include Eire, Switzerland, Germany, Spain and Austria.” The next day, American, British, and Canadian representatives meeting for the third session of secret Pentagon talks concerning a future “North Atlantic Pact” cited Austria along with Western Germany and Spain as countries for which “the way would be left open for accession later.” On April 13, 1948, the National Security Council (NSC) reiterated that

when circumstances permit, other countries, such as Spain, Germany (or the Western Zones) and Austria (or the Western Zones), which logically might belong in the Five-Power Treaty Group or in the North Atlantic Area, should be invited to adhere to the Five-Power Treaty and to the Defense Agreement.

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151 Cronin, *Great Power Politics and the Struggle over Austria*, 120-121.
Shortly thereafter on April 30, 1948, Secretary of State George C. Marshall wrote to Samuel Reber, the American representative in London for State Treaty talks that “in our view, Austrian security is related to western union security and arrangements for latter should envisage eventual Austrian inclusion.”\(^{153}\) This was also the view subsequently taken during the summer of 1948 when North American and European officials met from July 6 to September 9 in Washington, DC, to discuss formation of a transatlantic military alliance. In one meeting on July 26, 1948, John D. Hickerson, the State Department’s director of the Office of European Affairs, said that including in the alliance “Germany and Austria would pose some very great problems for a long time to come, since treaties have not been signed with these countries, and since both were under military occupation.” “Ultimately,” Hickerson believed, “as a long term proposition, it was only natural to expect that they would be included.”\(^{154}\)

The talks’ summary memorandum of September 9, 1948, presented to participating governments advocated that “the original full parties to the North Atlantic Pact” make

a joint statement at the time of its conclusion to the effect that any threat of aggression, direct or indirect, against any other OEEC country (including Western Germany, Austria, and Trieste) would be regarded by them as a development calling for consultation with the object of taking any measures which may be necessary.\(^{155}\)

Such evidence reveals to Steininger that “Austria’s NATO membership was under active consideration in Washington.” Indeed, Steininger is suspicious that


\(^{154}\) FRUS, 1948, vol. 3, Western Europe, 203.

\(^{155}\) Ibid, 241-242.
In the *Foreign Relations* series there are only scattered references to the use of Austrian manpower; this was, after all, the era of the NATO Lisbon force goals (100 divisions in NATO). There seems to have been something more that censors in the Reagan administration did not want us to see. There are tantalizing ellipses in the *Foreign Relations* whenever military issues are discussed.\(^{156}\)

In line with Western interests and views, the historical record testifies to considerable Western opposition to the prospect of Austrian neutrality. Karl Gruber, for example, recalled from his time as foreign minister that the 1953 “‘Bürgenstock-episode’ had in the West the outright effect as if someone had poked around in a wasps’ nest with a hiking stick.” The British in particular, remembered Gruber, “acted completely crazy.” “Precisely this reaction, though,” continued Gruber,

showed clearly that neutrality had to be first “sold” in the West. For most Western politicians an Austrian neutrality still meant nothing other than a gift to Russia, which at any rate had already swallowed unbelievably much. We had to make it conceivable—and believable—to the Western Allies that Austria was able to defend itself against Communist subversion even without the occupation armies of the English, the Americans, and the French, and that the strategic situation of the West would not be completely unhinged by the evacuation of Western Austria.\(^{157}\)

Because of strategic considerations and the possible effect of an Austrian settlement on Germany, Gruber believed “in contrast to most other politicians” that “the key to the solution of the Austrian question was to be sought above all in Washington and not in Moscow. Moscow could, after all, hardly lose anything in an evacuation of Austria.” As opposed to previously cited views of the Soviet Union as the main obstacle to the State Treaty, Gruber thought it a “myth that the Western negotiating partners were filled with a particular zeal to come to a quick conclusion” in State Treaty negotiations,

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\(^{156}\) Steininger, 506-507.

\(^{157}\) Gruber, *Meine Partei ist Österreich*, 140.
something that Gruber thought the Soviets knew and considered when they delayed the conclusion of the State Treaty.\footnote{158}

Gruber thus saw the Austrians’ “main task” in “convincing the West, above all the USA, that ‘on balance’ the conclusion of a State Treaty was also advantageous for the West.” Conscious of the Soviet strategy to promote global American disengagement, for example, one “influential American senator” with whom Gruber had “very friendly relations” warned him “not to forget that we will row across an ocean and in 20 years there will be no Congress to be had for again sending troops to European areas. The Russians, however, will stay very near, a half-hour’s drive from Vienna.”\footnote{159}

Gruber was not the only Austrian to experience Western opposition to Austrian neutrality. The Austrian diplomat Gmoser reported from the Moscow embassy on June 15, 1953, right before the Indian diplomatic initiative, that “various conversations with the American ambassador Charles E. Bohlen” revealed that he was “against possible Austrian neutrality.” Bohlen “had repeatedly expressed the view that such a status,” in his words, “would be very sad for Austria.” Bohlen, for instance, worried whether the implications of neutrality would deny Austria membership in the Organization of European Economic Cooperation (OEEC).\footnote{160}

Later at the Berlin Conference, Western policy makers opposed Austrian plans to proclaim neutrality on several occasions, not just at the previously cited February 10, 1954, meeting. On February 16, for example, Secretary of State Dulles met with Figl and Kreisky. According to the meeting’s protocol in the \textit{Foreign Relations of the United States}, Dulles

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{158} Ibid, 155, 170.
\bibitem{159} Ibid, 155.
\bibitem{160} Schilcher, 176.
\end{thebibliography}
went on to point out the dangers and disadvantages for Austria in staying out of collective security arrangements and becoming a vacuum, stressing the importance of raising an Austrian Army. He noted that Austria could become an inviting invasion route to the South comparable to Belgium in 1914. He reiterated that the US would not wish to stand in the way of an Austrian policy in favor of military neutrality, but said that the cost to Austria would be heavier and that the Western Powers and, he supposed, the Austrian Government would not wish to leave a vacuum in Austria. Dr. Figl and Dr. Kreisky belittled the risks once Soviet forces are out of Austria and the Secretary pointed out the danger of Soviet military forces returning under the guise of technicians in the oil fields....Dr. Kreisky speaking on behalf only of his own party in the coalition, considered the neutrality declaration just a device for obtaining a treaty, and expressed a wish to have the security of NATO if that were possible. He felt that it is not.\footnote{FRUS, 1952-1954, vol. 7, part 1, Germany and Austria, 1133.}

Kreisky in his memoirs recalled saying to Dulles at Berlin that he “did not at all want to dispute that an alliance with the Western powers is very attractive on the basis of security policy reasons, but only for half of Austria; because the other half will continue to remain occupied by Soviet troops, just as this is the case in Germany.” Kreisky reminded Dulles, though, that “the axiom of our foreign policy since 1945 is to maintain the unity of Austria.”\footnote{Bruno Kreisky, Zwischen den Zeiten: Erinnerungen aus fünf Jahrzehnten (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1986), 463.} “Then,” Kreisky stated during an address on October 17, 1967, “Dulles reflected for a moment and shook his head, and the conversation was over.”\footnote{Kreisky, Reden, 731.}

Not just the strategic implications of Austrian neutrality, but also fears for the domestic stability of a neutral Austria concerned Western policy makers. Raab’s aide Fritz Meznik remembered that the Western powers, “particularly the United States,” in the months of April and May 1955 had “considerable objections against the conclusion of a state treaty.” The Western ambassadors “made clear to Raab fears that Austria would not withstand Soviet pressure in the long run” and worried about the burden on Austria of

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  \item \textit{Neutralities Advocates and Adversaries}
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the State Treaty’s economic provisions. Only gradually did the Western Allies accept Raab’s assurances that a free Austria with a flourishing economy would be far more capable of withstanding Soviet pressure than had been an Austria partially occupied and exploited by the Soviets.\textsuperscript{164}

ÖVP secretary general Maleta agreed with Meznik that the West constantly feared that the new sovereignty of Austria would be no real sovereignty, but rather that it would come to a hollowing out, that here an independent, sovereign state would indeed come into being in name, but that sooner or later through infiltration or government participation of the Communists a formal independence, a formal neutrality would perhaps remain but would be brought from the inside out to dependency. These considerations hung over us continually like a Damocles sword.\textsuperscript{165}

Secretary Dulles could not even refrain from expressing such fears at the official reception in Palace Schönbrunn following the signing of the State Treaty on May 15, 1955. The publisher Fritz Molden, for a period Dulles’s son-in-law, remembered Dulles being “in not a very happy mood.” Asked by Molden to comment on the State Treaty, Dulles responded that he hoped “it will go well for you. I am not, however, certain that the treaty does not contain a few traps. You must take care that you can steer your ship of state through the conflicts of the coming decades without the permanent neutrality demanded by the Soviets laying for you too strong trip lines in the process.”\textsuperscript{166}

The possible political effects from Austrian neutrality also concerned American policy makers. A September 4, 1953, State Department memorandum worried that neutrality would not only deny to Europe Austria’s “modest…contribution in material

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\textsuperscript{164} Fritz Meznik, “Mittel und Wege, die Besatzung zu beenden,” in Neue Fakten zu Staatsvertrag und Neutralität, 49.

\textsuperscript{165} Alfred Maleta, “Persönliche Erinnerungen auf dem Weg zum österreichischen Staatsvertrag,” in Neue Fakten zu Staatsvertrag und Neutralität, 83.

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terms” to common defense efforts, but would also hinder in this field a “great step forward in the solidarity of the continent.” The memorandum also considered the restrictions of neutrality as infringing upon the “restoration of Austrian sovereignty,” the stated goal of American and Allied occupation in Austria. Any failure, though, in restoring a truly independent Austria “would be a severe setback to US efforts to lead the free world coalition.” “In world opinion,” the memorandum argued,

the reversion of an Austria long aligned with, supported by and supporting in turn Western objectives to the status of an officially neutral state would inevitably result in a loss of US prestige in the eyes of the world. If after more than 8 years of US aid and western tutelage Austria were to be declared or declare itself neutral, the conclusion would be inescapable that US policies and methods had failed. 

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The West comes to Terms with Austrian Neutrality

The history of America’s rise to global predominance in the 20th century made American policy makers especially critical of the concept of neutrality. “America’s experience with implementing its own policy of neutrality during the twentieth century,” Richard E. Bissell and Curt Gasteyger wrote in the introduction to a volume of essays on neutrality in Western Europe, “has been such a failure—making it seem as though neutrality acts lead to war—that such policy has little credibility with the broad American elite.” Once America had abandoned isolationism for leadership of the Free World during World War II, moreover, American Cold War leaders grew far more critical of anything less than full commitment to the struggle against communism. “For neutral

167 Considerations regarding the Neutralization of Austria (9/4/53); Neutrality Folder; Box 9; Entry 1284; Lot 58D223; Subject Files Relating to the Austrian Occupation and Peace Treaty, 1949-55; Miscellaneous Lot Files; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
countries,” wrote Bissell and Gasteyger in a statement fully applicable to the Austrian situation presented by Kreisky to Dulles at the Berlin Conference,

neutrality is a statement of independence, of a commitment to national security. But for Americans, neutrality can be a pejorative term, an expression of other nations’ unwillingness to commit themselves to what is considered a clear political or moral choice. To be neutral in a war was thus considered morally questionable by the American public. After the war, neutrals were sometimes seen as either ambivalent in their attitudes toward the East-West conflict or free riders on the stability and defense sustained by the alliance.¹⁶⁸

Perhaps no other individual better personified American rejection of neutrality than Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. Reflecting his Calvinist background as a Presbyterian minister’s son, Dulles often viewed foreign policy in strict moral terms, and questions of neutrality were no exception.¹⁶⁹ Speaking at Iowa State University’s commencement address on June 9, 1956, merely a year after the Austrian settlement, Dulles observed that the United States had concluded in the last ten years around the world 42 mutual defense pacts that “embody the principle of the Monroe Doctrine.” “These treaties,” declared Dulles,

abolish, as between the parties, the principle of neutrality, which pretends that a nation can best gain safety for itself by being indifferent to the fate of others. This has increasingly become an obsolete conception and, except in exceptional circumstances, is an immoral and shortsighted conception. The free world today is stronger, and peace is more secure, because so many free nations courageously recognize the now demonstrated fact that there own peace and safety would be endangered by assault freedom on elsewhere.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ For biographical information on John Foster Dulles, see for example: John Foster Dulles (accessed January 23, 2006); available from http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/kbank/profiles/foster.dulles/.
Yet Dulles himself at the Berlin Conference had termed Swiss neutrality “honorable.” In addition, during the conference on February 7, 1954, Dulles stated, perhaps somewhat deceptively, in background information to the press that “there is no plan, of which I know, to bring Austria into NATO or the European Defense Community.”

Dulles superior, President Eisenhower seemed only to add to the contradictions in a press conference on June 6, 1956, merely three days before Dulles’s well-known Iowa State address. As described by Finnish scholar Jussi Hanhimäki, the theme of Eisenhower’s comments was that “to his mind neutrality and neutralism were not necessarily such terrible things as some proclaimed them to be.” Ike’s oft-noted “less than perfect syntax” created “front-page news” with statements like: “We were a young country once, and our whole policy for the first hundred years was, or more, 150, we were neutral. We constantly asserted we were neutral in the wars of the world and wars in Europe and antagonisms.” According to Hanhimäki,

although the White House Press Office tried to salvage the situation as soon as possible, Ike had opened a can of worms. How could the leader of the Western Alliance, the free world, who had repeatedly stressed the evil nature of the Soviet Union and the need for free men to unite against the threat it posed, see merit in any policy that did not condemn the USSR outright. If this was acceptable, then the NATO allies might choose to become neutral without any moral qualms, if they saw this as a less expensive option than alliance.

Thus, Congressman Hamilton Fish Armstrong described in Foreign Affairs how in the short space of three days “the United States Government issued two descriptions of what it thinks about neutrality, one of which surprised and annoyed our allies, the other

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of which annoyed the uncommitted states even though it did not surprise them.”  

In particular, explains the American scholar Catherine C. Nielsen, “Dulles remark led to confusion in the Austrian Ministry of Foreign affairs since it conflicted with previous statements on neutrality made by Eisenhower, and it was not clear whether Austria was included in the list of ‘criminal and shortsighted’ states.”  

As Armstrong related, both Eisenhower and Dulles had considerable explaining to do that summer, and even then their views were not entirely clear. “When foreign embassies began telephoning on June 7 to find out the practical meaning of the President’s press conference of the previous day, the White House issued a ‘clarifying statement.’” Giving particular reassurance to countries militarily aligned with the United States, the statement called defense treaties in the framework of the United Nations Charter “the modern and enlightened way of obtaining security.” The White House “repeated and emphasized the President’s words” that classical neutrality does not mean being “neutral as between right and wrong or decency or indecency.” The statement also contained “a homily on the merits of collective security,” which, “unfortunately” for Eisenhower, “had not come into his mind while he was speaking impromptu.”

Dulles, Armstrong related, “restated his position in a press conference held on July 12.” Dulles “admitted that there were, after all, ‘very few, if any’ neutrals of the immoral sort.” When pressed to name one, Dulles said of Switzerland, which had even avoided the United Nations because of neutrality, that he “would not want even there to

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175 Armstrong, 61.
say that the neutrality of Switzerland was immoral.” “Observers,” noted Armstrong, “were left wondering why all those adjectives had been used in the first place.”\(^{176}\)

As a solution to the confusion sown by Dulles and, by extension, Eisenhower and other American policy makers as well, Nielson offers that “such statements by Dulles were not referring to the legal concept of neutrality, but rather, were accusing states of being neutralist.” Neutrality “per se” was not a problem for the United States just as long as a “state was on ‘their side’ ideologically in the Cold War.” “Military neutrality for a small state such as Austria” was acceptable, “provided it was Western oriented and did not attempt to be neutralist and distance itself from the Cold War.” Americans became critical only when they perceived “an Austrian ‘drift towards neutralism.’”\(^{177}\) Armstrong sensed this understanding of Dulles’s views in his July 12, 1956, press conference where Armstrong felt that Dulles “narrowed his definition” of “immoral” neutrality by remarking that “countries which denounce security pacts are seeking to promote a somewhat wrong view of neutrality.”\(^{178}\)

As for military neutrality, confidential conversations of Dulles, Eisenhower, and their subordinate officials reveal that they, in the words of Bader, “grudgingly came to accept the idea of neutrality” for Austria.\(^{179}\) While Admiral Radford speaking on behalf of the JCS “insisted that a neutralized Austria would greatly weaken us in Europe,” at a meeting of the NSC on October 13, 1953, for example, Dulles argued that while we should of course oppose the neutralization of Austria just as far as possible in any negotiations, the decision in the long run would depend on the Austrians themselves. If, in order to induce the Russians to get out of Austria, the Austrian Government refused to align itself with

\(^{176}\) Ibid, 65.

\(^{177}\) Nielson, 219. Emphasis in the original.

\(^{178}\) Armstrong, 61.

\(^{179}\) Bader, *Austria between East and West*, 205.
NATO, there was very little, said Secretary Dulles, that the United States could do about it, even though we should refuse to sign the treaty. We can, of course, explain our position to the Austrians, but we could not impose our will upon them, nor could we carry the British and French along if they agreed with the Austrian viewpoint. In any case, an embittered Austria would never prove a reliable ally of the United States. To sum up his position, Secretary Dulles said that the State Department amply did not wish us to get into a situation where we are opposing something that is inevitable.180

Dulles sentiments reflected the advice of the State Department’s embassy staff in Vienna. An August 26, 1953, cable from Vienna noted that neutrality would pose “difficult problems…for the West and Austria” and was “contrary to the stated purpose of United State policy in Austria, since it would constitute an infringement of Austrian sovereignty.” Nonetheless, the memorandum considered that “U.S. rejection of a neutrality proposal in the face of Austrian readiness to accept a neutral status might be next to impossible” given “the intense Austrian desire for any ‘bearable’ Treaty.”181

All in all, Cronin conceded, the historical evidence does not show “the true position of the Eisenhower administration” concerning Austrian neutrality to be “entirely clear. Even as some lower-level American planners opposed neutrality for Austria, others accepted it as a final bargaining chip.” Pre-Berlin Conference policy directives “indicate that the State Department’s official position on neutrality was ambiguous.”182

180 FRUS, 1952-1954, vol. 7, part 2, Germany and Austria, ed. William Z. Slany (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1986), 1910-1911. Strangely enough, a State Department memorandum dated the day after the NSC meeting, October 14, 1953, starkly deviates from the JCS strategic assessment of Austria. “Austria,” the paper reads, “can contribute little or nothing to the military defense of the West and we should have no objection to an Austrian undertaking of neutrality.” See: Austria—Brief for the United Kingdom Delegation, October 14, 1953; Treaty—September, 1953 Folder; Box 10; Entry 1174B; Lot 56D294; Austrian Desk Files, 1950-1954 (Arthur Compton File); Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, 1941-1954; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.


182 Cronin, Great Power Politics and the Struggle over Austria, 134.
Cronin also found “a surprising flexibility” at “the highest levels of American foreign policy making.” Dulles, for example, recorded Eisenhower saying during a “breakfast conference” on January 20, 1954, that “with reference to the Austrian Treaty, the President said he could see no objection to the neutralization of Austria if this did not carry with it the demilitarization. If Austria could achieve a status somewhat comparable to Switzerland, this would be quite satisfactory from a military standpoint.” “Had the Berlin Conference depended on the question of neutrality alone,” speculated Cronin, “the records of this secret strategy session imply that neutrality might have been accepted in 1954 as a price for the treaty, as it was eventually accepted in 1955.”

Indeed, Eisenhower and Dulles at a NSC meeting the day following their breakfast meeting did not just make implications. “Turning to specifics,” Dulles addressed to an audience including Admiral Radford and the director of central intelligence his “thought that if the Soviets were in the ‘right mood’ it might prove possible to obtain a treaty for Austria and the withdrawal of the occupation forces. We would be prepared, if absolutely necessary to secure the treaty, to envisage some degree of neutralization for Austria.”

This same American flexibility impressed Kreisky. Both during the Berlin Conference and elsewhere, Kreisky determined again and again in discussions with American friends how very accessible they are—in contrast to many others—to arguments, even then, when it is not convenient for them. It only has to make sense to them. This was for me particularly conspicuous in John Foster Dulles, although he had the reputation of being a very hard man.

184 FRUS, 1952-1954, vol. 7, part 1, Germany and Austria, 781.
185 Kreisky, Zwischen den Zeiten, 463.
Yet the Eisenhower administration was not the only group of Western policy makers willing to accommodate Austrian neutrality. Bischof, for example, finds it “significant” that American NSC documents from 1950 reject areas such as Germany and Japan as “islands of neutrality” while failing to “explicitly list” Austria. “Was thus,” questioned Bischof, “a possible Austrian neutralization, which was really being brought more and more into play by Austrian politicians as a suggested solution, already tacitly seen in 1954 as acceptable?”\[186\]

The British diplomat Cullis, meanwhile, emphasized at a symposium in Vienna marking the 25th anniversary of the State Treaty that “as far as the British government was concerned, we never envisaged any other status than” neutrality. “Any hesitation the West may have shown over the neutrality proposal when it eventually emerged in 1954-5,” Cullis added, “was based not on doubts over the concept as such, but simply on concern over the modalities involved.”\[187\]

Considering that they, like the Soviets, feared a new Anschluß, the French among the Western powers were the most well disposed towards Austrian neutrality. In the words of Gehler, most French policy makers were “quite satisfied” with Austrian neutrality as a “definitive guarantee” against Anschluß acting in conjunction with Article 4 of the State Treaty.\[188\] Yet even among the French, according to Rauchensteiner, General Marie-Emile Béthouart, the former commander of French occupation forces,


considered Austrian neutrality wrong and wanted to include Austria in NATO “at almost any price.”

Silver Linings in the West?

In light of the almost inevitability of Austrian neutrality, most Western policy makers seemed to have made the best of the situation. The American embassy in London, for example, cabled on May 20, 1953, that the Western powers might agree to Austrian neutrality “in exchange for some extremely advantageous concessions.”

Similarly, an August 26, 1953, Vienna embassy cable proposed making “Austrian neutralization…part of a quid pro quo for Soviet Russian agreement to revision” of the State Treaty’s economic provisions, especially because “genuine neutralization would be impossible for Austria if the Soviet Union should retain the extraterritorial status” of Soviet enterprises in Austria. The State Department’s Vienna embassy also considered whether the West may find it feasible, in the course of negotiations with the Soviet Union over an Austrian State Treaty, to raise the possibility of neutralizing one or more of Austria’s satellite neighbors (e.g. Hungary or Czechoslovakia) if the Soviet Union introduces the question of Austrian neutrality. Such a course would seem to be particularly justified by the fact that Hungary is a former enemy nation, whereas Austria has been declared by the Four Powers to be a liberated, rather than conquered, nation.

Although the Austrian settlement brought no quid pro quo for the West aside from perhaps the Moscow Memorandum’s alteration of the State Treaty’s economic provisions.

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189 Rauchensteiner, *Der Sonderfall*, 322.
190 Cable from the American Embassy in London, May 20, 1953; Treaty—May 1953 Folder; Box 10; Entry 1174B; Lot 56D294; Austrian Desk Files, 1950-1954 (Arthur Compton File); Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, 1941-1954; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
provisions, the West did not go away empty-handed in 1955. Even the mere withdrawal of the Soviets from Austria was, according to Ambassador Neumann, “clearly desirable from a Western point of view.” “The continued Soviet occupation of part of Austria,” Neumann analyzed, “in the center of Europe, tended to destabilize Germany and Italy, or at least to project possible destabilization towards both countries.”

A March 2, 1953, State Department memorandum seemed to agree with Neumann, stating that “it has been the policy of the United States to bring the occupation of Austria to a speedy conclusion” because “the ending of the occupation would be of measurable military, economic and political advantage to the West.” The memorandum, for instance, optimistically reported that the end of the Austrian occupation “would mean that forty thousand Soviet troops would be compelled to withdraw from the Eastern portion of Austria and the legal pretext for the retention of Soviet troops in Hungary and Rumania would be destroyed.”

The Warsaw Pact vitiated the effects of the Austrian settlement upon Soviet military deployments in these two countries and the March 2, 1953, memorandum did not consider the effects of Western troop withdrawal under an Austrian settlement. The memorandum, though, was more prescient when it noted that the Soviets in a complete withdrawal “would relinquish control of vital parts of the Austrian economy.” Under the occupation, the memorandum reported,

the Soviets are in undisputed and complete possession of Austria’s rich oil fields (which they are exploiting to the point of exhaustion) and in which they are ruining the Austrian economy by underselling and “dumping”

192 Neumann, 145.
193 Austrian Treaty—Next Steps (March 2, 1953); Treaty—March 1953 Folder; Box 10; Entry 1174B; Lot 56D294; Austrian Desk Files, 1950-1954 (Arthur Compton File); Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, 1941-1954; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
tactics made possible by their USIA enterprises which evade Austrian taxes, customs and any other law or regulation *ad libidum*.\(^\text{194}\)

While the Moscow Memorandum later mitigated for the Soviets the economic effects of their withdrawal from Austria, it was undeniable, as the March 2, 1953, memorandum predicted, that under the State Treaty the “Iron Curtain” was “pushed back more than one hundred miles.” The memorandum foresaw this as a psychological victory for the West of the first magnitude, for Soviet troops would have given up territory for the first time since 1946 and Austria’s equivocal status would have been clarified. The news of Soviet troops leaving Vienna—which to millions of people in Eastern Europe has always represented the “West”—would provide a lift to the morale and a spark to the hope of countless enslaved people in the European satellites of the Soviet Union.\(^\text{195}\)

Dulles and others such as, according to Ambassador Seydoux, many French officials responded to Austrian neutrality with perhaps a classic attitude of making lemonade out of lemons. These Western officials soon realized that the significance of Austrian independence, already recognized by the State Department in 1953, combined with Austrian neutrality could act as a political weapon for “rollback” in Eastern Europe. As the scholar Kurt Steiner recognized, “part of the controversy between Khrushchev and Molotov” was “the risk that the example of a neutral Austria could encourage some countries in the Soviet bloc to attempt to take a similar stance.” While Eastern Europe in the Khrushchev era exhibited “stirrings of greater national independence,” precisely “the new course of Soviet foreign policy implied greater acceptability of nonalignment or neutrality.” Khrushchev tried to counter Molotov’s objections with the argument that

\(^{194}\) Ibid.
\(^{195}\) Ibid.
Austria “was not a ‘people’s democracy,’ so that it could not serve as a precedent for countries within the socialist camp.”

Nonetheless, Dulles in a televised report on May 17, 1955, two days after the State Treaty, emphasized that

this is the first time a segment of the Red Army will have turned around and start to go back. Now, that’s bound to have a tremendous impact in the other countries where the Red armies are there in occupation. It is going to create a desire—a mounting desire—on the part of those people to get the same freedom from that type of occupation that the Austrians have gotten. And furthermore this, this joy at their freedom which was so manifest by the Austrian people, that is going to be contagious and it’s going to spread surely to the neighboring countries—Czechoslovakia—for the first time there’ll be an open door to freedom on the part of Hungary. These things are bound to have an effect, and the Soviet Union, of course, they know they’re going to have an effect. They thought about these things long ago when they drew their zone of occupation in Austria—remember they drew it in a queer line—so as to be sure that they would block the borders to Czechoslovakia and to Hungary.

Dulles added that Soviet withdrawal from Austria

is going to carry a whole lot of new problems into the satellite area...The example of what has happened here, I thought as we saw the cheering, waving crowd, is going to be something contagious, and there are going to be other people who are going to want to be able to cheer and wave their national flags.

The Austrians themselves were not averse to encouraging such views among the Western powers. Heindl of the ÖVP press service, for example, remembered that the American embassy in Vienna during the summer of 1955 invited practically all members of the ÖVP party leadership to lunch. After these luncheons the Americans invariably

198 Steiner, 75.
discussed future Austrian neutrality and its implications. As ÖVP members soon learned of this pattern, they agreed to answer the reservations of the Americans by encouraging them “not to think of what Austrian neutrality means for your European NATO partners, but rather to consider what it means for Austria’s neighbors like Czechoslovakia and Hungary.”

The publisher Molden observed that such speculation was not misplaced. “In the Eastern European lands the conclusion of the State Treaty and the relinquishment of east Austria by the Soviets were followed with truly passionate concern.” Molden considered this “particularly understandable in Hungary, which had been especially closely tied with Austria in the course of historical developments.” Validating Molden’s analysis, Hungary was among the first ten countries to officially recognize Austria’s neutrality on November 24, 1955, and was the first Communist country to do so. Austrian officials described Hungarian recognition, the declaration of which appeared in Hungary’s national law gazette, as “extremely rapid and especially festive.” “One wonders,” questioned Gehler, “whether some in Budapest already saw Austria as a model for Hungary.”

As many have noted, the Hungarian uprising in 1956, merely a year after Austria’s independence and declaration of neutrality, validated the views of Heindl and others. The scholar Vojtech Mastny saw “an uncanny linkage between Austria in 1955

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199 Heindl, 52.
200 Molden, 160-161.
201 Gehler, “From Non-alignment to Neutrality,” 118.
202 Heindl, 52.
and Hungary in 1956. The alluring example of the Austrian solution helped precipitate, even though it did not cause, the upheaval in Hungary."

Kreisky himself saw the “withdrawal of the Red Army from Austria” as the proverbial “spark that ignited the powder keg” in a Hungary grown tired of Communism by 1956. In this connection, Kreisky recalled observing Soviet troop movements in Austria. While driving one night in Austria’s Waldviertel, Kreisky passed “seemingly endless, massive columns of Soviet soldiers underway from the Czech to the Hungarian border.” The columns held up Kreisky “for hours” on the return trip because he was not allowed to pass them. Such experiences convinced Kreisky that the withdrawal “of tens of thousands of Soviet soldiers” from Austria could not “remain hidden from the Hungarian people.” “Those who thought of their own liberation,” concluded Kreisky, “must have been filled with a feeling of well-founded hope.”

That the Hungarian government renounced its Warsaw Pact membership and proclaimed Hungarian neutrality on November 1, 1956, was only logical under the circumstances. The irony of the Austrian settlement creating an “Austria-euphoria in Hungary,” where “Austrian policy was perceived as admirable,” was not lost on the Hungarian scholar Láslo J. Kiss. Communist Hungary, not West Germany, took the “bait” of Austrian neutrality that the Soviets had prepared. Similarly, Gehler observed that “Soviet representatives—especially those who favored the ‘Austrian solution’ of 1955—had to accept that the so-called ‘model case’ was much more suited to acting like

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204 Kreisky, Im Strom der Politik, 229.
a Trojan Horse for their own political system than to weakening the positions of Adenauer and the West. The shot backfired.” Dulles indicated as much already before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on May 17, 1955, predicting that the State Treaty would not

have a very profound effect upon Germany because the conditions are so dissimilar. I do think it is going to have a very profound effect upon the adjacent satellite countries such as Czechoslovakia, where it opened up for the first time a border with freedom and in Hungary, where it opened up for the first time a border with freedom.

Indeed, the Romanian historian Ghita Ionescu recognized that the Warsaw Pact was not just an “Eastern countermove to NATO,” but also had a “profundly ‘anti-neutral’ nature.” Although the Warsaw Pact “did not add much to the obligations already included in the bilateral treaties joining the U.S.S.R.” to pact members, the Warsaw Pact “deprived the member countries of the right to aspire, like Austria, to a status of neutrality, or, like Yugoslavia, to practice a policy of neutrality.” The Treaty of Warsaw signed on May 14, 1955, one day before the State Treaty, was “the logical and brutal antidote to neutrality.” Tellingly for Ionescu, in the year of the Hungarian revolt his native Romania had made “a crime punishable by death the spreading of the idea of neutrality verbally or in writing.” Speculations in 1955 among Austria’s Communist neighbors about a spread of neutrality, confirmed Rauchensteiner,

were, however, only the expression of a mood and not the result of a changed policy in Czechoslovakia or Hungary. Exactly the opposite, precisely these governments drew the consequences from the changed situation and underlined in an unmistakable manner the character of the

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208 Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Report by the Secretary of State, 84th Cong., May 17, 1955.
Iron Curtain. In the moment that the Soviet occupation troops withdrew from Austria, the borders to Austria were guarded even more tightly than before. Where possible, even more uncompromising use was made of firearms whenever it came to erroneous border crossings and to, in principle, unimportant incidents.\footnote{210}

The upheaval promoted by Austrian neutrality in Hungary, even if ultimately crushed by the Soviets, seems to have quelled Dulles reservations about the Austrian settlement. On July 17, 1957, for example, the Italian ambassador to the United States, Manlio Brosio, paid a visit to Dulles at the State Department before departing for his summer holidays in Italy. In his conversation with the ambassador, Dulles recalled the sudden decision of the Soviet Government to accept an Austrian Treaty. For some reason, which was still obscure, the Kremlin had decided to agree to an Austrian settlement, although in retrospect it would seem that the balance of advantage lay with the West, for example: the Western orientation of independent Austria, the exposing of Hungary to a free and democratic neighbor.\footnote{211}

Ludwig Steiner as well remembered Chancellor Raab’s second visit to the United States from May 16 to May 20, 1958. Steiner found the “friendly reception by Secretary of State Dulles especially notable.” Dulles “assured the chancellor that the path chosen by him of permanent neutrality had been very successful for Austria, but also for the stability of Central Europe.”\footnote{212}

Although Dulles did not live to see it, the “Prague Spring” of 1968 in Czechoslovakia could not have displeased him. The Austrian scholar Karl Gutkas noted that Austria also “exerted a great force of attraction” upon the second of Austria’s

neighbors attempting to escape the grasp of the Soviet bloc. “Just as in the year 1956 in Hungary,” wrote Gutkas, “Austria’s economic and political situation was also now a worthy goal for the inhabitants of Czechoslovakia.”

The events of 1956 and 1968 ultimately pleasantly surprised those like Dulles who had feared the spread of neutrality in Western Europe. These fears gradually acquired in the West the name of Finlandization after another non-NATO European nation often seen as too obsequious to the Soviet Union. Yet, as the British scholar Philip Windsor has observed, “in spite of all the vapid talk in many Western circles about Soviet ambitions to ‘Finlandize’ Western Europe, the real danger in Soviet eyes is that Western Europe might gradually succeed in Finlandizing its Eastern counterpart.” The American Department of Defense official and scholar Joseph Kruzel agreed in 1989 that Europe’s neutrals had served in this reverse Finlandization as “enticing models for East European nations searching for greater autonomy in a form acceptable to the Soviet Union.” From Finland itself, Harto Hakovirta has concluded that “by praising the merits of neutrality in Western Europe, the USSR obviously takes the risk of encouraging neutralist forces in Eastern Europe.”

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Without Guaranty: The Moscow Memorandum meets Political Reality

As previously indicated, the Moscow Memorandum referred to bringing about a “guaranty of the integrity and inviolability of Austrian state territory by the four Great Powers.” Interviewed in 2005, Rathkolb argued that the ultimately “false estimate” of receiving such a guaranty was a premise upon which the SPÖ accepted neutrality at the Moscow Conference.\(^{217}\) This was not the first reference to some form of international guaranty for Austria. A January 28, 1949, memorandum from the American legation in Vienna considered “a firm and unequivocal Western guarantee of Austria’s sovereignty and independence which will make it clear that any attempt at forcible subversion, external or internal, will provoke immediate Western intervention and grave risk of war” to be “indispensable” and “an essential prerequisite to the withdrawal of occupation forces.” “Most desirable,” the memorandum judged,

of course would be the incorporation of Austria into a Western European security pact, so that it would be perfectly clear that an attack on Austria involved an attack on Western Europe as a whole, as well of course as the United States. If the organization of a Western European security system has not by the time the Austrian treaty goes into effect proceeded sufficiently far to make possible its comprehending Austria, a tripartite guarantee by the U.S., Great Britain and France might be used to fill the gap until Austria’s participation in the larger system became possible. In our view a grave risk would be involved in withdrawing Western forces from Austria before such a guarantee has been publicly and unequivocally assumed.\(^{218}\)

A subsequent State Department memorandum from April 27, 1953, referred to a Department of Defense belief that “the Western powers should issue a guarantee of

\(^{217}\) Rathkolb interview.
\(^{218}\) Memorandum on Austrian Treaty Negotiations—1949, January 28, 1949; Austrian Treaty Memos Folder; Box 2; Entry 1174C; Lot 54D541; Office of Italian and Austrian Affairs, 1949-1953; Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, 1941-1953; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
Austria’s integrity prior to withdrawal.”

American support for a “Tripartite Declaration of Interests in Austrian Security” emerged again in a September 25, 1953, memorandum for the secretary of state. The same memorandum warned, however, that “Soviet participation in a declaration is to be avoided as it might facilitate Soviet intervention or could permit obstruction in case of satellite aggression.”

Here was an initial indication of the opposition facing a four-power guaranty for Austria as envisioned by the Moscow Memorandum as opposed to a purely Western three-power guaranty in place of Austrian membership in a Western defense pact. This opposition only grew with deliberation as shown by American Ambassador Thompson’s consultations with his French and British colleagues in Vienna recorded in a January 9, 1956, cable. Thompson called it “unwise for the Western Powers to take a completely negative attitude toward an eventual formal request by the Austrian Government for such a guarantee” because this “would suggest that the Western Powers were losing interest in Austria, and would thus weaken Austria’s international position and encourage neutralism in Austria.” Additionally, this “attitude would open the door to a unilateral Soviet guarantee.”

Nonetheless, Thompson saw “intrinsic disadvantages” in a “Four-Power Guarantee.” Listing the drawbacks, Thompson worried that a guarantee would

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219 Austrian Treaty Memorandum, April 27, 1953; Treaty—April 1953 Folder; Box 10; Entry 1174B; Lot 56D294; Austrian Desk Files, 1950-1954 (Arthur Compton File); Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, 1941-1954; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.

220 Problems for the Secretary’s Consideration in Connection with Austrian Treaty Negotiations, September 25, 1953; Treaty—September, 1953 Folder; Box 10; Entry 1174B; Lot 56D294; Austrian Desk Files, 1950-1954 (Arthur Compton File); Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, 1941-1954; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.

221 Tripartite Views of U.S., U.K., and French Ambassadors on Question of Territorial Guarantees, January 9, 1956; Austria Guarantees (1955-1956) Folder; Box 20; Entry 1314; Lot File 59D609; Subject Files of the Assistant Legal Advisor for European Affairs relating to Germany and Austria, 1945-1960; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
put a premium on neutrality and thus encourage other countries to follow Austria’s example; imply that the greatest threat to Austria was from some other than one of the four guaranteeing Powers, leading to the assumption that it was directed chiefly against Germany; probably weaken Austria’s own defense effort; restore to Russia (even though in concert with ourselves) a special position in respect of Austria and moreover, by implication, give the Four Powers a special interest in the maintenance of Austrian neutrality; further the Soviet concept of a European Security Pact; and give Soviets possibility of delaying action in U.N. by insisting on prior quadripartite consultation.  

“We,” Thompson concluded with reference to the American, British, and French ambassadors in Austria, “should be given discretion to endeavor to persuade them [the Austrians] to drop matter.” If the Austrians insisted upon a four-power guaranty, Thompson suggested in response that the “Four Signatory Powers” rather noncommittally “solemnly declare” to bring threats against Austria “immediately to the attention of the United Nations and use their best endeavors to secure appropriate decisions or recommendations by the United Nations to meet the situation.” Meanwhile, Thompson advocated that the Austrians “meet, or forestall, a Soviet offer, or announcement, of a ‘unilateral guarantee’” with perhaps “an appropriate declaration to protect themselves against Soviet intervention in Austrian affairs on the basis of such guarantee.” Fortunately, Thompson had seen “no Soviet pressure upon the Austrians to take the initiative” and speculated “that the Soviet Government is not particularly interested in participation in a Four-Power Guarantee.”

The State Department responded positively to Thompson’s cable, expressing the belief that “substantial further effort should be made if three Ambassadors consider any chance success to dissuade Austrians from seeking guarantee.” Accordingly, the State

\[222\] Ibid.

\[223\] Ibid.
Department provided “additional arguments against asking for guarantee” such as the objection that an “approach to four powers formerly in occupation implies they have or should have continuing responsibility for Austria which is surely incompatible with newly-won independence.” “As Austrians know,” the State Department added, “not formal quadripartite declaration but continued solidarity and close cooperation between Austria and West will constitute only effective guarantee Austrian territory against any potential violator.” The State Department, meanwhile, refused to see any binding obligation in the Moscow Memorandum, the “substance of which as result subsequent events has been disregarded or modified.” If the Soviets pressed for a “guaranty,” the State Department advised the Austrians to indicate to the Soviets that Austria already belonged to the collective security regime of the United Nations.224

Stourzh recalled that not only the three Western occupying powers in Austria, but also “some of the smaller NATO powers like Belgium had doubts about the wisdom of such a guarantee.” Because “none of the three Western signatories of the Austrian Treaty bordered on Austria,” military support for a guarantee would involve “some other NATO powers.”225 In its reply to Thompson, the State Department had also recognized this, pointing out that “none of four powers have common frontier with Austria so assistance could be given in emergency only by crossing third states.” “Normal guarantee to be realistic,” the State Department argued, “would have to include Czechoslovakia, Fedrep [FRG], Italy, Yugoslavia or Hungary for access.”226

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224 Department’s Comments on Tripartite Report re Guarantee Austrian Territorial Integrity; Austria Guarantees (1955-1956) Folder; Box 20; Entry 1314; Lot File 59D609; Subject Files of the Assistant Legal Advisor for European Affairs relating to Germany and Austria, 1945-1960; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
226 Department’s Comments on Tripartite Report re Guarantee Austrian Territorial Integrity.
Belgian foreign minister Spaak worried furthermore that guaranties for Austria by the three former Western occupying powers in Austria would pull in “all other partners of the North Atlantic Pact into such a conflict as a consequence of the automatic nature of the NATO system.” Meanwhile, “Austria in the reverse case, that is an attack on a country of the NATO system, would remain neutral.”

Perhaps for these reasons there is little mention in the American National Archives of NATO guaranties for Austria other than a hand-written line scribbled on a note with “Department of State—Legal Adviser” stationary: “A-Guarantee: NATO Treaty—Cld we get Nato to say any attack on A wld be consid attack on Nato.”

By the time Thompson cabled Washington, DC, in January 1956, though, he detected that “the Austrian Government is now less interested in a Four-Power Guarantee and may at least be willing considerably to delay bringing the issue up” even though “the Austrian Government will probably consider itself obliged finally to carry out its Moscow commitment to use its best endeavors to obtain a Four-Power Guarantee.”

Rauchensteiner observed that initially the Austrians “had undertaken every exertion” to obtain a guaranty despite “strict refusal” from the West. “Gradually,” Rauchensteiner explained, “the conviction took hold that it would be very good if no one outside of Austria itself would decide whether neutrality was violated or broken, because this would have opened the floodgates for unilateral interpretations of the guaranty powers.”

Neuhold agreed that

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227 Jenny, 260.
228 Anonymous Handwritten Note; Austria Guarantees (1955-1956) Folder; Box 20; Entry 1314; Lot File 59D609; Subject Files of the Assistant Legal Advisor for European Affairs relating to Germany and Austria, 1945-1960; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
230 Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 325.
a guaranty can prove itself to be a two-edged sword. It is namely to be feared, that the guaranty powers could attempt to interfere with foreign and domestic policies with the argument that the favored state has to avoid everything which could somehow bring about the invocation of the guaranty. For this reason, the non-realization of the guaranty by the “Big Four” on behalf of Austria foreseen in the Moscow Memorandum was thoroughly in Austria’s interests.231

Austrian leaders such as former foreign minister Lujo Tončić-Sorinj have agreed with Neuhold. “Guaranty,” Tončić-Sorinj argued in 1980, “is basically control and therefore not compatible with sovereignty.”232 Kreisky the same year also wrote that a guaranty “would have brought with it the danger that it would have been decided elsewhere when our independence is endangered, only not in Vienna.” The Austrians also “clearly understood that the Western Allies would hardly bring themselves to make such a guaranty. Thus only the Soviets would have remained with the unavoidable conclusion that the decision about when our independence is endangered would lie precisely in Moscow.”233

Partisan East-West Negotiation and its Neutral Result

The foregoing comprehensive analysis of the 1955 Austrian settlement affirms Bader’s assessment that “the independence of Austria is no monument to the virtues of marathon bargaining, Western negotiating finesse, or Soviet cleverness, but is an example of how divergent East-West objectives can sometimes evolve to a point where, for a brief

233 Kreisky, Politik braucht Visionen, 58-59.
moment, both parties are best served by ‘half a loaf.’”\(^{234}\) Gehler concurred that the “State Treaty was a compromise solution.”\(^{235}\)

While recognizing that Western “diplomats deserve credit for heroic tenacity,” Cronin expressed similar views. Although the State Treaty appeared “after eight years of frustrating and nearly fruitless negotiations” as “a great success for Western diplomacy,” the treaty’s “final breakthrough” had “very little to do with what was happening at the bargaining table.” It was “internal Soviet considerations and events outside Austria” that resulted in a treaty “much more favorable to Austria” than previously “passionately debated” drafts.\(^{236}\) Now that the Austrians had obtained their independence in the midst of the Cold War, both national sovereignty and internationally recognized norms of neutrality demanded that Austrians prepare to defend their state in a conflicted world.

\(^{234}\) Bader, *Austria between East and West*, 208.
\(^{235}\) Gehler, “From Non-alignment to Neutrality,” 117.
\(^{236}\) Cronin, *Great Power Politics and the Struggle over Austria*, 160.
Chapter IV

Arms and the Nation: The Story of Austrian Rearmament

Austria Disarmed

In an ultimately anarchic, self-help world of nation-states, state sovereignty customarily entails national defense. Thus it is no surprise that the provisional government of Chancellor Karl Renner created on September 24, 1945, included a small office charged with military matters, including the creation of a future army. Renner appointed Franz Winterer, a former lieutenant colonel relegated to minor duties in the Wehrmacht during the war because of his Social Democratic tendencies, as the undersecretary to lead this office.¹ This Unterstaatssekretariat für Heerwesen or Heeresamt was part of Renner’s chancellery and enjoyed support across the Austrian political spectrum, including from the Austrian Communists then in the government.²

The Allied Council, though, decreed the Heeresamt’s dissolution on November 30, 1945. Shortly thereafter, the Allies forbade all military activity in Austria on December 10, 1945.³ This latter decree affected mainly paramilitary units in Austria under the control of various Allied powers. The British, for example, maintained in Carinthia 20,000 surrendered Wehrmacht personnel in the Aldrian Brigade, named after its commander, Lieutenant General Eduard Aldrian, and a body of White Russian soldiers

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¹ James Jay Carafano, Waltzing into the Cold War: The Struggle for Occupied Austria, Texas A&M University Military History series (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 174.
Arms and the Nation

(Korps Noeldechen) under the command of a Colonel Rogôzin. These soldiers fulfilled auxiliary duties such as the care of field hospitals.4

A Free Austrian battalion had also accompanied French troops entering Austria. According to French intentions, this battalion based in Innsbruck and consisting of Wehrmacht Deserters and Austrian resistance members was to form the core of a future division. British-run labor units known as “war establishments” and various Yugoslav, Slovene, and Austrian Communist paramilitaries rounded out this picture of military formations. Soviet objections that denazification and pacification demanded complete demobilization of all military units, however, met with little resistance from the other powers and all of these units found their end in the December 10, 1945, decree.5

Along with the Austrians, the Western powers later thought better of their earlier sweeping decrees creating a completely demilitarized Austria, particularly as the Cold War developed. The Viennese publisher and former Austrian resistance member Fritz Molden, for example, maintained contacts with the American occupation authorities, including his old acquaintances from the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Molden’s friends in this World War II forerunner of the CIA “were in the summer of 1945 still inclined to uphold the brotherly comradeship of arms with the Soviets. By spring 1946, in contrast, another language was already spoken, now it was a matter of the necessity of building up a defense against Soviet expansion in Central Europe.” Similarly, the Austrian government entered secret conversations with the Western Allies,

often involving Molden, to discuss “the possibility of a common defense against
Communist or otherwise from the Soviets originating measures for the occupation of all
of Austria or the separation of the eastern zone from the rest of Austria.”

Austrian officials, meanwhile, stressed the fundamental necessity of a sovereign state to possess an armed force for self-defense. In a conversation with Austrian president Renner on March 27, 1946, the American high commissioner General Mark Clark asked Renner whether he supported an end to the occupation. Renner replied that ending the occupation entailed the “difficulty” that “our borders will always be threatened by bandits from the neighborhood; moreover, a state must have an armed force in the interest of peace and order.” Not only Communist subversion, but also (perhaps in combination with Communist takeover attempts) longstanding Yugoslav territorial claims to disputed areas in Carinthia and Styria posed a threat. Renner thought that “25,000 to 30,000 men sufficed, naturally without heavy weapons so that no one could impute warlike motives.” But, according to Renner, “in the moment where the Allies pull out, this formation must already be there. This formation demands preparations and time.”

Foreign Minister Karl Gruber expressed almost exactly the same sentiments two days later in an address to ÖVP functionaries. “The main danger for Austria,” admonished Gruber, “will come—we must be clear in this—on the day on which the occupation is ended. In our experiences dictatorships are much faster and more effective

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than democracies in interventions in the internal affairs of their neighbors.” Thus Gruber called for a “UN force to be stationed in Austria for a long time.”

Renner followed Gruber with a public declaration on May 28, 1946, that “no free and independent state can do without military establishments of any kind.” The next year on January 29, 1947, at the conference of plenipotentiaries meeting in London to negotiate the State Treaty, the Austrian government reiterated its call for an Austrian military. A memorandum presented to the conference warned that

if Austria, in contrast to its neighboring countries,...is left without a military, this would create an empty space in one of the most sensible points of Europe and Austria would not be in the position to perform even the smallest resistance against attempts to threaten its territorial integrity. Austria thus requests most urgently permission to establish an army.

In subsequent years, Gruber repeatedly called for the formation of an Austrian military on behalf of the Austrian government, particularly in light of the rearmament of Austria’s neighbors. Before the Nationalrat on March 5, 1948, Gruber demanded that

we must be able to build up an Austrian federal army in due time. It is high time three years after the end of the war that the Austrian government is conceded the right to begin the necessary preliminary work for the establishment of an Austrian federal army, just like states that were even declared defeated powers have been permitted from the very beginning.

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11 Ibid, 168.
Gruber expressed similar sentiments in his remarks before the Nationalrat on April 2, 1952. “What is supposed to happen,” he asked in reference to the already determined evacuation period for Allied troops,

when one day an Austrian State Treaty should indeed be concluded? Within 90 days foreign troops will then have to leave the country….What has the Austrian government done, and if it still has done nothing, what is it intending to do, in order to create the preconditions so that within these specific 90 days an Austrian federal army can actually be established that can at least symbolically guard our borders against neighbors armed to the teeth? I call outright upon the Austrian federal government to make use of this primitive right of a people to guard the borders of its country.\(^\text{12}\)

The February 1948 Czech coup only heightened Austrian concerns. “In Austria,” analyzed Rauchensteiner, “the shock of these events was especially perceptible.” With the possibility of cross-border subversion in mind, it “was suddenly now no longer clear whether the quick conclusion of a state treaty should be wished for or faced with trepidation.”\(^\text{13}\) Gruber, for instance, became less enthusiastic about a state treaty and more anxious to see a continued Western troop presence in Austria after the Prague coup.\(^\text{14}\) Concerns about a premature end to the occupation grew so strong in the SPÖ that Vice-Chancellor Adolf Schärf had to let it be known among State Treaty conference delegates in London that he still supported a successful treaty conclusion, albeit with proper security conditions.\(^\text{15}\) The State Department’s Office of Italian and Austrian Affairs reported on March 16, 1948, that

the communist revolution in Czechoslovakia, coinciding with the deadlock in the London conference, has given rise to an attitude akin to panic in the Austrian government. The desire to arm the police and to reestablish the Federal Army prior to the withdrawal of occupation forces indicates that

\(^{12}\) Ibid, 250.
\(^{13}\) Rauchensteiner, Der Sonderfall, 224-225.
\(^{15}\) Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 118.
the Austrian government fears the consequences of the withdrawal of forces.\textsuperscript{16}

Not just the Austrians, but also the Western powers had little enthusiasm for a state treaty in a disarmed Austria. Gruber, who often noted the underappreciated reservations of the Western powers to a state treaty, judged in his memoirs “the main difficulty in achieving an Austrian state treaty” to be that “the West simply did not consider us capable of developing without its presence enough power of resistance to withstand Communist penetration.”\textsuperscript{17} In other writings Gruber reminisced that “in the West there was the opinion that we would fall like a domino on the day of the withdrawal of the occupation troops because we would not have even a single soldier.”\textsuperscript{18}

In agreement with Gruber, Austrian scholars such as Hanns Haas have developed a “differentiated picture of State Treaty negotiations” in contrast to the “public opinion conforming” to the Cold War that “leaves no doubt about the guilt of the Soviet leadership for the delay in negotiations.” Through readings of released official documents like the \textit{Foreign Relations of the United States}, Haas has come to the view that during periods such as early 1948 “Soviet foreign policy pushed for a quick conclusion of a treaty in critical phases of negotiations but came upon the resistance of the State Department.” For this resistance “military interests were decisive.”\textsuperscript{19} Haas’ colleague Günter Bischof has also noted the resistance of the Pentagon to an Austrian

\textsuperscript{16} The London Negotiations and Future Policy in Austria, March 16, 1948; Policy Documents Folder; Box 3; Entry 1174C; Lot 54D541; Office of Italian and Austrian Affairs, 1949-1953; Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, 1941-1953; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group (RG) 59; National Archives (NA) Building II, College Park, MD.
\textsuperscript{17} Karl Gruber, \textit{Meine Partei ist Österreich: Privates und Diplomatisches} (Vienna: Amalthea Verlag, 1988), 114.
Treaty in 1949, but Soviet disinterest in a treaty at this time made the point moot.\textsuperscript{20} The French high commissioner, General Marie-Emile Béthouart, meanwhile, also expressed objections to Allied evacuation before Austria was properly armed.\textsuperscript{21}

Not only concerns for Austria’s domestic stability, but also the general East-West balance of power in Austria and environs worried the West. The previously indicated drawdown of Western occupation troops in Austria meant, for example, that in early 1951 about 15,000 Western troops in Austria faced approximately 50,000 Soviet troops. Of the Western forces, 13,400 were Americans, costing the United States $80 million per year.\textsuperscript{22} Most of the Western troops, moreover, were not combat forces and they had no air power, except for a small Anglo-American air contingent in Italy. The Soviet 59\textsuperscript{th} Air Army headquartered in Vienna-Liesing, by contrast, controlled around 170 combat aircraft and could call upon a further 250 in Hungary.\textsuperscript{23}

\textit{Austria Rearms (Somewhat)}

Thus, already in the years immediately following the 1945 Allied Council decisions demilitarizing Austria, the Austrians and the Western Allies were all in public agreement that Austria needed to begin constructing a military force. Indeed, in light of the broad agreement among the Austrians in this matter, Rauchensteiner considered it “practically impossible to say exactly” which Austrian first suggested the creation of an

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\textsuperscript{21} Rauchensteiner, \textit{Die Zwei}, 120.
\textsuperscript{22} Günter Bischof, \textit{Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-55: The Leverage of the Weak}, King’s College Cold War History Series (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 121.
\textsuperscript{23} Rauchensteiner, “Staatsvertrag und bewaffnete Macht,” 144, 147.
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\textit{Arms and the Nation} 232
Austrian military before the State Treaty’s completion. The one decisive veto in the Allied Council coming from the Soviet Union was notable in several ways. To begin with, the Soviet Union had initially accepted the creation of the Heeresamt in 1945. The Soviet Union had also violated the 1945 decrees with the establishment of the USIA Werkschutz. Moreover, on April 13, 1949, the Soviet high commissioner Colonel General Vladimir V. Kurasov had expressed understanding for the desire to begin the establishment of an Austrian military before the State Treaty’s ratification.

Officially, the Soviet Union and the three Western occupying powers had already agreed upon the size of the future Austrian military by April 24, 1947. At the Moscow Foreign Ministers’ Conference, these four powers had agreed to limit the Austrian armed forces to 53,000 ground troops and 90 aircraft along with 5,000 air force personnel in the State Treaty’s Article 17. These provisions had their basis in American proposals carefully drafted by the Subcommittee for Europe of the interdepartmental State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC 307) a year before. The SWNCC had argued in a memorandum on June 8, 1946, that

in order to prevent Austria from engaging in another war, to restrict the maintenance of her armed forces to a minimum for internal security and local defensive requirements, and to preclude the rendering of substantial assistance to any enemy with which she might become allied, specific limitations on the Austrian armed forces should be included in the treaty.

The Americans had advocated allowing Austria a force similar in size to the military outlined for Hungary under its peace treaty, namely 66,000 ground troops, 92

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24 Rauchensteiner, Der Sonderfall, 223.
26 Ibid, 140, 142.
27 State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee: Military, Naval, and Air Clauses for the Treaty of Peace with Austria, June 8, 1946; Folder 388.1—Austria (6-8-46), Sec. 1; Box 11; Geographic File, 1948-1950; Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218; NA.
aerial aircraft, and 6,600 air force personnel. While the Americans’ British negotiating partners commented that these force levels were too high, the Americans responded that bargaining room was needed. The final State Treaty provisions, meanwhile, thoroughly corresponded not only to the ideas of Renner, but also met the expectations of Gruber and others who had all suggested an Austrian military of about 25,000-30,000 personnel.²⁸

The Soviets, though, refused to countenance creating an Austrian military before the finalization of the State Treaty, a position that in turn directly contrasted with the American refusal to undertake State Treaty negotiations in the absence of at least a minimal Austrian military.²⁹ Given this logjam, the Austrians and the Western powers entertained a variety of “secret” rearmament measures beyond Allied Council control and a Soviet veto. Gruber, according to Bischof, anticipated “communist goon-squads under the leadership of Soviet-trained agents” or Yugoslavian border transgressions during the vulnerable three-to-six month “ratification phase” following the conclusion of the State Treaty and the departure of occupation forces. The Tyrolean Gruber, “undoubtedly with romantic visions of the legendary Andreas Hofer taking on Napoleon’s mighty army in mind, suggested to the Austrian Cabinet that they should organize the hidebound shooting clubs (“Schützen”) and volunteer fire brigades as future Austrian guerrilla fighters.” While the Americans found some merit in this plan, they “dismissed hare-brained self-defense schemes such as building the core of an Austrian air force by allowing the training of former Luftwaffe Austrian pilots on glider planes.”³⁰

French forces in Gruber’s homeland, meanwhile, “went to considerable lengths,” in the words of Bischof, to prepare their occupation zone for a possible Soviet attack.

²⁸ Rauchensteiner, “Staatsvertrag und bewaffnete Macht,” 141-142, and Der Sonderfall, 223.
²⁹ Rauchensteiner, “Staatsvertrag und bewaffnete Macht,” 139.
³⁰ Bischof, Austria in the First Cold War, 121-122.
France, according to Austrian scholar Bruno W. Koppensteiner, was “without a doubt the militarily weakest of all four occupation powers” and the “only European continental power of the victorious Western coalition.” Thus France had a “high sensibility” for any endangerment of the “neurological zone” in Central Europe. Accordingly, the French in a “considerable system” (Koppensteiner) of defense plans made “intricate preparations” (Bischof) for blocking or destroying 48 key bridges, roads, and tunnels along the Alpine routes into Germany and Italy. One such plan entailed exploding a train with 50 tons of explosives in the tunnel under the Arlberg Pass between the provinces of Vorarlberg and Tyrol in order to disrupt this key east-west rail line.³¹ French plans to make Austria into a “bulwark against the East” (Rauchensteiner) also included the formation of Austrian underground groups and paratroop exercises in the Alps.³²

Nothing, though, could substitute for the actual creation of an Austrian military. Bischof remarked that “Western Cold War scholarship has largely glossed over the fact that the covert rearmament of the Western occupation zones of Austria was initiated in 1948, at least two years before West Germany’s.” In the years to come “Pentagon planners gave Austria, in a rare exception, the same priority as NATO allies (‘Title I’); equipment was set aside by depleting NATO stockpiles.”³³

The mechanism for the West’s unilateral rearmament of Austria became the Austrian federal police or gendarmerie. Even before the gendarmerie came into consideration as a framework for Austrian rearmament, the British had attempted to compensate for the drawdown of their occupation forces by assigning tasks to the

³² Rauchensteiner, Der Sonderfall, 233.
³³ Bischof, Austria in the First Cold War, 116, 119.
Austrian police, something that the Austrian government gladly accepted in order to reduce the occupation’s presence. In August 1948, however, an Anglo-American committee recommended the establishment in each Western occupation zone of a battalion of about 500 gendarmes. Together they would form a gendarmerie regiment with headquarters near Salzburg.

The Americans named these battalions “Mobile Units” (MU), a name corrupted by some Austrians, conscious of the anti-British tribal uprising then in progress in Kenya, into “Mau-Mau.” Each MU received a reconnaissance element, disguised behind the name “Driving Unit [Fahrenheit],” in the form of an armored car company equipped with American World War II-era M-8s. Until 1955, though, these Austrian M-8s had their standard armament of 37-mm cannon, puny as they were, removed and possessed only machine guns.

Rauchensteiner refrained from calling the police in the paramilitary MUs “troops.” These gendarmes, he wrote, “allowed themselves neither to be militarily led nor used, were therefore in the eyes of Western planners largely unusable.” The Austrian government was, however, not ready to do more for fear of engaging in a prohibited activity.

Maneuvers held in the summer and fall of 1951 confirmed that the MUs were of little value. With the fall 1950 strikes (during which the MUs had only seen some use in Upper Austria) fresh in everyone’s memory, the Western powers wanted to see if the gendarmerie battalions could counter armed unrest. These maneuvers, according to

34 Rauchensteiner, “Staatsvertrag und bewaffnete Macht,” 144.
35 Rauchensteiner, Der Sonderfall, 245.
37 Rauchensteiner, “Staatsvertrag und bewaffnete Macht,” 144.
Rauchensteiner, “led to thoroughly negative judgments. The people trained primarily in gendarmerie service could not give anything close to the impression of trained troops.”

The failure of the MUs prompted the Western Allies to create the true core of a future Austrian army under the cover of the gendarmerie. American headquarters in Austria had already at the beginning of 1950 created a phased plan strengthening the gendarmerie such that with 20,000 gendarmes it could transform in the foreseen 90-day evacuation period into a 28,000-strong army. Plans to develop such a force took shape at the beginning of May 1952 in an Austro-American agreement governing the armament, training, and financing of units within the gendarmerie. Even though the conciliation of American security concerns in order to speedily achieve the State Treaty was in Austria’s interest, relative Austrian disinterest in security matters delayed the establishment of the new military formation. Not until, according to Rauchensteiner, “a phase of total stagnation in State Treaty negotiations,” namely August 1, 1952, did a “new type” of “gendarmerie special formation” come into existence with American aid, the B-Gendarmerie.

The Austrian scholar Wilfried Thanner noted that “no one really knows where this name comes from and what it actually means.” Supposedly the provincial gendarmerie commandant of Upper Austria, Colonel Dr. Mayer, coined this term to distinguish the B-Gendarmerie from the general (allgemeine) or A-Gendarmerie. The “B” could thus indicate a chronological listing or could also, in the opinion of others, stand for

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“readiness [Bereitschaft-],” “armed [Bewaffnete-],” or “special [Besondere-]” Gendarmerie.40

The B-Gendarmerie consisted at first of 3,000 men distributed across six gendarmerie schools. Although these gendarmes still received police instruction, they received mainly military training.41 The B-Gendarmerie, for example, took part in the 1952 Exercise Frosty of the United States Forces in Austria (USFA) simulating a defense of the mountain passes of Upper Austria. The military training in gendarmerie schools included analysis of Soviet tactics on the Eastern Front in World War II, with the Austrians displaying a keen interest in antitank defenses against Soviet armored attack.42

By 1953 the B-Gendarmerie had grown to 5,700 men. The reduction of British and French occupation forces to a battalion each following the January 1, 1954, decision of their governments to emulate the Soviet Union and no longer charge the Austrians with occupation costs led the West to increase the size of the B-Gendarmerie to 8,500 men.43 This “restructured regiment” of the strengthened B-Gendarmerie formed nine infantry battalions and one engineer battalion or, in the words of American historian James Jay Carafano, “almost a division’s worth of combat power—as much as was available to the American, British, and French commanders combined.”44 Had a Soviet attack occurred before the establishment of an independent Austria with its own military, the Western powers, according to Rauchensteiner, would have unilaterally given Austria

41 Rauchensteiner, “Staatsvertrag und bewaffnete Macht,” 145.
42 Carafano, Waltzing into the Cold War, 185-186.
43 Rauchensteiner, “Staatsvertrag und bewaffnete Macht,” 146-147.
44 Carafano, Waltzing into the Cold War, 188.
its full sovereignty and a—perhaps exiled—Austrian government would have commanded the B-Gendarmerie on the side of the West.\textsuperscript{45}

The B-Gendarmerie consisted only of volunteers who, unlike the members of the MUs, were no longer subject to police union work agreements. Significantly, veteran officers and NCOs with \textit{Wehrmacht} experience led the B-Gendarmerie.\textsuperscript{46} Indeed, it was the enlistment of such officers that marks August 1, 1952, as the B-Gendarmerie’s birthday.\textsuperscript{47} Rauchensteiner considered the B-Gendarmerie, which “came to some fame,” as “relatively hard to qualify because it was neither regular military nor gendarmerie nor paramilitary formation.”\textsuperscript{48}

Whatever the B-Gendarmerie was, it was supposed to remain hidden behind the façade of a police unit until, in Gruber’s expression, “it only had to put on a military uniform on Day X.”\textsuperscript{49} Rauchensteiner found in 1983 that for men of the B-Gendarmerie “the secrecy was ultimately so died in the wool that even today they do not want to have anything to do with thorough historical research and they hesitate to release their papers or simply refuse.”\textsuperscript{50} “In the recruitment of the B-Gendarmerie,” added Rauchensteiner, it was largely concealed for reasons of cover that this would hardly be a normal gendarmerie service, and it was not a rare occurrence that provisional gendarmes, who had dreamed of a normal civil service existence, resigned when they suddenly had to exercise and participate in field maneuvers.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{45} Rauchensteiner, “Staatsvertrag und bewaffnete Macht,” 145.
\textsuperscript{46} Rauchensteiner, \textit{Der Sonderfall}, 307.
\textsuperscript{47} Blasi, 44.
\textsuperscript{49} Gruber, “Die Zeit nach Beendigung des Zweiten Weltkrieges,” 23.
\textsuperscript{50} Rauchensteiner, “Die Entmilitärisierung und Wiederbewaffnung in Österreich 1945 bis 1955,” 73.
\textsuperscript{51} Rauchensteiner, \textit{Der Sonderfall}, 308.
For their part, the Americans in September 1953 advised their Austrian partners to not allow any pictures of B-Gendarmes handling heavy American weaponry. The Americans also sometimes concealed B-Gendarmes in American uniforms during maneuvers.  

Similar secrecy had surrounded the MUs. Worried about Soviet inquiries, for instance, the Nationalrat in December 1948 explained away a 35% rise in the gendarmerie’s budget from 1948 to 1949, actually caused by the MUs, with references to gendarmerie motorization. In the same manner, a MU exercise took place on October 2, 1951, near Eggendorf, Upper Austria, under the assumption that 400 convicts had broken out of a prison and established themselves on a farm. The gendarmes supposedly had the mission of surrounding the escapees and forcing them to surrender. As the Austrian Social Democratic newspaper Neue Zeit reported before the maneuver, though, this scenario merely concealed training for counterinsurgency warfare like that previously practiced in the Wehrmacht.

Whether MUs or B-Gendarmerie, though, these cover measures for a national army were (predictably?) all for naught. Rauchensteiner noted in 1980, for example, that the Soviets knew about the B-Gendarmerie “in minute detail.” For historians such as Rauchensteiner it is “sheer pleasure” to read in newspaper archives that the Soviets knew “who is where, who commands whom, they had complete lists of names, they knew about anything and everything.” The B-Gendarmerie was “merely pro forma

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52 Blasi, 47, 54.
secret…everything was shouted from the rooftops.” Despite classifications of “secret” and “top secret,” Rauchensteiner wrote on another occasion, “no one could entertain the illusion that something really remained hidden to Soviet authorities.”

The B-Gendarmes themselves learned this in July 1954 while responding to a Danube flood in an emergency relief operation. A company of the “top secret” B-Gendarmerie had orders to cross over to the north bank of the Danube in the Soviet-occupied Mühlviertel of Upper Austria. Lieutenant Lothar Brósch-Fohraheim remembered that the B-Gendarmes had instructions to present themselves as ad hoc assembled gendarmes. “With a somewhat queasy feeling” the B-Gendarmes crossed the bridge over the Danube at Linz, only to have the Soviet commander of the guard surprisingly greet them as the “first official unit of the B-Gendarmerie in the Soviet zone.”

Perhaps no better example of Austria’s not-so-secret rearmament was Die Aufrüstung Österreichs: Dokumente und Tatsachen, published by the Austrian section of the World Council of Peace (Friedensrat), a Communist front organization. In 163 pages, this book detailed in text and pictures anything in Austria remotely connected to Western-supported rearmament and “war-mongering.” Communist criticism of Austria’s “secret” rearmament also reached the Nationalrat. There Undersecretary Ferdinand Graf’s responsibility, along with Minister Oskar Helmer, for the gendarmerie in the Interior Ministry provoked insults such as “fascist,” “megalomaniac Dummkopf,”

57 Blasi, 56. Emphasis in the original.
and “old bandit” from KPÖ members Franz Honner and Ernst Fischer before they were called to order.\textsuperscript{59}

The rearmament of Austria also became, in Rauchensteiner’s term, “a mainstay [\textit{Dauerbrenner}] in the Allied Council.” “If a street was widened in Upper Austria or a mountain road was expanded in Tyrol,” he wrote, “then already this was supposed to have strategic character according to propaganda not to be taken very seriously.”\textsuperscript{60} “The Allied reaction,” recounted the American diplomat William B. Bader, “to the Soviet charges was simply to ignore them.” This was a telling contrast to “the normal Western response” to Soviet accusations of challenging “the Soviet element to an investigation.” In the case of rearmament, however, “the Soviets received only vague answers that the armament of the gendarmerie was a question to be dealt with by each occupation power independently.”\textsuperscript{61}

Once in the fall of 1951 the American and British high commissioners, Walter J. Donnelly and Harold Caccia, respectively, invited the Soviet high commissioner, General Vladimir Petrovič Sviridov, to visit the British and American zones in order to inspect everything he considered a concealed military measure. The Western high commissioners, though, asked in return to visit Soviet bases in eastern Austria. Sviridov, in turn, attempted to evade this request and even pretended to be ignorant of the location of the maneuver area Döllarsheim, a base created by the Third Reich and still in use by the Federal Austrian Army (\textit{Bundesheer}) today. At the next sitting of the Allied Council on October 12, 1951, Donnelly brought a map marked with all important Soviet military

\textsuperscript{59} Rauchensteiner, \textit{Der Sonderfall}, 305.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{61} Bader, 106-107.
establishments in the area Allentsteig-Döllarsheim.62 Such antics aside, both
Rauchensteiner and the Austrian general Otto Seitz note that the Soviet response to the
West’s rearmament of Austria was rather muted. Seitz thought that the Soviets, while
knowing of Austrian rearmament, “made no difficulties in recognition of its later
necessity and benevolently noted it.”63

Rauchensteiner observed that Austrian “approval in principle” of the B-
Gendarmerie “did not mean that one was on fire with enthusiasm for the matter.” “Aside
from a few leading Austrian politicians…most of those responsible only wanted to engage
in an alibi action and were simply happy to have the issue off the table in order to be able
to continue the State Treaty negotiations.”64 A desire “to avoid precipitating a break with
the Soviet Union,” argued Austrian historian Michael Gehler, further encouraged the
Austrians to proceed with rearmament “at a gradual pace” even as a “well-calculated,
‘secret’ rearmament” functioned “as a gentle point of pressure on the Soviet Union to
move ahead with the state treaty and bring it to a conclusion.”65

Rauchensteiner’s and Gehler’s Austrian academic colleague Christine
Mitterwenger-Fessl confirmed that even right before the final State Treaty negotiations in
1955 Julius Raab considered a “motorized gendarmerie à la B-Gendarmerie” sufficient
for Austrian defense needs.66 Rauchensteiner concluded that the Austrians “did just
enough in the question of national defense in order to comfort the outside world, or not to

62 Rauchensteiner, Der Sonderfall, 305.
63 Rauchensteiner, “Die Entmilitarisierung und Wiederbewaffnung in Österreich 1945 bis 1955,”
64 Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 219.
65 Michael Gehler, “From Non-alignment to Neutrality: Austria’s Transformation during the First
66 Mitterwenger-Fessl, 308.
discomfort it too much. And one also wanted subsequently to do just enough and not a bit more.\textsuperscript{67}

Nonetheless, Gruber recalled in his memoirs that the B-Gendarmerie succeeded in its assuring effect. It was “no easy task,” he wrote,

to convince broad portions of the American public that we were internally secure and firmly resolved to engage in self-defense. Only the excellent impression made by our B-Gendarmerie, built in all secrecy, ultimately gave Western authorities the confidence that we would not fall over in the first putsch attempt.\textsuperscript{68}

\textit{The West’s Call to the Colors: The Aufgebot}

In contrast to the “Mau-Mau” or B-Gendarmerie, as historians like Rauchensteiner have noted, the \textit{Aufgebot}, or “call up” program, was the “single secret project in connection with the remilitarization of Austria that actually remained secret.”\textsuperscript{69}

This cooperative venture between the Western occupation powers and the Austrians foresaw the registration of around 200,000 Austrian \textit{Wehrmacht} veterans, of whom, the plan assumed, at least 100,000 would opt to fight on the side of the West against any Soviet attack across Central Europe. According to USFA commander Lieutenant General George P. Hays on October 28, 1952, these 100,000 soldiers could then be operational within six months and would enable the defense of a line across Austria from Salzburg to Villach, Carinthia.\textsuperscript{70} Among other tasks, the B-Gendarmerie under Western plans would have cooperated with the mobilization of the \textit{Aufgebot} in case of war.\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{67} Rauchensteiner, “Staatsvertrag und bewaffnete Macht,” 155.
\textsuperscript{68} Gruber, \textit{Meine Partei ist Österreich}, 155-156.
\textsuperscript{70} Manfried Rauchensteiner, “Staatsvertrag und bewaffnete Macht,” 146.
\textsuperscript{71} Blasi, 50.
Various American proposals for the *Aufgebot*, though, looked far beyond Austria. In case of Soviet attack, the Americans wanted namely to quickly remove the *Aufgebot* contingent from Austria to Italy, but diplomatic talks revealed Italian objections to the presence of so many Austrians in northern Italy close to the German-speaking minority in formerly Austrian South Tyrol. The Italians urged instead the formation of Austrian units in southern Italy or North Africa. Speaking of the *Aufgebot* as the “final call up” in the “tradition of Andreas Hofer,” Rauchensteiner in 1979 retrospectively judged the prospect of Austrians preparing for war as far away as North Africa to be “nightmarish *[beklemmend]*.”

Yet while evacuated Austrians would have served the manpower needs of the West in any war with the Communist bloc, Austrian historian Gerhard Artl recorded that for the Austrians it was above all a matter of rescuing as many countrymen as possible from a Soviet occupation on the one hand while preserving, on the other hand, in case of conflict through the presence of exile formations the sovereignty and integrity of the Austrian state by participation in the fighting and preventing a development like that after 1938 when the lack of an Austrian exile government and/or exile formations burdened the representation of Austrian interests in the councils of the Allies.

Some evidence indicates that the agreement to implement the *Aufgebot* came about already at an October 2, 1951, discussion between the American high commissioner Walter J. Donnally, Lieutenant General Stafford Leroy Irwin (Hays’ predecessor as USFA commander), Chancellor Leopold Figl, Foreign Minister Gruber, Interior Minister Helmer, and Undersecretary Graf. Between the following February 18

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72 Rauchensteiner, *Der Sonderfall*, 306.
74 Blasi, 40.
and March 7, talks took place in Austria’s western provinces during which provincial leaders promised their support and determined which personnel would conduct the work.\textsuperscript{75} The registration followed without the knowledge of the veterans concerned and encompassed 90,000 men by 1954.\textsuperscript{76}

**National Defense and Neutrality**

In perhaps a merely symbolic action, the Allied Council lifted its December 10, 1945, ban on military activities in Austria on July 8, 1955, right before the ratification of the State Treaty the following July 27.\textsuperscript{77} Even before Austria declared neutrality, the National Defense Law (\textit{Wehrgesetz}) of September 7, 1955, subsequently laid to rest with its provision for national conscription any fear that Austrian national security would remain limited to a successor of the B-Gendarmerie.\textsuperscript{78}

The \textit{Wehrgesetz} expressed Austrian determination to fulfill the Neutrality Law’s pledge that Austria would “maintain and defend” neutrality “with all means at her disposal.” Austria, moreover, did not simply view the Neutrality Law as domestic law but notified all states having diplomatic relations with Austria of this law on November 14, 1955, and requested recognition of the same. The notified states, according to Austrian legal scholar Hanspeter Neuhold, “responded to this wish partly expressly, partly through tacit recognition.”\textsuperscript{79} As Neuhold’s fellow Austrian legal scholar, Alfred Verdross, noted, such notification helped fulfill the Austrian pledge in the Moscow

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\textsuperscript{75} Artl, 106. \\
\textsuperscript{76} Blasi, 40-41. \\
\textsuperscript{77} Mitterwenger-Fessl, 317. \\
\textsuperscript{78} Rauchensteiner, “Staatsvertrag und bewaffnete Macht,” 155. \\
\end{flushleft}
Memorandum to “undertake all expedient steps” in order to achieve an “international recognition” of Austrian neutrality.80

What exactly, though, defined the neutrality in Austrian domestic constitutional law and notified to the world community of states? In answer to this question scholars like the Swiss Heinz Schmid have observed that “neutrality law rules were codified above all during the Second Hague Peace Conference in two agreements from October 18, 1907.” Both the Convention Respecting the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers and Persons in Case of War on Land (Hague Convention V) and the Convention concerning the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers in Naval War (Hague Convention XIII) “still form even today the core substance of neutrality law.”81

Analysts such as the Austrian Gerhard Böhner, however, observe that these two conventions and neutrality law in general have “a pronounced rudimentary character. Neutrality law thus allows itself to be better presented in guidelines than in specific, detailed statements.”82 The Austrian legal scholar Michael Schweitzer has agreed that “the codification of this area of law, seen in legal-political terms, is filled with gaps.”83

Not all states, moreover, have signed these two Hague conventions. Writing in 1975, Josef Köpfer counted 29 states as Convention V signatories and 26 states as Convention XIII signatories, figures including in neither case all great powers.84

Similarly, Utta Plessow found among “over 100 sovereign states” in 1967 “about 40”....

80 Alfred Verdross, Die immerwährende Neutralität Österreichs (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1978), 32-33.
signatories to the two conventions, “of which some states—Austria-Hungary, Montenegro—no longer even exist today.”Yet Hague Convention V (in Article 20) and Hague Convention XIII (in Article 28) both state that “the provisions of the present Convention do not apply except between Contracting Powers and then only if all the belligerents are Parties to the Convention.”

Thus Stefan Oeter dismissed these two conventions “as fundamental sources of law for neutrality law” because “the extreme universal participation clause of the conventions in connection with the very limited number of ratifications leads to the result that the conventions are practically never applicable as treaty law settlements.” This “severe birth defect already became visible during the First World War.” The former legal advisor to the Austrian Foreign Ministry, Franz Cede, agreed with Oeter, not only because of the limited number of treaty signatories (Cede counted 28 for Convention V and 32 for Convention XIII), but also because of the “evidently inconsistent state praxis during the First and Second World Wars.”

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86 Copies of both Hague neutrality conventions are readily available, both in printed form and online. See, for example: Francis Deák and Philip C. Jessup, eds., *A Collection of Neutrality Laws, Regulations and Treaties of Various Countries*, vol. 2 (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1939), 1370-1380. The two conventions are also available online at Yale Law School’s Avalon Project. See: Convention Respecting the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers and Persons in Case of War on Land (accessed February 1, 2006); available from http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/hague05.htm; and Convention concerning the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers in Naval War (accessed February 1, 2006); available from http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/hague13.htm.


88 Franz Cede, “Österreichs Neutralität und Sicherheitspolitik nach dem Beitritt zur Europäischen Union,” *Zeitschrift für Rechtsvergleichung, internationales Privatrecht und Europarecht* 36, no. 4 (1995): 146. Plessow also noted that “the norms were often disrespected and violated by the belligerents so that they could have very well lost their validity through force of events.” See: Plessow, 17.
Accordingly, scholars like Schwitzer see “customary international law playing a large role in neutrality law.” Schwitzer has noted that “in the literature the opinion is mostly represented that the Hague agreements with their provisions concerning neutrality law represented codified customary international law and are valid beyond the circle of treaty partners.” Indications for this are “in the negotiations protocols, from which is evident that the general view at the conference of The Hague went in the direction that it was a matter of codified customary international law.”

In a similar manner, Oeter believed that “at heart only the basic—for a long time no longer disputed—rules of customary neutrality were written down in the conventions.” “Pathbreaking new initiatives for the further development of neutrality law” did not take shape at the 1907 Hague Conference, but rather “efforts in the editing commission of the conference to create new and precise rules” failed. Plessow, meanwhile, concluded that the preamble of Convention V proclaiming a desire “of defining the meaning of the term ‘neutral’” made the Hague Conventions “a quasi compilation of generally valid principles of international law.”

Legal scholar Dietrich Schindler wrote that “only relatively weak divergences of opinion manifested themselves during the codification of these rules at The Hague” because “the law of neutrality had consolidated itself in a large measure in the course of

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90 Oeter, 42, 248.

91 Plessow, 17, and Convention Respecting the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers and Persons in Case of War on Land.
the 19th century as customary law.” Schindler’s Austrian colleague Manfred Rotter has offered support for this assessment in the observation that

judging from the basic documents concerning the neutrality of Switzerland [declared in 1815], Belgium [1839] and Luxemburg [1867], their drafters must have acted on the basis of a common understanding of the nature of permanent neutrality. For neither of these instruments contains any definition or enumerates rules to be observed by these states as a result of their special status.

Schwitzer cautioned that harmonious “expressions of opinion and will by the potential treaty partners can only bind them….An obligation, though, for states that did not participate in the formulation of the treaties cannot generally be maintained.” Refuting the existence of a pre-Hague customary law, noted Schwitzer, is “the universal participation clause of the Hague agreements, which would then, after all, be completely superfluous.” Additionally, both conventions (Article 24 in Convention V, Article 32 in Convention XIII) contain clauses allowing “Contracting Powers…to denounce the present Convention,” with the denunciation taking effect one year after notification reaching the Dutch government.

Nonetheless, Plessow determined that the actions of several states confirmed the customary law character of the Hague Conventions. Italy and the five Nordic states, for example, passed similar neutrality laws in 1938 based upon the Hague Conventions. The Nuremburg tribunal after World War II also recognized these conventions. In turn, the American fleet instructions from 1955 assumed the Hague Conventions as a basis while

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94 Schwitzer, 94.
95 Convention Respecting the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers and Persons in Case of War on Land and Convention concerning the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers in Naval War.
the Soviet Union in the same year recognized them in a diplomatic note to Holland. Köpfer agreed that “various courts” have judged the Hague Conventions to be “valid customary law.” Oeter concluded, therefore, that “neutrality is an institution of customary law grown up through the centuries.” Additionally, neutrality since 1907 has continued to develop as a matter of customary law. Hans Haug made in 1962 the observation still valid today that “despite the rapid development of air power and air warfare it has up to the present day still not been possible to compliment The Hague Conventions concerning the laws of warfare and neutrality with a binding agreement for an air war regime.” The “most important principles of neutrality in land and sea warfare,” though, had shown themselves to be “transferable to the conditions of air warfare” by the belligerent powers.

In a parallel fashion, “perpetual neutrality” like that declared by Austria in 1955 rests, in the words of Schwitzer, “completely on customary international law.” Such a policy of attempting to avoid all wars in advance “modifies or widens individual norms of simple neutrality law.” In interpreting this long-term adaptation of ad hoc neutrality, the international legal community has assigned particular weight to official national statements concerning “perpetual” or “permanent” neutrality such as the *Official Swiss Conception of Neutrality* promulgated on November 26, 1954.

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96 Plessow, 17.
97 Köpfer, 26.
98 Oeter, 2. Emphasis in the original.
100 Schwitzer, 94.
This document states that neutral “duties” exist “already in peacetime,” including the “obligation to defend neutrality and/or independence.” The Austrian legal scholar Karl Zemanek wrote in a legal brief on February 13, 1970, that this statement was part of a “Swiss view—flowing from both official statements as well as writings of Swiss international law authors—based on long experience that perpetual neutrality can only be armed neutrality.” General Wilhelm Kuntner, commandant of the Austrian National Defense Academy, confirmed that the “militant will to defend of Switzerland,” the point of reference for Austrian neutrality in the Moscow Memorandum, “had become downright proverbial” during Switzerland’s “long practice of neutrality.”

A glance at Convention V, the only Hague neutrality convention of direct relevance to landlocked Switzerland and Austria, reveals why. As Böhner has noted, this convention “assumes armed neutrality without this needing to be expressly codified.” Article 1, for instance, declares that “the territory of neutral powers is inviolable.” Article 2 states that “belligerents are forbidden to move troops or convoys of either munitions of war or supplies across the territory of a neutral Power.” Article 3 also forbids belligerents from erecting “on the territory of a neutral Power a wireless telegraphy station or other apparatus for the purpose of communicating with belligerent forces on land or sea.” Article 11 obliges “a neutral Power which receives on its territory

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102 Hummer and Mayrzдет, 228.


104 Böhner, 22.
troops belonging to the belligerent armies” to “intern them, as far as possible, at a distance from the theatre of war.”

Zemanek thus determined that “positive international law obliges a neutral state to repel violations of its territory by belligerents and/or to end initiated but still lasting violations.” The history of Switzerland shows that this enforcement of neutrality requires considerable force. Alone the duty to intern belligerent troops confronted Switzerland during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 with the task of controlling 90,000 fully-armed French troops of the Bourbaki Army after their retreat into Switzerland. Some of these interned French soldiers later stormed with swords a German victory celebration in Bern at war’s end. The French Army’s 45th Corps with 30,000 troops subsequently sought refuge in Switzerland during World War II. The Austrian author Gerd Kaminski consequently asked, absent an Austrian military, what should prevent similar armed bodies in wartime “from parading with their tanks on the Ringstraße [in downtown Vienna].”

Moreover, Austrian legal scholar Hanspeter Neuhold observed that under the Damocles’ sword of self-help, compliance with these obligations [of neutrality] lies in the neutral’s own national interest. For should the neutral state prove, at least over a certain period of time, unable or unwilling to put an end to such encroachments on its neutrality, the belligerent negatively affected by them is entitled to do so itself. This would mean, however, that armed hostilities between the belligerent parties would spread to the neutral state’s territory, so that it would be drawn into the war—the very result that it wanted first and foremost to avoid by choosing a neutral position.

Thus neutrality, Heinz Vetschera of the Austrian National Defense Academy has explained, has a “trilateral structure” consisting of a neutral country and two opposing belligerents that obliges the neutral “to maintain its integrity.”\textsuperscript{109} A classic historic example of a neutral’s failure to “maintain its integrity,” often cited by Vetschera and others, is Cambodia, one of the bloodiest killing fields of Southeast Asia.\textsuperscript{110}

Indeed, Vetschera has analyzed that “unprotected neutrality would favor the first to break it. It would lead almost of necessity to a race among the belligerent parties for control of the neutral country with the consequence that the belligerent parties would collide on neutral territory.”\textsuperscript{111} The German scholar Hans-Willi Nolden has cited as evidence of this proposition the case of neutral Belgium in 1914, invaded by Germany in part because of fears that France would do the same.\textsuperscript{112} Parallel to Nolden, Stelianos Scarlis has noted that inadequate Norwegian defenses prior to World War II created “a power vacuum in the strategic sea area between Northern Europe and the British Isles,” thereby setting the stage for “a kind of race between the great powers to realize their plans to violate neutrality.”\textsuperscript{113}

While Austrian legal scholars like Verdross have shown that a “permanently neutral state” must maintain “an effective defense,” the “determination which measures are necessary for this goal is left within the boundaries of the discretion” of the neutral


\textsuperscript{110} Heinz Vetschera, interview by author in the \textit{Offizierskasino} of the National Defense Academy in Vienna’s Stiftskaserne on July 11, 2005.


state. In addition, “this obligation finds its end in the capability” of a neutral state, for “the general legal principle ‘ultra posse nemo tenetur’ is also valid in international intercourse.”\textsuperscript{114} Zemanek agreed that there was “no obligation to use automatically certain means” for defending neutrality, “as long as they were in any way means with which the desired goal could be achieved.” The “perpetually neutral state” only had to procure “military armament that could be reasonably expected of it in good faith.”\textsuperscript{115}

Many Austrian analysts have noted that the interrelated strategic and legal implications of Austrian neutrality clearly concerned the Western powers. The historian Günter Bischof related that “the State Department had to fight hard” in the National Security Council (NSC) for the State Treaty “in spite of the Pentagon’s security concerns. Ultimately, the Pentagon agreed to neutralizing Austria only because it would be ‘armed neutrality.’”\textsuperscript{116} Rauchensteiner agreed that the United States “was only ready to concede Austrian neutrality under the condition of a strong military component” and that “for the Americans neutrality stood or fell with the armament of Austria.”\textsuperscript{117} The Austrian legal scholar Felix Ermacora, meanwhile, cited both Senators Margaret Chase Smith and J. William Fulbright listing Austrian national defense as a precondition for Austrian neutrality in Senate testimony on June 1, 1955.\textsuperscript{118} Speaking before the United States Foreign Relations Committee earlier on May 17, 1955, Secretary of State John Foster

\begin{footnotes}
\item[114] Alfred Verdross, Die immerwährende Neutralität Österreichs (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1978), 48.
\item[115] Hummer and Mayrzedt, 218, 228.
\item[116] Günter Bischof, Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-55: The Leverage of the Weak, King’s College Cold War History Series (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 146. Emphasis in the original.
\item[117] Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 218.
\end{footnotes}
Dulles recognized on behalf of the American government the concerns of these two committee members, stating that

one of the proper concerns we had was that Austrian neutrality would be a disarmed neutrality, and if that was the case it would set a very bad example, and, in the case of Germany, would have a bad disintegrating effect upon NATO alliances, and I did everything, I think, that could have been done to obtain assurances that the Austrians would not avoid the burden of the expense of armament, but would be prepared to do all that was reasonably in their power to defend their own borders, and not rely upon a declaration of neutrality as having that purpose. Both of the [Austrian] political parties…are strongly committed to the idea that they must have an armed status…I think it is as safe to predict as anything ever is in this political world that the Austrians will strongly arm themselves.\(^\text{119}\)

Concurrently, French prime minister Edgar Faure stated during the State Treaty ratification debate before the \textit{Assemblée Nationale} that the French had accepted Austrian neutrality “only on condition that Austria would be placed in a position of effectively defending its independence.”\(^\text{120}\) The Austrians, for their part, noted Reinhard Meier-Walser, internationally committed themselves with their diplomatic notification of the Neutrality Law, including its implied reference to armed defense (“all means”).\(^\text{121}\) As Zemanek argued, “any changes in the content of the federal constitutional law concerning neutrality” would “place in question the recognition by the powers” of Austria’s permanent neutrality.\(^\text{122}\)

\(^{119}\) Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, \textit{Report by the Secretary of State}, 84\textsuperscript{th} Cong., May 17, 1955.


Switzerland or Belgium?: Neutrality and Geography in Austria

The duties of armed neutrality had special significance for Austria given its strategic, indeed historic thoroughfares. As Austrian political scientist Anselm Skuhra noted, “Austria lies geostrategically in the center of the continent” where “the strategic areas of Central and Southeastern Europe overlap.” Austria “possesses with the Danube valley one of the historic transit routes between East and West and with the Brenner the lowest and most traveled Alpine pass.”

Later assessing this geography, Major General Emil Spannocchi, commandant of the Bundesheer in the 1970s, viewed three main areas of possible military operations in Austria in case of East-West conflict. Spannocchi considered the Danube valley to be “Austria’s main problem area, at least from a strategic point of view.” Knowing that this “strategic east-west corridor” had been used by Hungarians, Turks, and Napoleon throughout the centuries and the Soviets in 1945, “NATO and the Warsaw Pact nations…must have an interest in having this corridor blocked by Austrian defense preparations.” Here NATO in particular feared, according to Spannocchi, “so-to-speak a short hook” by the Warsaw Pact towards Bavaria. Even though such an attack would not be along “the shortest drive into the heart area of the NATO enemy, i.e. the great industry centers and Atlantic harbors,” an advance here would bring “considerable tactical advantages” by securing a drive farther to the north.

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Spannocchi also considered “of interest to Warsaw Pact nations” a “second, although not as important, line” running “along the south side of the main crest of the Alps from the Hungarian lowlands to northern Italy.”126 Scarlis suggested that this approach toward Italy offered the Warsaw Pact the advantage of avoiding a “more strongly armed Yugoslavia.”127

The third area in Spannocchi’s considerations, meanwhile, was the only place where NATO might be tempted to violate Austrian neutrality, namely Tyrol with the Brenner Pass. This area represented “the shortest line of communication between the NATO sectors of Central and Southern Europe” but was “interrupted by neutral Austria, an area only 50 km wide as the crow flies.” In an “East-West conflict, there could be great temptation to avoid logistic detours by simply negotiating this small barrier, albeit in violation of international law.”128

Given that Austria was the “turntable of Europe,” observers like Alain Stuchly-Luchs, secretary general of the Österreichische Liga für die Vereinten Nationen, found in 1955 Austria’s “oft-made comparison with Switzerland” to be “not valid.” Switzerland “was only able to maintain its neutrality for around 150 years without protection from abroad because Switzerland lies in the strategically ‘dead area’ of Europe.”129 In the same year of Austrian neutrality’s founding another Austrian commentator agreed that “it would be better according to the geopolitical and geographic situation not to speak of the

example of Switzerland, for a country along the historic military road of the nations in the Danube plain is not to be compared in this respect with an enclave in the Alps.”

For one Austrian writer in 1955, in contrast, far more pertinent as an example for the Danube land Austria was Belgium, a country that had tried rather unsuccessfully to be neutral along a historical thoroughfare. The Dutch scholar F.A.M. Alting von Geusau reprised precisely this analogy at a conference in 1983. Austria’s “permanent neutrality since 1955,” wrote Alting von Geusau, “is a status is best comparable—though in different political and strategic circumstances—to the status of Belgium after 1839. In case of major war, it stands no better chance to be respected than Belgian neutrality in 1914.” American high commissioner Lieutenant General Geoffrey Keyes shared Alting von Geusau’s assessment over 30 years earlier. On November 10, 1949, he expressed to the State Department that “the difference between Swiss and Austrian neutrality lies in its practice and practicability. Austrian neutrality is only a peacetime necessity directed towards averting world conflict, without any real hope of its preservation once hostilities begin.”

With a Little Help from Friends: The Establishment of the Bundesheer

Foreign aid was largely responsible for the establishment of the Bundesheer just as foreign aid had played a key role in the “secret” rearmament of Austria under the

occupation. “Everyone,” wrote Rauchensteiner, “displayed a burning interest in the development of the Bundesheer, the great powers as well as the neighbors of Austria.” All four occupying powers contributed to the Bundesheer’s development with weapons deliveries while Western troops handed over their basing facilities used during the occupation to the young Austrian military.134

Former Austrian National Defense Academy commandant Major General Mario Duić remembered that the unintended result of such a “start up aid” or “‘good will’-gesture” was an “eclectic variety [Sammelsurium]” of weapons in the Bundesheer. One 1960 Austrian Defense Ministry study of Austrian armor, for example, found Soviet T-34/85, British Charioteer, French AMX-13, and various American tanks (M-24, M-41, M-47) in the Bundesheer inventory.135 Displayed exponents of these tanks in the Panzergarten of the excellent Heeresgeschichtliches Museum (HGM) in Vienna exhibit the truth in Brigadier Ernest König’s statement that the Allied gifts formed a “‘colorful collection’ from five different industrial worlds and three different systems of weights and measures.” However much historically interested individuals may enjoy examining such tanks over a cup of espresso from the HGM’s café, though, they presented considerable logistic problems for Austrian officers like König.136

The main source of armament and equipment for the Bundesheer, however, was the United States. Desirous of armed neutrality in Austria, American policy makers had emphasized before the signing of the State Treaty the need for an independent Austria to receive military assistance. The American embassy in Vienna, for example, cabled its

134 Rauchensteiner, Der Sonderfall, 334; and Die Zwei, 283.
recommendation on August 26, 1953, that “Austrian neutralization should be in a form which would not preclude her receiving military assistance from the United States, and the West in general, for defensive purposes.” The following October 14, the NSC determined in its policy memorandum *U.S. Objectives and Policies with Respect to Austria* (NSC 164/1) that “the United States should refuse to sign a Treaty…which would prejudice Austria’s capacity to preserve internal order, or which would restrict the Western Powers in giving aid to Austria in the establishment of adequate internal security.”

Accordingly, when the State Treaty was signed on May 15, 1955, American equipment for an initial Austrian military of 28,000 troops had been lying in storage in Livorno, Italy, for years. From the end of August to October 1955, 1,986 freight trains, about 40 daily, transported military equipment from Livorno to Hörsching, Austria, where an American staff transferred the material into Austrian custody. This equipment came in battalion-sized packets corresponding to American Tables of Ordinance and Equipment (TO&E) with a year’s worth of replacement parts and training ammunition.

These deliveries from Livorno, however, formed only the first installments in the Military Assistance Program (MAP) signed between the Americans and the Austrians on June 14, 1955. Under this plan, the only MAP at the time involving a non-NATO country, the Americans agreed to provide by 1960 the equipment for an army of 60,000 troops. A memorandum requesting American military aid for Austria dated August 23, 1953, included a recommendation that the United States should not sign a Treaty which would prejudice Austria’s capacity to preserve internal order, or which would restrict the Western Powers in giving aid to Austria in the establishment of adequate internal security.”

1956, noted that the “Army attaché in Vienna” and the American European Command (EUCOM) had considered 60,000 troops “organized in three corps consisting of nine brigades, three armored regiments, three artillery regiments and necessary support forces” as an “optimum force” with the military capability to a) maintain Austria’s internal security and independence, b) serve as a deterrent to Soviet aggression, c) withstand an initial assault from that quarter, should it occur, d) hold part of Western Austria until assistance arrived, and e) assist in the defense of the NATO area in the event of general war.  

American officials determined in a June 30, 1958, memorandum that American aid was decisive in the formation of the Bundesheer, observing “that without MAP support, there would probably not be an Austrian Army worthy of the name in existence today.” By April 1959, the end phase of the plan for 60,000 Austrian troops, American military assistance to Austria since 1955 totaled $100 million. By comparison, Carafano calculated that the Soviets after 1955 “eventually transferred a cache of military stocks” including 10,000 carbines, 10,000 machine pistols, 24 howitzers, and 28 T-34/85 tanks. These “supplies were mostly symbolic; hardly significant enough to affect the military balance in the region.”

Austrian statistics from the early years of the Bundesheer clearly indicate the preponderance of American equipment. The armored backbone of the Bundesheer, for

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140 Inclusion of Military End Item Aid for Austria in FY 1958—MDAP Appropriation Proposals to the Bureau of the Budget; Folder 763.5MSP/1-555; Box 3583; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 763.5-MSP/1-555 to 763.62/3-2557; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
141 Narrative Statement, Austria, as of 30 June 1958 (Revised 30 June 1959); Austria MAAG Narrative, 6/30/59, Folder; Box 4; Entry 1615; Lot File 62D172; Records Relating to the Military Aid Program and the Draper committee, 1957-1962; Deputy Assistant Secretary for Politico-Military Affairs (G/PM); General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
143 Carafano, 190.
example, was 118 American M-47s (by comparison, the Bundesheer received only 40 British Charioteer tanks in 1958).\footnote{König, 177-178.} An Austrian inventory from March 1962, moreover, listed 560 of 641 mortars, 180 of 295 artillery pieces, 368 of 554 armored fighting vehicles, 3,631 of 5,002 trucks, 19 of 33 helicopters, 648 recoilless rifles, and 2,257 3.5-inch M-20 rocket launchers (bazookas) all coming from the United States. In contrast, only 31 mortars, 32 artillery pieces, 30 armored fighting vehicles, and eight training aircraft came from the Soviet Union. Jack A. Sulser, the Austrian desk officer in the State Department at the time, estimated that 95% of the equipment in the Bundesheer was American and remarked that “the new Austrian Army looked like the old American Army—they’re equipment, their helmets, everything was American.”\footnote{Martin Kofler, \textit{Kennedy und Österreich: Neutralität im Kalten Krieg}, Innsbrucker Forschungen zur Zeitgeschichte series (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2003), 117.}

The equipment donated to the Austrians did not necessarily impress them with its quality. Brigadier Richard Bayer, responsible for the coordination of defense policy formulation in the Chancellery from 1974 to 1991, described the equipment given to the Austrians in 1955 as “the stuff that was too expensive to take home.”\footnote{Richard Bayer, interview by author in Bayer’s office at the \textit{Österreichische Gesellschaft für Landesverteidigung und Sicherheitspolitik} (ÖGLS) in Vienna’s Stiftskaserne on August 4, 2005.} General Duić remembered that an Austrian on the receiving committee in Hörsching described the Livorno material as “obsolescent [überaltert],” if unused.\footnote{Duić, 111.}

The Defense Ministry subsequently offered a much stronger critique in a readiness report from the fourth quarter of 1957. The report described the weapons in the Bundesheer as “thoroughly obsolescent,” the engineering material as “extremely deficient,” and the recoilless rifles as “only conditionally usable.” The report cited deficiencies in medium mortars, antitank weapons, support units, and ammunition...
supplies, considered sufficient for “at best 1-2 days of fighting.” The report also complained of the “procurement of replacement parts being almost impossible” and considered “modern small arms (assault rifles, etc.) urgently necessary.” In conclusion, the Defense Ministry judged the Bundesheer’s “equipment...only conditionally suitable for an operation.”  

As dissatisfied as Austrian officials might have been with their level of military preparedness, the Americans, the main benefactors of the Austrian military, were quite satisfied with a limited military engagement in Austria. In a 1996 interview with the Austrian magazine ZOOM, Austrian historian Oliver Rathkolb explained that the Americans did not want to finance in Austria a “an Israel with a highly-armed army…a high-tech army.” The Americans wanted the Bundesheer to maintain Austrian internal stability and “simultaneously create a kind of time delay in order to maintain the north-south line of NATO.” Aside from western Austria, “Vienna and eastern Austria were not really interesting from the NATO-perspective.”

A briefing memorandum dated October 30, 1959, from the American embassy in Vienna for a Washington, DC, visit of Austrian defense minister Ferdinand Graf on November 4, 1959, demonstrates American reticence in funding Austrian defense beyond a small army. As Rathkolb recounted to ZOOM, Graf broached the subject of advanced weaponry purchases such as missiles and warplanes. The American position in response was, “Anytime, but only in exchange for hard currency.” For Rathkolb, the Graf visit shows “very clearly there was here, seen strategically, only a limited mission.

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148 Ibid.  
150 Call of Austrian Defense Minister Graf, November 4 at 4:00 p.m.; Folder 361.2—Graf; Box 17; Entry 2092B; Vienna Embassy Classified General Records, 1959-1961; Records of the Foreign Service, Posts of the Department of State, RG 84; NA.
Up to this point one was ready to invest; from there on it was then a matter of the Austrians.”\textsuperscript{151} For American planners, Rathkolb has written elsewhere, “the role of the 

*Bundesheer* was exactly defined.”\textsuperscript{152}

The Americans’ limited mission for the *Bundesheer* becomes apparent from a September 1959 briefing memorandum written in preparation of the Graf visit. In it the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) stated that the

present Austrian Army is capable of accomplishing fully only the mission of maintaining internal security. The United States strategic objectives for Austria visualize that, in addition to maintaining internal security, Austrian forces should be of sufficient strength to delay an attack into Austria by Soviet/Satellite forces, defend the key passes exiting from Austria, and conduct operations in conjunction with NATO forces.\textsuperscript{153}

Perhaps this difference in perspective explains the satisfaction with the *Bundesheer* expressed by the American ambassador to Austria, Llewellyn Thompson, on January 17, 1957. Writing to the secretary of state the same year that the Austrian Defense Ministry criticized *Bundesheer* readiness, Thompson rejoiced that

Austrian military buildup has exceeded expectations. In spite of a shortage in equipment and experienced personnel, Austria has, within one year after gaining its independence, created an armed force of 24,000 men and officers...This buildup exceeds by two infantry brigades the force level planned for establishment during late 1957.\textsuperscript{154}

Similarly, the American Military Aid and Advisory Group (MAAG) for Austria “desired to point out from the outset” of its report on June 30, 1959,

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\textsuperscript{151} *Covert Operations.*


\textsuperscript{153} *Joint State-Defense Message concerning the Graf Visit: Minister Defense Graf Visit to US—1959 (22.3)* Folder; Box 1; Entry 5293; Lot 68D123; Records Relating to Austria, 1957-1964; Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Italy, Austria, and Switzerland (EUR/AIS); General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.

\textsuperscript{154} *Military Aid for Republic of Austria, File M-104-56; Folder 763.5MSP/1-555; Box 3583; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 763.5-MSP/1-555 to 763.62/3-2557; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.*
that the progress which has been made thus far by the Austrian Army has surpassed all reasonable expectations. Working under considerable difficulty, the Austrian Ministry of Defense has placed in the field a force which, while not combat-ready, has an excellent potential, a high morale and has made satisfactory use of the materiel given to the Republic of Austria under the current program."155

Under the Shadow of the Past: Austrian Rearmament and the State Treaty

The original State Treaty discussed at the Vienna Ambassadors Conference in May 1955 contained in its Article 17 the numerical military restrictions (53,000 man army, air force of 5,000 personnel and 90 planes) agreed upon by the occupying powers at Moscow in 1947. In the words of Neuhold, however, Austrian delegates were able to eliminate Article 17 at the Ambassador’s Conference “with the support of the Western Powers, so to speak five minutes before 12.”156 Henceforth Austria would be free to utilize its full military potential in a conscription-based army.

Nevertheless, various military restrictions remained in the final State Treaty, reflecting concerns from the not so distant past in which Austria was not a newly independent neutral nation but a constituent member of the Nazi empire. As Foreign Minister Figl stated at the Ambassador’s Conference on May 3, 1955, the State Treaty’s regulation of Austrian military matters “resulted at the time from the perspective of the

155 Narrative Statement, Austria, as of 30 June 1958 (Revised 30 June 1959); Austria MAAG Narrative, 6/30/59, Folder; Box 4; Entry 1615; Lot File 62D172; Records Relating to the Military Aid Program and the Draper committee, 1957-1962; Deputy Assistant Secretary for Politico-Military Affairs (G/PM); General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
complete elimination of Nazi military rule and the prevention of its future exploitation of Austrian potential in a possibly reviving German Wehrmacht.”

Article 12 of the State Treaty, for example, established a “Prohibition of Service in the Austrian Armed Forces of Former Members of Nazi Organizations, and Certain Other Categories of Persons.” Individuals who, according to Article 12, “shall in no case be permitted to serve in the Austrian Armed Forces” included “Persons not of Austrian nationality,” and “Austrian nationals who had been German nationals at any time before 13th March, 1938” or “who served in the rank of Colonel or in any higher rank in the German Forces during the period from 13th March, 1938, to 8th May, 1945.” Article 12 also excluded members of a range of Nazi organizations as well as authors of Nazi literature and business leaders whose Nazi activities had “damaged the interests of an independent and democratic Austria.”

Article 14 anachronistically and superfluously proclaimed that “all war materiel of Allied origin in Austria shall be placed at the disposal of the Allied or Associated Power concerned according to the instructions given by that Power. Austria shall renounce all rights to the above-mentioned war materiel.” More importantly for the future, Article 14 stipulated that

Austria shall not manufacture any war materiel of German design. Austria shall not acquire or possess, either publicly or privately, or by any other means, any war materiel of German manufacture, origin or design except that the Austrian Government may utilize, for the creation of the Austrian armed forces, restricted quantities of war materiel of German manufacture, origin or design remaining in Austria after the Second World War.

159 Ibid.
In a similar manner, Article 16 ("Prohibition Relating to Civil Aircraft of German and Japanese Design") demanded that Austria "not acquire or manufacture civil aircraft which are of German or Japanese design or which embody major assemblies of German or Japanese manufacture or design." The preceding Article 15 ("Prevention of German Rearmament") also required that Austria

not employ or train in military or civil aviation or in the experimentation, design, production or maintenance of war materiel: persons who are, or were at any time previous to 13th March, 1938, nationals of Germany; or Austrian nationals precluded from serving in the Armed Forces under Article 12; or persons who are not Austrian nationals.\footnote{160}

The first paragraph of Article 15, meanwhile, was a perfect example of what historian Manfried Rauchensteiner described as "old furniture" left in the State Treaty in which "nonsense was demanded and written down for the future."\footnote{161} Here the State Treaty, signed ten days after West Germany entered NATO and one day after East Germany entered the Warsaw Pact, proclaimed that "Austria shall co-operate fully with the Allied and Associated Powers in order to ensure that Germany is unable to take steps outside German territory towards rearmament."\footnote{162}

Rauchensteiner noted that the preservation of this clause was "senseless" because "Austria, after all, could never have hindered, nor even attempted to hinder, that German military personnel were trained in the Soviet Union or in the USA, or that impulses for German rearmament went out from these or other countries."\footnote{163} One commentator in 1957 found absurd that "if the Russian Ambassador in Washington learns that a German

\footnote{160} Ibid.
\footnote{161} Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 276. Rauchensteiner complained that "no specialists from the Ministry of the Interior—or outside experts—were consulted (secrecy was the watchword)" during the revision of the State Treaty's military and aviation provisions.
\footnote{162} State Treaty.
\footnote{163} Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 276.
commission has arrived in the USA with the intention of purchasing arms, he might invoke the help of his Austrian colleague to prevent them from achieving their aim.”

Thus Federal President Rudolf Kirchschläger, a former diplomat and international lawyer, noted in 1983 that this clause had “already in the year 1960” lost its “obligatory character for Austria” given the obvious East-West military cooperation with both halves of Germany. “No state,” he observed, “can claim a right vis-à-vis another state, which the first state is itself not willing to recognize.”

These State Treaty provisions would later throw up difficulties for Austria, such as when Austrian Airlines purchased German-French co-produced Airbus aircraft, beginning in 1979. By 1990, Austrian legal scholars were worrying that more and more commercial aircraft contained German elements. Thus Rauchensteiner correctly judged Article 16 as “too little thought through.”

Already in 1955, meanwhile, some analysts had worried that the State Treaty’s restrictions could prove difficult for Austrian rearmament. Like many modern Western machine guns, for example, the standard machine gun of the Bundesheer introduced in 1974, the MG-74, had as its basis the over 30-year old MG-42 of the Wehrmacht. To get around the State Treaty, the Austrian arms manufacturer Steyr received the commercial

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168 “Die Vorbelastung des Bundesheeres mit Verboten: Unbegründete Souveränitätsbeschränkungen im Staatsvertrag,” *Berichte und Informationen* 10, no. 476 (1955): 1. This article, among other things, mentioned the possibility of Austria wanting to acquire used German infantry weapons.
license and some parts for the MG-74 from the Italian firm Baretta. Similar concerns existed when the Bundesheer tested the Milan in 1988, a French antitank missile containing significant German input. Ultimately, though, the Bundesheer opted to buy the Swedish Bill.

\textit{Given and Taken Away: Austrian Armed Neutrality and the State Treaty}

Clearly the most problematical provision of the State Treaty’s military clauses was Article 13. This “Prohibition of Special Weapons” was to be a lasting burden upon Austrian defense efforts throughout the Cold War. Article 13 demanded that “Austria shall not possess, construct or experiment with” a variety of listed weapons. Some of these were simply Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) that no one wanted Austria to have anyway, such as “any atomic weapon” or “any other major weapon adaptable now or in the future to mass destruction and defined as such by the appropriate organ of the United Nations.” Article 13 also banned Austrian involvement with asphyxiating, vesicant or poisonous materials or biological substances in quantities greater than, or of types other than, are required for legitimate civil purposes, or any apparatus designed to produce, project or spread such materials or substances for war purposes.

The “Special Weapons” in Article 13, though, also included armaments with a conventional application. Curiously, the State Treaty prohibited landlocked Austria from possessing “sea mines,” “torpedoes capable of being manned,” “submarines or other submersible craft,” “motor torpedo boats,” and “specialized types of assault craft.” Most

\begin{flushright}
171 State Treaty.
\end{flushright}
detrimental to the *Bundesheer*, however, was Article 13’s prohibition of “any self-propelled or guided missile or torpedoes, or apparatus connected with their discharge or control” and “guns with a range of more than 30 kilometers.” For good measure the “Allied and Associated Powers” reserved “the right to add to this Article prohibitions of any weapons which may be evolved as a result of scientific development.”172 According to Rauchensteiner, the French had even proposed “for the period after the conclusion of the State Treaty a permanent commission in Austria” that would “watch over the fulfillment of the military clauses of the State Treaty *ad infinitum*.”173

That Article 13 was an impediment to Austrian defense was rather obvious. ÖVP parliamentarian Lujo Tončić-Sorinj complained before the *Nationalrat* on June 7, 1955, that the State Treaty contained “things which, let us say, do not indicate a particularly detailed involvement with military matters.” It disturbed Tončić-Sorinj, for example, that Austria was constrained to use cannon “unsuitable for defense, which have a range of only 30 km, even when the aggressor has such with a range of 100 km.”174

Many both inside and outside of Austria, though, discovered relatively early on that, in the words of Austrian journalist Andreas Unterberger, “the most awkward problem in connection with national defense” was the “missile prohibition” in Article 13.175 One commentator in 1982 judged in hindsight that “already the technical development of armaments in 1955” placed in doubt whether Austria under the State Treaty could defend itself and “the situation has since changed to Austria’s

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172 Ibid.
173 Rauchensteiner, *Der Sonderfall*, 301. Rauchensteiner also attributed to the French certain “completely nonsensical clauses” in the State Treaty such as the 30 kilometer artillery range limit and the prohibition of submarines and torpedoes.
174 Csáky, 425-426.

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disadvantage.” In 1982 as well, the Nationalrat defense spokesman of the FPÖ, Helmuth Josseck, confirmed that “it is undisputed by all military experts that, given the current level of military technology, a defense of given strategic or tactical areas is no longer possible without, for example, wideranging guided antitank and antiaircraft missiles.”

Jossack also boasted in 1982 that “it did honor to the freiheitlichen political community” to have indicated already in 1955 the need for missiles in the Bundesheer. During the debate over conscription on September 7, 1955, Nationalrat member Wilhelm Kindl, a member of the FPÖ’s predecessor, the WdU, was “the only parliamentarian” who registered “serious reservations against the missile prohibition written down in the State Treaty text.” Kindl argued that “the attempt to defeat an attack conducted with modern means of war solely with heretofore extant conventional weapons is hopeless and therefore an order given to the troops to defend is to be considered unjustifiable under such circumstances.”

Objections to the State Treaty’s military provisions from WdU circles also appeared in print. Berichte und Informationen, an Austrian publication edited by supporters of the WdU, discussed in 1955 the possible problems presented by the artillery range and “special weapons” limitations of the State Treaty. Kindl’s colleague in the WdU and the Nationalrat, Helfried Pfeifer, meanwhile, greeted the elimination of numerical military restrictions in the State Treaty, but found that “the remaining

178 Ibid, 352.
personnel and material limitations are so farreaching that in the judgment of experts an effective national defense is not possible so long as these provisions remain in effect.”

Pfeifer criticized the “prohibition of modern special weapons (Art. 13), whose possession and use are decisive in light of the well-advanced technology of warfare.” Pfeifer also found unsettling that according to Article 12 “high officers of the rank of colonel or above with experiences from the Second World War may not serve in the new military.”

American officials, meanwhile, worried that the literal meaning of Article 13 was quite strict. A September 2, 1959, briefing memorandum for Defense Minister Graf’s upcoming visit to the United States worried that Article 13 was “so rigid” that the delivery of 3.5” rocket launchers [bazookas] to the Austrian army was a questionable issue. While no written record exists in this office in substantiation, the first U.S. Military Attaché to Austria stated verbally to Colonel Sloan, his successor, that he had discussed this point with the British and French Military Attachés and that agreement was reached that the U.S., Britain, and France would not question the fact that the 3.5” rocket launcher was possessed by the Austrian Army.

The memorandum observed that Bundesheer possession of bazookas “is common knowledge and to this date, Russia has not chosen to raise the issue either.” Additionally, Graf had previously visited Moscow and discussed “the purchase of Czech multiple rocket launchers and, evoking no unfavorable comment, has purchased such weapons and actually demonstrated them before [Soviet Defense Minister] Marshal [Rodion] Malinovsky.” The memorandum concluded that

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181 Briefing Documents for Visit of Minister of Defense, Republic of Austria, to the United States, September 2, 1959; Minister Defense Graf Visit to US—1959 (22.3) Folder; Box 1; Entry 5293; Lot 68D123; Records Relating to Austria, 1957-1964; Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Italy, Austria, and Switzerland (EUR/AIS); General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
while Russia undoubtedly considers that although any rocket weapon is technically a treaty violation, so long as such weapons are confined to anti-tank and conventional field artillery types which do not possess a nuclear capability, there is not serious objection to their possession by the Austrian Army.\textsuperscript{182}

Yet the Americans were not willing to push the issue. Another American memorandum concerning the Graf visit noted in reference to \textit{Bundesheer} possession of “U.S.-supplied bazookas and Czechoslovakian rocket launchers” that “we have taken the position that neither type of weapon is forbidden by Article 13.” Nonetheless, probably not without ulterior thoughts of limited American military aid, the memorandum advised American officials to respond to anticipated requests by Graf for missiles with the reservation that “the U.S. could not supply any weapons which are forbidden by the State Treaty.”\textsuperscript{183}

Throughout the following years the \textit{Bundesheer} acquired small quantities of rockets and missiles. In addition to the battalion (14 units) of Czech-made Soviet rocket launchers acquired in 1959, Austria also publicly tested the Swiss antitank missile Moskito in 1960. Swiss multiple rocket launchers later made their appearance mounted on Austrian Saurer armored personnel carriers (APCs) during a parade in 1965 on Vienna’s Ringstraße. In subsequent years the \textit{Bundesheer}’s Saab 105Ö fighter bombers carried unguided air-to-ground rockets.\textsuperscript{184}

Yet the \textit{Bundesheer} remained largely missile-free to the detriment of its capabilities, even though Austrian neutrality obliged the \textit{Bundesheer} to defend Austrian

\textsuperscript{182} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{183} \textit{Memorandum concerning the Call of Austrian Defense Minister Graf, November 4 at 4:00 p.m.; Minister Defense Graf Visit to US—1959 (22.3) Folder; Box 1; Entry 5293; Lot 68D123; Records Relating to Austria, 1957-1964; Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Italy, Austria, and Switzerland (EUR/AIS); General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.}
\textsuperscript{184} Hubertus Czernin, “Raketen-Reigen,” \textit{Profil}, July 29, 1985, 10; and König, 177.
sovereignty. The irony was not lost on many Austrians like Tončić-Sorinj, who observed in 1980 that the restrictions of Austrian sovereignty in defense matters are in contradiction with the federal constitutional law concerning neutrality recognized by the community of states. According to this law, after all, we are obliged to defend our state territory and maintain our independence. Defense can only be made with effective weapons which must adapt to developments in weapons technology.185

This contradiction between neutrality and various State Treaty provisions was already apparent in 1955. The American diplomat Alexander C. Johnpoll recorded Interior Minister Helmer expressing to him on April 14, 1955, the hope that in the event of Four-Power negotiations the United States will insist upon Austria having the obligations to defend herself not only against Anschluss with Germany but also against incursions from the Soviet bloc; and that we would demand for Austria the right to build a military force limited only by the Austrian Government’s own assessment of its needs in manpower and size and types of weapons.186

Five days later, Johnpoll related that Helmer’s undersecretary, Graf, wished for the Western Powers to “seek to remove Article 17 altogether or amend it to remove the arbitrary limitation on size and weapons to be available to the Austrian army.”187 Similarly, Foreign Minister Figl described on May 3, 1955, at the Ambassador’s Conference the State Treaty’s military provisions “as no longer up-to-date or useful seen

186 Memorandum of Conversation between Oskar Helmer, Minister of Interior, and Alexander C. Johnpoll, Department of State, April 14, 1955; Coalition—PP+SP (203) Folder; Box 7; Entry 1283; Lot 58D72; Subject Files Relating to Austrian Affairs, 1954-1956; Miscellaneous Lot Files; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
187 Memorandum of Conversation between Ferdinand Graf, State Secretary of Interior, and Alexander C. Johnpoll, Department of State, April 19, 1955; Coalition—PP+SP (203) Folder; Box 7; Entry 1283; Lot 58D72; Subject Files Relating to Austrian Affairs, 1954-1956; Miscellaneous Lot Files; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
from the perspective of Austria’s future guaranteed neutrality.” “The security of a neutral policy of Austria,” Figl added,

can not be guaranteed only by the great powers, but must also rest on the readiness of the Austrian people themselves to defend their freedom, independence, and state territory….The representatives of the four powers here present surely know just as well as the Austrian delegation that any armament of Austria will be under very narrow constraints, not only because of the peaceful character of the people, but also because of the financial possibilities. It appears, therefore, even more necessary to give the Republic of Austria the possibility of a real and effective defense within these constraints and to thus concede to Austria certain advantages through amendment of individual military articles.\(^{188}\)

Nevertheless, the omission on the part of the Austrians to do anything about Article 13 has remained notable to many Austrians. Unterberger has judged an elimination of this article to have been “thoroughly possible,” but apparently “Austrian diplomacy forgot in the days before the signing of the State Treaty with fateful negligence” to do anything.\(^{189}\) While the Austrian delegation at the Ambassadors’ Conference did indeed ask for and receive the elimination of Article 17 with its numerical limitations, Rauchensteiner has found “no wishes of any kind” expressed in relation to what became Article 13 (Article 21 in earlier treaty drafts). “On the basis of the protocols of the Ambassadors’ Conference,” concluded Rauchensteiner,

it can be clearly proven that not a single negotiating team touched the article with the prohibition of Special Weapons. For their part the occupying powers saw evidently no reason to broach the issue. And Austria had already let it be known in the internal preliminary talks that it wished no changes in this article which in the final treaty received the number 13. Was it only an oversight? Was anyone in the Foreign Ministry conscious of the import of this article or was it simply believed that it would simply suffice as is? We do not know. We, however, also

\(^{188}\) Ermacora, “Persönliche Eindrücke über die Entstehung des Staatsvertrages,” 55.
\(^{189}\) Unterberger, 217.
do not know whether the ambassadors of the occupying powers would have been at least open to a change of the provisions.  

Speaking before the *Nationalrat* on June 7, 1955, Tončić-Sorinj had another explanation. He conceded that the State Treaty “naturally” contained “certain restrictions” of Austria’s national defense and “not very sensible provisions.” These were “remains from the original treaty draft and their retention is due to the fact that only with the greatest difficulty was anything taken out of the treaty that was possible to remove, and in the process things more essential than others were naturally removed.”

*Mission to Moscow: The Austrian Effort to Acquire Defensive Missiles*

Already in 1955, the WdU *Nationalrat* member Pfeifer demanded that “if Austria is supposed to be able to effectively defend its neutrality” the United Nations Security Council would have to revise the State Treaty’s military provisions according to the treaty’s Article 17. This “Duration of Limitations” declared that these provisions “shall remain in force until modified in whole or in part by agreement between the Allied and Associated Powers and Austria or, after Austria becomes a member of the United Nations, by agreement between the Security Council and Austria.” By November 1956 bipartisan support existed across the Grand Coalition in Austria for invoking the Security Council under Article 17 and a corresponding resolution took shape for the *Nationalrat* debate over the Federal Budget Law (*Bundesfinanzgesetz*). 

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190 Rauchensteiner, “Staatsvertrag und bewaffnete Macht,” 150, 152.
191 Csáky, 425-426.
192 Pfeifer, 304.
193 *State Treaty*.
The resolution called upon the Austrian government “to undertake without delay the necessary steps at the Security Council of the United Nations according to Article 17 of the State Treaty in order to achieve the soonest lifting, in respect of personnel and materiel, of the military restrictions stipulated in the State Treaty.” The Foreign Ministry intervened, though, and prevented resolution’s presentation, arguing that achievement of the unanimity among the five permanent members of the Security Council called for by Article 17 “could hardly be assumed…under present circumstances.” Interestingly, the Foreign Ministry advised against the resolution not only because of its lack of utility, but also because “an official Austria request in this matter…would create one point of contention between the great powers without helping, however, Austria or the free world.”

An official Austrian desire to revise Article 13 and purchase guided defensive weapons remained constant throughout the years, as Austria’s first comprehensive National Defense Plan, approved in 1983, indicated. The Soviet Union, though, alone among Security Council members and signatories to the State Treaty, remained obdurate. Neuhold in 1980 summarized that

Austrian attempts to gain the approval of the USSR for the acquisition of such [guided defensive missile] weapons have until now come upon deaf ears—not least because of possible Soviet objections against any precedent effect of such a State Treaty revision, particularly with respect to the Anschluß prohibition of Article 4.

195 Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 353.
196 Landesverteidigungsplan (Vienna: Bundeskanzleramt, 1985), 91.
That same year, the Soviet scholar Viktor N. Belezkij displayed Soviet opposition to changes in the State Treaty at a symposium held in Vienna to commemorate the treaty’s 25th anniversary. “With respect,” he said, to the question of agreement between the term ‘neutrality on the Swiss model’ and some articles of the State Treaty which impose certain military restrictions, here I see no contradiction. ‘Neutrality on the Swiss model’—that is a general term and it is specifically used in documents connected with the State Treaty, although this term is not legally anchored in the State Treaty; this is fairly clear. With respect to our Soviet standpoint concerning a change of this article, this standpoint was, is, and remains clear—unalterable. We are against any sort of change. As I believe, the best guaranty for Austria’s security exists not in increased armament, but rather in a consistent policy of neutrality.  

Soviet opposition to modifications in Article 13 is ironic, given that this article had its origins among the Western powers, namely in the American memorandum SWNCC 307 from 1946. According to Rauchensteiner, while American postwar military planning “wanted to concede to Austria a numerically generously portioned professional army,” Austria “would not, similar to the former allies of the German Reich as well, control either weapons of mass destruction or missiles.” At about the same time, the United Kingdom developed a particular interest in preventing the proliferation of WMD and their delivery systems in light of the damage wrought by the Third Reich’s V-1 and V-2 missiles. The State Treaty’s prohibition of artillery with a range greater than 30 kilometers, for example, corresponded to this interest, given that the traditional

199 Rauchensteiner, “Staatsvertrag und bewaffnete Macht,” 141.  
moat of the British Isles, the English Channel, was 30 kilometers wide at its narrowest point.201

The United Kingdom introduced corresponding armament restrictions into the Italian peace treaty negotiations. From there these provisions found their way into the other peace treaties with former World War II Axis allies (Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, and Rumania) signed, along with the Italian treaty, on February 10, 1947, in Paris, and later into the Austrian State Treaty.202 ÖVP Nationalrat member Alois Mock cited in 1980 the State Treaty’s references to naval weapons as evidence that Article 13 “was transferred without reflection from the Allied peace treaties with the former enemy states.”203

Writing in the same year as Mock, Vetschera confirmed that the first draft of the Austrian State Treaty emerging from negotiations in London on February 25, 1947, “could not deny the influence” of the peace treaties signed that month, an indication once again of Austria’s ambiguous status following World War II. The draft contained 59 articles but only 14 of them possessed “a complete consensus of all plenipotentiaries,” often “precisely the articles” whose provisions corresponded to the peace treaties. The

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201 Sigmar Stadlmeier, Dynamische Interpretation der dauernden Neutralität, Schriften zum Völkerrecht series (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1991), 182.
202 Heinz Verschera, “Austria,” in The Missing Link: West European Neutrals and Regional Security, eds. Richard E. Bissell and Curt Gasteiger (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 71. All of the February 10, 1947, treaties are collectively available online, see: Australian Treaty Series 1948 No 2 (accessed February 25, 2006); available from http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/treaties/1948/2.html. Curiously, the armaments restrictions are identical in all the treaties except the Italian, which alone among these peace treaties contains the prohibition later found in the State Treaty of artillery with a range of more than 30 kilometers. As a sea power, though, Italy’s armament restrictions did not contain the prohibition common to the other treaties on “submarines or other submersible craft, motor torpedo boats, or specialized types of assault craft.”
naval armament restrictions, for example, “clearly showed that agreed upon consensus solutions were simply copied, not fundamentally analyzed anew.”\(^{204}\)

The Austrian military historian Johann Christoph Allmayer-Beck, in contrast, believed that the naval restrictions in Article 13 had “their point of reference quite evidently on the other side of Austria’s borders.” The State Treaty drafters “wanted to hinder Austria as a basis for armament from once again, like in 1938, giving aid to a possibly revived Germany.” Allmayer-Beck found “grotesque” that Austria was to be restrained from doing something “it had no intention of doing” while the Cold War blocs rearmed their respective parts of Germany.\(^{205}\)

The foregoing analysis accords with Mock’s assessment that the peace treaty negotiations following World War II “make clear” the meaning of Article 13 as pertaining “only to offensive weapons of mass destruction in memory of the German V-weapons, not, however, to defensive antiaircraft and antitank missiles that were at the time, at most, only in the testing stage.”\(^{206}\) Vetschera has substantiated this assessment with the observation that

an addendum to all treaties regarding war material enumerates “rockets, self-propelled and guided missiles and (self-propelled and guided) projectiles” as separate categories. Historic evidence shows that the term “missiles” refers only to weapons with a range of more than 30 kilometers, whereas short-range weapons constitute “self-propelled and guided projectiles” in this terminology and would not be affected by the prohibition clause.\(^{207}\)


\(^{206}\) Mock, 46-47.

The research of Sigmar Stadlmeier, an international law scholar, also supports the “occasionally doubted thesis of the offensive orientation” of the weapons prohibitions in the various postwar peace treaties. Stadlmeier noted that the prohibition upon “any self-propelled or guided missile or torpedoes, or apparatus connected with their discharge” in the peace treaties always preceded the exception “other than torpedoes and torpedo launching gear comprising the normal armament of naval vessels permitted by the present Treaty” in parenthesis.\(^ {208}\) Stadlmeier assigns this exception “interpretive character” because it is in parenthesis, whereas a complete prohibition of “any missiles” except for torpedoes would have demanded an “express exception” with “constitutive character” outside of parenthesis.\(^ {209}\)

Some contemporary accounts of the State Treaty indicate this restricted understanding of the treaty’s military provisions. The editors of *Europa Archiv* in 1956 found that the State Treaty limited Austrian armament “only in a nonessential manner” and thereby “also enabled Austria to maintain from now on a militarily secured neutrality.” These restrictions, added *Europa Archiv*, “did not weigh very heavily, because the Austrian armed forces had to serve only purely defensive purposes.”\(^ {210}\) Ten years later, General Béthouart also wrote in his memoirs that the State Treaty’s “only


\(^ {208}\) Australian Treaty Series 1948 No 2; and Stadlmeier, 183. Stadlmeier apparently could not avoid the oversight that Hungary is a landlocked country when she wrote that “the states with which the Paris peace treaties were concluded were each coastal states.”

\(^ {209}\) Stadlmeier, 183.

removing military restrictions consisted for Austria in the prohibition upon the possession of certain weapons of mass destruction.”

The various signatories to the 1947 peace treaties also believed that their military clauses only restricted offensive weapons, for in due course they all acquired defensive missile systems. Finland even sought and received in 1963 a declaration to this effect from two peace treaty signatories, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union. General Duić observed in 1977 that the Warsaw Pact members among the former Axis allies “had procured a rich arsenal of such guided weapons, above all from the Soviet Union. No treaty power has ever protested against this.” Duić felt that such purchases simply manifested the inherent right of self-defense proclaimed in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, according to which an expansive interpretation of restrictions like those in the State Treaty’s Article 13 was “obsolete.”

Given the historical origins of the State Treaty and the practice of the peace treaty signatories, many Austrians advocated simply interpreting Article 13 to allow for defensive weapons, if an outright revision were unobtainable. General Kuntner, for example, denied the “slightest intention” of “ever touching the State Treaty in any way,” nor did he believe that Austria needed to interpret Article 13 “unilaterally.” He “simply and clearly argued” that the State Treaty signatories had already given the “best proof” for an interpretation of Article 13 favorable to Austria with their deliveries of defensive missile systems to the former Axis allies. Unterberger also felt that “a thoroughly

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212 Skuha, 664.
legitimate interpretation of the State Treaty would doubtlessly allow the purchase of purely defensive—for antiaircraft and antitank purposes—weapons.”

Vetschera’s research into the history of the 1947 peace treaties aimed precisely at providing a more historically nuanced and flexible understanding of Article 13. Presenting his views in a 1985 issue of the *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, Vetschera argued that the Soviets would oppose a formal change in the State Treaty, but would allow Austrian purchases of defensive missiles given a proper demonstration of Article 13’s intent. Vetschera later explained that historic Russian cultural attitudes underlay Soviet opposition to changing the State Treaty, for Russian law had its basis in Byzantine-based church law holding legal documents to be sacred. Thus the State Treaty was not subject to change, and certainly not at the insistence of a smaller power, but could tolerate reinterpretation.

Others doubted this reinterpretation thesis. Neuhold dismissed the missile sales to the peace treaties’ signatories as a “res inter alois acta” having no legal implications for Austria and any attempt to draw conclusions for Austria from these sales as “legally doomed to failure.” Neuhold’s colleague Rotter, meanwhile, saw an unqualified prohibition of missiles in Article 13 and noted that most former Axis countries had become members of military alliances that could control for any misuse of missiles.

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215 Unterberger, 217.
217 Vetschera interview.

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acquired in violation of the peace treaties. The one exception to this rule, Finland, had specifically requested permission before buying missile systems.\textsuperscript{219}

The German legal scholar Diemut Majer believed that the only legal possibility for Austria to get around Article 13 was through the principle of \textit{clausula rebus sic stantibus}, according to which unilateral changes in a treaty are acceptable when fundamentally changed conditions impose an unacceptable burden on a contracting party. In the case of Article 13, however, Majer saw “no validity” even for this approach, for the article’s references to “now and in the future” (albeit with respect to WMD) and an Allied right to later add additional prohibitions indicated “the will of the contracting parties” to “permanently transcribe” these limitations and “encompass future developments of weapons technology. Any appeal to a subsequent change in circumstances should probably thereby be excluded.”\textsuperscript{220}

Neuhold’s suggested legal solution, in contrast, was the \textit{lex posterior} principle, whereby later laws modify and nullify previous obligations. All four former occupying powers, observed Neuhold, had diplomatically recognized Austrian neutrality. This recognition entailed a willingness to derogate anything hindering an Austrian defense of neutrality, such as Article 13.\textsuperscript{221}

Established opinion in Austria, though, maintained for a considerable period that only a change in the State Treaty could allow Austria to purchase missile systems. This

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\textsuperscript{221} Neuhold, “Der Staatsvertrag als Grundlage der Österreichischen Außenpolitik,” 179.

\textit{Arms and the Nation} \hspace{1cm} 285
was, for example, the view of the Foreign Ministry since the end of the 1960s. Josseck also noted in 1982 that the SPÖ argued this “again and again” in contrast to the FPÖ’s advocacy for a reinterpretation of Article 13.

No matter the method, many worried about diplomatic repercussions following Austrian attempts to revise or reinterpret Article 13. Kreisky in his memoirs in 1988 condemned this vice of concluding treaties and ignoring them at the first available opportunity. We are experiencing precisely this now with the missiles: We were lucky to receive the State Treaty and we accepted the missile prohibition because we fought for our freedom; the paper was hardly dry, however, and already attempts were made to get around this provision of the treaty. This reproach of treaty breaking does not apply to the Austrian diplomacy which, when such was demanded of it, always raised alarm, but rather the conservative Austrian domestic politicians, who are so very domestic politicians that they do not want to notice foreign policy broken china. The Austrian Social Democrats, in contrast, were always faithful to treaties and never ready to ignore them.

Particularly worrying for the Austrians was the fact that any dispute over the State Treaty could lead to a signatory’s invocation of the treaty’s Article 35 under which “any dispute concerning the interpretation or execution of the Treaty which is not settled by direct diplomatic negotiations shall be referred to the Four Heads of Mission” of the former occupying powers. Thereupon

any such dispute not resolved by them within a period of two months shall, unless the parties to the dispute mutually agree upon another means of settlement, be referred at the request of either party to the dispute to a Commission composed of one representative of each party and a third member selected by mutual agreement of the two parties from nationals of a third country. Should the two parties fail to agree within a period of one month upon the appointment of the third member, the Secretary-General of the United Nations may be requested by either party to make the appointment. The decision of the majority of the members of the

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222 Skuhra, 664.
223 Josseck, 352-253.
Commission shall be the decision of the Commission, and shall be accepted by the parties as definitive and binding.\textsuperscript{225}

Thus in a 1984 interview, Kreisky’s SPÖ colleague Foreign Minister Leopold Gratz “assigned no value” to talks over a “revision of the State Treaty.” Gratz believed not only that Austria had to uphold the State Treaty “to the last detail \textit{[peinibel]}” but also that “we should avoid, 30 years after we once again have our full sovereignty, to call together again, humorously stated, the four former governesses and to negotiate with them again in this capacity.” Gratz did not “think that this would be good for our sovereignty and our selfrespect.”\textsuperscript{226}

Colonel Friedrich W. Korkisch, active in the Bundesheer’s small aviation contingent for which tactical missiles were of existential significance, recalled in 2005 that from people in the Foreign Ministry like Gratz “came in the course of diverse conversations a clear ‘Nein’ to any kind of missiles.” The “main reason cited,” remembered Gratz, “was Yugoslavia (question of Slovenia).” In this matter the Foreign Ministry “feared a linkage” between the State Treaty’s Articles 13 and 7.\textsuperscript{227}

Article 7 concerning the “Rights of the Slovene and Croat Minorities” had stipulated in a variety of provisions that “Austrian nationals of the Slovene and Croat minorities in Carinthia, Burgenland and Styria shall enjoy the same rights on equal terms as all other Austrian nationals.” These minorities were “entitled to elementary instruction in the Slovene or Croat language and to a proportional number of their own secondary

\textsuperscript{225} \textit{State Treaty}.
schools” along with “a section of the Inspectorate of Education…for Slovene and Croat schools.” Article 7 also demanded that

in the administrative and judicial districts of Carinthia, Burgenland and Styria, where there are Slovene, Croat or mixed populations, the Slovene or Croat language shall be accepted as an official language in addition to German. In such districts topographical terminology and inscriptions shall be in the Slovene or Croat language as well as in German.  

Debates over whether Austria has fulfilled its international and domestic legal obligations under Article 7 have marked the Second Republic’s politics up until the present day. In particular, minority demands for Slovene and Croat “topographical terminology and inscriptions” developed in the 1970s into the Ortstafelstreit, an ongoing dispute sometimes marked by civil unrest and vandalism. Accordingly, in the words of Korkisch, “until the end of the 1970s” the Foreign Ministry worried that Yugoslavia would accuse Austria of a “treaty violation,” perhaps with Soviet support. Having already in 1955 become a subsequent signatory to the State Treaty under its Article 37, Yugoslavia could then invoke Article 35.

Not just diplomats and politicians, but also leading Bundesheer officers were averse to calling the State Treaty in question. Thus General Troop Inspector Heinz Scharff expressed opposition to missile purchases in a 1983 interview. While arguing

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228 State Treaty. The rather sweeping nature of Article 7 also prohibited any “activity of organizations whose aim is to deprive the Croat or Slovene population of their minority character or rights.”


230 Korkisch, 190.

231 Erinnerungsort Wien (accessed February 27, 2006); available from http://www.erinnerungsort.at/thema3/u_thema1.htm. Article 37 states that “any member of the United Nations which on 8th May, 1945 was at war with Germany and which then had the status of a United Nation and is not a signatory to the present Treaty, may accede to the Treaty and upon accession shall be deemed to be an Associated Power for the purposes of the Treaty.” See: State Treaty.

for a more flexible interpretation of Article 13, meanwhile, General Kuntner nonetheless opposed any explicit change in the State Treaty. “This treaty,” he said, “is the basis of our newly won sovereignty, and there would be a series of other issues which others could take up if we ourselves began to question individual issues.”

Moscow or Money?: The Real Reason Why the Bundesheer had No Missiles

Diplomatic complications aside, Neuhold always thought that Austrian attempts during the Cold War to achieve a defense-friendly interpretation of Article 13 were “not really serious.” Neuhold argued in 1982 that “Austrian governments were and are, at heart, perhaps not too unhappy at the Soviet ‘nyet.’ Were the USSR to change her mind, the financial implications of acquiring those defensive ‘special weapons’ would be considerable.”

Josseck that same year agreed that “the negative attitude against the necessary missile-propelled defensive weapons seems not to lie in bilateral ‘State Treaty-loyal’ behavior.” In Josseck’s estimation, “this question was always viewed as a hot potato [heißes Eisen] by the SPÖ and the ÖVP and left unresolved like all these problems. There were never really any serious and concrete intentions to remove this defense policy deficiency.” This was not because of “international” concerns but because missile armament “would assume great financial resources that both parties have until today not

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233 Kuntner, 101.
235 Hanspeter Neuhold, “Austrian Neutrality on the East-West Axis,” in Neutrality and Non-Alignment in Europe, eds. Karl E. Birnbaum and Hanspeter Neuhold (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, Universitäts-Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1982), 67. Efraim Karsh also argued that because of money “it could be argued that the Austrians have not been too unhappy with this Soviet position.” See: Efraim Karsh, Neutrality and Small States (London: Routledge, 1988), 150.
been ready to raise for an efficient national defense.” Thus Josseck saw no early solution for this “core question of our defense” because “missiles cost a lot of money.”

A March 1986 poll of 1,993 Austrians, meanwhile, evinced popular support for keeping the Bundesheer sans missiles. The survey’s question and subsequent results regarding missiles for the army were:

**What is your view towards equipping the Austrian Bundesheer with missiles?**

Under consideration are not “large” missiles like perhaps the Pershing or SS-20, but rather “self-propelled projectiles” that can be carried and fired by one man. Such weapons are operated by foreign armies against tanks, helicopters, and military jet aircraft. Are you FOR an acquisition of these missiles or AGAINST?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Survey</th>
<th>16-29 Year-olds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FOR</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGAINST</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even among those men who had performed their national service in the Bundesheer, only 41% (in comparison to 39% of all men) favored a missile acquisition, with 45% against. A majority for purchasing missiles existed only among Austrian men who had once served in the Third Reich’s Wehrmacht (46%/40% or 159 individuals versus 111). The most commonly cited reasons against a missile purchase among all respondents were complaints of missiles being “too expensive,” (11%) and “unnecessary” (10%) combined with a general opposition “against all weapons, military, war, violence” (9%) and a belief that defense was “senseless anyway” (7%). Austrian security studies scholar Erich Reiter, one of the studies organizers, found interesting that Austrian popular opinion was “not at all dominated by the controversial question whether

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236 Josseck, 353.

*Arms and the Nation*
Austria may possess missiles at all.” Only 4% of respondents justified their opposition with “State Treaty/neutrality does not permit it.” In response to the question “what do you believe is the reason that Austria has still not purchased these weapons,” the “State Treaty prohibition” was indeed the most popular answer (52%), but “no money” was a close second (48%).

Both financial and legal factors, then, hindered Austria from acquiring defensive missiles until 1987 when the Austrian government announced the unilateral interpretation of Article 13 long sought by individuals like Vetschera. Reiter praised the decision taken that year on September 7 by the Austrian government to purchase defensive missiles as a “truly historic achievement.” Two years later in July 1989, shortly before the Berlin Wall fell, the Austrian government decided to purchase the aforementioned tank killer Bill, a missile with a range of two kilometers. The government, though, postponed the purchase of light antiaircraft missiles.

From the beginning of Austrian neutrality, therefore, the legacy of the State Treaty and its application by the Soviet Union seriously handicapped any Austrian attempt to fulfill neutrality’s inherently military demands. Yet as closer analysis of the missile debate in Austria revealed, the Austrians themselves were not averse to avoiding neutrality’s military obligations. A more detailed examination of this phenomenon is the subject of the next chapter.

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238 Ibid, 32-33, 119-120, 126. Multiple responses were possible to the follow-up questions.
240 Reiter, 43.
241 Skuhra, 664.
Chapter V
Armed Neutrality: A Pledge Redeemed?

With all Means or Just a Few: Austrian Defense Spending

While recognizing that “significant” foreign aid “alone made possible a quick establishment of the first units of the Bundesheer,” the Austrian security studies analyst Heinz Danzmayr saw this aid “in certain respects, indeed, as a Trojan horse [Danaergeschenk].” Such “start up help” contributed “decisively from the very beginning” to “false budget conceptions” for national defense “that subsequently did not allow themselves to be fundamentally corrected.” “Up to the present day,” bemoaned Danzmayr in 1988, “it is hard to make comprehensible what the procurement, maintenance and necessary replacement of equipment for national defense actually costs.” This “inherited” equipment, moreover, was “only in small portions new” thereby “disproportionately driving up maintenance costs,” which “furthermore had to have a negative effect on the already underdimensioned proportion of new acquisitions.”

The Austrian military historian Manfred Rauchensteiner has also referred to foreign military aid, which “essentially eased the establishment phase of the army,” as a “Danaergeschenk.” “Austria,” he has analyzed, “was literally freed of the concern of affording an army, of having to pay for it. The army was gifted to Austria.” In the early years of the Bundesheer, the “compromise” defense budget of 3-4% of the entire Austrian federal budget was “just sufficient” to cover personnel and basing costs not covered by foreign largesse. “With this, though,” wrote Rauchensteiner, “the framework in which

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the army budget would move was once marked out and it was in the following years and decades no longer possible to apply a lasting correction.”²

At times, wrote Austrian historian Christine Mitterwenger-Fessl, the Bundesheer was actually an “item of budgetary savings.” Even after the 1956 armed Soviet intervention in neighboring Hungary, the SPÖ in 1958 caused the ÖVP to retreat from calls for increased defense spending with the slogan “Build schools, not barracks.” In 1959, the defense budget even lost 200 million Schillings.³ Similarly, Bundesheer major general Mario Duić recalled that the defense budget began to decline in real terms in 1958 just as foreign aid ran out. Although the army budget increased from 1.65 billion Schillings in 1958 to the then record-setting level of 2.4 billion Schillings in 1963 (from 3.09% to 4.08% of the federal budget), the fixed and personnel costs of the Bundesheer increased in the same period 107% and 137%, respectively.⁴

Such a shortage of funds made itself felt to Bundesheer officers like Duić. Assuming a life expectancy of 10-15 years for the largely aged American equipment given to the Bundesheer, Duić estimated a yearly need for 462-700 million Schillings in new acquisitions, yet in 1961 only 170 million Schillings were available for this purpose. Simultaneously, this elderly American equipment demanded in 1961 460 million Schillings for maintenance, but only 186 million Schillings were available. Lack of maintenance facilities in the Bundesheer, meanwhile, entailed using high-cost civilian


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firms. The results of these factors were not surprising: the readiness rates for
_Bundesheer_ wheeled vehicles on subsequent New Year’s Days for the years 1957-1961
were 100%, 45%, 50%, 65%, and 40%, respectively. In this same period these readiness
rates for tanks fluctuated: 100%, 56%, 42%, 67%, and 75%.\(^5\)

In the long-term, military aid facilitated Austria’s maintenance of, in the words of
Heeresgeschichtliches Museum (HGM) docent Thomas Reichl, a “longstanding-tradition
in Austrian military history: namely, we have no money.”\(^6\) Any number of statistics
testifies to the reality behind Reichl’s wit. In 1987, for instance, security studies scholar
Erich Reiter compiled the following tabulation of annual Austrian defense spending for
the years of the _Bundesheer_’s existence:\(^7\)

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^5\) Ibid, 106.
\(^6\) Reichl has stated this during various tours at the HGM attended by the author during summer
2005. Colonel General Lothar Rendulic, an Austrian _Wehrmacht_ veteran, agreed with Reichl’s sentiments
in 1960, writing that both the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the First Republic had done relatively little
for defense. Right after the _Anschluß_, for example, the _Wehrmacht_ discovered that Austria had artillery
ammunition for only two days of fighting. See: Lothar Rendulic, “Probleme der Verteidigung unserer
\(^7\) Erich Reiter, _Die Österreicher und ihr Bundesheer: Analyse einer Untersuchung über die
Einstellung zu Fragen der Landesverteidigung_, Schriftenreihe zur politischen Kultur Österreichs of the
Gesellschaft zur Förderung politischer Grundlagenforschung series (Vienna: Verlag Josef Neuf, 1987),
171.
These rates of defense spending were not only low in and of themselves, but also in comparison with other countries in the transatlantic area. The American scholar Thomas O. Schlesinger found that in 1968 only two European countries, Turkey ($14) and Spain ($17), spent less per capita on defense than Austria ($19). Defense spending figures from 1990 gave Reiter a similar result. In a comparison of NATO members and the “neutral” countries Austria, Finland, and Sweden, Austria’s per capita defense spending of $204 exceeded only Portugal’s ($146) and Turkey’s ($52) and was below the average for the neutrals ($478) and the Western alliance, both with ($689) and without ($405) the United States.

According to Reiter’s analysis of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute’s 1986 *SIPRI Yearbook*, Austria defense spending (1.4% of Gross National Product or GNP) was only ahead of Luxemburg (.9% of GNP) in a comparison of 28 neutral/nonaligned, NATO, and Warsaw Pact nations for the year 1985. In a similar ranking of 30 countries compiled by the former American deputy assistant secretary for defense Joseph Kruzel for the year 1986 on the basis of the International Institute of Strategic Studies’ (*The Military Balance 1986-1987*), Austria came in dead last.

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10 Reiter, *Die Österreicher und ihr Bundesheer*, 174. The SIPRI figures used percentages of GNP measured in American dollars as a reference and included Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, East Germany, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Soviet Union, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States, West Germany, and Yugoslavia. Along with Austria and Luxemburg, only Ireland, Finland, and Romania had defense spending less than 2% of GNP in 1985.
11 Joseph Kruzel, “The European Neutrals, National Defense, and International Security,” in *Between the Blocs: Problems and Prospects for Europe’s Neutral and Nonaligned States*, eds. Michael H. Haltzel and Joseph Kruzel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 148. Kruzel’s figures (percentages of GDP) compared the same countries as Reiter with the exception of (oddly enough) Canada and the addition of Albania, Cyprus, and Malta. As in Reiter’s analysis, only Austria, Ireland, Finland, Luxemburg, Romania, and Malta, not considered by Reiter, had defense spending below 2% of GDP.
When Paul R. Viotti, a U.S. Air Force Academy professor, analyzed IISS defense statistics in 1990, however, Austrian defense spending (1.4% of GDP) had again pulled ahead of last-place Luxemburg (.9% of GDP) in a ranking of the same countries analyzed by Reiter for the year 1985.\textsuperscript{12} Hanspeter Neuhold’s analysis in 1982 of recent \textit{Military Balance} figures confirmed that “Austria has been involved in a neck-and-neck race with Luxemburg for last place among the European states over the years.”\textsuperscript{13}

Being last in defense spending among all European countries also meant that Austria took last place among the European neutral/nonaligned countries often compared with Austria. As the 2005 exhibit \textit{Das Neue Österreich} in the Upper Belvedere Palace showed, Austrian defense spending (measured according to GDP) was always below that of Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland for the years 1968-2004.\textsuperscript{14} The following graph shows defense spending levels for these countries as well as nonaligned Yugoslavia and, for comparison, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in NATO for various years:\textsuperscript{15}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{12} Paul R. Viotti, “Comparative Neutrality in Europe,” \textit{Defense Analysis} 6, no 1. (1990): 6. Viotti used GDP figures, except where unavailable, in which case he used GNP.
\textsuperscript{14} Ernst Bruckmüller, “UNO und Neutralität,” in \textit{Das Neue Österreich: Die Ausstellung zum Staatsvertragsjubiläum 1955/2005}, eds. Günter Düriegl and Gerbert Frodl (Vienna: Österreichische Galarie Belvedere, 2005), 207. Swedish defense spending was the highest during this period.
\end{flushleft}
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Switzerland</th>
<th>Yugoslavia</th>
<th>FRG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for 1968-1977</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measured in nominal dollars per capita, defense spending for these countries in select years was:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Switzerland</th>
<th>Yugoslavia</th>
<th>FRG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>$19</td>
<td>$27</td>
<td>$128</td>
<td>$68</td>
<td>$24</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>$39</td>
<td>$55</td>
<td>$211</td>
<td>$122</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>$54</td>
<td>$83</td>
<td>$303</td>
<td>$160</td>
<td>$80</td>
<td>$259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>$57</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$184</td>
<td>$84</td>
<td>$84</td>
<td>$242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>$114</td>
<td>$110</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>$292</td>
<td>$127</td>
<td>$396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>$122</td>
<td>$142</td>
<td>$432</td>
<td>$290</td>
<td>$164</td>
<td>$410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>$106</td>
<td>$168</td>
<td>$341</td>
<td>$301</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In total, figures cited by the Austrian scholar Anselm Skuhra showed Austrian defense spending averaging 1.21% of GDP from 1960 to 1989, the “lowest rate of all OECD states with more than one million inhabitants.”  

16 Graph compiled from: Böhner, 54; Mario Duić, Unbewältigte Landesverteidigung: System und Verantwortung, Mängel und Chancen (Graz: Verlag Styria, 1977).  

Even compared to its predecessor, the First Republic, the Austrian Second Republic looked cheap to Skuhra. While the First Republic devoted between the years 1923 and 1937 an average of 8.3% of the federal budget to national defense (a figure not including private spending on various party paramilitaries), the Second Republic expended an average of 4.4% of the federal budget in the 1960s, 4% in the 1970s, and 3.7% in the 1980s on defense.\footnote{18}{Reiter, \textit{Österreichische Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik}, 39.}

The Austrian diplomat Fritz Kolb tellingly noted that Austria in 1968 spent more on the federal railway system (4.624 billion Schillings) than on national defense (3.666 billion Schillings).\footnote{19}{Skuhra, 672.} In 1983, the federal railways consumed nearly three times the defense budget of $780 million. Even the Austrian State Opera outspent the Defense Ministry.\footnote{20}{Fritz Kolb, “Die Verteidigung Österreichs,” \textit{Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift} 8, no. 6 (1970): 484-485.} Austrian defense spending also paled in comparison with Austrian private consumption, as Defense Minister Georg Prader noted in 1965. Following postwar economic recovery, once destitute Austrians were then annually expending multiple times their defense budget on alcohol, nicotine, and cosmetics.\footnote{21}{Joan Johnson-Freese, “Austria,” in \textit{Europe’s Neutral and Nonaligned States: Between NATO and the Warsaw Pact}, eds. S. Victor Papacosma and Mark R. Rubin (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1989), 171-172.}

\textit{Austrians to the Front?: Austrian Conscription and its Malcontents}

Not only Austrian pocketbooks, but also the service of Austrians under arms revealed a limited Austrian will for national defense. In the words of Austrian defense analyst Heinz Danzmayr, the September 7, 1955, National Defense Law created “the European \textit{Unikum} of a nine-month service time (general conscription), which is due not

\begin{flushright}
\footnote{18}{Reiter, \textit{Österreichische Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik}, 39.}
\footnote{19}{Skuhra, 672.}
\end{flushright}
to any objective reasons, but rather to a compromise in the formulation of the Austrian National Defense Law between the two large parties of the country.” Nine months was namely the halfway point between the ÖVP suggestion of 12 months national service and the SPÖ’s proposal of six months.\textsuperscript{23}

Writing on behalf of a group of Austrian defense analysts and politicians in 1973, Felix Ermacora noted that defense experts in 1955 advocated national conscription lasting anywhere from 15 to 18 months.\textsuperscript{24} Likewise, Lieutenant General William H. Arnold, United States Forces in Austria (USFA) commander, and other American officials informed Chancellor Julius Raab and Vice-Chancellor Adolf Schärf in a meeting on July 16, 1955, of “NATO standards which prescribe two years normal and one and one-half years minimum service for adequate training of modern reserve forces.” Raab, though, responded that “a one and one-half or two year term of military service in Austria was currently out of the question.”\textsuperscript{25}

For the Swiss analyst Alfred Aebi in 1976, “the most notable aspect of this law was the lack of any legal obligation for the performance of maneuvers by reservists in order to maintain their training proficiency and to receive instructions in new equipment and weapons systems.”\textsuperscript{26} Former Wehrmacht major general Hans Kissel observed in 1967 that reservists were only liable for a maximum of four days of instructions a year. Military experts, he noted, considered a law prescribing longer exercises “urgently

\textsuperscript{23} Danzmayr, 323.
\textsuperscript{24} Felix Ermacora, ed., Weißbuch zur Lage der Landesverteidigung Österreichs an Stelle eines immer fehlenden Berichtes der Regierung Kreisky über den Stand der umfassenden Landesverteidigung (Graz: Universitätsbuchdruckerei, 1973), 31.
\textsuperscript{26} Alfred Aebi, Der Beitrag neutraler Staaten zur Friedenssicherung untersucht am Beispiel Österreichs und der Schweiz, Schriften des Schweizerischen Aufklärungs-Dienstes series (Zürich: Buchdruckerei Stäfa, 1976), 59.
necessary.”27 Austria’s conscription law, in the words of Aebi, thus created “the unusual situation of a growing number of reservists who distance themselves from year to year from their former proficiency.” Reservists “could have perhaps even come into the unappealing situation of, in case of mobilization, being called up for service with weapons that they possibly would not even know.”28

Practical difficulties added to the problems of Austria’s system of national service. One 1960 study pointed out that “in Austria the implementation of general conscription is practically foresworn because of financial reasons—more than 40% of all conscripts are not called up!”29 Defense Minister Karl Lütgendorf, meanwhile, recalled that a lack of cadre personnel along with a system of two call-up dates meant that the “combat power of individual brigades fell off—a distinction was made between winter and summer brigades—at certain times.”30

During the 1960s, however, even nine months of national service appeared too long for many Austrians. Defense Minister Prader warned in a seminar on November 23, 1968, that

nothing can and may be changed in the basic principle of a nine-month service period. In the view of military specialists and also in my personal opinion this is the absolute minimum amount that there can be if we do not want to raise the impression that our national defense is meant only

27 Hans Kissel, “Das österreichische Bundesheer und seine Probleme,” Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau 17, no. 9 (1967): 482. In an interview with the author at the HGM on July 26, 2005, Manfred Rauchensteiner recalled that this follow-up training involved seminar-like affairs usually for officers and NCOs concerning, say, new weapons. Most people, though, did not have any training after their nine months of service.
28 Aebi, 59.
29 Grundfragen zur Landesverteidigung (Vienna: Sozialwissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft, 1960), III.
symbolically. Our service period in Austria is so short that no one can take responsibility for a further shortening.  

Prader’s warnings were for naught. “The thought of a shortening of conscription,” wrote historian and Bundesheer lieutenant colonel Andreas Steiger, “accompanied the Bundesheer since its existence. Already in 1956 [Inspector] General [Erwin] Fussenegger had discussed a five-month service period with Minister Graf.” A decade later “it was above all demobilizing soldiers who demanded a shortening of national service with the justification of ‘time spent in neutral [Leerlauf]’ in the Bundesheer.” “For opponents of national defense,” Steiger observed, “the entire Bundesheer was Leerlauf. Many soldiers, though, perceived the unavoidable work services as Leerlauf—lacking civilian personnel, soldiers had to perform very many auxiliary services.” Deficiencies in cadre personnel and training materials along with poor planning and execution of the training also contributed to Leerlauf.

This “Leerlauf in the Bundesheer,” noted Steiger, “quickly became a political battle cry,” especially for the SPÖ. In Rauchensteiner’s words, shortened conscription became “the dominating slogan of the 60s. Because this slogan became a political program, it also gained weight. And the weight was sufficient to influence the election results of 1970.” Under the slogan “Six months are enough [Sechs Monate sind genug],” the SPÖ won a plurality of Nationalrat seats (81 SPÖ seats versus 78 ÖVP and 31)


33 Ibid.

6 FPÖ) in the March 1970 elections, enough to form a minority government tolerated by the FPÖ. Early elections the next year then brought the SPÖ an absolute majority.\textsuperscript{35}

The SPÖ then made use of an earlier proposal made by the Socialist undersecretary for defense Otto Rösch in a December 20, 1963, newspaper interview for a Bundesheer restructuring. Under the “Rösch Plan,” conscription would consist of six and one-half months followed by three exercises of 14 days in the following 10-15 years. The Bundesheer in peacetime would be purely a training institution designed to transform into an active army after a quick mobilization. Edited by Vice-Chancellor Bruno Pitterman, Rösch’s proposal appeared as an SPÖ defense concept on February 14, 1964, and subsequently served as the basis for suggestions to transform the Bundesheer into a militia army.\textsuperscript{36}

Accordingly, legislation passed on August 1, 1971, under the new SPÖ government of Chancellor Bruno Kreisky cut national service to six months and 60 days of refresher maneuvers. The large majority of the Bundesheer’s roughly 2,200 officers, though, protested against the new term of conscription in the public “Letter of 1,700 officers.”\textsuperscript{37} A majority of the Bundesheer’s NCOs as well as ÖVP and FPÖ party members also rejected the new service scheme in contrast to the significant support from SPÖ members. Most officers and NCOs, explained Steiger, “took a very contrary position to the restructuring of the Bundesheer into a militia along Swiss lines.” This system “was foreign to them; in Austria there were no experiences with it. The general

\textsuperscript{36} Das Bundesheer in den Jahren 1968 bis 1975.
\textsuperscript{37} Ernest König, “Die Reorganisationsvorhaben des österreichischen Bundesheeres und deren Rahmenbedingungen: Rückblick, Stand, Ausblick,” Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift 33, no. 5 (1995): 527. These eight months (to be divided in theory between six months of initial service and two months of refresher training) were in themselves an extension of the Kreisky government’s proposal of six months and 40 days of refresher training.
view was that a militia was not a completely sufficient fighting force. An intensive study of the Swiss militia took place in Austria only later.” Most military leaders only wanted additional exercises in conjunction with a nine-month service period.  

The new conscription laws remained a source of controversy in the following years. An Austrian study in 1975 complained that the new period of national service entailed an annual loss of “around three million man/day units in service volume…not made up with other means or measures.” In addition, the “purely political decision” for a six-month term of national service was going to severely restrict the chance of survival of the Austrian soldier. This Austrian soldier must measure himself against a “full professional” in combat, for whose preparation for this task multiple factors of time and means have been expended. Practice cannot be dispensed with despite optimal training methods and the most modern aids, and precisely this practice cannot be achieved in six months.  

Writing in Military Review, Denis Chaplin in 1977 agreed that national servicemen cannot be trained to perform effectively in this space of time, trainers’ time being more or less limited to acclimatization, basic drill and how to pull a trigger. Moreover, psychologists agree that a young civilian cannot adjust to and come to terms with the peculiarities of military life in less than 12 months; any shorter period prevents him from resigning himself to the army as a temporary vehicle for self-expression.  

Analysis of national service in other European neutral/nonaligned countries only emphasized the limited nature of conscription in Austria. General Duić calculated in 1977 that a while a conscript in Austria served 240 days, his counterparts in Sweden and Switzerland served 325 and 330 days, respectively.  

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41 Duić, Unbewältigte Landesverteidigung, 129.
Vetschera of the Austrian National Defense Academy showed that Finland demanded eight to 11 months basic training from its conscripts, Sweden seven and a half to 15 months, and Switzerland 118 days with, however, several subsequent call-ups of 20 days. Finland (40 days) and Sweden (90-160 days) also mandated follow-up maneuvers. Militia officer training in Austria (90 days) was also the shortest in length among the four countries (Finland: 100 days; Sweden: 320 days; and Switzerland: 118 days).  

Aside from its brevity, the new Austrian conscription law provoked the complaint that it did not adequately encompass the nation’s manpower. “Unlike the Swiss,” wrote Stephan Kux in 1986, “who take their conscription seriously, many Austrians are as yet unreconciled to the idea of military service, and a system of exemptions, Byzantine in its complexity, is still in operation.”

Even under the new conscription law, though, a major problem remained the lack of refresher training for reservists. According to the law, conscripts had the choice of serving six months in the Bundesheer and then returning for 60 days of subsequent maneuvers or serving eight months all at once. Private interests actually argued in favor of one eight-month term, as employers preferred individuals not liable to subsequent duty.

The result, as General Duić explained in a 1980 interview, was that about two-thirds of all conscripts chose to complete national service in one stretch and were subsequently “practically lost forever” to the Bundesheer. At the time, Duić confessed that the Bundesheer could only mobilize 160,000 men even though Austria had trained

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almost one million soldiers since 1956. Many of these eight-month conscripts, moreover, Rauchensteiner noted, were “system maintainers [Systemerhalter]” who spent their time fulfilling administrative tasks in the Bundesheer. Contemporary critics such as Reiter demanded an end to this “insufficient eight-month consecutive service [Durchdienen]” and a standardization of the six month/two month format along with an appropriate “understanding of the people” from individuals such as business managers for the needs of conscription.

“Everyone knows,” Ermacora summarized in 1973 the criticism of his associates, that Kreisky’s policies had brought “the will” and the “capability for national defense to zero.” “Austria,” he wrote, “has, in fact, become a military vacuum. The Kreisky government and its defense minister are silent about this in public, but ultimately admit it—shamefully enough—in closed circles.”

The Austrian scholar Gerhard Böhner later agreed that “the Bundesheer reform reduced readiness by about 1973 to almost the point of zero.” An October 19, 1971, report delivered by the general troop inspector and other army officers to the defense minister “forcefully” demonstrated this. Böhner described the report as presenting “a hitherto absent danger of the Bundesheer’s spiritual collapse” marked by references in the report to “inner unrest among officers and NCOs, their increasing resignation,” and the “large-scale absence of officer and cadre recruits.” According to the report, the 1971 reforms had only increased the Bundesheer’s problems, stripping it of the ability to repeat the mobilization undertaken in response to the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

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46 Rauchensteiner interview.
47 Reiter, Die Österreicher und ihr Bundesheer, 12.
48 Ermacora, Forward, 26.
49 Böhner, 56.
Forces in the Field: The Strength of the Bundesheer in Comparison to its Environment

Not surprisingly, Austria’s limited commitment to national defense translated into a Bundesheer woefully weak in comparison to the armed forces of Europe and Austria’s immediate neighborhood. While the Bundesheer grew from 7,000 soldiers in 1955 to over 50,000 in 1965, 150,000 in the mid-1970s, and 250,000 in 1990, other European neutrals maintained significantly larger militaries.  

Austrian general Otto Heller recalled that Sweden in 1969, with a population of 7.9 million, could mobilize armed forces consisting of 600,000 individuals supported by an additional 100,000 troops in home guard units. Together these forces constituted about 9.5% of the Swedish population. At the same time, mobilized Swiss forces of 660,000 corresponded to about 10% of Switzerland’s 6.42 million inhabitants. By comparison, 7.32 million Austrians could only field at most 150,000 soldiers, merely 2.05% of the Austrian population.  

Reiter’s analysis of Europe’s neutral military forces in 1987 presented a similar picture. Reiter’s data for Sweden (800,000 under arms, including 100,000 home guards, in a population of 8.3 million) and Switzerland (625,000 under arms in a population of 6.6 million inhabitants, including one million foreigners) corresponded roughly to Heller’s figures. Additionally, though, Reiter noted that the Swedes and the Swiss could field 525 and 300 warplanes, respectively. Perhaps most interesting in Reiter’s analysis was Finland, a country of 4.9 million inhabitants fielding 696,000 under arms, including

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128 warplanes. Austria’s 7.5 million inhabitants, meanwhile, had “more modest” defense plans foreseeing a Bundesheer of 186,000 soldiers by 1987 and 300,000 in the following years.\textsuperscript{52}

Numerous tabulations have reached the same conclusion as Reiter. In 1988, Israeli scholar Efraim Karsh saw the neutral military balance this way:\textsuperscript{53}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Switzerland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobilized Strength</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>734,000</td>
<td>776,000</td>
<td>645,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobilization as % of population</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combat Aircraft</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanks</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armored Vehicles</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,475</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Viotti at the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1990 divided continental Europe’s neutral and non-aligned countries into “armed” and “relatively unarmed” neutrals. Even in the latter category, Finland clearly outshone Austria:\textsuperscript{54}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tanks</th>
<th>Fighters</th>
<th>Regulars</th>
<th>Reservists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>65,700</td>
<td>735,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>625,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>241,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Relatively) unarmed neutrals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>54,700</td>
<td>170,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1 brigade</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>36,500</td>
<td>700,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Major General Erich Eder, commandant of the Austrian National Defense Academy, also cited in 1993 a gap in the strength of Austrian and Swiss artillery. Military Balance figures from 1984 showed that Switzerland possessed 1,400 artillery

\textsuperscript{52} Reiter, Die Österreichische und ihr Bundesheer, 11-12.
\textsuperscript{53} Karsh, 151.
\textsuperscript{54} Viotti, 4. Viotti’s inclusion of the rather insignificant military forces of Ireland among the “relatively unarmed neutrals” is omitted here.
pieces and 1,350 antitank guns versus 200 Austrian artillery pieces and 500 antitank guns. The significant discrepancies in Austrian and Swiss military power were all the starker to Eder, given that Switzerland was about half the size of Austria. Swiss terrain was also far more mountainous and therefore defensible than Austria’s, as Lothar Rendulic, an Austrian who reached the rank of colonel general in the Wehrmacht, noted in 1969.

In contrast, Eder expected that “forces equipped with 4,000 to 5,000 tanks and more than 500 combat aircraft” would have operated against Austria in any general East-West conflict. Assuming a Warsaw Pact attack against Austria as part of a general assault on Western Europe, it is not hard to understand Eder’s speculation. Citing statistics that remained fairly stable over the years, General Kissel in 1967 counted 220,000 soldiers, 3,200 tanks, and 750 warplanes in Czechoslovakia, a country then of 14.25 million inhabitants. Fellow Warsaw Pact member Hungary, with 10.25 million people, had at the same time 109,000 troops, 1000 tanks, and 150 warplanes. The 19.53 million non-aligned Yugoslavs, meanwhile, whose allegiances in various European conflict scenarios would have been indeterminate, fielded 264,000 soldiers, 400 warplanes, and an undisclosed number of tanks. All of these states, moreover, possessed significant reserves.

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57 Eder, 14.
The 1981 book *The Balance of Military Power* illustrated such military disparities with a European map showing the equivalent of two Austrian infantry divisions holding a lonely vigil in comparison to (including the Soviets) seven armored and eight infantry divisions in Czechoslovakia and three armored and seven infantry divisions in Hungary. General Duić in 1977, meanwhile, attempted to present relative military strength with a comparison of force level densities in the following graph:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Soldiers per km²</th>
<th>Main Battle Tanks (MBTs) per 1000 km²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRG</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not just problems of quantity, but also of quality continued to plague the *Bundesheer* throughout the years. Describing the previously cited *Leerlauf*, Hans Walter Christ complained in 1963 in *Zukunft* that, during their nine months of military service, some artillerymen had never fired a round and some tankers had not driven 1,000 paces. Additionally, some pilots had hardly flown an hour in 15 months. Given a lack of resources for training, some conscripts spent their national service gardening or peeling potatoes. Chaplin in 1977 did not see much improvement, writing that “even the traditional elite of the *Bundesheer*—the *Gebirgsjäger* [mountain troops]—are not

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60 Duić, 35.

permitted to use their special footgear for everyday service because of the shortage of
replacements and repair materials.”

Nor did reports from the Bundesheer improve in the 1990s. During the maneuver
Kristall in September 1998, for example, one third of all participating tanks and all of the
40-year old Sauerer armored personal carriers (APCs) broke down. Many Bundesheer
soldiers, though, did not even have APCs, but had to go to maneuvers in trucks, often
borrowed from other units. Personal mobile phones, meanwhile, often substituted for
lacking radios. Bundesheer soldiers also complained that their field uniforms dating from
1975 (Feldanzug 75) were too hot in summer and too cold in winter, but at least it was an
Austrian product, unlike the cotton uniforms that otherwise would have come from
abroad.

An appropriately titled 1999 article in the Austrian newsweekly Profil, “The
Scrap Army [Die Schrott-Armee],” cited similar deficiencies in Bundesheer uniforms,
noting that raincoats were lacking, successive generations of recruits used the same
combat boots, and there were no waterproof gloves. Two-thirds of Bundesheer soldiers
lacked modern helmets and flak jackets. Some soldiers, meanwhile, did not go to
maneuvers in APCs or even trucks, but buses.

Through the years complaints arose that the Bundesheer was not even using its
limited resources efficiently. The author Peter Feldl wrote in 1969 that “from year to
year not the army, but rather the Defense Ministry, which now already has more
personnel than that of Austria-Hungary in its time and occupies a considerable part of the

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62 Chaplin, 60.
officer corps, is enlarged.”

Bundesheer critic Wilfried Daim also described Austria’s army that year as a “bureaucratic hydrocephalus, an institution for the care of officers.”

Ermacora concurred in 1973 that the Bundesheer had an “Unzahl of staffs.”

Reviewing the army’s development in 1993, the leftist Bundesheer opponent Hans Wolker complained that soon after its establishment the army had almost 100 individuals in the rank of general, a number corresponding to one general for 500 soldiers. There was also an officer then for every 15 soldiers. By 1993, Wolker found the situation “even worse despite all promised reforms.” Austrian officials estimated that the Bundesheer then had a general staff officer for every 200 men in the army’s peacetime contingent of 45,000 soldiers, even though the 400,000 soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy had a general staff officer for only every 500 soldiers.

The complaints reported in Profil in 1998 were the same. While most NATO militaries spent less than 50% of their budgets on personnel, the Bundesheer spent 60%.

Talk of a “17 and 4 formula” also made the rounds in the Defense Ministry, an allusion to the then reigning division of 21,000 professional soldiers into 17,000 serving in various staffs, schools, bands, and other non-line assignments and only 4,000 serving among 30,000 conscripts.

References to silver linings in an otherwise gloomy picture of Austrian national defense have been few and far between in the pertinent literature. The commander of the Bundesheer in the 1970s, Major General Emil Spannocchi, observed in 1978 that per

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67 Ermacora, 64.
69 Bauer, 44-45.
capita Austrian defense spending had gone from 600 to 1400 Schillings in the years 1970-1978, “a considerable achievement” even taking inflation of, at most, 10% into account. Although this end result was still significantly less than Switzerland (3000 Schillings per capita), it was in good stead with Italy (1400 Schillings per capita) and exceeded Yugoslavia’s per capita spending (1270 Schillings). “How then actually,” asked Spannocchi, “do some strategic ‘know-it-alls’ condemn Austria once again as a ‘thinned-out zone.’”

Vetschera agreed, as Reiter’s previously cited GDP figures indicate, that Austrian defense spending increased significantly under, ironically enough, the Socialist government of Kreisky. Vetschera recalled that NATO once proclaimed for its members the goal of an annual 3% defense budget growth rate, a rate maintained by Austria during many years of Kreisky’s chancellorship. Of course, Vetschera is among the first to admit that this relative growth rate took place against the background of low absolute defense spending. Nor, if the per capita figures cited earlier are to be believed, did Austria maintain its lead over Yugoslavia through the years.

Other attempts to put a positive face on Austrian defense spending are less convincing. Colonel Josef Marolz noted in 1980 that his Bundesheer was larger than many NATO militaries when measured in comparison to national population. Similarly, in 1982 the Austrian international legal scholar Manfred Rotter calculated that the NATO alliance spent an average of $7,968, the Warsaw Pact $6,115 per km² of alliance territory. Similarly, NATO had .204065 soldiers, the Warsaw Pact .203395

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71 Heinz Vetschera, interview by author in the Offizierskasino of the National Defense Academy in Vienna’s Stiftskaserne on July 11, 2005.
soldiers per km$^2$. Austria, in contrast, spent $8,563 and had .4412 soldiers per km$^2$ of Austrian territory.\textsuperscript{73}

Additionally, Austria only had to defend its territory, a mission requiring merely a 1:3 ratio of friendly to hostile strength according to traditional military analysis. Compared to its neighbors, Austria’s troops-to-territory ratio failed to maintain this relationship only vis-à-vis West Germany and (just barely) Czechoslovakia. Austrian defense spending per km$^2$ also only failed to maintain this 1:3 ratio with respect to Switzerland and West Germany.\textsuperscript{74}

Rotter’s comparison of alliance expenditures and troop levels to alliance territories is suspect, however. A true measure of Austria’s strategic environment would focus on the mass of military force concentrated in Austria’s European neighborhood, the decisive central front of the Cold War. The relationship of an alliance’s expenditure to its total territory, including such places as the Yukon or Siberia, is irrelevant. While Austria had the advantage of defense, any aggressor in a general European war such as the Warsaw Pact would have had the offense’s traditional advantage of concentrating its forces at a decisive point, such as the Danube River valley. Rotter’s comparison of Austrian defense strength with individual neighbors fails to take account of precisely this factor, for members of an alliance like the Warsaw Pact would have operated against Austria not individually but in unison.

The overwhelming consensus among analysts throughout the years, however, was that Austria did too little for defense. An Austrian officer in the Bundesheer general


\textsuperscript{74} Ibid, 290.
staff with combat experience in World War II told General Kissel in 1967 that “with the present financial means the Bundesheer is not viable.” Another general staff member informed Kissel that “the army was hardly able to fulfill the duty defined by law to protect the state.”

Colonel General Rendulic in 1970 called the Austrian defense budget a “European Groteske.” Nationalrat member and ÖVP defense spokesman Heinrich Neisser argued in the Christian Democratic Österreichische Monatshefte in 1977 that Austrian defense spending was “just enough to prevent the dissolution of the Bundesheer.” Kruzel in 1987 saw “little question that the Euro-neutrals and nonaligned nations allocate relatively little money to defense” and “as a group must be reckoned as the defense skinflints of the European continent.” Austria, of course, was at the bottom of this group.

Reiter in 1989 wrote that “our national defense withers away now for 33 years since the establishment of the Bundesheer according to the motto ‘too little to live, to much to die.'” In metaphorical terms, General Heller found Austria’s “shield” to be a “sieve” and its “sword” to be a “quite thin board.” Interviewed in 2005, Neuhold called Austrian defense efforts during the Cold War “irresponsible.”

These Austrian defense deficiencies are particularly important from the perspective of neutrality because of its demand for “reasonable” measures to make an

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75 Kissel, “Das österreichische Bundesheer und seine Probleme,” 491.
77 Neisser, 18.
78 Kruzel, 147-148.
80 Heller, 78.
81 Hanspeter Neuhold, interview by author in the foyer of Vienna’s Diplomatische Akademie on July 12, 2005.
“effective” defense. As Karl Zemanek noted in his legal opinion of February 13, 1970, the traditional criteria for such efforts was the “international standard.” This standard, observed Neuhold in 1983, “results from the performance of comparable states.” Whether Austria had met this standard, Neuhold found “debatable.”

Burdened by Past and Present: The Bundesheer and the Second Republic

As befits a democracy, Austria’s limited defense preparations throughout the years accurately reflected Austrian public opinion. The Austrian columnist Peter Michael Lingens in 2000 judged “an unwillingness to defend” as “the actual constant in Austrian security policy since 1945.” Chancellor Jonas Klaus seemed to agree during an address at the Karl Franzens Universität in Graz, Styria, on November 21, 1967. “We live,” he said, “in a democracy that until now has pledged itself only in a hesitant manner to the description ‘defense friendly [wehrfreudig].’”

Many factors shaped negative Austrian attitudes towards military preparedness. Scholars like the political scientist Skuhra pointed out that “Austria evinces no successful participation in war since 1866 and the last two (world) wars ended with a political, military, and economic catastrophe for the country.” These Austrian defeats, observed

86 Skuhra, 661.
former foreign minister Peter Jankowitsch, have “colored” Austrian views of a “never very popular” Bundesheer. As expressed by Reiter,

the ruination of the multinational state, the experience of defeat in the Second World War, and the estimation of Austria as small and relatively helpless have produced in the population the consciousness that a war is not winnable for an Austrian armed force. If the great power Austria-Hungary lost in the First World War (and even went under itself), if the mighty Wehrmacht could not win in the Second World War, how then should small Austria with its small Bundesheer be able to win a war?88

These losses and the concurrent ruptures in Austrian history also meant, according to Reiter, that “the tradition of Austrian defense and security policies is burdened by disruptions and deficient continuity. Almost every generation has served in a different army: my grandfather in the tunic of the Kaiser, my father in the German Wehrmacht and I in the Bundesheer of the Second Republic.” Precisely “the largest war in which our people ever had to participate…the Second World War, which 1.2 million Austrians in total experienced in the German Wehrmacht and for which ca. a quarter million paid with their lives,” was something Austria generally tried to avoid remembering, for all too obvious reasons. Such public amnesia prompted Reiter to ask, “What should someone make of the political culture of a people, of a state, which does not or not sufficiently honor the dead of its wars?” To Reiter

it is not decisive for the honoring of the sacrifices of a war how just or unjust the war is, but rather the individual readiness to sacrifice which, if it cost life or even only brought imprisonment, deprivation, and pain, is simply to be praised as a service on behalf of the community. Whoever does not do this may not be surprised that the willingness in principle and at any time to defend his country is placed in question.89

87 Peter Jankowitsch, interview by author in Jankowitsch’s office at the Österreichisch-Französisches Zentrum on July 28, 2005.
88 Reiter, Die Österreicher und ihr Bundesheer, 9. Emphasis in the original.
89 Reiter, Österreichische Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik, 75-76.
The only victories of Austrian soldiers seemed to be over other Austrians. Many Austrians, particularly among the political Left, bitterly remembered how the First Republic’s Bundesheer crushed the Social Democratic movement and its paramilitary formations when political tensions under the Dollfuss dictatorship broke out into civil war in February 1934. Active in the Social Democratic youth organization before joining the KPÖ in the interwar period, the former resistance member Wolker recalled that the Bundesheer in the First Republic “proceeded ruthlessly against the workers defending freedom and democracy in the February days of 1934 and bombarded without pity community housing and workers homes.” Yet “as Hitler-Germany marched into Austria in March 1938, breaking international law, the Austrian Bundesheer capitulated without a fight. It did not fire a single shot against the German occupation troops.” Thus the Bundesheer since its founding was, in principle, never particularly popular. From the beginning it encountered skepticism and rejection from a large part of the population. Too strong were the memories of the fateful reactionary role that the Bundesheer had played in the First Republic, above all in the year 1934.90

In its traditions, the Bundesheer has tried to avoid the controversies of modern Austrian military history by reaching back into a distant past. SPÖ members such as Jankowitsch and Hans Eichbauer in the 1986 Zukunft article “Bundesheer: Bedenkliche Tradition [Troubling Tradition]” pointed out that Bundesheer units celebrate military successes of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy against, for instance, the Ottoman Turks and Napoleon, long-forgotten by most Austrians.91 Skuhra found in 1991 that 80 of 85 units in the Bundesheer (94%) had a day of remembrance (Gedenktag) dating before

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90 Wolker, 14.
November 1918.\textsuperscript{92} Foreseeing such a state of affairs, some Zukunft authors in 1955 went so far as to suggest that the modern Bundesheer simply get by without any historic traditions.\textsuperscript{93}

Not even members of the Bundesheer always agreed with its selected heritage. Colonel Friedrich W. Korkisch, an officer from the Bundesheer’s small aviation section, found the choice of June 19, 1918, as the “Tag der Luftstreitkräfte [Day of the Air Forces]” questionable. This was in honor of the air combat around the Montello on the Italian front in World War I, but, according to Korkisch, “no one asked whether this air battle was even at all won; or whether the main burden of the air combat lay with the German squadrons; why not June 18 or June 20.” Korkisch observed that some Bundesheer officers “rightfully” wanted to abolish this historic remembrance, but had been unsuccessful.\textsuperscript{94}

If deficient military glory had not been enough to dissuade the Austrians from flocking to the colors, the occupying powers following World War II did their part to eliminate any martial enthusiasm among the Austrians. Initially more concerned with disarming Austrians recently armed by the Third Reich rather than rearming an independent Austria, the “victorious powers,” according to General Spannocchi, wanted the Austrians to believe “that the root of all evil in the world was the military; that, therefore, nothing was more unnecessary and more dangerous for the nation’s future than

\textsuperscript{92} Skuhra, 673.
\textsuperscript{93} M. T. Normann, “Um das österreichische Bundesheer,” Zukunft, no. 6 (1955): 168.
an army.” Thus “the first obstacle to be overcome” in building the Bundesheer “was a rather confused psychological start.”

As Spannocchi himself admitted, the “well-publicized ‘reeducation’” of the occupation “had a relatively easy time convincing a people of seven million, who had mourned 470,000 dead and missing in action.” In the words of Reiter, “there were many after 1945 who believed that they never again wanted to pick up a weapon.” Spannocchi’s colleague General Duić agreed that the result of “years of excessive duties for state and ‘People’s Community [Volksgemeinschaft]’ in the Third Reich” was “resigned-pacifist thinking.” “Now (in many cases extreme),” elaborated Duić, “individualistic behavior entered the foreground. Personal goals of happiness and wealth and the desire for peace as their precondition became dominant at the cost of community goals.”

Johann Ellinger, ministerial secretary in the Austrian Defense Ministry, concluded in 1963 that “public opinion, probably as a consequence of the Allied disarmament campaign, still stood after the Second World War under the influence of radical pacifist ideas.”

Like most people worldwide, some Austrians like Lingens realized that the history of the Third Reich could offer lessons precisely opposed to pacifism, but only the small minority of Austrian resistance fighters shared after the war a belief in the necessity of sacrifice for a just cause. Everyone else in Austria suffered (and suffered

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96 Ibid.
97 Reiter, Die Österreich und ihr Bundesheer, 41.
disillusionment) because of their “service on behalf of the community,” to paraphrase Reiter. 100 “The conclusion,” analyzed Duić,

was not drawn by the parties and society of postwar Austria from the presumably Schuschnigg’s “pacifist” acquiescence in the violence and injustice on March 11, 1938, that this hardly served the peace in Europe and rather strengthened Hitler’s confidence for further steps, so that ultimately war, destruction, losses, and years of hardship after the war had their roots in this acquiescence. 101

Austria’s military past combined with Austria’s limited national strength in the present to produce what Andreas Unterberger, editor in chief of the conservative Viennese daily Die Presse, retrospectively diagnosed in 1998 as a Cold War “fatalism growing out of history and the atomic age.” Austrians believed that “when it gets serious Austria will be helpless anyway.” 102 Such beliefs were present at the very founding of Austrian neutrality, as Alain Stuchly-Luchs, secretary general of Österreichische Liga für die Vereinten Nationen, showed in a 1955 article in his organization’s journal. “The establishment of a Bundesheer,” he wrote,

  can protect Austria in the case of an armed conflict with one of the bordering small states, not, however, when Austria’s neutrality should be violated by a great power. Whether the Bundesheer encompasses now one, two, or three divisions—appropriate for it will be only the role of a force for border security; a single modern jet fighter costs many millions of dollars and in order to equip our country with an air force, which can hold up the air force of a great power for even only a few hours, we would have to expend innumerable yearly budgets exclusively for this, in the final analysis, unproductive goal, which is naturally impossible. 103

100 Lingens, 15.
According to General Spannocchi in 1982, this “traumatic inferiority complex” with its attitude toward national defense of “without us [*ohne uns*], because it is going to be senseless, after all,” was “presumably conditioned by an all too-long, namely 10-year state of complete defenselessness.” Whatever the origin, Austria’s lack of creditability in defense matters was enduring. Mitterwenger-Fessl concluded in 1986 that no chances at all—and not only from the responsible politicians—were and are conceded to the national military defense of a small state in the era of atomic warfare. It was and is said again and again that in view of the gigantic development of military technology and the formation of large power blocks, one’s own means would never suffice anyway for the defense preparations called for.

Stuchly-Luchs’s solution in 1955 to Austria’s military quandary, meanwhile, did itself not inspire much confidence in the end. Given that foreign powers could break or revoke military commitments or simply be unable to fulfill them at a given time, Stuchly-Luchs placed little faith in the Moscow Memorandum’s oft-discussed possibility of a guarantee for Austrian neutrality. Under the influence of the United Nations’ (UN) Security Council’s “success” in countering aggression against South Korea, the Austrian UN advocate favored placing Austria under a UN guarantee. Left unanswered in his proposal was why the various powers of the world would be more faithful towards UN guarantees than other kinds of guarantees.

**Warriors of Neutrality?, I: Austria’s Leadership shows no Interest in Defense…**

In light of all these factors, Unterberger’s sometime subordinate Lingens proposed in 2000 the thesis that “Austria would have remained without an army if the

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104 Emil Spannocchi, “Hat Österreichs Freiheit eine Zukunft?” in *Wie Sicher ist Österreich*, 301.
105 Mitterwenger-Fessl, 306.
106 Stuchly-Luchs, 1-2.
State Treaty and neutrality had not forced Austria into arming itself.” Lingens was not alone in his views. “International law scholars and historians,” wrote Wolker in 1993, express this now in the formula: if the—for Austria so blessed—permanent neutrality was a concession to the Soviet Union during the conclusion of the State Treaty, so were rearmament, establishment of an army, and integration into the military-strategic planning of the Western powers the concession to the USA. 

Ernst Zipperer certainly considered the Bundesheer as a burdensome concession when he wrote the appropriately titled article “We do not want to be Soldiers [Wir wollen keine Soldaten sein]” in the June 1955 issue of Zukunft. Zipperer predicted that the Bundesheer would be useless in any general war while a gendarmerie alone could control the borders. “For what then,” asked Zipperer, “should sums in the billions be expended on our own army? Perhaps, so that it can present an honor company at official state receptions?” The military was otherwise only good for teaching men “to execute every dumb and senseless order under all circumstances and—to go to a bordello.” As the Socialist editors of Zukunft later elaborated in 1987, “National defense was—and is?—often a repressed theme among Socialists. Enthusiasm for weapons and the military is not their thing.”

Opposition to the Bundesheer must not have been limited to the SPÖ, though, for Erwin Fussenegger, the first general troop inspector of the army, recurred in his retirement speech on December 16, 1970, to Lingens’ speculation. As described by Reiter, Fussenegger’s address indicated that the “Bundesheer had to carry along a lie for 15 years (from establishment in fall 1955 to the end of 1970).” The army resulted not

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107 Lingens, 7.
108 Wolker, 33.
from “the recognition at the time of leading politicians” that “no military vacuum may develop” in Austria after the withdrawal of the occupying powers because “this would not be tolerable with respect to the European situation.” Austrian leaders, rather, “saw themselves forced at the time by the public and especially by foreign influences (Western powers)” to create some sort of military. “Without one’s own national defense,” concluded Reiter, “a withdrawal of the occupying powers could not be had and besides, after all, a neutrality like Switzerland’s was promised and there something military-like simply had to be done.”

Corresponding to Socialist attitudes, meanwhile, SPÖ officeholders Theodor Körner (federal president) and Oskar Helmer (interior minister) both expressed sympathy for the suggestion from their colleague in the ÖVP, Chancellor Raab, that Austrian rearmament remain limited to the B-Gendarmerie. Thus a broad spectrum of Austrian politicians displayed disinterest in national defense. “Even politicians ultimately responsible for national defense,” Duić emphasized,

among them proven officers from the First World War such as, for example, Julius Raab and Adolf Schärf, thought at least partially in pacifist, short term-domestic, and welfare state-economic terms. The preference for only a symbolic national defense became perceptible over and over, whereby the example of Denmark in the last war was cited above all by the political left.

Rauchensteiner corroborated that Austrian leaders in the early years of the Second Republic expected “basically nothing more than symbolic resistance” from the Austrian

111 Reiter, Österreichische Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik, 67.
113 Duić, “Das Erbe von Kriegs- und Nachkriegszeit,” 90. Denmark offered perfunctory resistance to German invasion in 1940, but nonetheless never had its status as an occupied country questioned, in contrast to Austria after 1938.
military. This was the case during an April 2, 1955, meeting between Austrian officials involved in defense planning such as Undersecretary Ferdinand Graf to discuss the State Treaty’s military clauses before the Moscow Conference. Foreign Minister Leopold Figl expressed the wish “to have independence guaranteed in all directions by all four powers. Therefore we must also have a military which can fire five rounds on the border in case of emergency.” Such views probably explain the “flippancy” with which military matters were treated at Moscow, later criticized by Colonel General Rendulic, given that no military expert accompanied the Austrian delegation.

As previously indicated, the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 did little to change Austrian thinking on defense. Johann Christoph Allmayer-Beck, named the “Doyen” of Austrian military history by fellow scholar Erwin Schmidl, argued in 2001 that the lack of any harm to Austria in 1956 fostered the mindset of “it went well, nothing happened.” Following his election as federal president in 1957, for example, Adolf Schärfs cited the minimal Danish resistance to German invasion in 1940, noting that “at times 20 shots and four dead can rescue the honor of a land.”

Schärfs’s sentiments dominated a meeting of the National Defense Council on February 25, 1958, a little more than a year after the Hungarian uprising. Chancellor Raab saw the main tasks of the Bundesheer as being “an educational factor for youth” and “collecting masses fleeing over the border during domestic unrest in neighboring

countries.” On the other hand, Raab believed that “the Bundesheer would never wage a war.” Socialist Nationalrat member Otto Probst seconded Raab, uttering the by now proverbial view that “a symbolic defense would best correspond to Austrian conditions.” Trade Minister Fritz Bock, meanwhile, worried that “the condition of the streets would be gravely damaged by a proposed increase in the number of tanks.” Only Defense Minister Ferdinand Graf advocated an effective Austrian national defense.\textsuperscript{119}

Kreisky as well expressed limited expectations for the Bundesheer during an address on October 17, 1967. “Now Austria with the best of will,” he stated before a group of university students,

cannot afford a protection and watch over neutrality such as Sweden’s or Switzerland’s, even if I ignore the economic preconditions. Already geographic reasons prohibit this. We have from a total, I believe, of 2,400 kilometers of border about 1,200 kilometers, I would say, in common with the People’s Democracies. Even if the entire Austrian population were ready to submit to so hard a regime as that of the people of Israel, this would be a completely unreal concept.\textsuperscript{120}

Kreisky maintained these sentiments in his memoirs written in the 1980s after he had served as chancellor. In his first volume appearing in 1986, Kreisky discussed Soviet attempts to create a puppet regime in Finland during the 1939-1940 Winter War. This was for Kreisky “the most important reason for defense preparedness in Austria, because Austria in case of such warfare through proxy could make a promising contribution. Everything else seems an illusion to me.”\textsuperscript{121} Kreisky reasserted in his second volume in 1988 that the main defense task for the Bundesheer was to counter proxy and partisan warfare. “I have never understood the Bundesheer as mere chimera,” wrote Kreisky,

\textsuperscript{119} Schmidl, 273.
\textsuperscript{121} Bruno Kreisky, Zwischen den Zeiten: Erinnerungen aus fünf Jahrzehnten (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1986), 346.
“even if I cannot today imagine that it would be able to hold up the superior armed forces of a great power. This seems to me, however, not to be an assumable contingency for the Bundesheer.”\textsuperscript{122}

Limited Austrian interest in national defense “had as a consequence,” according to Ellinger, “that besides the defense minister hardly another politician has stood up for national defense in public and, conditioned by this situation, the initiative for the building up of the entire national defense has been assigned to him alone.”\textsuperscript{123} This was logical, according to the political scientist Christine Stöckl, given the political reality revealed during the crisis of the Bundesheer in the 1970s that “the army had no powerful interest group behind it and no social group could find a tangible benefit in the army. The farmers, for instance, favored for as long as could be remembered the shortest possible period of conscription.”\textsuperscript{124}

Neisser concluded in 1982 that

a perusal of the voluminous platform papers of the political parties showed that the areas of security policy are quite stepmotherly treated. Security debates ignite mostly in concrete individual cases and entail at best changes in small areas. Events like, for example, the hostage taking of the OPEC Conference in Vienna in its day [1975] shake up politics and public for a short period, only shortly thereafter to fall prey to forgetfulness….Security policy as a comprehensive political task belongs in electoral campaigns to the themes which preferably are ignored. It still does not seem possible to win an election with security policy problems.\textsuperscript{125}

Mitterwenger-Fessl agreed in 1986 that

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{122} Bruno Kreisky, \textit{Im Strom der Politik: Erfahrungen eines Europäers} (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1988), 256-257.
\textsuperscript{123} Ellinger, 447.
\textsuperscript{125} Heinrich Neisser, “Dimensionen der Österreichischen Sicherheitspolitik,” in \textit{Wie Sicher ist Österreich}, 344.
\end{flushright}
in the history of Austria after 1955 the concerns of the army, more exactly of an effective national defense called for by the law of neutrality, have disposed statesmen to hardly more than pure expressions of will. Always, whenever it was a matter of providing the corresponding resources to the army, other things—admittedly often actually more important—were conceded priority. From the very beginning, one strove, at most, to formally meet the obligations arising from the State Treaty and neutrality—and not do more.  

Reiter discovered this while on the staff of FPÖ Nationalrat member Friedhelm Frischenschlager, defense minister from 1983 to 1985. “Whenever Frischenschlager wanted to speak about the army in the FPÖ caucus,” Reiter recalled, “the others said: leave us alone, we have more serious problems. And the FPÖ was, after all, the very party that most strongly identified with the Bundesheer.”  

Duić, meanwhile, noted in 1977 that “the political academies of the large parties (maintained by public funds) had by fall 1976 still not integrated defense policy into their educational work.”  

Reiter found as the overall result of this political disinterest in national defense that the Austrian government had “no relationship” to the Bundesheer. Politicians allowed themselves in defense matters “every idiocy.” One politician, for example, remarked to Reiter that helicopters could better provide air defense than jet fighters. Another politician expressed to Reiter opposition to the purchase of air defense missiles on the basis of their supposed offensive capability against targets such as the city of Bratislava in Czechoslovakia.  

As Reiter wrote in 1987, in local intellectual circles one hardly deals with questions of military national defense; for many this seems outright to be a taboo or a theme for “pariahs.” The intellectual elite concerns itself here rather seldom with goals, chances, and methods of Austrian military national defense, but

126 Mitterwenger-Fessl, 306.  
128 Duić, Unbewältigte Landesverteidigung, 56.  
129 Erich Reiter, interview by author in Reiter’s office at the Austrian Defense Ministry’s Büro (und Direktion) für Sicherheitspolitik in Vienna’s Stiftskaserne on August 3, 2005.
rather with questions concerning the application of violence and the renunciation of violence, with new forms of conflict resolution and with alternatives to traditional concepts of defense.\textsuperscript{130}

Reiter elaborated in 1993 that questions of national defense are treated as second-rate in this country. Excepted from this criticism is only the “national defense-scene,” that small group of politicians who have honestly concerned themselves with national defense as ministers of defense or party speakers for militia or defense issues. The great political scene has, however, no ear for defense—and also no understanding of it. Many do not know what is involved in national defense, speak nonsense, and decide things of which they have no conception.\textsuperscript{131}

\textit{Warriors of Neutrality?}, II: \textit{...and the People Follow}

Austrians by and large have emulated the disinterest of their leaders in national defense. Indeed, a June 1955 article in \textit{Zukunft} speculated that a plebiscite would have rejected the formation of an Austrian military.\textsuperscript{132} A 1962 study commissioned by the Austrian Defense Ministry later asked Austrians whether they would “stick out their head for our state.” Although a bare majority of 52\% responded affirmatively, 37\% said “no.”\textsuperscript{133}

Even less Austrian will to defend emerged in a survey almost 30 years later. A “representative” group of initially almost 600 Austrians over the age of 18 (406 by survey’s end) responded to a set of questions during three periods “dominated by marked global political events”: September 1990 (Kuwait occupied by Iraqi troops), February/March 1991 (Gulf War), and October 1991 (Yugoslavian crisis, end of

\textsuperscript{130} Reiter, \textit{Die Österreicher und ihr Bundesheer}, 41.
\textsuperscript{131} Reiter, \textit{Österreichische Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik}, 127.
\textsuperscript{132} Normann, 166.

\textit{Armed Neutrality}
Bundesheer deployment on the Slovenian border). The survey asked “what it would be like in case of an attack on Austria—would you be in principle ready, if it is demanded, to (1) fight with a weapon for Austria or (2) do you refuse out of conviction any support for an armed defense?” During the three periods, only 13%, 14%, and 14%, respectively, offered the first response while 32%, 27%, and 18% took the pacifist view. This predominance of pacifism was probably due in part to deficient belief in the Bundesheer. Asked to evaluate the “chances of success for the army in case of conflict” with the responses “sufficient,” “partially sufficient,” and “not sufficient,” the response percentages of the three waves were: (1.) 6%, 42%, 38%; (2.) 11%, 42%, 39%; (3.) 8%, 64%, 24%.¹³⁴

In between these two surveys lies a wealth of polling data indicating less than desirable Austrian martial spirit. In 1967, for example, the Sozialwissenschaftliche Studiengesellschaft asked what Austrians would do in case of a partition of Austria among its neighbors. Only 11% foresaw resistance by “fighting as partisans” while 18% proclaimed a readiness “to go on strike.” In contrast, another 18% of Austrians said that they would do “nothing,” 10% said that they would “emigrate,” and 22% said that they would “go with the majority.”¹³⁵

Trends hardly improved in 1970. In one study, 50% of respondents advocated doing nothing against a violation of Austrian airspace, a direct contravention of neutrality duties under international law. A majority of the same respondents (53%) opposed giving the Bundesheer improved armament, even though 28% and 33%, respectively, of

poll participants considered Austria “very [sehr]” and “fairly [ziemlich]” endangered. Only 20% assessed the danger facing Austria as “little [wenig].”\textsuperscript{136} The same poll showed 91% of Austrians dismissing the possibility of Austrian neutrality being respected by the great powers in time of war, but only 46% then willing to engage in an active defense (among those younger than 29, a bare majority was willing to fight).\textsuperscript{137}

These tendencies remained apparent in a March 1973 poll. Military defense received the support of 79% of Austrians, with only 21% wanting to abolish the \textit{Bundesheer}.\textsuperscript{138} Yet when the 2,007 survey participants were asked to grade various militaries including the \textit{Bundesheer} “with reference to training and armament” along a scale of “1” (best) to “5” (worst), only 2% of the respondents gave the \textit{Bundesheer} a “1” while 26% gave it a “4” or “5.” The militaries of Hungary, Israel, North Vietnam, the Soviet Union, West Germany, the United States, and Yugoslavia all received higher scores. Strangely enough, only Italy received a somewhat inferior grade (1% rated the Italian military with “1,” 19% with “4” or “5”).\textsuperscript{139} Accordingly, the following survey question reveals a not very optimistic prognosis for the \textit{Bundesheer} in battle:\textsuperscript{140}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & Not at All & For Hours & For Days & For a Week & Longer \\
\hline
the attack of neighbor state & 14 & 18 & 27 & 18 & 21 \\
the attack of a great power & 65 & 17 & 8 & 2 & 2 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\begin{flushright}
136 Böhner, 60.
\end{flushright}
Perhaps the most interesting of all studies surveyed in 1980 1,860 conscripts after their term of service as well as 1,830 conscripts before their enlistment. Both of these groups received the question “How much do you personally fear that the following events could occur in the next 10 years and personally affect you?” and the choice of the following contingencies:

1. A severe illness.
2. A severe traffic accident.
3. Unemployment.
5. A conflict in a neighboring country also directly endangering Austrian state territory.
6. March of foreign troops through Austrian state territory.
7. The energy crisis.
8. An increase of terrorism in Austria.
9. An occupation of Austria by foreign troops.
10. A danger to democratic institutions and rights in Austria.

The percentage breakdown of their selected responses was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I fear Strongly</th>
<th>Could easily Happen</th>
<th>Rather Improbable</th>
<th>Very Improbable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Polling data from previous years reflected this Austrian sense of a secure international environment. In various years leading up to 1980, Austrian poll participants

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141 Ibid, 506.
142 Ibid, 509.
received the question, “How probable is it in your opinion that it will come to a war in Central Europe and that Austria will be involved in a war in the next years?” The percentage breakdown of their responses was: 143

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Probable</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardly probable</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impossible</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know/no statement</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was just as well that Austrians conscripts envisioned themselves in a secure environment, for the same 1980 poll of conscripts displayed little confidence on the part of Austria’s presumptive defenders, both before and after their service. Both before and after national service the conscripts received the question “what chances do you concede the Bundesheer with its operation” in various scenarios. The following response percentages reveal that the Bundesheer enjoyed popular confidence only in cases of civil relief: 144

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chances of the BH to achieve something with its operation</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Great Chances</td>
<td>Few Chances</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A massive border violation by an East Bloc State (Hungary, Czechoslovakia)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A massive border violation by a Western State (FRG, Italy)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During catastrophes</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Austria is used as a transit country for foreign troops</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

143 Ibid, 511.
144 Ibid, 510.
Asked to elaborate their views, the responses of the conscripts were hardly encouraging as the following survey question reveals:\textsuperscript{145}

**How much do you agree with the following assertions and/or reject them?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very True</th>
<th>Probably Yes</th>
<th>Probably No</th>
<th>Very False</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Before</strong></td>
<td><strong>After</strong></td>
<td><strong>Before</strong></td>
<td><strong>After</strong></td>
<td><strong>Before</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria is, at any rate, too small and too weak in order to be able to effectively defend itself.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If we offer resistance in case of a threat, many people will have to die. We can, however, achieve nothing.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With a good defense concept we could inflict so much damage on an opponent in case of danger that he would have it easier in many cases to go around Austria.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three years later during the fall and summer of 1986 a survey of conscripts similar to the 1980 poll took place. The poll questioned conscripts either in the first two weeks of national service, at the end of the first six months, or at the end of eight months, along with Austrian men obligated to serve but not yet conscripted. About 1,000 Austrian males were in each group.\textsuperscript{146}

As usual, the study found that the “threat perception of young Austrians liable to serve is not very marked. They feel quite secure in Austria, formulated in positive terms.
Above all, threat scenarios that could encompass the entire state are considered hardly improbable.” The following survey results made this clear:147

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions of Conscripts Beginning Service</th>
<th>Event Very Probable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear War</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War in the Neighborhood</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Transit through Austria</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Space Violation</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorism of Foreign Origin</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Damages by Environmental Pollution</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Disasters</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Unemployment</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Crisis with Use of Force</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once again, most conscripts did not have a very high opinion of the Bundesheer’s effectiveness in various contingencies:148

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bundesheer Operation is Sensible</th>
<th>Beginning Conscription</th>
<th>End of Conscription (6-Months)</th>
<th>End of Conscription (8-Months)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear War</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War in the Neighborhood</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Transit through Austria</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Space Violation</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorism of Foreign Origin</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Damages by Environmental Pollution</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Disasters</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Unemployment</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Crisis with Use of Force</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lastly, the previously cited poll of 1,993 Austrians in March 1986, the height of the Bundesheer’s Cold War development, was one of the most comprehensive of surveys

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147 Ibid, 567-568.  
148 Ibid, 569.
Armed Neutrality

149 Reiter, Die Österreicher und ihr Bundesheer, 50.
150 Ibid, 22. Political scientist Heinrich Schneider similarly found it interesting that an “overwhelming majority” of Austrians approved of the Bundesheer’s existence “even during the blossoming of the peace movement.” In accord with “numerous opinion polls,” a 1983 study showed 86% of Austrians supporting the maintenance of an army, including even 69% of peace movement members. Nevertheless, only a bare majority (51%) of poll respondents advocated military defense in case of a foreign attempt to occupy Austria. The same percentage expressed its sympathy for pacifism, although only 7% of those surveyed identified themselves as pacifists (15% among peace movement members). Typically, only 5% clearly thought that such a defense might be successful, while 44% gave it some chance of success. See: Heinrich Schneider, Akzeptanzprobleme der österreichischen Landesverteidigung, Sozialwissenschaftliche Schriftenreihe series of the Institut für Politische Grundlagenforschung and the Ludwig Boltzmann-Institut für Politische Soziologie (Vienna: Verlag für Politische Grundlagenforschung, 1987), 6-8. Reiter and others, such as the FPÖ policy analysts Heimo Probst (constitutional and foreign affairs) and Bernhard Rochowanski (security policy), have noted regional variations in Austrian attitudes towards national defense. Traditionally leftist Vienna tends to be critical of the military while many of Austria’s southeastern border regions, marked by historic territorial disputes with Yugoslavia and facing the Soviet bloc during the Cold War, are more supportive of the military. See: Reiter, Die Österreicher und ihr Bundesheer, 28; and the author’s interview with Probst and Rochowanski in their offices at the Nationalrat on July 21, 2005.
151 Reiter, Die Österreicher und ihr Bundesheer, 23-25.

of Austrian attitudes towards national defense. Reiter, one of the poll’s organizers, noted the basically “positive” Austrian attitude towards the army revealed by the survey:150

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Austria needs an army</th>
<th>Total Survey</th>
<th>16-29 Year-olds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There the good news for the Bundesheer ended, though, with Reiter noting throughout the survey the “conspicuous” presence of a “generation gap” as martial fervor decreased according to youth. Even as the survey showed Austrians calling for increased spending on housing (53% of respondents wanted more funding), police (42%), and health care (36%), Austrians, if anything, wanted to reduce their military burdens:151
### Financial expenditures for the Bundesheer should be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Survey</th>
<th>16-29 Year-olds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remain the same</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Bundesheer should:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Survey</th>
<th>16-29 Year-olds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be strengthened</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep its present strength</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Sum:</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be reduced</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be abolished</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Sum:</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be transformed into a professional military</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### In which areas is too much/little money expended by the federal government? For National Defense:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Survey</th>
<th>16-29 Year-olds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too much</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too little</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The right amount</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know/no statement</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reiter’s results paralleled a study conducted in conjunction with the 1980 conscript survey in which only 19% of poll respondents considered Austria’s military preparedness “sufficient” while 34% considered it “not sufficient” and 41% considered it “partially” so. Nevertheless, only 2% of respondents were willing to pay an additional 50-100 Schillings in taxes per month for defense while 10% were willing to expend more than 100 Schillings monthly.  

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152 Brunmayr and Ofner, “Politische Bildung und die Einstellung junger Österreicher zur Landesverteidigung,” 506.
As in previous surveys, the Austrians surveyed in 1986 expressed relatively little fear of armed conflict. Only 24% of survey participants considered a “nuclear war in the next 20 years” to be either “fairly certain” or “perhaps” possible. Only 32% of those surveyed said the same for a conventional war. Although a general fear of “nuclear war” was present, military concerns played a limited role in a list of surveyed fears.\textsuperscript{153}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GREAT fear gives me the thought of:</th>
<th>Total Survey</th>
<th>16-29 Year-olds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excessive bureaucracy</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear war</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armament in East and West</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toxics in food</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carcinogens in the environment</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domination by the computer</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure to excel</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhindered technical advance</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation of Austria</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death by traffic accident</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing influence of militarism</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Symbolic Defense becomes a Reality}

On the basis of his 1986 study, Reiter “saw his thesis hardened” that “many Austrians have an unrealistic attitude towards national defense and questions of their own security.” Despite an “overwhelming positive attitude in principle towards the \textit{Bundesheer}” and an affirmation of “national defense as an abstract duty,” Austrians gave

\textsuperscript{153} Reiter, \textit{Die Österreicher und ihr Bundesheer}, 36-37.
the Bundesheer “few chances” and were “not ready to appropriately invest in it.”\cite{154} This confirmed an earlier explanation by Neuhold for Austria’s “schizophrenic behavior” combining an unwillingness to increase defense spending with doubts concerning the effectiveness of Austria’s national defense. Austrians, he explained in 1983, probably did not see “any essentially stronger deterrent effect” from “significant additional expenditure…in view of an environment bursting with weapons.”\cite{155}

Although it is hard to assess a threat of invasion that never materialized, Reiter considered Austria’s relative optimism concerning the stability of the Cold War peace to have been simply wishful thinking. “Because,” Reiter argued,

for Austria a war—and that cannot be repeated enough—is not winnable, it simply cannot take place, so that we will not lose it and be occupied: it simply may not take place in our consciousness. Popular thinking, so it seems, therefore ignores possible military threats, does not want to admit their validity, represses them.\cite{156}

Reiter criticized that the “decisive political forces in Austria—lacking a civically responsible ability to take decisions—availed themselves of the popular outlook of general threat repression and/or made this the basis of a policy, in which national defense was pushed into an outsider’s role.” “Instead of openly taking conscientious initiatives with respect to the political-military problems of this state,” the “practice of the politicians” was to develop “mere ignorance and tactical electoral behavior.” Reiter doubted “whether all partners of the political defense consensus (SPÖ, ÖVP, FPÖ) were

\begin{footnotes}
\item[154] Reiter, \textit{Die Österreicher und ihr Bundesheer}, 3.
\item[156] Reiter, \textit{Die Österreicher und ihr Bundesheer}, 9.
\end{footnotes}
really serious or whether secretly reservations and tactical considerations were not in play.”¹⁵⁷

In accord with previous surveys, Reiter’s 1986 study found that low threat awareness and limited resources devoted to the national defense entailed a rather unusual nonmilitary perception of the Bundesheer, as the following graph reveals.¹⁵⁸

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The duties of the Bundesheer are particularly important/necessary in the areas:</th>
<th>Total Survey</th>
<th>16-29 Year-olds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catastrophe relief</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border monitoring in order to prevent violations (e.g. pursuit of refugees on Austrian territory)</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training of special units capable of conducting partisan-like operations</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring of Austrian airspace so that foreign planes cannot enter Austria unhindered</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations at sporting events</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representational purposes, such as parades, etc.</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The importance attached by most poll participants to “catastrophe relief” is conspicuous. This and other civilian missions demonstrated, in the words of Reiter in 1987, that Austrians said “yes” merely “to an institution supposed to fulfill certain functions similar to those of an army.”¹⁵⁹ As Reiter explained in 2005, Austrians tended

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 3, 10, 41.
¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 40.
to think of the *Bundesheer* merely as a “militarized police.” Opinion polls conducted in 1992 similarly led researchers to conclude that hardly anybody thinks that the Austrian Armed Forces could really successfully defend the country. The results of empirical social research reveal an interesting aspect in this respect: The more militarized a task for the Austrian Armed Forces is, the lower is their assumed competence. For the so-called secondary tasks, like disaster relief and peace-keeping, however, the military is deemed competent and effective.

In Reiter’s view, therefore, the *Bundesheer* was subject “for a long time to an unusual estimation” according to which the army was not “seen as an actual military establishment conceived for the possibility of war, but rather as a kind of sympathetic evil, which a state simply needs for symbolic reasons, in order to ‘show the flag.’” In several of his writings, Reiter expressed his belief that the “symbolic national defense” first indicated by Austrian leaders in the early years of the Second Republic had become reality. This was a “policy with eye winks to term national defense as thoroughly important, indeed as indispensable, but in practice to concede it only a secondary value and to not finance it [national defense] sufficiently—to thus not really take it seriously.”

By the same token, the prominence of what might be termed by the Pentagon Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) in the polling data from 1992 showed that the Austrian people as a whole do not particularly support military defense. The Austrian Armed Forces are regarded as a necessary evil, an

160 Reiter interview. During his 2005 interview, Reiter pulled out a recent issue of the Austrian magazine *Truppendienst* from that summer. The picture on the cover showed an Austrian soldier mounted on horseback while patrolling for illegal immigrants on the border with Hungary. Reiter found this photo indicative of Austria’s nonmartial attitudes towards the *Bundesheer*.


unwanted child so to speak, which, as has been born already, is accepted in a halfhearted way. The expenses incurred, however, should be recouped in any case, Austrians think, so that some advantage can be derived. In the eyes of the Austrians, such advantage is not to be funneled into preparations to defend against a possible military attack, but into important tasks for society, like disaster relief or mountain and air rescue, particularly in long periods of peace.164

According to Reiter, symbolic defense meant that the Austrians procured “just enough (a few) military forces in order to maintain that the obligation from the neutrality law had been met.” The Austrians, though, would not allow the military “to cost very much” and “above all demand personal sacrifice—like, for example, a longer term of conscription or inconveniences such as more frequent maneuvers, etc.” “Under no circumstances, though,” asserted Reiter, should the Bundesheer “actually come into action in an actual war, for ultimately we do not really take it [the Bundesheer] so seriously.” Austria’s “superficial” approval of the military with a resulting “little bit of national defense” showed “‘good will,’ not much more.”165

Austrian Air Defense: The Reductio ad Absurdum of Austrian Armed Neutrality

No where was Austria’s supposedly armed neutrality less armed than in the air. Austrian air power, such as it was, received its start in November 1955 when the Soviet Union gave the young Bundesheer eight Yak-11 and Yak-18 propeller-driven training aircraft packed in crates. An assembled Yak-18 piloted by an Austrian made the Bundesheer’s first flight on December 9, 1955.166 Other propeller-driven trainers followed, together evoking the name “butterfly collection [Schmetterlingsammlung]”

164 Kernic, 4.
165 Reiter, Die Österreicher und ihr Bundesheer, 10, 40. Emphasis in the original.
because of their variety, until Austria replaced them with 24 Saab 91Ds from Sweden in 1964. In 1957, three DH-115 Vampire jet trainers became the first jet aircraft of the Bundesheer.\(^{167}\) Two years later 18 Fouga C. M. 170 Magister two-seater jet trainers joined the Bundesheer inventory, where they would remain until 1972.\(^{168}\)

Of course, the Austrians did not want to remain limited to training aircraft. Plans circulated in 1955 among Austrian military planners for an air force of 80-120 fighters, 146 fighter bombers, 48 reconnaissance aircraft, 18 observation aircraft, 71 transports, 95 trainers, and 60 other aircraft and helicopters.\(^{169}\) Colonel Korkisch wrote, meanwhile, that the Americans “pursued with the creation of Austrian air forces at first a policy similar to that used with the army.” A MAP was to provide Austria with trainers (T-6), liaison aircraft (L-19), transports (C-47), helicopters (H-13), six AN/TPS-1 radars, and “considerable” radio equipment, including Forward Air Controller (FAC) sets for jeeps. Austria would also receive a combat force of “around three F-86F squadrons (54 machines) and 30 to 40 F-84Fs.”\(^{170}\)

Korkisch lamented, though, that “Austria showed no interest in these two types and the Foreign Ministry feared foreign policy disagreements with the Soviet Union.” The diplomats worried namely that “such planes from US stocks, seen materially, would have brought the Bundesheer a priori into the position of a (‘pro-Western’) army of


\(^{168}\) Urrisk, 29.


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aggression.” Although Korkisch dismissed this as “laughable,” the Austrians “wanted to provoke the Soviet Union for nothing in the world.”

Briefing documents for Austrian Defense Minister Ferdinand Graf’s November 4, 1959, visit to Washington, DC, however, suggest that the Americans were, in the final analysis, not favorably disposed to providing Austria with an air force. The same October 30, 1959, memorandum expressing American reserve towards increased military aid for Austria also noted that “Minister Graf may request that the United States either provide Austria with jet fighter aircraft or assist Austria in their purchase at reduced prices.” American officials, though, “decided that no U.S. jet aircraft will be provided to Austria under MAP” as

operation and maintenance of U.S. jet aircraft of an advanced type would appear to be prohibitively expensive for Austria. In the opinion of our military, Austrian jet aircraft would be based so close to Communist borders that they would be annihilated in minutes after an attack started.

The October 30 memorandum repeated almost verbatim a recommendation from an earlier memorandum on September 2, 1959, that “Austria probably should be encouraged to acquire one squadron (14-20 aircraft) of unsophisticated jet fighter bombers solely for international prestige purposes in order to challenge invasions of her air sovereignty.” The October 30 memorandum added the important caveat that Austria should do this “at its own expense.” The September 2 memorandum had considered the Fiat G-91 “the ideal aircraft for Austria.” Unfortunately, the subsequent memorandum noted that Austrian tensions with Italy over the formerly Austrian territory of South Tyrol

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171 Ibid, 181.
172 Memorandum concerning the Call of Austrian Defense Minister Graf, November 4 at 4:00 p.m.; Minister Defense Graf Visit to US—1959 (22.3) Folder; Box 1; Entry 5293; Lot 68D123; Records Relating to Austria, 1957-1964; Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Italy, Austria, and Switzerland (EUR/AIS); General Records of the Department of State, Record Group (RG) 59; National Archives (NA) Building II, College Park, MD.
and its German-speaking population had foiled an Austrian purchase of 14 G-91s from Italy in 1958. Korkisch, for his part, also recalled that neutrality considerations prompted criticism in 1958 of the “light tactical combat aircraft” G-91 as a “NATO-airplane.”

Austria finally decided in 1960 to purchase 30 used Saab J-29Fs, a plane whose prototype had first flown in 1947. The first 15 of these first generation jet fighters capable of functioning in ground attack, reconnaissance, and aerial surveillance roles landed on July 6, 1961, at Vienna’s Schwechat airport with the others arriving during the following year. According to Korkisch, the J-29s were a “transitional solution for five to six years.” The “Flying Barrel [Fliegende Tonne],” though, eventually stayed in service until 1972.

Beginning in 1968, Austria purchased 40 Saab 105Ös, a jet trainer that, like the J-29, could also function as a light multirole aircraft. While visiting Sweden during his years as Austrian defense minister, then FPÖ Nationalrat parliamentarian Frischenschlager learned to his surprise that not only was the Saab 105Ö a trainer, but was itself originally a modification of a civil aircraft. The first three in an initial

173 Memorandum concerning the Call of Austrian Defense Minister Graf, November 4 at 4:00 p.m.; and Briefing Documents for Visit of Minister of Defense, Republic of Austria, to the United States, September 2, 1959; Minister Defense Graf Visit to US—1959 (22.3) Folder; Box 1; Entry 5293; Lot 68D123; Records Relating to Austria, 1957-1964; Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Italy, Austria, and Switzerland (EUR/AIS); General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
178 Urrisk, 29.
180 Friedhelm Frischenschlager, interview by author in Vienna’s Café Korb on July 12, 2005.
purchase of 20 Saab 105Ös landed at Schwechat on July 7, 1970. All 20 were in service by 1971 when the government ordered 20 more Saab 105Ös.\textsuperscript{181} The following year all 40 were operational.\textsuperscript{182}

Although the Saab 105Ö had its moments of glory, such as when one Saab 105Ö forced a Turkish Air Force Transall transport plane to land after it had made an unauthorized flight over the Tyrol corridor on August 5, 1973, the Saab 105Ö was far from optimal.\textsuperscript{183} Austrian journalist Othmar Lahodynsky pointed out in 1981 that even passenger liners were outpacing the Saab 105Ö, a difficult situation for an aircraft responsible for, among other things, policing neutral Austrian airspace.\textsuperscript{184} Skuhra in 1991 observed that “the service introduction of jet airplanes into civil aviation had for years made Austrian airspace no longer controllable, because the Saab 105Ös were too slow.”\textsuperscript{185}

This was a serious concern, as Frischenschlager emphasized during an interview in 1984. The Austrians, he said, must “be capable of controlling our own air space since it is easier to violate our neutrality in the air than on the ground. What took place on the ground in 1956 [Hungary] and 1968 [Czechoslovakia] occurs on a more or less daily basis in the air.”\textsuperscript{186} By one estimate, from 1958 to the year of Frischenschlager’s interview there were at least a couple and, in some years, several dozen annual violations

\textsuperscript{181} Hofbauer, “50 Jahre—Einsätze, Ereignisse, Entwicklungen,” 69.
\textsuperscript{182} Urrisk, 29.
\textsuperscript{183} Hofbauer, “50 Jahre—Einsätze, Ereignisse, Entwicklungen,” 70.
\textsuperscript{185} Skuhra, 664.
of Austrian airspace. Speaking in 2005, moreover, the commandant of Austrian Army Aviation, Major General Erich Wolf, stated that about 30 incidents annually demanded aerial interception, luckily so far all the result of trivial errors.

The limited performance and number of the Austrian Saab 105Ös led the Swiss scholar Aebi to conclude in 1976 that “ca. 37” Saab 105Ös then counted by him could “not even approximately fulfill” the duties resulting from neutrality. Even worse, Chaplin in 1977 found that, “due to problems of aircraft age, spares, munitions, maintenance crews and pilot training, barely 10” of “38 Saab-105Ö fighter bombers intended for defense of Austria’s air space” could “be considered operational.” Operational or not, Papacosma and Rubin in 1989 credited Austria with possessing 32 “20-year-old SAAB 105 fighter-bombers for air defense” (hence the various listings of 32 combat aircraft in the previously cited tables of armament).

The Bundesheer finally entered the supersonic age in 1988 when 24 Swedish J-35 Draken began to arrive in Vienna. Yet Austrian enthusiasm was muted, for these were fighters of the second generation in some cases older than the pilots who would fly them. Indeed, the Draken and Austrian neutrality were almost the same age, for the Draken prototype first flew on October 25, 1955, one day before the passage of Austria’s neutrality law. The Austrian Draken were not quite that old, as Bundesheer lieutenant colonel Georg Schmidt informed Lahodynsky in 1986, but were D-series J-35s, built


\[189\] Aebi, 72.

\[190\] Chaplin, 61.

\[191\] Papacosma and Rubin, 174.

\[192\] Benedikter, 439.

between 1963 and 1965. They had previously equipped the Swedish Air Force’s Fourth Wing in Oestersund, a unit that then reequipped with the Draken’s successor, the J-37 Viggen.

As General Ernest König related, the Austrian government had considered already in 1961 acquiring the Draken, “at the time a thoroughly modern airplane,” but had declined the purchase of a second generation jet fighter for cost reasons. Acquisition of the Draken became again a topic of discussion following the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia during which the Austrians could basically do nothing against repeated Soviet incursions of Austrian airspace (discussed in detail later). An extraordinary meeting of the National Defense Council on September 13, 1968, stressed the need for Austria to possess supersonic interceptors and led to the recommendation that Austria purchase 12 Draken. “To everyone’s surprise,” in the words of Korkisch, the Austrian government purchased not the Draken but the second delivery of Saab 105Ös.

Interviewed in July 2005, Frischenschlager still does not know of any good justification for this decision leaving the Bundesheer possessing basically 40 (modified) trainers but no frontline fighters. General König has suggested that the purchase of an additional 20 Saab 105Ös resulted from “supposedly logistical reasons.” This simplistic desire for uniformity, though, helped delay until May 20, 1985, an Austrian decision to acquire the Draken. “If the decision for the Saab J-35 Draken had occurred in 1968,” analyzed König, “it would have been possible to speak of a good decision despite

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198 Frischenschlager interview.
foreseeable introductory problems—18 years later this was not so unreservedly possible!“¹⁹⁹

By 1985, though, many agreed with Candidus Cortolezis in the Österreichische Monatshefte who referred to the “junk Draken [Schrott-Draken]” being “age old [uralt].”²⁰⁰ According to Papacosma and Rubin, the Austrian press reported that, although “newly refurbished,” the Draken had “only 900 flying hours left in them” yet were “expected to police domestic airspace for the next ten years.”²⁰¹ In the fittingly titled article “Museum Ready [Museumsreif],” meanwhile, Bundesheer officers had complained to Profil magazine in 1984 that the Draken then under consideration was outdated.²⁰²

The following year in April, shortly before the purchase decision, Profil reported that three Draken were indeed on display in museums in Cambridge, Munich, and Paris. Moreover, the same article noted that four Draken had crashed in 1984, alluding to safety concerns in the Bundesheer about their planned not-so-new acquisition.²⁰³ As Brigadier Josef Bernecker noted in 1985, the production run of the Draken encompassed 604 aircraft from 1959 to 1974.²⁰⁴ Yet by 1986 127 had crashed.²⁰⁵ Lieutenant Colonel Schmidt warned Lahodynsky that “we really have enough experience with Swedish aircraft. Our last combat aircraft was the Saab J-29, which was at the time of purchase

²⁰¹ Papacosma and Rubin, 174.
just seven to nine years old. Of 30 ‘Flying Barrels’ we lost 11 in crashes during ten years, despite minimal flight hours.”

Schmidt also warned that the elderly Draken were inefficient, citing, for example, modern versions of the DC-9 carrying 130 passengers using less fuel than the Draken.

By way of explanation, Schmidt, who resigned from the Bundesheer in protest against the Draken and argued that “whoever is for the Draken, is against the Bundesheer,” expressed to Lahodynsky admiration of the Swedes for their achievements in national defense, particularly in the air. They have developed good concepts, but they have the disadvantage that it was not possible, presumably because of neutrality policy reasons, for the Swedes to sell their airplanes on the world market. Because of small production numbers, these airplanes are technically too little matured and become indescribably expensive in flight operation.

Defenders of the Draken, however, considered such criticisms excessive. Various Bundesheer pilots, for example, explained to Lahodynsky that Swedish accident rates with the Draken were due to more rigorous training. Brigadier Bernecker also felt that the Austrian Draken would be in good company with respect to age. Sweden, which had established its first Draken unit in 1960, intended to fly them until 1995, while Denmark and Finland planned to fly the Draken until the end of the 20th century. Other planes then in the inventory of NATO, such as the F-4 Phantom or the F-104 Starfighter, or the MiG-21 in the air forces of the Warsaw Pact or Finland were the same age as the Draken.

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207 Ibid, 23, 27.
208 Lahodynsky, “‘Wir steigen nicht mehr ein,’” 30.
purchased by Austria. Nonetheless, Major General Wolf judged the Draken in 2005 retrospectively as a “compromise that I viewed with one eye laughing and one crying.”

As Brigadier Bernecker explained to the Austrian readers of *Truppendienst* in 1985, though, a compromise was about all that the Bundesheer sought in the Draken. While any aircraft purchased by the Bundesheer in 1985 would come into service in about 1987, most analysts considered 1993 as the start date for fourth generation aircraft. Were Austria to purchase third generation fighters, they would most likely have a service life of 15-20 years but would be out of date after only six. Waiting until 1993 to purchase a fourth generation aircraft, on the other hand, risked losing to the civilian sector flight personnel without any modern planes to fly. It would also have been difficult for the Bundesheer to master fourth generation fighters while only possessing prior experience with first generation fighters. For the Bundesheer, then, the Draken represented an intermediate stopgap until about 1995.

In the case of the Draken, former ÖVP general secretary and Nationalrat member Walter Tancsits found the “decision probably right to buy as cheap as possible.” This was because the 24 Draken, like the J-29, the Saab 105Ö, and the G-91 suggested by the Americans, “served solely to master cases of crisis and neutrality violations.” As the Austrian militia officer Heinrich Payr analyzed in 1990, “everything indicates that the Swedish and Swiss Air Forces are, at any rate, capable of not only of air surveillance, but also defense in case of an attack—in Austria this is not even considered.” Hence

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212 Tancsits, 594.
213 Heinrich Payr, *Die schwierige Kunst der Neutralität* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1990), 70.
Vetschera in 1985 wrote that “a capability to intercept violations of Austria’s airspace by belligerents appears necessary, and consequently it has been decided to replace its ageing fighter-bombers by an adequate, but limited, number of interceptors.”

General Spannocchi had also presented this view of Austrian airpower merely countering individual violations of Austrian airspace on the pages of Zukunft in 1970. Dismissing the possibility of Austria waging an air campaign, Spannocchi nonetheless demanded that “we must be able to do something at the 11th act after the tenth protest.”

Writing in Zukunft fourteen years later, Nationalrat member Friedrich Klocker did not even indicate the possibility of the Draken fighting. The Draken fighters, he argued, would merely use their speed to pursue and visually identify intruders so as to allow for later protests. This was probably just as well, given that under the State Treaty the Draken would only have onboard cannon for armament.

In analyzing the Draken purchase, Payr found that “the strength of the Finnish Air Force, though, suggests that in Austria, even when it is only a question of air surveillance in case of neutrality violation, at best only the barely defensible minimum is available.” Yet however insignificant the Draken acquisition was, it unleashed a veritable Austrian tempest in a teapot (or, perhaps more fitting for Austria, in a coffeepot). In November 1985, 121,000 Austrians (2.2% of the electorate) signed a petition supported by the Austrian Greens calling for a plebiscite against the Draken. The following March, 244,000 inhabitants of the province of Styria (28.6% of the local electorate) signed a petition of the Styrian ÖVP for a plebiscite against the stationing of

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217 Payr, 70. Skuhra also called “the number 24” an “operational minimum of two squadrons.”

See: Skuhra, 664.

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the Draken in the province.\textsuperscript{218} One anti-Draken demonstration in Styria counted 9,000 protestors.\textsuperscript{219} Politicians representing Innsbruck, Linz, and Salzburg also stated their opposition to any local stationing of the fighters.\textsuperscript{220}

The Viennese Peace Movement (\textit{Wiener Friedensbewegung}), meanwhile, protested in a July 31, 1984, letter printed in \textit{Zukunft} that the Draken constituted “an increase in the armament of the army” and a “militarization of society.”\textsuperscript{221} General Othmar Tauschitz also recalled in 1995 that Draken opponents, who emphasized the planes’ noise pollution, prepared airfield takeovers while children of Draken pilots faced insults in school.\textsuperscript{222} All in all, Frischenschlager in 2005 found opposition to the Draken to be “unbelievable [\textit{unglaublich}].”\textsuperscript{223}

Frischenschlager’s former aide, Reiter, could only express contempt for the “debate over the Draken” that became “a determining subject in domestic Austrian politics.” An (American) aircraft carrier, Reiter noted, carried 70 to 100 planes while European air bases hosted, on average, 50-100 or at least 30-40 planes. By contrast, Austria had a conflict in which a political movement was built up because of the stationing of 24 interceptors (a trifling number by international standards) at two bases in Styria. This seemingly provincial and grotesque debate, which abroad—to the extent noticed—encountered incomprehension and mirth, ultimately became in Austria the dominant theme of national defense. The noise pollution from the takeoff of 24 used airplanes and the question of their technical standard have now concerned three defense ministers and have pushed far more important problems of national defense.

\textsuperscript{218} Skuhra, 672.
\textsuperscript{219} Johnson-Freese, 175.
\textsuperscript{220} Reiter, \textit{Die Österreicher und ihr Bundesheer}, 14.
\textsuperscript{223} Frischenschlager interview.
defense out of the public consciousness and have therefore thrown far back the discussion over core questions of national defense.\textsuperscript{224}

In the end, the \textit{Bundesheer} got its Draken, but then there was a \textit{Bundesheer} pilot shortage. \textit{Bundesheer} commandant Hannes Philipp bemoaned in May 1990 that there were only five jet pilots left in the \textit{Bundesheer} after the others had grown tired of being targets of public criticism and had entered the private economy.\textsuperscript{225} The private economy’s far higher pay only further helped draw military pilots into civilian life.\textsuperscript{226}

Some opponents of the Draken did have a point, though, in that the cost of these few airplanes posed a significant burden to the \textit{Bundesheer}’s budget. One 1976 \textit{Profil} article, for example, calculated the cost for 24 interceptors at around 3.6 billion Schillings, not including ground control installations and armament. This was at the time just over half of the Austrian defense budget.\textsuperscript{227} Given a cost of six billion Schillings (including financing and ten years of operation), Skuhra confirmed in 1991 that “in the final analysis the Draken purchase severely burdened the expansion of territorial defense forces [\textit{Militär}].”\textsuperscript{228}

Reiter, however, pointed out in 1987 that the “actual alternative” to the Draken “would have meant the expansion of the air units to an operational air force with at least 200 to 300 operational airplanes and therefore the doubling of the defense budget.” This alternative would have demanded a “statesman-like” decision absent during the Draken

\textsuperscript{224} Reiter, \textit{Die Österreicher und ihr Bundesheer}, 14, 16.
\textsuperscript{226} Skuhra, 664. Skuhra noted some improvement over the situation described by General Philipp, for by the “end of 1990 only nine pilots were ready for operations.”
\textsuperscript{228} Skuhra, 664. Papacosma and Rubin also noted the Draken’s cost. See: Papacosma and Rubin, 174.
debate. During this same year merely two years before the fall of the Berlin Wall, the ÖVP politician Tancsits also admonished that “in a few years it will not be possible, however, to get around the decision of creating appropriately armed and efficient air units for the preservation of armed neutrality.” Although Vetschera reflected in 2005 that a true air defense on the model of Switzerland (with, for example, aircraft bases carved into the Alps) was possible in Austria, the Bundesheer never received the significant resources to do this. The Goldhaube radar complex on the Kolomannsberg in the province of Salzburg, meanwhile, the most modern air observation system in Europe at the time of its operational debut in 1968, remained an isolated bright spot in this otherwise bleak picture of Austrian air defense.

That Austria had no air defense during the Cold War posed significant dangers for any possible East-West conflict. Frischenschlager warned in his 1984 interview that “Austria could easily become an invader’s gateway, or a corridor through which everyone would like to pass, it being the easiest option. If we do not control our own air space, we will become a refuge area, a positive attraction to warring parties.” Vetschera in 1989 expressed particular worries with respect to NATO in this regard, as “Austrian airspace could be used to outflank” the Warsaw Pact’s “dense air defense…for attacks into Eastern Europe.”

Bundesheer first lieutenant Wilhelm Mende, meanwhile, articulated in 1987 in Truppendienst the fear that air combat over Austria could lead to a combatant declaring

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229 Reiter, Die Österreicher und ihr Bundesheer, 16.
230 Tancsits, 594.
231 Vetschera interview.
232 Urrisk, 30.
233 Danspeckgruber and Sauerwein.
itself as the “protector” of Austria’s neutrality with the subsequent demand for air bases in Austria in order avoid long flights and reduced combat efficiency. If Austria were to offer armed resistance against such a demand, this could then provoke the other side to “protect” Austria in turn. Mende feared that Austria might even have to fight both sides.235

Of course, any actual defense of Austria would have suffered enormous, empirically demonstrated disadvantages from an Austrian air capability that, in the words of Colonel Korkisch, was “never more than a torso” and whose combat power was “close to zero.” Colonel Korkisch reviewed in 2005 what this entailed: minimal movement of mechanized forces, loss of heavy weaponry on the ground, interrupted supply lines, unhindered air mobile operations of the enemy, and terror attacks from the air against Austrian population centers. Using a phrase from Bundesheer brigadier Franz Freistetter, Korkisch pointed out that “the large-scale impossibility of a mobile operation of heavy weapons turned the Bundesheer on the battlefield into ‘rifle carrying infantry.’”236

In the face of a dismal state of affairs, Korkisch saw the Bundesheer effectively choose to ignore any unsettling problems. “Most large maneuvers of the Bundesheer,” he recalled,

were conducted for 20 years long or more without any ‘air situation’ and/or it was consistently assumed that enemy air combat capabilities were ‘tied down’ by our own forces or ‘hindered’ by bad weather. Even when airplanes were at hand an operation of our own air units was often foreworn—even as opposition forces—or their role deprecated. That this had as a consequence a completely falsified picture of the battle should only be mentioned for the sake of completeness.237

237 Ibid, 182.
Rather than focus on the battlefield, the Bundesheer sought escape in ever popular nonmilitary operations. “People concentrated,” lamented Korkisch,

preferably on mountain rescue and flood water operations, for which dozens of helicopters up to and including the CH-53 were gladly acquired for hundreds of millions of Schillings. The “helicopter faction” had for years in the administration the upper hand and could point to its successes while the “flat-winged flyers” searched for meaning again and again.  

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Mission Impossible: Austrian Neutrality, Air Defense, and Cruise Missiles

Whether weak or strong, it is questionable whether Austrian air defense could have ever defended against Austrian neutrality against one modern means of warfare, namely cruise missiles. The possibility of cruise missiles based in Europe crossing Austrian airspace during a NATO-Warsaw Pact conflict was a longstanding concern in Austria during the Cold War. Zemanek observed at a conference in October 1983, for instance, that “we note with grave concern that those states that station on their territories missiles with nuclear warheads, targeted at the central European area, are apparently prepared to violate Austria’s neutrality as a result of their eventual use.”

This issue arose as early as July 6, 1960, when Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev, while paying a state visit to Austria that summer, criticized American missiles based in northern Italy during a lunch with the Carinthian provincial government in Klagenfurt. Their trajectories towards their presumptive targets in Eastern Europe would almost certainly cross Austria, thereby breaching Austrian neutrality. Likewise, a March 22, 1980, Pravda article by Hans Kalt, the editor in chief of the Austrian Communist daily

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238 Ibid, 181.

Armed Neutrality
Volksstimme, complained that NATO’s recent decision to deploy medium range missiles in Europe “directly affect neutral Austria.” Such missiles based in northern Italy or Bavaria “are not going to stop before borders and the status of neutrality.”

As the Austrian historian Aurél B. J. Moser wrote in 1974, the KPÖ had long criticized American missile bases in South Tyrol on the Italian-Austrian border as actions showing that “NATO does not respect Austria’s neutrality and is not willing to observe it in case of war.” Accordingly, the Austrian Communists had criticized the lack of Austrian protests against such missiles, noting that Yugoslavia had done so and that Sweden had voiced opposition to missile bases in England.

The question of missiles transiting Austrian airspace arose again in spring 1980 when Rauchensteiner and other research fellows from the HGM visited the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Moscow. The Soviet hosts asked, “What would Austria do if NATO were to install cruise missiles in northern Italy?” Rauchensteiner “frankly” conceded that missiles based in Italy or elsewhere crossing Austrian territory were “problems beyond Austria’s present capabilities. Austria has forwarded a diplomatic note to Rome, stating that Austria takes it for granted that cruise missiles, when used, will not cross Austrian airspace.”

Neuhold, meanwhile, noted in 1989 that “Sweden and Finland announced their intention to shoot down any missiles that violated their airspaces” during the discussion in the 1980s over the deployment of Soviet SS-20s and American Pershing IIs and cruise

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240 25 Jahre Staatsvertrag, 72-73.
missiles. However, “these countries’ actual capacity to do so was open to question, to put it mildly.” For that matter, “supersonic jets, which can cross the neutrals’ airspace in a few minutes, also pose almost insurmountable difficulties to a neutral’s defensive forces.”  

Neutral impotence in the face of cruise missiles raised an important question for American international law scholar Alfred P. Rubin. “Would it be a breach of Austrian neutrality,” he asked in 1988, “for Austria to fail to erect a missile defense system that could deny overflight of Austrian airspace to NATO cruise missiles? Or Soviet equivalents aimed at NATO bases in Italy or Polaris submarines in the Mediterranean?”  

“Moreover,” asked Neuhold in 1989, “even if the neutrals had the necessary means, would their obligations of prevention include the destruction of cruise missiles or bombers known to carry (or suspected of carrying) nuclear explosives? Would they have to risk the detonation of these weapons over or on their territories?”

Most analysts throughout the years have rejected any such demand for suicide in the name of neutrality. Hans Haug in 1962 argued that the shooting down of nuclear-armed Flugkörper “can not be expected of a neutral state” due to the “disproportionate casualties and damages.” Bundesheer Colonel Josef C. Bystricky agreed in 1967 that the passage of such weapons would not make a “neutral state liable under international law” because “the fulfillment of all obligations in international law finds its limit in the

243 Hanspeter Neuhold, “Challenges to Neutrality in an Interdependent World,” in Between the Blocs, 89.
245 Neuhold, “Challenges to Neutrality in an Interdependent World,” 89.

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Neuhold as well found a “negative answer” to his own question suggested in “the principle of *ultra posse nemo tenetur* and proportionality.”

Whatever the legal ramifications of cruise missiles, though, Rauchensteiner worried with the hindsight of the year 2000 that Soviet complaints about missiles that Austria could not stop anyway had merely formed a useful pretext for Soviet violations of Austrian neutrality in case of war. Had war come, however, was there anything the *Bundesheer* could have done to effectively defend Austria and its neutrality given the limited resources at hand? *Bundesheer* commandant Emil Spannocchi and other Austrian policymakers ultimately attempted to answer this question in the 1970s and 1980s, the last decades of the Cold War.

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248 Neuhold, “Challenges to Neutrality in an Interdependent World,” 89.
Chapter VI
Advantage out of Necessity?: The Spannocchi Doctrine and Universal National Defense

Bundesheer in Crisis

Not surprisingly, it has been hard through the years for the Bundesheer in Austria to keep up its morale. The Austrian author Johannes Kunz, for instance, recounted in 1987 a Bundesheer joke known “already by many generations of Austrians.” “What is small, grey, lies in the field, and twitches?” the gag went, “not a mouse—the Austrian Bundesheer!”

Accordingly, Austrian scholar Helmut Kramer wrote in 1996 that “at the end of the 1960s, a veritable crisis of legitimacy developed in Austria’s armed forces. It can be said generally that the political status and the social acceptance of the military in Austria is clearly lower than in other European countries.” Writing in 1969, the Austrian psychologist turned Bundesheer critic Wilfried Daim confirmed that “intelligent young people mostly avoid the officer’s profession. Workers and farmers are also not enthusiastic today when their daughter wants to marry an officer or otherwise active soldier, because the military profession is largely perceived as not possessing good prospects.” Interviewed in 2005, former foreign minister Peter Jankowitsch basically agreed with Daim’s estimates of the Bundesheer’s social standing.

4 Peter Jankowitsch, interview by author in Jankowitsch’s office at the Österreichisch-Französisches Zentrum on July 28, 2005.
Paul Reichel, a security policy analyst for the Austrian Green Party, noted in a 2005 interview that there are “exertions without end” to increase the Bundesheer’s popularity. Nonetheless, Reichel estimated that 90% of Austrian men do not want to serve in the military, and, of the other 10%, even fewer want to serve in the Bundesheer after they have actually experienced the army first hand. There are, he offered as explanation, “10,000 stories about the Bundesheer,” an organization in which the people “are drunk every evening.”

Writing in 1969, Daim also reported heavy drinking in the Bundesheer, observing that because of bad morale some officers who “did not know what else to do” were “already drunk by midday.” Like the “intelligent soldiers” who spoke with Daim, these officers knew that the Bundesheer “can only do justice to secondary duties” but could not “fulfill its actual duty in the framework of international law.” Thus Bundesheer soldiers led “an absurd drone existence” as “a kind of refined unemployed.” Under these conditions the Bundesheer “just barely maintains a sad existence and is incapable of giving halfway intelligent people a healthy selfrespect.” “Officers,” added Daim, “who have learned a proper profession beyond the military often go away from the army because, due to a feeling of moral probity, they cannot withstand a questionable military existence.”

Daim’s and Reichel’s views are apparently by no means a historic exception. The SPÖ Nationalrat member Peter Schieder cited in a 1970 Zukunft issue a study according to which 10% of conscripts had a negative view of the Bundesheer before performing national service and 45% had a negative view after their completed enlistment. Many of

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5 Paul Reichel, interview by author in downtown Vienna’s Café Central on July 12, 2005.
6 Daim, Analyse einer Illusion, 12, 29.
these conscripts complained that the last three months of their then nine-month enlistment term were wasted.\(^\text{7}\)

No significant change in attitudes followed the shortening of conscription, though. The 1980 survey of Bundesheer conscripts queried the group of soldiers who had completed their service with this statement: “Please describe your feeling after the short time in which you were with the Bundesheer. How much do the following statements correspond to you?” Merely 6% felt that “it pleases me very well, the way things are [Es gefällt mir ganz gut, so wie es ist].” “Partially good, partially bad [Teils gut, teils schlecht]” was the sentiment of 48%, while a disturbing 33% stated, “I am fairly disappointed [Ich bin ziemlich enttäuscht].”\(^\text{8}\)

The March 1986 study directed by Austrian security studies scholar Erich Reiter found the following responses to the question “Have you recently heard something favorable/unfavorable about the Bundesheer?”\(^\text{9}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Survey</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>16-29 Year-olds</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Reiter noted that these results were depressing not only in absolute terms, but also because men had the most negative comments. Yet these were the very individuals who had direct contact with the Bundesheer. Moreover, Reiter found that “more than half of all positive answers referred to the civilian duties of the Bundesheer.”\(^\text{10}\)

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\(^\text{10}\) Ibid, 38.
The 1986 study of Austrian military-age males confirmed Reiter’s findings. The number of respondents from the four surveyed groups of about 1,000 each describing national service as “lost time” only grew with exposure to the Bundesheer. Before serving, 23% of Austrian males said this; after two weeks conscription this percentage increased to 33%, after six months to 42%, and after eight months to 57%. Confirming previously established trends, “the study revealed that the signs were correctly interpreted and that in general a negative process of consciousness formation continues to take place in the army with respect to the ‘understanding of purpose’ and therefore the readiness to perform.”\footnote{Karl Semlitsch, “Empirische Studien zur Verteidigungsbereitschaft junger Österreicher im Zeitvergleich: Defizite und Probleme der Politischen Bildung im Bundesheer,” in Österreichisches Jahrbuch für Politik 1987, eds. Andreas Khol, Günther Ofner, and Alfred Störmann (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1988), 564, 572.}

The Bundesheer did itself no favors with at times abusive and archaic practices. The journalist Peter Michael Lingens criticized, for instance, that the Bundesheer in its early years forced sick soldiers in Vienna’s Fasangarten barracks to lie at attention in bed and had four forms of saluting for the various permutations of soldiers with/without head cover and moving/standing.\footnote{Peter Michael Lingens, Wehrloses Österreich?: Neutralität oder NATO—Alternativen in der Sicherheitspolitik (Vienna: Molden Verlag, 2000), 17.} Bundesheer training abuse, meanwhile, became a cover story for Lingens longstanding employer, Profil magazine, following the 1974 death of a conscript during a summer exercise.\footnote{“Schinderhannes in Uniform?: Ausbildung beim Bundesheer,” Profil, August 29, 1974, 10-18.}

The weakness of neutral Austria, meanwhile, provoked worries throughout the Cold War among Western analysts concerned for the defense of Western Europe against possible Warsaw Pact attack. Widespread Swiss concerns became evident already in 1955, the very year of Austria’s declaration of neutrality. That year, for example, the
respected Swiss newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (NZZ) editorialized in a two-page article on August 21 that the Western evacuation of Austria along with the State Treaty’s military restrictions had created a “military vacuum” in Austria for the foreseeable future. Austria’s well-known defense disadvantages such as a “concentric” geographic encirclement of populous eastern Austria by the Communist bloc and predicted budget restrictions allowing for a military of only 50,000-60,000 troops predestined for the foreseeable future merely a “symbolic defense” of Austria. Moreover, Western evacuation of Austria meant that north-south transalpine thoroughfares in Switzerland became more attractive for a possible NATO seizure in wartime. The NZZ thus judged that the “Austrian State Treaty, seen purely strategically, has by far not brought that relaxation of the situation that the treaty may have effectuated politically.”

The NZZ summarized Swiss fears with the aphorism that the Swiss frontier “fortress of Sargan has become a fortress on the Russian border.” The Swiss promptly reinforced this post on their eastern border. An officially sanctioned offer made by a Swiss colonel through diplomatic channels for Swiss officers to enter the young *Bundesheer* and help train it, however, met with a polite Austrian refusal.

Although, according to Austrian scholar Klaus Eisterer, the writings of the NZZ created “especially bad blood” in Austria, its “military weakness was an open secret” noted “extensively” by the Swiss press. Speaking with Swiss officials, “influential Austrian politicians” such as ÖVP secretary general Alfred Maleta and Leopold Figl also “indicated early on in many conversations that Austria was not capable of constructing a

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national defense similar to Switzerland’s because of various historic, mental, strategic, and financial reasons.” Maleta, for example, stated to the Swiss diplomatic representative in Vienna, Anton Feldscher, that the “will to defend [Wehrgeist]” so typical in Switzerland was completely lacking in Austria.” Feldscher himself wrote in a 1957 memorandum that the Austrian Bundesheer, despite having Switzerland as a model of armed neutrality, “could most likely not withstand a comparison with the Swiss military” given the Bundesheer’s “modest extent.” Yet Feldscher conceded to the Austrians that “Austria would be practically fairly defenseless against an attempt by foreign army units to march through in view of Austria’s very unfavorable strategic position.”

The British Foreign Office, for its part, also doubted Austria’s Wehrgeist in a secret 1955 report on The Future Austrian Army. In the words of the Austrian historian Michael Gehler, this report “supposed that no Austrian Force could hope to defend the country for more than a few hours.” The Austrian Foreign Ministry also registered similar concerns through its embassies in London and Washington, DC, as well as diplomatic contacts in Vienna. Despite subsequent positive reports in the 1950s (previously cited) from Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson and the Military Advisory and Assistance Group (MAAG), the Austrian Foreign Ministry discerned among the British and the Americans in a May 23, 1956, report a “growing impatience and unrest because of the tempo and extent of the establishment of an Austrian defense apparatus.” The Anglo-American powers had “the impression that Austria since the withdrawal of the


occupation troops has given itself over to a feeling of security that is not at all justified by the international situation.”

Defense Minister Ferdinand Graf tried in 1958 to refute such concerns in the Swiss monthly *Schweizer Monatshefte*. Graf gave a *Bundesheer* strength of 38,700 soldiers. On this basis, Graf decided to believe that I am able to say now, two and a half years after the signing of the State Treaty and the conclusion of the Austrian constitutional law of October 26, 1955, on ‘permanent neutrality,’ that the military vacuum which arose through the withdrawal of the four occupying powers from Austria is largely filled.

Other observers remained unconvinced. In NSC 6020, the American National Security Council (NSC) on December 9, 1960, assessed that the Austrian “army (about 55,000) and the internal security forces (about 27,500) are now capable only of maintaining internal security and coping with minor border incidents. Any significant enlargement of the army is unlikely in view of Socialist reluctance to allocate large amounts for defense.” In Austria, meanwhile, a study published in 1960 concluded that “it is clear to everyone that the *Bundesheer* is still not capable after four years of existence of taking up military national defense.”

Similarly, according to Austrian military historian Manfried Rauchensteiner, “the balance of the general troop inspector after five years of buildup was—in his own words—a sad one.” Erwin Fussenegger believed namely that

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we are now there where the First Republic was, possessing an army without will that, poorly led and poorly armed, was placed in 1938 before an impossible task…We have somehow reached a point where I would actually have to give up and should throw up the question: Does this all still make sense? Should we not rather cross all of this out and demand a reduction to the façade of an army? That façade of an army, which the then vice-chancellor indicated with references to symbolic defense during my inaugural visit in 1956.\(^{22}\)

Reinhard Kamitz, the president of the Austrian National Bank and former finance minister, expressed analogous sentiments to American embassy officials in early 1962. The Americans in Vienna recorded Kamitz viewing the Bundesheer as “rapidly becoming a laughing stock to the Austrian people.”\(^{23}\) It is doubtful that the knowledge of Bundesheer plans would improved the opinions of the Austrians. Reviewing the Bundesheer’s development in the years 1955-1970 before the Spannocchi reforms, Brigadier Hannes-Christian Clausen described plans for “solely waging a defensive battle of a maximum of six days after a warning time of around 48 hours; what should or would or could happen afterwards remained unclear.”\(^{24}\)

Bundesheer major general Mario Duić judged retrospectively in 1990 that “Austria’s neutrality policy become ever less convincing for foreign military experts after the so determined military operations during the Hungarian revolt in the fall of 1956.”\(^{25}\)

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\(^{23}\) Schleinzer-Roesch Visit Papers; Defense Minister SCHLEINZER-ROESCH Visit—1962 (16-A.5) Folder; Box 2; Entry 5293; Lot 68D123; Records Relating to Austria, 1957-1964; Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Italy, Austria, and Switzerland (EUR/AIS); General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.


Tellingly for General Hans Kissel of the (West) German Bundeswehr, the 1967 Warsaw Pact maneuver Moldau held in Czechoslovakia planned only 240 minutes for a breakthrough in Austrian defenses.26 On the other side of the Iron Curtain in 1966, meanwhile, the American diplomat William Bader summarized Western concerns for Austria’s armed neutrality with the observation that State Treaty “restrictions, not to mention the Austrians’ own inclinations, make the armed neutrality of Switzerland an utterly unrealistic model.” In contrast to the scholar James Jay Carafano, Bader found that under the State Treaty

Austria is now virtually a military vacuum in the center of Europe. Because Czechoslovakia and Hungary can fortify their Austrian borders and West Germany and Italy cannot (this is not a treaty provision but simply a political reality), Austria forms a convenient gateway to attack on Western Europe.27

Disarmed Neutrality?

With the Bundesheer in disarray, some Austrians even made the novel suggestion of disarmed neutrality for their country. The Austrian physicist Hans Thirring, for instance, believed that any European conflict would not remain limited but escalate to nuclear warfare, making any Austrian national defense futile. Thirring therefore called in the fall of 1963 for diplomatic means in the form of an international guaranty to replace an abolished Bundesheer as the protector of Austrian neutrality.28

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The Austrian journalist and SPÖ Nationalrat member Günther Nenning recurred to this idea in a petition drive introduced in 1969 for a referendum to abolish the Bundesheer.\textsuperscript{29} According to the petition, Austria would “contribute to world peace through complete disarmament” by seeking an “international treaty” recognizing the “status of disarmed neutrality with binding force in international law.” Under this treaty attacks against such disarmed neutral states would be “crimes against international law” obliging treaty signatories to levy sanctions against aggressors under Article 41 of the United Nations Charter. Once this treaty came into force, Austria would abolish the Bundesheer and assign its duties to the federal police and gendarmerie. The gendarmerie would then form a “neutrality protection troop” for the conduct of “those military duties of a permanently neutral state that do not consist in warfare and its preparation.” In case of “military occupation,” Austria would respond with “nonviolent resistance.”\textsuperscript{30}

Disarmed neutrality appealed to many on the political left such as Hans Wolker, first a Socialist, later a Communist. Wolker complained that “not less than 500 billion Schillings in today’s value [1993] have been pumped into the Bundesheer since its existence, not counting the enormously high expenditures for interest and interest on the interest of loans taken out by the Bundesheer.” Wolker, though, considered all such efforts as well as any obligation for armed neutrality flowing from neutrality as nullified by the State Treaty’s Article 13. “If it is already in and of itself difficult for a small state

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to secure its existence militarily,” analyzed Wolker, “this becomes simply impossible if
the possession, production, and testing of weapons systems indispensable for the state’s
military defense are prohibited.” While making the curious observation on the basis of
Article 13 that the “State Treaty powers simply had no armed Austria in mind,” Wolker
concluded that “alone on the basis of these State Treaty stipulations Austria can never
secure its independence and territorial inviolability militarily, but rather only politically.”
To this end, Wolker called for a “policy of nonintervention, of strict neutrality, and of
friendship with all states.”

Daim also came to the conclusion in 1970 that “the gap between that, which we
are allowed, and the further development of weapons, which are forbidden for us, is
becoming ever greater—and thus our Bundesheer ever more unreasonable.” The year
before Daim had written that the “stormy development of weapons technology” made the
Bundesheer “more and more anachronistic” to the point where it was only
“insignificantly” stronger than the “Vatican Swiss guard” without, though, its “folklore
effect.”

Daim summarized in 1970 that Austria had “not the slightest chance in a
conventional war.” If Daim needed any proof of the Bundesheer’s uselessness, he
found it in the largely bloodless 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. “The CSSR-
army,” assessed Daim in 1969, “is the best equipped of the Eastern bloc after the Soviets.
This army dispossess over almost 200,000 men, 900 capable aircraft, missiles, and many

33 Daim, Analyse einer Illusion, 23.
tanks. The firepower of the CSSR-army might well be 30-40 times that of the Austrian army. Military resistance was nonetheless hopeless.”

Daim judged Austria’s “military hopelessness” to have become “an experiment in reason.” Most Austrian politicians, including some “secret pacifists,” namely “knew basically that the entire Bundesheer is foolishness.” An “ÖVP politician” privately expressed agreement with Daim, stating “away with all this tin decoration!” These politicians knew “at the very least” that their constituents such as unions and manufacturing associations considered “all money for the Bundesheer to be a senseless sacrifice.” Yet “previously Austria’s political reason had acted as an impediment to irrationality. Concrete: the politicians did indeed appropriate money for foolishness—irrationality; they did not, however, appropriate very much—the impediment of reason.”

Accordingly, Daim, a pacifist close to the ÖVP, supported Nenning’s petition drive to abolish the Bundesheer. Daim rejected the option of increased defense spending, for the State Treaty’s military restrictions did not allow for “a qualitative, but only a quantitative” improvement, “a kind of improved Swiss Guard.” Even if this “would be strengthened fivefold and the halberds better polished and made of special steel, the Swiss Guard would still be only a detachment of a medieval, and not a modern, army.” Daim thus found no purpose in any military beyond a B-Gendarmerie-like organization capable of border patrol, internal security, and disaster relief duties.

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36 Daim, Analyse einer Illusion, 8, 26.
38 Daim, Analyse einer Illusion, 27, 97-99.
From the acts of civil disobedience performed by Czechs and Slovaks against the Soviet invasion, though, Daim drew hope that nonviolent means could foil any foreign occupation in Austria. Just as “the 1968 intervention of the Soviets in ČSSR made the senselessness of the Austrian Bundesheer even clearer,” this invasion also indicated “the grandiose possibilities of nonviolent resistance for which the Austrian population has not at all been prepared and because of the Bundesheer is also not being prepared.” While Austria could “offer nothing against Soviet tanks and airplanes,” Austria could prepare “radio stations in the mountains, noncooperation with the occupying army, production stops, agitation in the language of the occupiers—this would be easy in case of a German invasion à la 1938—, corresponding secret presses, and numerous other possibilities for immobilizing and demoralizing the occupation troops.” All of these things “would present an effective defense and simultaneously be useful in bringing the peoples from whom the occupation troops come to an inner conversion.”

Like Wolker, Daim saw the security strategy of a disarmed Austria having international diplomacy as a component. “A sincere, engaged policy of peace,” he wrote, “would increase Austria’s security.” “A country,” he explained,

which on the basis of the deepest convictions of its leading politicians pursues a policy of peace practices thereby intellectual national defense, because an attack on such a country would be particularly despicable in the eyes of international opinion. And if such country simultaneously secures itself by treaty and hosts a series of international organizations, it has already done much in order to avoid an occupation by other states.

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39 Ibid, 93, 112.
Advocates of disarmed neutrality noted that not all neutral states were armed. Luxemburg, for example, became neutral and disarmed per treaty in 1867. Although effectively disarmed, Vatican City also became neutral according to the Lateran Pacts of February 11, 1929. Thus Josef Pokštefl in 1978 reached the conclusion that “the thesis of a defense and armament obligation as a constituent element of permanent neutrality does not exist from a historical perspective: various forms of permanent neutrality were present in history in which a duty to be armed was partially or completely excluded.”

In the specific case of Austria, Wolker invoked the legal standard of proportionality against any armament obligation. According to Wolker’s reading of international law, a “permanently neutral state is not required to provide for defense when such provisions endanger the state’s economic viability, or if military defense is impossible.” Wolker also brushed aside references to the (armed) example of Switzerland in the Moscow Memorandum. Not only was this memorandum merely a political, not a legal, document, but “great differences existed from the beginning between Austrian and Swiss neutrality,” including Austria’s membership in the United

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42 Dietrich Schindler, “Aspects contemporains de la Neutralité,” *Recueil des Cours de l’Académie de Droit international de la Haye* 121, no. 2 (1967): 303. In Article 24 of the main Lateran Treaty the Holy See declares that it desires to take, and shall take, no part in any temporal rivalries between other States, nor in any international congresses called to settle such matters, save and except in the event of such parties making a mutual appeal to the pacific mission of the Holy See, the latter reserving in any event the right of exercising its moral and spiritual power. The Vatican City shall, therefore, be invariably and in every event considered as neutral and inviolable territory.

For a copy of the Lateran Pacts online, see: *Lateran Pacts of 1929* (accessed March 1, 2006); available from [http://www.aloha.net/~mikesch/treaty.htm](http://www.aloha.net/~mikesch/treaty.htm).  

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Nations (and the Security Council) as opposed to Switzerland’s longstanding abstinence from this world body.\textsuperscript{44}

Individuals like Wolker, however, remained in the minority, set apart from the legal mainstream expressed in Karl Zemanek’s February 13, 1970, evaluation of Nenning’s petition drive. Assessing academic writings on neutrality, the Austrian legal scholar Michael Schweitzer concluded in 1977 that the duty of a neutral country to be armed “is generally affirmed in the literature and only rejected by a few.”\textsuperscript{45} Austrian legal expert Stephen Verosta, for example, wrote in 1967 that “unarmed neutrality is not acceptable for permanently neutral states according to the present state of positive international law, aside from tiny states [Zwergstaaten] that are completely demilitarized” like Vatican City or the “effectively permanently neutral Liechtenstein.”\textsuperscript{46} Similarly, security studies scholar Dieter S. Lutz found in 1982 that exceptions to the rule of armed neutrality like the Vatican were “insignificant” and that “the theoretical attachment of pacifism with neutrality…has never been implemented in reality.”\textsuperscript{47} Often in cases of unarmed neutrality like Luxemburg, “guaranty powers” also watched over the fulfillment of traditional neutrality obligations.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{44} Wolker, 11-13. Ortner also felt that an effective defense of Austria would demand so much that there would nothing worthwhile in Austrian society left to defend. See: Ortner, “Die Konsequenz,” 24-25.

\textsuperscript{45} Michael Schweitzer, \textit{Dauernde Neutralität und europäische Integration}, Forschungen aus Staat und Recht series (Vienna: Springer-Verlag, 1977), 139.


\textsuperscript{48} Hans Haug, \textit{Neutralität und Völkergemeinschaft} (Zürich: Polygraphischer Verlag, 1962), 50. In Article II of the May 11, 1867, Treaty of London, “Luxemburg henceforth forms a perpetually neutral state.” The treaty’s “High Contracting Parties committed themselves to respect the principle of neutrality stipulated” by Article II and all of them (Austria, France, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia) with the exception of neutral Belgium placed this neutrality “under sanction of a collective guaranty.” Under Article III, meanwhile, the city of Luxemburg would cease to be “a fortified city” and would have only “the number of troops necessary for guarding the maintenance of good order.” Article V promised that “by
Analysis in Austria of disarmed neutrality clearly demonstrated why neutrality normally entailed national defense. Among other issues, there was the question of conflict spillover onto neutral territory. In opposition to individuals like Daim or Nenning, author Gerd Kaminski doubted in 1970 that merely a gendarmerie could successfully combat this danger. “What would then have possibly happened,” asked Kaminski, if the Czech army had actually offered resistance on the occasion of the Soviet intervention in the year 1968?; if large units had pulled themselves back to Austrian territory? Is the gendarmerie, in the absence of the Bundesheer, supposed to ask politely in conjunction with the nearest post office director for the tanks to be handed over?49

Kaminski reminded his readers that during both 1968 and the earlier 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary the Soviet Union had made unfounded accusations of Austrian support for anticomunist forces. “At the time,” wrote Kaminski, the Austrian federal chancellor could refute the assertions as completely unjustified with references to the readiness for action of the Austrian armed forces, which secured Austrian neutrality. How would, however, the governmental head of a disarmed Austria act in such a case? Could he believably assure in all directions that Austrian neutrality was correspondingly secured? Would not such invented assertions be much rather believed by world public opinion if they are directed against a state not actually able to defend itself against violations of neutrality?50

Most critics also doubted the effectiveness of “social defense [Sozialverteidigung],” as the strategy of nonviolence came to be called, to defend Austria, believing like the Wehrmacht veteran Colonel General Lothar Rendulic that a determined means of demolition” Luxemburg City would become an “open city” not possessing “any military establishment” and whose fortifications “will not be reestablished in the future.” For a copy of the May 11, 1867 Treaty of London online, see: Le Traité de Londres (1867) (accessed March 3, 2006); available from http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/1914m/1867.html.

50 Kaminski, 174.
enemy could always break the will of a disarmed people.\textsuperscript{51} Werner Pfeifenberger criticized advocates of nonviolent resistance for “ignoring the previous history of ‘social defense’ that clearly shows that social defense is always insufficient against determined invaders.”\textsuperscript{52} The scholar Gerhard Böhner agreed that “the efficiency of this method must at least be doubted according to historical experiences.” He also added the warning that “this conception would demand of the population in case of occupation far greater, indeed unacceptable, physical, psychological, and mental sacrifices” than conventional conflict.\textsuperscript{53} Even \emph{Sozialverteidigung} advocates such as Daim conceded that it “also imparted no absolute security but would be, however, worth more than the \textit{Bundesheer} and less expensive.”\textsuperscript{54} “Nonviolent resistance,” argued Daim, “is for us today more expedient than any military resistance ever could be.”\textsuperscript{55}

Questions of efficacy aside, knowledgeable analysts considered \emph{Sozialverteidigung} simply incompatible with neutrality. As Heinz Vetschera of the Austrian National Defense Academy explained, \emph{Sozialverteidigung} was “to be excluded for a permanently neutral state” because

all previous theories of nonviolent defense understand themselves as ‘social defense,’ thus as protection exclusively of the social order, not, though, the territorial integrity of the concerned state. This does not suffice, however, for the maintenance of neutrality with respect to belligerent states, whose interest exists primarily in the control over the state territory of the neutral country.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{53} Böhner, 29-30.
\textsuperscript{54} Daim, \textit{Analyse einer Illusion}, 109.
\textsuperscript{55} Daim, “BH hat keinerlei Chance,” 111.
Böhner confirmed that “nonviolent defense can not be made compatible with the neutrality duties of a permanently neutral state because defense by nonviolent resistance assumes an already successful occupation of the country.” A lack of military defense by the neutral state would only “expose it to reprisals of the belligerents.” Indeed, Pfeifenberger warned that “a military vacuum was even more inviting of a neutrality violation than an insufficiently defended territory.” This vacuum “violates the other belligerents’ legal claim to selfprotection of the neutral area against invasion attempts and thus concedes to the belligerents the right to advance into the neutral state.” Once belligerents possessed the territory of a neutral state, they would “neither seek nor need social contact to the occupied population.”

These considerations even raised “the interesting question” of “open cities” in a neutral country. “In fact,” wrote the Swiss scholar Jürg Späni-Schleidt, “the recognition of open cities would create a new restrictive interpretation of the permanent neutral’s duty to defend its entire sovereign area.”

German security studies scholar Dieter S. Lutz therefore concluded that “the term ‘pacifist neutrality’ represents, at least under the auspices of classical international law, nothing other than a contradictio in adjecto.” Likewise, Colonel General Rendulic dismissed Sozialverteidigung advocates as “military illiterates.” In contrast to “‘critical’ peace researchers,” meanwhile, the paradox of armed neutrality did not escape

57 Böhner, 29-30.
61 Rendulic, 2.
Austrian legal scholar Hanspeter Neuhold. “Instead of giving a good example,” Neuhold noted that the neutral state “had to undertake efforts for military defense as long as other states—particularly those in the neighborhood—disposed over armed forces; in contrast, the permanently neutral state must orient itself according to their steps and may only be the last to disarm!”

Although the 1970 initiative to abolish the Bundesheer occurred, according to Vetschera, in “an overall pacifist climate in Western Europe,” this proposal “was supported only by the tiny Communist party and never reached the required votes.” This “pacifist trend,” however, helped “the Socialist party, who entered the 1970 elections with the promise to cut military service from nine to six months and won the campaign.” This pacifist influence from the discussion over disarmed neutrality continued to characterize the years of SPÖ governance. Stephan Kux later observed in 1986 following over a decade of Socialist rule that “years of government by the Socialist Party,” with its traditional deemphasis of the military, facilitated by weaknesses and divisions amongst its political opponents, have persuaded most Austrians to believe that any money spent on defense would be better spent on pensions. Those who warn of Austria’s alarming vulnerability are politely lectured on the benefits of the welfare state, which, it is claimed, would reinforce the country’s capacity for “social defense.”

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Deus ex Spannocchi: Can his Doctrine defend Austria?

Efforts to abolish the Bundesheer were an expression of growing crisis of confidence in Austria’s national defense efforts. Just before Nenning’s petition drive, for example, the Bundesheer in 1969 conducted one of its largest maneuvers ever. Bärenatatze (“Bear Claw”) involved 12,500 soldiers, 350 tracked vehicles, and hundreds of motorized vehicles for the purpose of demonstrating the army’s effectiveness in countering a direct attack on Austria. “As usual,” wrote Wolker, “the ‘red enemy’ was shown coming from the east, from the Danube area and the Voralpen.” On the other hand, the “blue defenders” had the objective of stopping the enemy in the area around St. Pölten/Amstetten west of Vienna in Lower Austria before going over to a counterattack. The maneuver, though, turned into a fiasco with the “red attackers” reaching Amstetten before “blue.”

General Spannocchi later confessed in 1981 that “the maneuvers of this new army soon brought fear to the hearts of the military and the political leadership, as well as meeting with disbelief and lack of understanding among the people.” This popular uneasiness grew in proportion to the output of inadequately trained young soldiers, the unsatisfactory results of which became the increasingly more credible argument of pacifist opponents of the army.” Pacifists “could now sow the seeds of insecurity over the entire political landscape by using the argument of frustrated draftees.”

In the same year as Bärenatatze, the Austrian author Peter Feldl wrote that “the entire Bundesheer appears pointless to a large part of the population and particularly the

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65 Wolker, 42. For more information on the actual conduct of Bärenatatze, see: Das Bundesheer in den Jahren 1968 bis 1975.
youth—perhaps also to our politicians, as far as this can be concluded from their attitude towards the army; only no one dares to say this out loud.” Moreover, Feldl considered it an

illusion to believe that the Bundesheer, even if one wanted to devote to it much greater resources, could maintain a continuous front during a serious attack for even a few hours. This is true not only for the case of an invasion of the Soviets or the Americans with or without alliance members. This is also true for the scenario of an attack of only one of the armies of a single one of Austria’s neighbors, because all their armies are greatly superior to the Austrian army (with the exception of Liechtenstein’s police). The Bundesheer is indeed too small to occupy a single border of one of Austria’s neighbors in a continuous front, even if the army were given the time for deployment.67

Analysts concerned for Austria’s national defense like Feldl and General Spannocchi came to the conclusion that Austria was simply playing a conventional game it could not win with inherently limited resources. Spannocchi reflected in 1981 that “it was simply incredible to attempt to prepare for a defensive war with less money, less technology, and a shorter period of service.” He judged the result of Austrian defense efforts before he became Bundesheer commandant in 1970 as “a miniature reproduction of a great power’s army, but considerably smaller, with antiquated equipment and a shorter training period.”68 Feldl in 1969 agreed that “what we have today in Austria is the copy en miniature, the toy model of a great power army” while Austrian political scientist Anselm Skuhra explained in 1991 that “the Bundesheer was constructed in the form of a small version of a technocratic NATO army.”69

The conventional nature of the *Bundesheer* was understandable given its origins. Brigadier Richard Bayer, who helped coordinate the formulation of Austrian defense plans in the Chancellery from 1974 to 1991, noted, for example, that most founding *Bundesheer* officers were *Wehrmacht* veterans and many later trained in America. Thus Spannocchi explained that “the first model of a new Austrian army was not structured according to the demands of future neutrality; rather, it was constructed according to theories derived from the memories of military leaders trained for entirely different tasks.”

Austrian security studies scholar Heinz Danzmayr also remarked that the “inheritance” of equipment donated by the Allies to the *Bundesheer* was conventional in nature, being made for “armies with duties completely different from those of the *Bundesheer* to be created for a permanently neutral Austria.” “Sharply formulated,” wrote Danzmayr, Allied (American) military aid “had to lead almost of necessity to the creation of the wrong army under the wrong budgetary understandings.” Indeed, as Christine Stöckl observed, the historical record documents that the Western Allies were not interested in armed Austrian neutrality per se but merely wanted to make the best preparations in Austria for a possible conflict with the Soviet bloc. Thus rearmament efforts in Austria such as the B-Gendarmerie and neutrality, which would have demanded

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70 Richard Bayer, interview by author in Bayer’s office at the Österreichische Gesellschaft für Landesverteidigung und Sicherheitspolitik (ÖGLS) in Vienna’s Stiftskaserne on August 4, 2005.
a completely different military structure, actually had “no relationship.” The journalist Andreas Unterberger concluded in 1992 that a basic evil accompanied the Bundesheer from the beginning: the structure of the weapons donated by the Allies, the attitudes of the army’s first leaders, practically all of whom were marked by the [second] world war, and the lack of a phase of reflection allowed the Bundesheer to develop according to the traits of a great power army.

Analysts like Feldl believed that only a dramatic break from a conventional Bundesheer and the application of Swiss militia-based defense concepts could create an effective defense for which Austrians would actually be willing to sacrifice. A major assumption underlying the defense strategies of neutral countries, Vetschera explained, was that belligerents are most likely to attack a neutral when they cross neutral territory to save time, undercutting their adversary’s reaction time and catching him by surprise. The aggressor would need to keep losses as low as possible and would want to break the neutral’s resistance without major deployments of troops for occupation.

This assumption that a neutral country such as Austria would not be the direct target of an attack but merely of secondary interest as a means (i.e. transit routes) towards victory over an opponent’s actual enemy during a NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation meant that Austria did not need to seek a tactical battlefield victory. Revised Austrian defense policy under Spannocchi and others thus sought simply to make the so-called

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75 Feldl, 279-286.

76 Verschera, “Austria,” 67.
“‘entry and/or transit price’ for every aggressor” as “high as possible.” 77 “If our assumption is correct,” wrote Spannocchi in 1981,

it will be important for Austria to have so many forces, adequately trained and equipped, deployed in such a fashion that every potential aggressor, after analyzing the cost effectiveness, will reasonably have to conclude that the advantages to be derived from a military attack on Austria are not in proportion to the expenditures such an attack would require. 78

With the somewhat ironic support of Chancellor Bruno Kreisky from the SPÖ, the ÖVP member Spannocchi became as Bundesheer commandant (1973-1981), according to Wolker, the “father” of a “new strategy.” 79 Often named the “Spannocchi Doctrine” in the general’s honor, this new defense policy taking shape in the 1970s was “Area Defense” or Raumverteidigung. In the words of Skuhra this was a “structurally defensive” concept comprising “strategically important” “Key [Schlüssel] Zones” and “less important” “Security [Raumsicherung] Zones” along with a “Base Area [Basisraum]” in the easily defended Alpine regions of Austria. 80

As the American scholar George J. Stein elaborated in 1990, the Schlüsselzonen lay “along an attacker’s anticipated ‘transit’ routes and may involve political assets like key towns or military assets like bridges, mountain passes, and main roads.” Austria fortified these Schlüsselzonen with prepared defenses such as the turrets taken from 120 used British Centurion tanks purchased from Holland in 1984 and converted to gun emplacements. 81 According to Spannocchi, meanwhile, Austria could “maintain a base

77 Skuhra, 662.
79 Wolker, 42. For basic biographical information on Commandant Spannocchi, see: Spannocchi, Emil (accessed March 6, 2006); available from http://www.aeiou.at/aeiou.encyclop/s/s684796.htm.
80 Skuhra, 662.
in the Alpine central region, which poses great military problems, and...this base will make the survival of the state possible, if not probable, even after aggression.”

Vetschera in 1990 retrospectively described this “strategic concept of area defense.” “It trades,” he wrote,
calculated losses of territory against the aggressor’s losses in time and casualties, in order to deny the surprise effect against the aggressor’s main adversary and to raise the costs to the aggressor. Its strategy is to keep forces intact, posing a continuing threat against the enemy’s rear and flanks, and to force the aggressor to saturate Austria with occupation forces, raising the costs beyond the benefits for the aggressor. Future aggressors would be primarily interested in controlling the main communication lines. Therefore, zones along these lines have been prepared for static defense by fortifications and prepared demolition, which should achieve both delay and attrition of the aggressor (key zones). Other areas would be denied the aggressor by light infantry forces employing guerrilla-type warfare against support, logistics, and communications elements as well as against second-echelon forces (security zones).

Spannocchi saw in the dispersed nature of Raumverteidigung a means of avoiding having to offer “inferior numbers, inferior resources, and probably also inferior leadership doctrines” to an “attacker who can do all of this better.” Spannocchi considered his “alternative” to inevitable conventional defeat as “simple enough. If our leadership manual defines a battle as a ‘series of temporally and spatially connected

Offizierskasino of the National Defense Academy on July 11, 2005, Heinz Vetschera recalled the usefulness of the Centurion purchase, saying that their emplaced turrets gave Austria the value of a tank division.

combats,' so it seems logical that the tearing apart of the temporal and spatial context no longer permits a battle.”84 Spannocchi therefore spoke of the necessity “to avoid battle” not by concentrating forces in the old military manner, but rather by de-concentrating them. We must dissolve the battle into an indefinite number of skirmishes fought on all the tactical points through which an opponent must go and the conduct of which does not overburden our own country through destruction. All the while we know, naturally, that we will lose every one of these skirmishes, but behind every lost fight we will offer the aggressor, who, after all, has only disposed of a minimal part of our resistance structure in this skirmish, the next skirmish; at every pass, in as many possible forests, and at every bridge. Not literally at every one, but at as many as possible.85

In Spannocchi’s appropriately titled chapter “Defense without Selfdestruction [Verteidigung ohne Selbstzerstörung]” in the appropriately titled book Verteidigung ohne Schlacht (Defense without Battle), he envisioned a “fighting unit comprising in the ideal case not fewer than ten men and not more than 50 men. The umbrella organization, the battalion about 150 men strong, is mostly responsible for command in larger areas and concentrates its forces only for especially promising actions.”86 Spannocchi intended these units to wage “skirmishes…without context.”87

Against the “summation effect” of all this skirmishes Spannocchi saw only one countermeasure: the filling out of our entire area with infantry occupation troops. In the final analysis the aggressor gains nothing if he can only bring the Drau valley, the Danube, or the Inn valley into military operation. At least not as long as a considerably large Basisraum remains

Austrian; or valleys and much territory for which the aggressor does not have an express military need and therefore, for the moment, has not even attacked.  

Spannocchi hoped, however, that the “resulting need” to overcome Raumverteidigung with a drawn out occupation would present an aggressor in the form of either NATO or the Warsaw Pact with a “considerable burden.” Not only would “any imaginable aggressor be under time pressure” in a bloc confrontation, but “both pact systems have at their disposal in principle only infantry-poor, mechanized shock troops.”“The modern attack armies,” wrote Spannocchi in 1982, “which were indeed organized to be effective against each other, today no longer have precisely these few 100,000 infantry occupation troops” necessary to control Austria. With an invader forced to occupy every pass, every rail station, every bridge, and every electrical work with infantry, which he has only to an insufficient degree…the question of cost effectiveness will unavoidably present itself if these infantry forces within large units, themselves no longer limitlessly available, can only be found through the addition of so many divisions that this exertion stands in a foolish disproportion to the operational value of the targeted small state.

While presenting complications for the aggressor, Raumverteidigung in the vision of Spannocchi would hopefully simply the defense tasks of small, neutral Austria. Limited resources forced Austria “to turn around its armament system’s steering wheel” away from conventional, high intensity warfare, but Raumverteidigung “with its ‘oldfashioned’ reemphasis of infantry made a tactical virtue out of a technical necessity.”

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88 Spannocchi, “Hat Österreichs Freiheit eine Zukunft?” 305.
89 Spannocchi, “Gegenüberstellung der Handhabung der militärischen Neutralität in Österreich und der Schweiz,” 143.
90 Spannocchi, “Hat Österreichs Freiheit eine Zukunft?” 305.
91 Brossollet and Spannocchi, Verteidigung ohne Schlacht, 59.
“The great power aggressor,” meanwhile, could not make a “shift of weight in its armament system” and thereby make itself “defenseless in its very own strategic problem set oriented towards the actual enemy.” The “technically head-and-shoulders superior enemy” could only react to the “incompatible doctrine of the small state” by “literally shooting sparrows with cannons, something that has never been successful.”

Spannocchi explained that Raumverteidigung avoided “risking a confrontation of similar means,” something that “would be hopeless because of financial, technical, and quantitative reasons,” by offering a “military economic calculation in which values had to be reshuffled.” Spannocchi explained, for example, that “an infantryman can destroy without too great risk a tank costing 12 million Schillings with an antitank weapon costing 4,000 Schillings.” Dispersal of forces in Raumverteidigung also made Austrian “defense forces free from the need to move; they are practically not be found from the air, which can be the only answer to the air superiority of any enemy to be expected, unfortunately, with deadly certainty.” Thus, a “100-million Schilling airplane finds no targets.” Additionally, “electronic command-and-control becomes a worthless acrobatic, despite all perfection, if the guarantied coordination of offensive operations is made senseless in advance on the basis of the defender’s disposition.” Ordinary Austrian soldiers, by contrast, could exploit

the almost common recognition that behind a very narrow and certainly combat-ready tip of modern offensive units follows an extremely high percentage of logistical support that is equally vulnerable as dependent on protection, but is nonetheless the indispensable precondition for the efficiency of the fighting sections up front.

92 Ibid.
94 Brossollet and Spannocchi, Verteidigung ohne Schlacht, 81.
In Raumverteidigung, most of the Austrian soldiers themselves could be easily trained conscripts fulfilling relatively simple tasks with relatively rudimentary weapons in their home localities. Spannocchi therefore dismissed the need not only for significant numbers of heavy weapons, but also for a revision of Article 13 in the State Treaty. Accordingly, the 1971 conscription law with its eight-month term of service was, in the words of political science professor Peter Pernthaler, “a pledge of fealty to a militia army.” Henceforth the majority of Austrian conscripts would serve in militia-like units called Landwehr. As Spannocchi explained, the Landwehr was “nothing more than an Austrian-adapted successor of the proven Swiss militia.”

Raumverteidigung divided the Landwehr into “stationary [Raumgebundene]” regiments and eight Mobile brigades (with about 50,000 soldiers in all), one for each Austrian province with the exception of Vorarlberg bordering Switzerland. Lacking significant transport capacities, the Raumgebundene Landwehr were to concentrate in the static defenses of the Schlüsselzonen while the mechanized infantry of the Mobile Landwehr used smallscale counterattacks to prevent flanking movements around static defenses through the Raumsicherungszonen. According to Stein, the mobile brigades also acted as “quick-reaction” forces coming to “the assistance of various ‘stationary’ units in an emergency.”

Raumverteidigung also involved civilian components. Spannocchi saw “being eyes and ears, that is intelligence gathering” as “the almost exclusive duty of the non-fighting people.” The people were also to provide “physical alimentation—clothing and

95 Spannocchi, “Hat Österreichs Freiheit eine Zukunft?” 306.
98 Stein, 30-31.
nutrition” and Landwehr soldiers were “to be housed in cities and villages in unoccupied areas.” The people, meanwhile, would engage in “civil resistance.”99 Brigadier Bayer also recalled in a 2005 interview consideration given to acts of civilian sabotage, such as flooding the valleys of waterways like the Danube with dam openings.100

Under Raumverteidigung, only one mechanized division and an aviation division remained as “standing forces” in the Bereitschaftstruppe or “Alert Force.” As described by Vetschera, these forces would “cope with minor threats without mobilization of the militia” or, “in case of major threats, these forces should protect mobilization of the militia and reinforce the militia forces in their respective zones.”101 Because these 15,000 troops had to be “well trained and highly mobile,” Spannocchi intended them to be “volunteers serving longer than the standard six and a half months of basic training.”

As previously indicated, Spannocchi saw the aviation division merely as an “air police” that “would not so much be required to prove itself in battle as to see that Austria is given credence with respect to its capability to end negligent or wanton disregard of its neutrality in a crisis.”102 Perhaps somewhat optimistically, Vetschera wrote in 1985 that “a concept of area defense does not require a strong air capability because of its dispersion of forces.”103 Accordingly, Colonel Friedrich W. Korkisch of the aviation division recalled that “flying officers were not consulted during the planning of

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100 Bayer interview.
101 Vetschera, “Austria,” 69.
In the National Defense Plan (Landesverteidigungsplan) drawn up in 1978 and approved in 1983, therefore, “air defense was completely lacking.”

The mechanized division, meanwhile, contained three armored infantry brigades stationed in three different areas of Austria. Each brigade contained one tank battalion of American M-60A1 or M-60A3 tanks (180 in all), one mechanized infantry battalion with Austrian armored personnel carriers (APCs), one artillery battalion with American M-109 155-mm self-propelled howitzers, and one battalion of Austrian Kürassier tank destroyers.

In sum, Austria with Raumverteidigung strove to emulate the low-cost strategies of other European neutral countries, marching, as it were, to the beat of a different military drummer. As explained by the former American deputy assistant secretary for defense Joseph Kruzel in 1989, these nations spend relatively little but mobilize a significant portion of their populations for military duties. The Euro-neutrals’ emphasis on a strategy of dissuasion and harassment rather than military defeat means that it is a mistake to judge the neutrals by the criteria used to evaluate NATO and Warsaw Pact armies. The deficiencies in the Euro-neutrals’ military establishments are not necessarily weaknesses for their own circumstances and the style of warfare which they envisage fighting.

Spannocchi’s Discontents

The Spannocchi Doctrine was not without its critics. The very dispersal of Raumverteidigung, often seen as one of its great strengths, could also be a great

105 Skuhr, 662; and Stein, 30.
weakness. Dispersal meant that forces concentrated not at decisive points but spread out, including into less important areas that could be bypassed. Various Austrian analysts thus expressed the fear that an aggressor could largely ignore most Bundesheer units having once subdued resistance along key transportation routes. The Austrian peace activist Ernst Schwarcz thus argued in 1977 that if an invader limited himself to thoroughfares, “Austrian military units in the mountains and at the passes could hold their positions for months without sighting an enemy tank.”

Spannocchi himself seemed to admit this in Verteidigung ohne Schlacht. “The aggressor,” he wrote, “may have impressive initial successes precisely along the lines of advance that interest him according to classical doctrine.” “The zones of the actual operational interest of the attacker,” Spannocchi added, “will be lost for a long time from the beginning, here the aggressor will dominate.” Moreover, Spannocchi considered it a “dangerous mistake” to send perhaps Landwehr units during this phase elsewhere into the fight because of seeming nonutilization in areas distant from the enemy. Aside from the fact that these Landwehr units lack all preparation for this deployment—these units possibly know the operational areas less well than the enemy and are at any rate less well trained and armed—, these units will only offer a dangerous target during their march and will expose their original areas to enemy seizure after redeployment. This would then be a danger for the system because once again, in place of the attrition effect, the wrong battle would be fought at the wrong time and in the wrong place, something which the enemy could quickly translate into a success.

While Verteidigung ohne Schlacht conceded an aggressor initial success along his lines of advance, Spannocchi argued that these areas “delineate merely a fraction of the

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109 Brossollet and Spannocchi, Verteidigung ohne Schlacht, 72-73.
country that the aggressor has provoked and that resists his rule as a never to be pacified whole.”\textsuperscript{110} Siegbert Rietzler, an Austrian security studies specialist with experience fighting partisans as a company-level \textit{Wehrmacht} officer in the Balkans, though, dismissed Spannocchi’s low intensity strategy of “a thousand pinpricks” with the quip that “pinpricks are not a military success.” Moreover, \textit{Bundesheer} lieutenant colonel Andreas Steiger retrospectively explained in 2005 that both military blocs in Europe could have countered Austria’s well-known strategy of small-unit actions with a “large number of attack and transport helicopters” supporting rapid reaction forces. In contrast to Spannocchi, Steiger believed that the “necessary forces for defense against small-unit actions” were available along with means to intimidate the civilian population. Steiger concluded that

an aggressor’s fighting units would never have been so strongly hindered by measures of low intensity warfare that operations would have ceased, even if these measures would have been maintained for a certain period of time. A military repulse can not be achieved with help of low intensity warfare, although it demands disproportionate sacrifices in lives and economic goods that are indispensable for the survival of the people.\textsuperscript{111}

Spannocchi’s critics also questioned the appropriateness of a pseudo-guerrilla strategy for Austria, even as Austrian officials attempted to distinguish between \textit{Raumverteidigung} and guerrilla warfare. Skuhra, for instance, noted that Spannocchi’s \textit{Verteidigung ohne Schlacht} was “not to be misunderstood as guerrilla tactics.”\textsuperscript{112} Stein also emphasized the official Austrian policy “that these guerrilla ‘tactics’ of hit-and-run raids are to be conducted only by the Armed Forces. There is no equivalent of the Swiss

\begin{footnotes}
\item[110] Ibid, 63.
\item[112] Skuhra, 662.
\end{footnotes}
policy of general armed resistance.”\textsuperscript{113} In line with this policy, Defense Minister Karl F. Lütgendorf in 1972 rejected the description of Raumverteidigung as “partisan warfare,” for this strategy “could not be demanded of our people and would bring every individual into conflict situation with the valid rules of international law.”\textsuperscript{114}

Spannocchi himself stated in his coauthored 1976 book \textit{Verteidigung ohne Schlacht} that Bundesheer soldiers “are not at all guerrillas who stand by a workbench by day and fight by night. (We do not believe namely, that such an orientation lies in the mentality of our people.)”\textsuperscript{115} Nonetheless, Spannocchi’s own references to intelligence gathering and logistical duties among the people made the affinity between his ideas and guerrilla warfare inescapable.

\textit{Bundesheer} major general Mario Duić therefore found “the starting point of the Spannocchi Doctrine” in the “military lessons developed and effectively practiced by Mao, Tito, and Giap.” Their teachings always assumed “an oppressed society, an oppressed people having become conscious of its dire straits.” This subjugated people then became “warm water in which alone—as Mao wrote—partisans could flourish like fishes.” Duić added, though, that the “political-revolutionary character” of the “war of liberation” was “not sufficiently underscored in the analysis.” This kind of warfare required not just “a community in crisis,” but also “a leadership that unalterably believes in an idea accepted by all and justifying all sacrifices, hardship, and brutality, including

\textsuperscript{113} Stein, 31. Emphasis in the original.
\textsuperscript{114} Karl F. Lütgendorf, “Aktuelle Fragen der Verteidigungspolitik Österreichs,” \textit{Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift} 10, no. 2 (1972): 79. Interviewed by the author at Reiter’s office at the Austrian Defense Ministry’s Büro (und Direktion) für Sicherheitspolitik in Vienna’s Stiftskaserne on August 3, 2005, Reiter also rejected Austrian guerrilla warfare as being “nothing for us.”
\textsuperscript{115} Brossollet and Spannocchi, \textit{Verteidigung ohne Schlacht}, 70.
the struggle for the people: the deterring retribution against traitors and collaborators as well as provocation of reprisals by the occupying power.”\textsuperscript{116}

Duić observed that thoughts of guerrilla war “had never found a perceptible political interest” in Austria. This would demand, after all, the assumption of “oppression by an occupying power” even though “preventing an occupation is one of the constitutionally stipulated duties!” Duić additionally doubted the ability of a “pluralist society” to prepare a guerrilla leadership in peacetime. “After all, never before,” analyzed Duić,

have peacetime structures and hierarchies, political or military, played a role in such wars of liberation. If our ideology-poor, interest-oriented service parties would jump over their shadows, a legal basis could be laid for a popular defense à la Yugoslavia. But these parties could hardly hold ready a Tito with a corresponding group of leaders.\textsuperscript{117}

Duić also found official denials of guerrilla warfare too clever by half. Official policy had the Bundesheer fighting not as partisans but in uniform, even though “Tito, Mao, and Giap did not submit to such restrictions. They waged total war, thus their success!” Nevertheless, Spannocchi foresaw civilians performing auxiliary functions. “Naturally,” commented Duić,

an occupying power reacts to this with punishments and reprisals. How long will troops comprised of conscripts want to endanger with their activity their dependents? Until now the ‘new wars’ were waged only by politically motivated volunteers! And how long will the population endanger itself by supporting or only tolerating this struggle?\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{116} Mario Duić, \textit{Unbewältigte Landesverteidigung: System und Verantwortung, Mängel und Chancen} (Graz: Verlag Styria, 1977), 194.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid, 194-195.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid, 195.
Duić ultimately found Spannocchi’s *Verteidigung ohne Selbstzerstörung* contradictory. If “determination is lacking in this battle for the people,” then “the guerrilla war must quickly peter out.” “What does defense [*Verteidigung*] mean then?” asked Duić. On the other hand, “a battle for the people” could not occur “without selfdestruction [*ohne Selbstzerstörung*].” Duić determined Spannocchi’s strategy to be “a vehicle of foreign make for which the only suitable (political-revolutionary) fuel was not to be found in Austria.”\(^{119}\) The Swiss military writer Walter A. Hamburger agreed that the Austrians were “as unsuited as imaginable” for guerrilla warfare.\(^{120}\)

Austria’s geography also seemed to conspire against any effective national defense, assuming that the most likely threat came from a Warsaw Pact offensive in the East. The MAAG in Austria in the late 1950’s noted on June 30, 1958, that

> the internal geography of Austria is about 50 percent mountainous which has resulted in a disproportionate percentage of the population living in the relatively flat and larger eastern section which is the very section which would be initially menaced by aggression from her Communist neighbors. This is particularly illustrated by the city of Vienna which contains approximately 1.7 million people out of a total of approximately 7 million population.\(^{121}\)

One Austrian study in 1971 pictured Austria’s Communist neighbors forming a “semicircular encirclement of Eastern Austria with its open and flat, or lightly hilly, terrain.”\(^{122}\) An Austrian writer in 1963 estimated that six out of seven million Austrians

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\(^{119}\) Ibid, 195, 197.  
\(^{120}\) Hamburger, 148.  
\(^{121}\) *Narrative Statement, Austria, as of 30 June 1958 (Revised 30 June 1959)*; Austria MAAG Narrative, 6/30/59, Folder; Box 4; Entry 1615; Lot File 62D172; Records Relating to the Military Aid Program and the Draper committee, 1957-1962; Deputy Assistant Secretary for Politico-Military Affairs (G/PM); General Records of the Department of State, Record Group (RG) 59; National Archives (NA) Building II, College Park, MD.  
\(^{122}\) *Österreichs Sicherheit* (Vienna: Sozialwissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft, 1971), 39.
lived in this area protruding between Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. As Defense Minister Georg Prader stated in 1968, “most industrial centers…as well as a large part of the natural riches” of Austria were in this area. The capital Vienna itself was only 30 and 50 kilometers from the Czechoslovakian and Hungarian borders, respectively. Bratislava, the capital of the Czechoslovakian province and later nation of Slovakia, was only 64 kilometers eastwards from Vienna by road, hardly farther than St. Pölten to the west, the provincial capital of Lower Austria. Commuter rail traffic once even connected Vienna with Bratislava before the Iron Curtain forced the trains to stop in Wolfsthal, Austria, five kilometers from the Czechoslovakian border.

The Austrian author Viktor Reimann assessed the areas bordering the Communist bloc as “strategically completely open and an outright invitation for enemy tank armies. A military defense of these areas is therefore not possible, even if more than half the budget were to be expended for defense.” Warsaw Pact aircraft, meanwhile, could reach Vienna in ten minutes from their bases. In the words of Kruzel in 1989, Vienna, “a city lying farther east than Prague” and containing “one of every five Austrians,” is “one of the world’s most charming and cultured cities,” yet “also one of the least defensible.”

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128 Kruzel, 152.
the eastern approaches to Vienna offer neither jungle nor swamp, there are also no mountains there. A tank army finds no natural obstacles of any kind, but rather, quite the contrary, terrain best suited for operations. Artificial barriers à la tank traps are a question of minutes. Advancing armored units would reach Vienna within an hour, at most an hour and a half. The tanks can take Vienna in a further 20 minutes if they do not obey the traffic regulations and stop at the traffic lights when they turn red. With the fall of Vienna, Burgenland, Lower Austria, and Styria the most populous part of Austria would already be occupied.\textsuperscript{129}

Many Austrian analysts doubted the suitability of eastern Austria with its open, densely settled terrain, for a guerrilla-type strategy. Daim himself considered the prospect of creating “a second Vietnam” out of Austria to be “richly naïve,” for the Wienerwald was not a “Vietnamese jungle.”\textsuperscript{130} Colonel Steiger also remembered that \textit{Bundesheer} officers attending Finnish military maneuvers in the 1960s did not receive encouragement from the Finnish infantry inspector, General Koskima, to utilize small-unit tactics in Austria. Koskima thought that the population density in Austria alone made such tactics infeasible. Indeed, the Finnish name for their small-unit tactics so successfully applied against Soviet invaders in the November 30, 1939-March 12, 1940, Winter War, \textit{Motti}-tactics, meant in Finnish “to break up the wood lying in the forest.” Austria, though, was significantly lacking in terrain comparable to the vast forested wastes of Finland experiencing winter temperatures as low as minus 40° Celsius.\textsuperscript{131}

\textit{Bundesheer} officers like Steiger saw several defense problems resulting from Austria’s settled areas and their inhabitants. General Siegbert Kreuter, for example, questioned the propagation of the “close territorial link of the militia as a ‘home

\textsuperscript{129} Daim, \textit{Analyse einer Illusion}, 85.
\textsuperscript{130} Daim, “BH hat keinerlei Chance,” 109.
\textsuperscript{131} Steiger, 580.
advantage,’ as if national defense equaled a soccer game.” “Experiences from all countries and wars show,” analyzed Kreuter,

that for soldiers nothing is worse than to have to see how their dependents, friends, and acquaintances, as well as their possessions, become victims of war, which is why the units either disappear into the civil population or are ripped along by their flight to the extent that the civilian population has not already been previously evacuated. For this, however, no care was taken.132

In agreement with General Kreuter, Colonel Steiger cited the observations of Prussian general David von Scharnhost from the Napoleonic Wars concerning the effect of civilian suffering on troop morale. Steiger found this aspect particularly important with respect to one of the most important military transit routes in Austria, the valley south of the Danube in Lower Austria between the Enns River and the Wienerwald. Steiger counted 11 cities in this area each with around 135,000 inhabitants and 46,000 households, and this was no exception for Austria’s Schlüsselräume. Along with concerns of military morale, Steiger theorized that Austrian civilians taking flight to the West in case of danger from the Warsaw Pact would block “for at least 20 hours the Autobahn near St. Pölten, the Bundesstraße 1, and two additional thoroughfares in the operationally decisive area.” Such refugee movements raised the concern whether the Austrian government would be willing to take the critical step of destroying strategic infrastructure, given that during the Winter War “no bridge was destroyed and no road was mined—in order to allow the columns of the civilian population to advance.”133

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133 Steiger, 575-576.
Analysts like Hamburger noted that only the Alpine areas of Austria presented terrain truly difficult in military terms and, with respect to guerrilla-like warfare, were largely free of civilians potentially exposed to reprisals. Such terrain was concentrated largely in western Austria, however, meaning that Austria could only successfully use the Spannocchi Doctrine against a NATO drive through the Brenner Pass. Additionally, both Hamburger in 1977 and, before him in 1973, officials from the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry noted that western Austria could not hold out on its own if supplies from eastern Austria were not forthcoming.\footnote{Hamburger, 148-149; and Probleme der Krisenvorsorge im Bereich der Land- und Forstwirtschaft (Vienna: Österreichische Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Landesverteidigung, 1973), 41.}

However appealing western Austria was in military terms, a defense here did little for the overwhelming majority of Austrians. After becoming chancellor, Bruno Kreisky criticized in the Nationalrat on December 16, 1970, Bundsheer plans dating from the army’s formation under the Americans to withdraw to a mountain fastness in western Austria. “When a high officer,” declared Kreisky, a general of the Bundsheer, one of the most respected officers, writes in a newspaper article in a large Viennese newspaper that there are different kinds of resistance, namely resistance which can be described as a fighting withdrawal and resistance which is made with all possible force, and then says where all possible force will first be used, when namely the tanks drive in single file and certain preconditions are met, then one knowing Austrian geography must come to the, in my opinion, not very cheerful conclusion that this resistance will take place in a part of Austria which lies far, far to the west. Once before during the time of the occupation the Béthouart Line was spoken of in conversation; I cannot believe in this; but it would be very dangerous, if, of seven and a half million Austrians, six and half million should come to the view that they live in an area which cannot be defended.\footnote{Bruno Kreisky, Reden, vol. 2 (Vienna: Österreichische Staatsdruckerei, 1981), 92-93. Interviewed by the author on August 3, 2005, at the Demokratiezentrum Wien, the Austrian historian Oliver Rathkolb noted that the concentration of SPÖ voters in eastern Austria made Kreisky averse to any military plans entailing an abandonment of this area in wartime.}
Analysts like Hamburger questioned whether any Austrians would want to continue fighting once an enemy (i.e. the Warsaw Pact) had occupied Austria’s urban areas. Spannocchi himself recognized in *Verteidigung ohne Schlacht* that, “stated in extreme terms, no one lives on the Großglockner [Austria’s highest mountain and the second highest in the Alps] and millions in the built-up areas.” Spannocchi attached great importance to shielding the Austrian populace from “any serious hostile grasp, even by means of blackmail,” because “without the consensus of the state population nothing works. This wants, though, personal security above all.”

*Raumverteidigung*, however, did little to solve the concerns of Austria’s urban dwellers. Interviewed in a Viennese café in 2005, former defense minister Friedhelm Frischenschlager emphasized with his pointing forefinger that the main line of Austrian resistance against a Warsaw Pact invasion would have been in a *Schlüsselzone* westwards of Vienna, “*hinter Wien!*” In addition, Colonel Steiger noted that a successful defense of Austrian cities would have demanded considerable urban warfare training in the *Bundesheer*, something that never took place. Preparation for urban warfare would also have demanded “a coordinated civil defense concept with a priority on civilian shelters.” Yet “only in 1980 was a medical aid strategy created that took account of medical care for the soldiers and the civil population as well as evacuation of the civil population.”

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136 Hamburger, 149.
138 Friedhelm Frischenschlager, interview by author in Vienna’s Café Korb on July 12, 2005.
139 Steiger, 575.
Many Austrians throughout the years, therefore, could not see much sense in sacrificing for a military that could, or would, not defend most of their homes.140

Austria’s tactical topography also went hand in hand with an “entry and/or transit price” strategy seemingly absurd to many Austrians. If an enemy had already taken the decision to invade Austria on the way to some other objective, why should Austrians fight? Writing in 1985 on the pages of Proﬁl, the Sozialverteidigung advocate Christian S. Ortner considered for Austria in this scenario “any military resistance to be downright ludicrous. Should Austrians actually die in order to prevent Americans from using the Inntalautobahn or the Russians the Südautobahn?”141

In the end, Spannocchi’s promotion of his strategy could not suppress all doubts in the Bundesheer. “There were various opinions concerning the operation of small-unit forces,” Colonel Steiger remembered.

Spannocchi supported those who were of his opinion: it is possible to achieve an operational success with small-unit forces. Maneuver tests took place in eastern Tyrol—an outstanding Alpine area—and in the Lower Austrian Alpine foothills. Both areas were not an important area for the mechanized troops of an opponent and were, above all, operationally insignificant. There was indeed a training success although these test maneuvers were not conclusive… Raumverteidigung was understood as a panacea and presented as such to the public. A critical analysis was perhaps not formally forbidden, but was de facto pushed aside wherever it sometimes internally dared appear.142

Defense Minister Werner Fasslabend (1990-2000) conﬁrmed in 2005 that many in the Bundesheer “never won anything” from the Spannocchi Doctrine, a strategy that Fasslabend himself considered “excessively [übermäßig]” inﬂuenced by the Vietnam

140 The author of this dissertation recalls one 1997 conversation with an Austrian in Vienna bemoaning the futility of a Bundesheer that only intended to retreat to Tyrol in case of a Warsaw Pact invasion.
142 Steiger, 580-581.
conflict. Yet no alternative presented itself; Fasslabend described Spannocchi’s strategy as “born out of necessity.”

Paraphrasing Winston S. Churchill’s comments on democracy, Steiger explained the conclusion reached by the Bundesheer with the words that “the concept of Raumverteidigung is the worst form of defense, but there is no better choice.”

Too Much Area, Too Little Defense: The Unfulfilled Spannocchi Doctrine

The Landesverteidigungsplan published by the Austrian government in 1985 after being approved in 1983 foresaw the Bundesheer achieving a strength of 186,000 soldiers in an “intermediate phase [Zwischenstufe]” in 1986 and 300,000 troops in an “expansion phase [Ausbaustufe]” by 1994. Interviewed in 2005, though, Rauchensteiner noted that General Spannocchi himself originally wanted 700,000 Bundesheer soldiers to fulfill Raumverteidigung. Similarly, the Austrian Officers Society (Österreichische Offiziersgesellschaft) felt compelled to issue a minority report in October 1970 contrasting the recommendations of a Bundesheer reform commission that year with a call for 300,000 Bundesheer soldiers in a first phase and 450,000-500,000 in a second phase of buildup.

Later in 1982, Helmuth Josseck, FPÖ defense policy spokesman in the Nationalrat, warned that “it is naturally clear to critical experts that, for example, with

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143 Werner Fasslabend, interview by author in Fasslabend’s office at the Nationalrat on July 15, 2005.
144 Steiger, 581. Emphasis in the original.
145 Landesverteidigungsplan. (Vienna: Bundeskanzleramt, 1985), 53.
146 Manfred Rauchensteiner, interview by author in Rauchensteiner’s office at the Heeresgeschichtliches Museum on July 26, 2005.
147 Alfred Aebi, Der Beitrag neutraler Staaten zur Friedenssicherung untersucht am Beispiel Österreichs und der Schweiz, Schriften des Schweizerischen Aufklärungs-Dienstes series (Zürich: Buchdruckerei Stäfa, 1976), 77-78.
the stipulated *Ausbauflage* 2 of the *Landwehr* concept, which foresees a personnel level of 300,000 men in case of mobilization, a satiation of Austrian state territory in the sense of a deterrent effect is not achieved." Josseck believed that these 300,000 soldiers could defend the Schlüsselzonen, "but an extension of protection to the other areas of state territory is impossible." 148 Reiter, Josseck's colleague in the FPÖ, subsequently confirmed in 1992 that the "minimum estimate [Untergrenze]" of 300,000 soldiers for a successful Raumverteidigung had been "set unrealistically low out of political concerns." 149 From abroad, meanwhile, Dennis Chaplin in 1977 wrote that "if Spannocchi is serious about using this territorial force in wide-scale partisan harassment tactics, his actual manpower requirement would, in fact, be nearer the 400,000 figure." 150

Yet the Bundesheer ultimately did not achieve even the relatively modest goals set for it under the *Landesverteidigungsplan*. Although the Bundesheer exceeded the Zwischenstufe level and was able to mobilize more than 200,000 troops in 1989, various constraints forced the Austrian government to accept, according to Vetschera, "a revised force structure" in 1987. This Heeresgliederung 87 aimed at "streamlining the forces toward a mobilizable force of 260,000 troops by the mid-nineties, without, however, abandoning the final objective of a mobilizable force of more than 300,000." 151

148 Helmuth Josseck, "Mehr Geld für Österreichs Verteidigung," in *Wie Sicher ist Österreich?*, 351. Like many others, Josseck mentioned the comparison with Switzerland, which, in an "essentially more favorable geographic setting," could mobilize 650,000 men and had an "extensive and effective system of comprehensive national defense."

149 Erich Reiter, "Die Neutralität ist kein sicherheitspolitisches Konzept der Zukunft," in *Neutralität: Mythos und Wirklichkeit*, eds. Herbert Krejci, Erich Reiter, and Heinrich Schneider (Vienna: Signum Verlag, 1992), 23. Reiter repeated this judgment during an interview with the author at Reiter's office at the Austrian Defense Ministry's Büro (Und Direktion) für Sicherheitspolitik in Vienna's Stiftskaserne on August 3, 2005. In his 1992 essay, Reiter also noted how few Bundesheer soldiers were in comparison to anywhere from 620,000 to 800,000 mobilized soldiers in the neutral countries of Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland.


151 Vetschera, "Austria," 69.
Writing in 1989, the American scholar Joan Johnson-Freese found that “soaring personnel costs, accounting for approximately 55 percent of all defense expenditures,” made the ultimate goal of 300,000 Bundesheer soldiers “problematic.” “The reason for this monetary drain,” wrote Johnson-Freese,
is that professional soldiers are paid like civil servants; consequently, they are entitled to overtime pay for work in excess of forty hours per week. These payments can total over $30 million annually and wreak havoc on maneuver scheduling. Further, because of such exorbitant personnel costs, investment in new equipment has amounted to only about 12 percent of the defense budget.\(^\text{152}\)

Vetschera also cited other factors such as a decline in the Austrian birthrate. The provision of nonmilitary service for conscientious objectors (COs) in 1974 also reduced “annual recruitment by more than 4,000.” As previously indicated, even of those who served in the Bundesheer, “too many recruits are absorbed within the military in peacetime functions, for example, as drivers, cooks, or office clerks. They serve a continuous eight-month term but are exempted from future assignments with the militia.”\(^\text{153}\) General Kreuter, meanwhile, reflected in 1995 on a lack of leadership personnel in the Bundesheer of the late 1980s.\(^\text{154}\)

Whatever the cause, Austrian defense planners had to face in the late 1980s, at least for a while, the prospect of a porous Raumverteidigung. Asked in 2005 whether Zwischenstufe force levels could have implemented Spannocchi’s strategy, Frischenschlager thought that this would have been “very difficult [sehr schwer]” to


\(^{153}\) Vetschera, “Austria,” 69.

\(^{154}\) Kreuter, 401.
do. The assessment of Bundesheer commandant Hannes Philipp in 1990 was even starker. The Bundesheer’s final strength of 200,000 soldiers prompted Philipp to comment to Profil that “for years we have lived as torn individuals: on one side the mission and on the other side the impossibility of this mission.” Philipp “said again and again to the responsible gentlemen in politics that we cannot fulfill the complete mission with the present strength.”

Writing just before Philipp’s post-Cold War interview, though, Vetschera considered the manpower problems to be “not insurmountable. COs appear to be recognized and exempted from military service too easily, which may be changed even within the existing legal framework. Also, the army’s peacetime work force may be reduced in favor of training a higher percentage for the militia.” Even if “these measures would suffice to close the manpower gap,” though, Vetschera found “the budgetary constraints that have prevented provision of proper equipment for 300,000 troops in time” to be “more important.”

Lack of funding meant that even the Bundesheer’s relatively small number of soldiers had less strength than paper figures would indicate. Felix Ermacora in 1983 had the impression that only the commands of the mobilized units and units “cheap” to procure have actually been established. The total so-called mobilization framework of the army does indeed thereby grow, but additional fighting units do not, however, exist. Units, for example, are described as established for which mortars, antitank weapons, and a large part of their radio equipment are lacking, as was shown on the occasion of the 1982 Raumverteidigung maneuver in Kufstein.158

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155 Frischenschlager interview.
157 Vetschera, “Austria,” 69.
Equipment deficiencies were a prominent feature of a coverstory titled “Bundesheer Wozu? [Bundesheer, What for?]” in the May 6, 1985 issue of Profil. A report on military readiness leaked the previous week stated that the Bundesheer possessed only seven days of provisions in case of mobilization and had deficits of anywhere from 20 to 80% in various medical supplies as well as ammunition shortages. Additionally, the Bundesheer had only procured 60% of its intended arsenal of medium mortars and still lacked 62% of its heavy mortars. The report also found all antitank weapons and 55% of the fortifications in Austria’s arsenal to be obsolete.

Reiter estimated in 1992 that while the Bundesheer at its apex fulfilled about two-thirds of the Landesverteidigungsplan’s personnel goals around 1986, the Bundesheer procured only about half of the planned equipment. “With the lack of heavy weapons, though,” wrote Reiter, “large parts of already established units were not or not completely operational.” Interviewed in 2005, Reiter assessed the Bundesheer’s arsenal with the even lower fraction of one-third of planned procurement. While Reiter called the Landesverteidigungsplan “interesting” and Rauchensteiner considered it an “excellent [vorzüglich] idea,” this plan, in the words of Rauchensteiner, “never became reality.” Comparing the Landesverteidigungsplan “point for point with

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161 Reiter interview.
162 Rauchensteiner and Reiter interviews. Rauchensteiner cited air defense units as one example of equipment lacking due to expense. Rauchensteiner has also written about the unfulfilled Landesverteidigungsplan, see: Manfried Rauchensteiner, “Österreich und die NATO: Ein historischer Rückblick,” Truppendiens 39, no. 4 (2000): 279. Reiter, meanwhile, also termed the Landesverteidigungsplan in 1993 as “thoroughly serviceable” even though Austria “never had the will to realize it.” See: Erich Reiter, Österreichische Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik: Aufsätze und Essays, Rechts- und sozialwissenschaftliche Reihe series (Frankfurt: Verlag Peter Lang, 1993), 46.
reality,” meanwhile, left General Kreuter with the “sad recognition that the plan could never have been realized.”

The limited fulfillment of the \textit{Landesverteidigungsplan} became apparent during a maneuver held November 16-23, 1979 (\textit{Raumverteidigungsübung 79}). According to Rauchensteiner, this exercise was “supposed to demonstrate in many respects the end of the experimentation phase” after “years in which a large maneuver would have made little sense because it would have hardly allowed the entire system to be recognizable in its processes.”

This maneuver took place in \textit{Schlüsselzone} 35 around Amstetten, the site of the disastrous \textit{Bärenatz} exercise in 1969. Many military and civilian foreign observers from countries like Holland, Switzerland, the United States, and Yugoslavia evaluated this exercise in glowing terms. Swiss military writer Ernst Wetter, for instance, wrote that “the Austrian \textit{Bundesheer} is—and the \textit{Raumverteidigungsübung 79} has impressively shown this—thoroughly capable of forcefully implementing \textit{Raumverteidigung}.”

There was more to \textit{Raumverteidigungsübung 79} than met the eye, however. For one thing, the November maneuvers showed the \textit{Bundesheer}’s uniforms to be deficient against the cold and the weather. Most importantly, though, a thoughtful \textit{Profil} writer noted one year after these maneuvers that \textit{Bundesheer} soldiers assembled from all over Austria to conduct this maneuver in one \textit{Schlüsselzone}. Wilfried Ahrens calculated that a

\begin{itemize}
  \item\textsuperscript{163} Kreuter, 402.
  \item\textsuperscript{164} Ernst Wetter, “Die österreichische Raumverteidigungsübung 79,” \textit{Allgemeine Schweizerische Militärzeitsschrift} 146, no. 3 (1980): 117.
  \item\textsuperscript{165} Rauchensteiner, \textit{Ein Heer für jede Jahreszeit}, 18.
  \item\textsuperscript{166} Steiger, 580.
  \item\textsuperscript{168} Wetter, 118.
\end{itemize}
“fictional defense of 2.4% of Austria” in this exercise demanded 14% of the Bundesheer’s then existing mobilized strength and 45% of the army’s tracked vehicles. Colonel Steiger also criticized that “the enemy’s operations were presented with the available Austrian mechanized forces in a manner that a defensive success of the Blue party was a given.”

General Kreuter analyzed after the Cold War that the Schlüsselzone was defended with 27,000 men and according to doctrine a counterattack was conducted. The success was decisive. The media came to the conclusion that the Bundesheer had found its way. In the process an important detail, some say the main issue, was overlooked. Because the planned territorial forces were not yet available in Schlüsselzone 35, units from other provinces had to be brought up. With a total strength in the mobilized army of 152,000 men (including pre-1970 enlistees!), about a fifth of the total strength was deployed in one Schlüsselzone, while there were 13 Schlüsselzonen and 17 Raumsicherungszonen in total. If it had come in 1979 to a defense contingency, very large gaps would have appeared. The mobilized strength had risen only by about 10,000 men in comparison to the end strength before the reforms, whereby the quality had fallen because of the end of mandatory exercises for a large part of the army.

The Bereitschaftstruppe as well revealed deficiencies in Austrian military spending. This force was supposed to have 15,000 soldiers, even though the Österreichische Offiziersgesellschaft in its 1970 minority report had considered 40,000 “alert” troops to be, according to Swiss scholar Alfred Aebi, “indispensable.” The Austrian officers thought that 15,000 soldiers “would not even satisfy the operational requirements of a border security operation in case of a crisis.” Yet Rauchensteiner in 2005 noted that this unit only reached a final size of 10,000.

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171 Steiger, 580.
172 Kreuter, 401. Emphasis in the original.
173 Aebi, Der Beitrag neutraler Staaten zur Friedenssicherung, 78.
174 Rauchensteiner interview.
In the *Raumverteidigung* concept, all *Bundesheer* soldiers outside of the *Bereitschaftstruppe* were militiamen. “In other words,” quipped Hamburger, “if someone wants to hold a parade in Austria, civilians must be called up.”\(^{175}\) According to Ermacora, therefore, the permanent *Bereitschaftstruppe* had as its “main duty” the screening of the *Bundesheer* while it mobilized. Shortfalls in the *Bereitschaftstruppe*, however, meant that “there could be no talk of a permanently operational force” and that “this force is not operational without mobilization.” Thus the *Bereitschaftstruppe* “could not secure a mobilization if this force must be first mobilized itself!”\(^{176}\)

Analysts like Aebi in 1977 considered this dependency on mobilization of both the Swiss and Austrian militaries in the heart of Europe to be troubling given that “units of NATO and the Warsaw Pact possess a high degree of readiness and mobilization.” With “warning time becoming ever shorter it is not certain whether both countries can conduct mobilization in due time.”\(^{177}\) Hamburger found this danger even more acute in the case of Austria bordering the Iron Curtain and containing transit routes far more important than those in Switzerland.\(^{178}\)

Many analysts such as Stein judged not only the quantity but also the quality of the *Bundesheer* to be “second-rank.” Stein noted in 1990 that “the Swiss Army’s main battle tank is the new West German Leopard-II, while the Austrian Army’s main battle tank is the American M-60, a tank that the West Germans have relegated to their reserve Territorial Army.”\(^{179}\) Johnson-Freese confirmed that “much of the *Bundesheer* 

\(^{175}\) Hamburger, 148.

\(^{176}\) Ermacora, 7.


\(^{178}\) Hamburger, 148.

\(^{179}\) Stein, 31-32.
equipment is a generation or more behind that of NATO or Warsaw Pact forces. That is particularly true of their antiarmor and air defense systems.”

Stein speculated, though, that “the major problem with the Austrian Army’s ability to mount a credible dissuasive effort may be the quality of the militia army.” While conceding that Landwehr “militiamen are well-motivated,” Stein could not ignore the fact that “their training…does not begin to approach that of their Swiss fellow militiamen,” even as Bundesheer soldiers lacked “modern antitank missile weapons.” Stein cited the “mere six months’ training” of the “average Austrian conscript” and calculated that “his entire reserve liability” of 60 days while “liable for mobilization to age 35” amounted to only “a series of one-week exercises every two years.” On the other hand, in 1983 Bundesheer commandant Ernest Bernadiner judged on the basis of his extensive observations the small Bereitschaftstruppe to be “one of the best trained Panzergrenadier divisions in Europe.”

Stein also judged the infrastructure of Austrian defense as impoverished. Austria’s “‘Territorial’ organization for transportation, logistics and communications” had a “much less developed level than in Switzerland.” Similarly, Stein questioned the Austrian intention to have

the stationary Landwehr in the southern alpine “Heartland” (Zentralraum) of the general Rear Area (Basisraum) and any other available troops to continue fighting behind a line of fortifications and obstacles in an effort to assert Austrian national sovereignty. Unlike the Swiss Alpine redoubt of three massive underground forts defended by large numbers of troops, Austria’s “Alpine Heartland” would represent a major nuisance but not an impossible obstacle to any attacker determined to physically occupy all of Austria.

180 Johnson-Freese, 173.
181 Stein, 31-32.
183 Stein, 30-31.
Austrian Civil Defense: How Comprehensive?

Raumverteidigung was not an isolated development in the 1970s but was part of Austria’s development of “Universal National Defense [Umfassende Landesverteidigung],” or ULV for short in German. With the subsequent approval of the Bundesrat on June 29, 1975, the Nationalrat unanimously wrote ULV into the Austrian Federal Constitution on June 10, 1975. The new Article 9a assigned ULV the task to preserve the federal territory’s outside independence as well as its inviolability and its unity, especially as regards the maintenance and defense of permanent neutrality. In this connection, too, the constitutional establishments and their capacity to function as well as the democratic freedoms of residents require to be safeguarded and defended against acts of aimed attack from outside.¹⁸⁴

As its name implied, ULV viewed national defense in a wideranging, holistic manner. The second paragraph of Article 9a stated that ULV “comprises military, intellectual, civil and economic national defense.” Paragraph three also made “every male Austrian national…liable for military service.” “Conscientious objectors,” though, could “perform an alternative service.”¹⁸⁵ Bayer noted that this “constitutional anchoring of general conscription emphasizes the militia character of our army as the adequate defense form of a neutral state that recognizes the concept of ‘territorially-based defense.’”¹⁸⁶

While drafting Article 9a, the Nationalrat also unanimously gave what Bayer called a “necessary adaptation” to the constitution’s Article 79. This revised article defined the “country’s military defense” as “the duty of the Bundesheer.” The

¹⁸⁵ Austria Index.
¹⁸⁶ Bayer, 385.
Bundesheer also had the duty to protect “the constitutionally established institutions as well as their capacity to operate,” the “population’s democratic freedoms,” and “order and security inside the country in general.” The Bundesheer was furthermore “to render assistance in the case of natural catastrophes and disasters of exceptional magnitude.” Bayer analyzed that such duties replaced Article 79’s previous “linear restriction” on national defense expressed as “protection of the borders [Schutz der Grenzen]” and reflected the “development towards three-dimensional warfare” in Raumverteidigung.

Bayer described the development of ULV as the “fulfillment of a long-harbored wish” whose “fundamental impulses,” like so much in Austrian neutrality, came from Austria’s “western neighbor,” Switzerland. “The starting point for these considerations,” wrote Bayer, “was the round of talks by a Swiss colonel in the spring of 1958 who—invited to Vienna—lectured about ‘Total National Defense [Totale Landesverteidigung] in Switzerland.’” Many cabinet members as well as the federal president were in attendance.

Chancellor Julius Raab’s third governmental declaration on July 17, 1959, subsequently spoke for the first time about creating a national defense concept including military, civil, and economic dimensions. Defense Minister Karl Schleinzer then actually used the term ULV for the first time in a June 1961 proposal encompassing military, civil, economic, and intellectual dimensions. Schleinzer’s proposals subsequently formed the basis for a public cabinet decree on July 18, 1961.

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187 Austria Index; and Bayer, 385.
188 Bayer, 380, 385.
189 Böhner, 36.
Like everything else in Austria’s defense preparations, “Austria’s system of Total Defense” appeared to Stein as “not as fully developed as that of Switzerland.” In particular, Austria’s lack of “a fully developed Civil Defense system for civilian protection” provoked from Stein the question “whether Austria’s model of Total Defense has given sufficient attention to the domestic side of national security policy.”

Heinrich Neisser, one-time defense policy spokesman for the ÖVP in the Nationalrat, might have considered this assessment too polite. “Downright politically negligent” was his description in 1982 for the federal government’s treatment of civil defense. “Merely restricted initiatives” in the area of civil defense by Austrian provinces stood “in contrast to other countries like, for example, Switzerland, where it is intended to secure the survival of the civil population in case of conflict with an almost complete system of protective shelters.” While the province of Voralberg “led by good example” with longstanding subsidies for private sector shelter building, Vienna ignored civil defense concerns during the construction of the city’s subway system.

Building codes in all provinces with the exception of Vienna, meanwhile, had technical guidelines for protective shelters, but the actual construction of shelters was only obligatory for builders in Styria. Both Voralberg and, since 1967, the federal government also planned shelters for new public buildings. Registries of air raid shelters built during World War II and the protective value of various buildings along with a handbook for behavior in shelters completed a rather dismal picture of Austrian civil...

191 Stein 31-32.
defense efforts.\textsuperscript{193} Swiss ordinances, in contrast, prohibited the construction of living quarters without civil defense shelters.\textsuperscript{194}

Differences in civil defense preparation between Austria and other neutral countries in Europe manifested themselves in clear quantitative terms. Böhner wrote in 1982 that no civil defense shelters existed in Austria while Sweden and Switzerland had shelter for 4.3 million and 3.1 million people, respectively. While Sweden and Switzerland annually spent 1.1 and .6 million Schillings, respectively, on civil defense, Austria spent only 5,000 Schillings.\textsuperscript{195} Six years later an examination of neutral and nonaligned countries in Europe by the Allgemeine Schweizerische Militärzeitschrift credited Austria with civil defense shelter for only 7\% of its population.\textsuperscript{196}

In 1990, civil defense in Sweden and Switzerland impressed the Austrian reserve officer and security studies scholar Heinrich Payr. Sweden could shelter 75\% of its people while Switzerland had shelters for 90\% of its population and intended to offer every inhabitant an artificially ventilated shelter by the year 2000. Switzerland also had a comprehensive civil defense organization with around 300,000 trained members, stocks of provisions, command centers, and medical facilities. Finland, meanwhile, could shelter 55\% of its population. According to Payr’s calculations, on the other hand, Austria could only protect 5\% of its population.\textsuperscript{197}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{195} Böhner, 77.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{197} Heinrich Payr, Die schwierige Kunst der Neutralität (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1990), 67.
\end{flushright}
The lowest estimate of Austrian civil defense shelter capacity, however, came in 1991 from the political scientist Skuhra. Skuhra calculated that Austria could shelter 2% of its population, although various installments could raise this figure to 18% in the short term. Such civil defense preparations seem positively prudent, though, in comparison to countries like West Germany, which could give only 2-3% of its population civil defense shelter.\footnote{Skuhra, 671.}

Beyond shelters, other shortcomings existed in Austrian civil defense preparations. While the *Profil* writer Michael Nakladal in February 1980 considered the November 1979 maneuvers a military success, concurrent civil defense exercises revealed a “civil defense fiasco” with loudspeaker wagons filling in for malfunctioning civil defense sirens in the exercise area. At the time of the maneuvers only one-fourth of Austria’s population was in range of warning sirens, malfunctioning or not.\footnote{Michael Nakladal, “Verkaufts mei Gwand, i fahr’ in Himmel,” *Profil*, February 18, 1980, 14-15.} In February 1980 Nakladal also spoke with General Duić, who called Austrian civil defense a “scandal” and cited in particular the lack of a law authorizing the commandeering of private autos in an emergency.\footnote{Michael Nakladal, “Beschränkte Wehrhoheit,” *Profil*, February 11, 1980, 20.} FPÖ defense policy spokesman Helmuth Josseck, meanwhile, asked in 1982, where are the preparations for the transfer of important governing and administrative bodies? Can the democracy function at all during a partial occupation of Austria? We only know approximately that there are areas of our country whose complete defense is not planned, but where are the practical scenarios for the evacuation of entire stretches of territory? In Stockholm there is annually a large exercise in whose course the almost complete resettlement of the Swedish capital is rehearsed. Where are the Austrian data here?\footnote{Helmuth Josseck, “Mehr Geld für Österreichs Verteidigung,” in *Wie Sicher ist Österreich?*, 350.}

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\footnote{Skuhra, 671.}
\footnote{Michael Nakladal, “Verkaufts mei Gwand, i fahr’ in Himmel,” *Profil*, February 18, 1980, 14-15.}
\footnote{Helmuth Josseck, “Mehr Geld für Österreichs Verteidigung,” in *Wie Sicher ist Österreich?*, 350.}
Mission Accomplished?: The Spannocchi Doctrine and Austria’s Defense Dilemma

Did General Spannocchi’s Raumverteidigung ultimately fulfill its promise and provide Austria with a credible defense at limited cost? Writing in a 1980 issue of Europäische Wehrkunde, Bundesheer colonel Josef Marolz seemed to think so in light of the recent “success” of the November 1979 maneuvers. The supposedly typical poor weather during the eight days of these exercises led Marolz to dismiss fears of hostile air operations over Austria in any potential conflict. Marolz also believed that the air units of NATO and the Warsaw Pact would tie each other down, leaving no forces free for operations in Austria, and noted the Spannocchi Doctrine’s limited need for mobility. Arguing that warning signs would precede any European conflict, Marolz also discounted the possibility of a surprise attack against Austria before mobilization. Finally, even if one bloc (i.e. the Warsaw Pact) did attempt to drive through Austria, the Bundesheer could hold out for the 48 hours necessary for the other alliance to redeploy, thereby foiling any attempt to gain a surprise advantage in Austria.202

Interviewed at the Austrian National Defense Academy in summer 2005, Vetschera indicated agreement with Marolz. Vetschera recalled NATO’s secretary general stating in the late 1970s or early 1980s that the alliance’s security needs required Austria to hold for seven days so that NATO could redeploy to meet any surprise thrust driving through Austria. Vetschera judged Austria to be “defensible [abwehrbereit]” in these terms by 1985. Vetschera also cited “respect” for Austrian defenses evinced by the Hungarians after the Cold War along with their corresponding fear that Warsaw Pact

(Soviet) strategy would have expended Hungarian troops in the reduction of Austrian defenses while leaving Soviet troops free to drive on to Bavaria.\(^\text{203}\)

Interviewed that same summer, former brigadier Richard Bayer accepted Vetschera’s assessment. After coordinating the formulation of defense policy in the Chancellery from 1974 to 1991, Bayer then took up direction of the Austrian Society for National Defense and Security Policy (Österreichische Gesellschaft für Landesverteidigung und Sicherheitspolitik) in an office across the courtyard of Vienna’s Stiftskaserne from Vetschera. Bayer qualified his speculation, though, with the observation that whether Austria defended itself in any Cold War bloc confrontation or repeated 1938’s surrender without a shot depended upon the “political leadership.”\(^\text{204}\)

Outside of Austria, meanwhile, former German undersecretary for defense Lothar Rühl retrospectively credited Austria with an effective Cold War deterrence in 1999. “It can be assumed,” he stated, that the respect and maintenance of Austria’s neutrality vis-à-vis the weaker Warsaw Pact forces of the Southern Group in the central and lower Danube area would have been advantageous for the Soviet Union and all states of the Warsaw Pact—at least in the preliminary phase leading to conflict—because this neutrality limited the extent of offensive NATO air operations and covered Bohemia from one side. It can also be assumed that though an invasion into Austria with Hungarian and Czechoslovakian troops and Soviet troops in both of these countries could have led to advantages for the continuation of an aggressive war on NATO’s flank in southern Germany and in southeastern France, such a detour could have been difficult and costly in time. Leaving Austria and Switzerland in peace would have left forces free for the direct attack on NATO and spatially limited NATO’s options. Later Austria could have been taken on without destroying anything there, in order to better use and exploit it.\(^\text{205}\)

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\(^{203}\) Vetschera interview. Vetschera also suggested that Czechoslovakian troops might have had worries similar to the Hungarians.

\(^{204}\) Richard Bayer, interview by author in Bayer’s office at the Österreichische Gesellschaft für Landesverteidigung und Sicherheitspolitik (ÖGLS) in Vienna’s Stiftskaserne on August 4, 2005.

Bayer, Marolz, Rühl, and Vetschera, however, remained relatively isolated in their optimism. For one thing, many worried that the shift to Raumverteidigung in the 1970s placed Austria in a military state of flux with no effective defense during the Bundesheer’s transformation from conventional to militia forces. Chaplin in 1977, for example, found Austria to be militarily…in a state of fragmentation and transit, literally a sitting target for anyone determined to march in and use it as an additional base of operations. The defense forces could not even engage in a successful “stopgap” conflict despite the reforms being made by General Spannocchi. It is feared that Austria will remain a military and political vacuum as far as NATO security is concerned.206

Rauchensteiner in 1985 confirmed that one thing, though, had to be clear to all who had something to do with the reform. In the moment that the realization of the new concept was begun the bridges were burned and one was almost thrown back to the situation of 1955. Thus Austria came exactly to the place where it had already been, namely in the situation of military imponderability. And that was seen with discomfort and suspicion. Foreigners, above all, viewed the changes beginning in Austria in the military field with some—and as far as has been revealed—deep mistrust.207

Numerous foreign and Austrian military analysts, meanwhile, were far more pessimistic than Bayer, Marolz, or Vetschera. The Austrian ÖVP politician Andreas Khol concluded in 1981 that an Austrian “military vacuum was outright assumed in

206 Chaplin, 58.
207 Manfried Rauchensteiner, Ein Heer für jede Jahreszeit: Das österreichische Bundesheer (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1985), 16. Interestingly, Rauchensteiner was not so dramatic in his assessment of Austrian weakness during the initial period of the Spannocchi Doctrine when interviewed by the author in his office at the Heeresgeschichtliches Museum on July 26, 2005. Rauchensteiner conceded that the Bundesheer’s reorganization in between “two different systems” implied a certain “weak moment” in Austria’s defense, but emphasized the positive aspects of adding Raumverteidigung to the already existing small mobile forces.
various staff headquarters.” Perhaps most famously, British general Sir John Hackett, a veteran of the World War II airborne assault on Arnhem and former commander of the British Army of the Rhine, dealt with Austria in his 1978 work of hypothetical history, *The Third World War: August 1985*. Although dismissed by Marolz, Hackett’s scenario foresaw an Austria “brutally brushed aside” by three Warsaw Pact divisions in three days while only two or three Austrian brigades of “good mountain troops” survived this onslaught to fight alongside NATO in its final repulse of the Red offensive. Even at the height of the *Bundesheer*’s development in 1989, meanwhile, Stein remained, in a word, questioning. He “questioned whether the Austrian Army has the capability to match its stated intentions” and raised “questions as to whether the Area Defense model is perceived as a credible dissuasion by potential attackers.”

Concern over Austrian defenses also came from official NATO sources. One American estimate from the 1980s, for example, postulated that Austria could withstand a Warsaw Pact offensive for a day. A leaked NATO report published by the conservative Austrian daily *Die Presse* on May 24, 1980, also concluded that Austria could do little to stop a Warsaw Pact attack. Subsequent Warsaw Pact maneuvers during 1984 in Czechoslovakia and Hungary displaying clear offensive intentions with respect to Austria made this assessment all the more troubling. Secretary General Joseph Luns of

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210 Stein, 31-32.
211 Rauchensteiner, “Österreich und die NATO,” 279.
NATO, meanwhile, publicly worried over the Bundesheer’s capability on November 7, 1980.  

Austria’s Swiss neighbors did not differ from NATO in their view of Austrian defenses. The Austrian scholar Reinhard Meier-Walser observed in 1988 that the Swiss “have never left any doubt that they view the neutrality of Austria lying in the Soviet Union’s area of influence as hardly militarily defended, whereby above all the vacuum in the air space appears as a security risk.” Accordingly, Austrian weakness remained a consistent topic in the Swiss press. NZZ editor in chief Hugo Bütler reviewed in 2005 that “it was an open secret that the Bundesheer in a real contingency, that is a massive military attack upon Austrian territory, would probably have never been capable of executing its mission as designed.”

As previously indicated, meanwhile, opinion polls both inside and outside of the Bundesheer failed to substantiate any improvement in Austrian views of their army, Raumverteidigung or not. Indeed, the two groups of conscripts asked by the 1980 pre-/post-conscription survey whether they “knew the term ‘Raumverteidigung’” responded largely with ignorance. Even upon leaving the Bundesheer, only 15% of surveyed conscripts answered “yes, I know exactly what that is” (7% at the beginning of conscription). A further 30% said “yes, I have a general idea of this” (28% before national service). Yet 23% left the Bundesheer having “already heard of this, but having

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little understanding of it” (34% before national service) and 9% even responded “no, never heard of this” (18% before national service).\textsuperscript{217}

Even though ULV contained an “intellectual [geistig]” component, many of the conscripts also did not recognize this term. Asked whether they “had already heard of ‘Umfassende Landesverteidigung (ULV)’” and whether they “know what is meant by this,” only 14% of demobilizing conscripts responded with “yes, I know exactly what that is” (9% before serving). A relatively constant 35% of conscripts before and 34% after conscription stated “yes, I have a general picture.” The 33% of conscripts who before serving in the Bundesheer stated that they “had already heard of this but can hardly picture it” dwindled to 25% among the conscripts surveyed after serving. A surprising discrepancy was present between the 16% of entering conscripts who had “never heard” of ULV and the 24% of exiting conscripts who did not recognize this term.\textsuperscript{218}

Separated into groups according to their declared familiarity with ULV, the conscripts exiting service had to answer “how much the following statements apply to the Bundesheer according to your experience and opinion?” The response percentages to select statements from the four groups with knowledge of ULV ranging from greatest (a) to least (d) were, as usual, not very encouraging.\textsuperscript{219}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{217}Brunmayr and Ofner, “Wie Verteidigungsbereit ist Österreichs Jugend,” 142. No answer was the response of 13% and 23% before and after conscription, respectively.
\item \textsuperscript{218}Ibid, 139.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Advantage out of Necessity?

I see little sense in the Bundesheer and therefore involve myself as little as possible.

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Many cadre soldiers concede behind closed doors that the Bundesheer cannot achieve much.

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Profil reporter Otmar Lahodynsky gave such sentiments pointed expression in a 1987 story. While making the traditional, despairing observation about the Bundesheer’s lack of missile weapons, Lahodynsky argued that the American-made, Korean War-vintage M-42 selfpropelled antiaircraft guns in the Bundesheer “should have been placed in a museum a long time ago.” (In fact, a M-42 is on display today in the Panzergarten of Vienna’s HGM.) A Landwehr corporal on maneuvers, meanwhile, declared to Lahodynsky that “in an actual conflict I will not drive to my foxhole in the Leitha Mountains but rather to the Westautobahn. With our armament we simply have no chance.”

Reflecting the corporal’s sentiments, Johnson-Freese discerned a “fatalism…in Austria’s attitude regarding its potential for defending itself militarily: an attempt is made to put on a good show of defense planning, but the people themselves do not really seem to believe that their efforts are effective.” Apparently nothing had changed since Alexander Solzhenitsyn stated in the NZZ on June 2, 1975, during a survey of Western Cold War fortunes marked by “defeat, defeat, defeat” since the end of World War II that

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221 Johnson-Freese, 161-162.
“Finland and Austria await their fate resigned, helpless without possibilities for defense, not being able to hope for foreign help.”

There was hardly any reason for Austrians to feel differently given the prognoses of their leaders and military analysts. General Troop Inspector Othmar Tauschitz wrote in a 1990 letter to Zukunft that the inadequately supported Bundesheer was the “living lie [Lebenslügen]” of the Second Republic, incapable of fulfilling a legally mandated defense mission. Likewise, General Erich Eder, commandant of the Austrian National Defense Academy, expressed at a November 1993 conference in Vienna the conviction that “in the case of an armed conflict between NATO and the WTO, we would not have been taken seriously.”

Accordingly, Defense Minister Fasslabend reported to the government on June 25, 1991, right at the Cold War’s end that “the inner condition of the Bundesheer is marked by frustration and resignation in many areas” due to the army’s numerous deficiencies. Interviewed in 2005, Fasslabend agreed with General Bernadiner that Bundesheer soldiers were among the “best trained in Europe,” but nonetheless considered the state of the Bundesheer as Fasslabend found it emerging from the Cold War in 1990 to be “catastrophic.” Similarly, Fasslabend’s ÖVP colleague Andreas Khol used all-too-familiar terms in 1993 to describe Austrian national defense during the Cold War as an “unbelievable, solely symbolic act.”

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225 Reiter, Österreichische Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik, 256.
226 Werner Fasslabend, interview by author in Fasslabend’s office at the Nationalrat on July 15, 2005.
Profil commentator Georg Hofmann-Ostendorf dismissed the Bundesheer as “an army of operetta soldiers no good for anything.” Neuhold similarly saw considerable “wishful thinking [Wunschdenken]” in the “entrance and maintenance price [Entritts- und Aufenthaltspreis]” strategy not only in Austria but in other European neutrals as well.

To many observers the history of the Bundesheer during the Cold War appeared as a journey to nowhere. The scholar Christian Riederer described insufficient financial resources and “societal disinterest” resulting in “numerous attempts to reorganize the army, to equip it with modern weapons systems, or simply to reform it” without “the necessary political support. Demands for a modernization of the army and its adaptation to new circumstances died away in domestic political controversies.”

“Austrian defense policy,” concluded Ermacora in 1992, does not extend beyond experimentation. The experiments were in part answers to security policy questions; in part the experiments were answers to partisan problems without any security policy necessity. During no phase of Austrian defense policy, however, could the Bundesheer, the cadre personnel and the conscripts, draw assurance and security from this policy. Austrian defense policy has always remained, in fact, a policy of reform. Without waiting for the results of one reform phase a new reform phase was begun.

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Advantage out of Necessity?
Reiter agreed in 1993 that “our national defense has actually always been under construction towards a certain goal. Our national defense is not and never was complete; after 35 years of the second Bundesheer this is not even funny any more.” “In light of the completely insufficient preparation for its national defense in material as well as psychological respects (read geistig national defense),” determined Reiter, “Austria has never actually become really neutral, but rather only deluded itself that this was the case.” Because Reiter considered “such conditions truly unworthy of a relatively highly developed democracy,” he pleaded for “the fundamental debate whether Austria actually wants to defend itself and should defend itself.” Otherwise Reiter found it irresponsible…to expend so much money for something that did not work. Indeed, the little bit of border protection that allows and allowed itself to be produced would be possible—in the framework of another conception—for considerably less money and would not demand that, until now, around 40,000 men are annually conscripted.232

To the extent that Austrian national defense possessed any “defense and deterrent effect against an attack by one of the two pacts,” Skuhra noted that this “was generally preferably calculated in days than in any other measure of time.”233 Bernhard Rochowanski and Heimo Probst, respectively defense and foreign affairs analysts for the FPÖ, for example, explained during a 2005 interview their impression from their reserve officer service in the 1980s that the Bundesheer had the task of holding out for three days so that NATO could redeploy to meet a Warsaw Pact attack through Austria. A longer period of resistance before the Bundesheer reverted solely to harassment operations was

233 Skuhra, 661.
not “realistic.”\textsuperscript{234} Similarly, Rauchensteiner noted in an interview during the same period that the Bundesheer only possessed artillery ammunition for three days of combat. Given predictions that the Bundesheer’s artillery would suffer 60% casualties on the first day of combat and the remaining guns would be disorganized, it did not seem prudent to buy more ammunition at a rate of one million Schillings per daily allowance.\textsuperscript{235}

Such estimates place in question just what exactly Raumverteidigung achieved, given that Reiter believed the pre-1970 Bundesheer capable of waging one single conventional battle for “three to four days.”\textsuperscript{236} Already in 1969, the Austrian diplomat and academic Ernst Florian Winter judged this performance to be possible. According to Winter’s statements in the Swiss monthly Schweizer Monatshefte,

> it appears at the time highly unlikely that NATO would have an interest in violating Austrian neutrality because Austria would be capable of offering resistance in Tyrol with limited forces. A neutrality violation by the East seems even more improbable because Austria would be able of delaying a transit for a few days until NATO countermeasures had taken effect, thereby depriving such a Communist bloc surprise operation of its purpose.\textsuperscript{237}

Yet even predictions of the Bundesheer’s main resistance lasting a few days might have been optimistic. Brigadier Edmund Entacher, commander of the Bundesheer’s 3. Panzergrenadierbrigade explained to Profil in 1999 that “the Austrian Bundesheer was in reality never capable of operations against a strong opponent. I would have had the strongest objections to issue an operational order against such a strong enemy, simply

\textsuperscript{234} Bernhard Rochowanski and Heimo Probst, interview by author in their offices at the Nationalrat on July 21, 2005. During the interview, the author’s reference to these three days as a “long weekend” provoked laughter.

\textsuperscript{235} Rauchensteiner interview. Colonel General Rendulic noted that limited defense spending was a tradition in both the monarchy and the First Republic. The Wehrmacht, for instance, discovered that the Bundesheer of the First Republic possessed only two days worth of artillery ammunition. See: Rendulic, “Probleme der Verteidigung unserer Neutralität,” 4.

\textsuperscript{236} Reiter interview.

because the chances of survival of my soldiers would be too small.”238 In fact, the 1984 Swiss exercise Gesamtverteidigungsübung '84 assumed precisely that the Austrians would seek an “arrangement” with the Soviet Union and not mobilize during a Warsaw Pact attack through Austria.239

Interviewed in 2005, Reiter considered the possibility of an Austrian capitulation to be not just speculation. The Bundesheer in relationship to other European militaries like those of the Warsaw Pact appeared to him like an amateur soccer team trying to play without a full complement of players against a professional team. Austrian national defense had “null” chance and “could never have functioned” under these circumstances. To send the Bundesheer into battle would have been “completely irresponsible.”240

Reiter, meanwhile, dismissed speculation by Brigadier Vetschera that Austrian defenses were ready by 1985 as resulting from a sense of military “honor” uniformed by the defense plans to which Reiter was privy while directing Defense Minister Frischenschlag’s office in the early 1980s. Although Reiter conceded that Warsaw Pact satellites such as Hungary found Austrian defenses daunting, Reiter credited such fears mainly to an unwillingness to fight for Soviet masters. “Believe me,” emphasized Reiter, “there would never have been an order to engage in combat [Einsatzbefehl]. It would have been mass murder.”241

240 Reiter interview.
241 Ibid.
A Modest Proposal: Austria’s Area Defends Itself?

The rather unneutral effect of Austrian weakness disturbed many military analysts in the free societies of the transatlantic area, Austria included. Reiter in 1993 analyzed retrospectively that “on the basis of the relative military weakness of Austria the eastern, northern, and southern areas of Austria offers itself as a favorable operational area for the offensively structured Warsaw Pact armed forces.” Former German undersecretary for defense Lothar Rühl offered similar views in 1990, noting that the contingency of a Warsaw Pact drive through the Danube valley “avoiding the obstacles of the mountains and outflanking the prepared defenses of NATO forces in Bavaria” has “preoccupied NATO ever since 1955.” “NATO forces in Germany are too dispersed for forward defense,” added Rühl, “and lack operational reserves (hence the importance of French forces to back them up in time). A WP offensive through this part of Austria would create a critical situation for NATO defense.” Austria’s “air defense problem,” according to Rühl, “takes on very serious proportions not only for Austria herself but for the FRG, Switzerland, Italy, and for NATO forces in Bavaria.”

“By allowing its defenses to become the least effective in Europe,” agreed the Swiss political scientist Stephan Kux in 1986, Austria has allowed a state of affairs to arise which can ultimately serve the interests of only one of the super powers. Austria is the Warsaw Pact’s shortcut to Bavaria and the Balkans and northern Italy. A weak Austrian-Swiss air corridor could be used by forward-based Soviet aircraft in a blitz attack against France’s tactical nuclear missile sites on the Plateau d’Albion or NATO’s airbases in southern Germany, an eventuality for which NATO’s commanders have had to plan for some years.

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242 Reiter, Österreichische Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik, 152.
244 Kux, 28.
Standing against such a possibility in the eyes of analysts like Unterberger was not so much Austrian national defense but the strategic calculations of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Austrian neutrality was, according to his words in 1981, “in the mutual interest of the West and, above all, the East in the closure of certain connecting routes for the strategy of the opponent.”

“In wartime,” Kruzel explained in 1989, Austria’s neutrality might well be preserved by the fact that each alliance, while seeing some military benefit in the use of Austrian territory, might fear that the other side would gain an even greater advantage. If Warsaw Pact forces began to move up the Danube corridor, NATO could be expected quickly to occupy western Austria and link up its central and southern commands. If NATO moved first, the Warsaw Pact would almost certainly move into eastern Austria and gain an enviable position for a further advance against Italy and Yugoslavia. The key determinant of Austria’s fate in a European war is whether each alliance would be willing to forgo its own advantages from invading Austria in order to prevent its adversary from gaining potentially greater benefits. Whatever resistance the Austrian military might offer would be a distinctly secondary consideration.

The French scholar Alain Carton agreed two years later, writing that each alliance would have dissuaded itself from occupying Austrian territory: if the Warsaw Pact or Soviet forces broached the Danube corridor, NATO forces would have occupied western Austria and reattached the southern command to the central command; if NATO was the first to move, adversary forces would have been tempted to take eastern Austria and utilize it as a support against Italy and Yugoslavia.

Many analysts thus seemed to confirm in retrospect the 1958 aphorism of Austrian undersecretary for defense Karl Stephani (SPÖ) that the eastern border province

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246 Kruzel, 153.
of “Burgenland will be defended in Tyrol.” The Austrian scholar Christian Stadler, for example, concluded in 2005 that “it was from the beginning basically a question of common sense to realize that a classical military defense of the entire Austrian territory was not conceivable” during the Cold War. Austria “was geopolitically far more threatened in relationship to Switzerland and simultaneously de facto strategically indefensible.” “Austria’s security,” wrote Stadler, “rested at the time upon the hermitic tension that ruled worldwide, a tension that provided for a situation in which one side did not begrudge the respective other side the gain of a millimeter of territory and/or influence.”

Unterberger expressed a similar calculation in 1992, writing that neutrality had been “a good instrument to hold the Soviet Army—from which emanated as the single factor a concrete threat—at a distance from Austrian soil” by giving “Moscow so to speak the guarantee that the West would also not occupy any strategically favorable bases and lines of communications in Austria as long as the Soviet Union restrained itself.” “On the other hand,” analyzed Unterberger,

Austria stood under a tacit or at least hoped for, not completely without justification, security guarantee of the West against a threat from the east. As long as the East-West conflict lasted, an occupation of Austria by the former Warsaw Pact would have been in fact for the West an intolerable weakening of the strategic status quo that would have most likely moved the West to intervene.

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Austrian neutrality, therefore, was not freestanding but ultimately depended upon the indirect support of others for existence. As the next chapter reveals, though, it is questionable whether Austria was actually neutral and not, in the words of Austrian historian Günter Bischoff, a “secret ally” of NATO in the Cold War.\textsuperscript{251}

\textsuperscript{251} See, for example: Günter Bischof, \textit{Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-55: The Leverage of the Weak}, King’s College Cold War History Series (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 152.
Chapter VII
Aligned Neutrality: Austria’s not so Neutral Relationship with the West

Beneath the Surface: Preparations for Underground Warfare in Austria

On Saturday, January 20, 1996, the American ambassador in Vienna, Swanee Hunt, urgently sought an audience with leading Austrian politicians: Chancellor Franz Vranitzky, Vice-Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel, and Defense Minster Werner Fasslabend. Ambassador Hunt telephoned those she could not meet personally. The reason for her haste was a Boston Globe story that day reporting on weapons caches buried in Austrian soil by the CIA from 1950 to 1954, particularly after the outbreak of the Korean War. Documents released by the CIA that January indicated 82 planned caches, but ultimately the CIA built only 79 of these hidden depots across the Austrian provinces of Salzburg, Styria, and Upper Austria. Ambassador Hunt apologized for the continued presence of these “forgotten” stocks of small arms and explosives in Austria.1 She also reassured her Austrian interlocutors that the caches contained no atomic, biological, or chemical (ABC) weapons.2

For Austrian military historian Manfried Rauchensteiner, in these caches “everything indicated that with the weapons and equipment the armament of a partisan troop of around 2,000 men was to be made possible.”3 Rauchensteiner’s colleague M. Christian Ortner from Vienna’s Heeresgeschichtliches Museum (HGM) agreed, seeing in the depots clear evidence for the intended establishment of an Austrian resistance

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supported by U.S. Special Forces. Ortner saw further evidence for this theory in the basing from 1953 on of the 10th Special Forces Group in nearby Bad Tölz, Bavaria.\(^4\)

The depots were to be available in case the Soviets overran Austria and other parts of Western Europe in a general war. The Americans built the depots during military maneuvers according to a clear pattern. Watertight packed weapons and equipment, along with ammunition and medical supplies, formed layers in the depots, with digging tools on top. Concealing the depots were dirt and foliage, along with empty cans, in order to foil metal detectors.\(^5\)

Of the 79 depots revealed by the CIA, the Austrians cleared 68 while one remained unlocated. The condition of the equipment, Rauchensteiner wrote, was “varied. Some depots were only garbage dumps, others were in exceptional condition.”\(^6\)

For all of the sensation associated with these weapons depots, Austrian historian Oliver Rathkolb was less than impressed. The weapons caches made upon Rathkolb “rather the impression of an ‘arm-chair Mickey Mouse planning game’ for the fulfillment of various directives from CIA headquarters.” Rathkolb noted that

one cache was laid out next to a creek so that during high water the contents were flooded; the first caches were hardly protected against rain and therefore the contents were immediately rusted already before 1955;
one depot with weapons and ammunition for a company was dug in extremely deep, so that these weapons could have only been dug out with the heaviest digging equipment.\(^7\)

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\(^6\) Ibid.

The Austrians had accidentally discovered the other ten caches throughout the years, by construction work, for example. “Thus,” the Austrian military historian Walter Blasi wrote, “for experts the surprise contained itself within limits.”8 Similarly, the British had also dug concealed weapons depots in Carinthia in tandem with the Americans, but local inhabitants had discovered and plundered some of these in the 1960s. The British subsequently notified the Austrian government, which in turn cleared the depots.9

Even after the weapons depots were cleared, many questions remained. “For which D-Day were the depots planned?” Rauchensteiner asked at a symposium on February 28, 1997. “Who was supposed to open the depots in a contingency and who was supposed to lead a partisan war? And who really knew about this, given that evidently high ranking American officers were not informed?”10

The Austrian publisher and former World War II resistance member Fritz Molden thought he could answer at least some of these questions. According to the Austrian writer Otto Klambauer, “the apology of the US-ambassador angered” Molden, who thought rather that the Austrian government owed the Americans gratitude.11 Molden declared in an interview on the day following the arms caches revelation namely that the Austrian cabinet of Chancellor Leopold Figl had asked for these arms while Molden himself functioned as the middleman between the Americans and the Austrians. In

11 Klambauer, 76.
addition to Figl, Molden also named in the federal government Vice-Chancellor Adolf Schärf, Foreign Minister Karl Gruber, Interior Minister Oskar Helmer, and his undersecretary Ferdinand Graf as knowing about these arms depots. According to Molden, the pertinent provincial governors also knew about this “top secret” Austrian project, including in the provinces of Lower Austria and Burgenland in the Soviet zone. Here American soldiers brought arms and radio equipment.12

Molden’s revelations in January 1996 were of a piece with his memoirs of the occupation period published in 1980. Molden wrote that during the occupation “in the western provinces and in the western sectors of Vienna precautionary measures were considered and taken” so that “in case of a complete cut off of the eastern zone by the Soviets links could still be maintained underground.” Austrians like Molden “strove to acquire an exact understanding of the situation in the Soviet zone and to maintain contact with mayors and other functionaries there.” Molden also sought “possibilities of communication, above all radios, as well as weapons and correspondingly trained personal in order to be able to support possible efforts in the eastern zone towards a reunification of Austria.” With particular relevance for later events, Molden wrote that “it was also attempted to lay over all of Austria a network of communication lines and support bases that should maintain and strengthen as far as possible the country’s power of resistance in case of occupation of the western zones of Austria by the Soviet Union or its satellites.” The Austrians also planned for moving the capital in case of emergency to

12 Segur-Cabanac, 55.
a western Austrian city or, if this were not possible, abroad (Salzburg and New York, respectively, were the primary candidates under consideration).  

In the words of Molden, the Austrians who organized these measures were “above all people who had gathered experience in the resistance during the Second World War.” Molden himself described an invitation by some Allied officers and Austrians already in the summer of 1946 to offer his services to a possible ant-Soviet resistance organization. Having only ceased fighting against the Third Reich the previous summer, Molden considered the “great questioning ceremony almost comic” and “immediately declared” his “readiness to take part again.” Shortly thereafter Molden found himself “in conversation with a circle, in which hardly one of those present was unknown to me.” Molden had discovered his old resistance buddies from the fight against the Third Reich having “now come together without much discussion in order to also defend, if necessary, this regained freedom against another dictatorship.”

Molden “established contacts anew with my Allied friends.” Molden met with “diverse Allied staffs in Vienna and in the west of Austria” and also “traveled to England and America for the first time in 1947.” “All of this,” wrote Molden in 1980, “continually occurred with the agreement of points of contact in the Austrian federal government who, however, could naturally have nothing officially to do with these things.” Molden recorded personally having “multiple occasions to lead detailed conversations with then federal chancellor Figl as well as, above all, with Interior Minister Oskar Helmer, Foreign Minister Dr. Karl Gruber, and Ferdinand Graf, undersecretary in the Interior Ministry.” “Nothing took place,” noted Molden, “that

14 Ibid, 126.
would not have been fundamentally accorded.” Austria’s partisans-in-waiting also maintained ties with the gendarmerie, the B-Gendarmerie, Austrian trade union leaders like Franz Olah, and the Austrian Farmer’s Federation (Österreichischer Bauernbund) as well as the aforementioned provincial governors.\(^{15}\)

In both his 1980 memoirs and his January 21, 1996, interview, Molden drew a link between Austrian covert activities and the wave of Soviet arrests that took place in 1948, claiming about 300 Austrians for the gulag. Information on underground activities provided by Soviet moles led to this crackdown involving several prominent Soviet seizures of Austrian citizens, including the detective Anton Marek and the 29-year old Dr. Margarethe Ottilinger, an Austrian economist involved in the administration of the Marshall Plan in Austria. “It was clear to us,” wrote Molden in 1980 with reference to these arrests, “that the government could not protect us if something was blown. But, after all, there was no protection during the resistance against the grasp of the Gestapo.” Molden “saluted” these individuals who endured interrogation, torture, and suicide attempts before coming home to Austria after the 1955 signing of the State Treaty. “Having stuck out their necks once again after ten years of war and occupation,” Molden wrote, “they had to atone for their engagement on behalf of a free Austria for seven years in the camps of the gulag.”\(^{16}\)

Hugo Portisch, who, in the words of Austrian historian Christian Segur-Cabanac, “conducted the most exact research for his TV series Österreich II,” substantiated Molden’s claims, saying that “it was the Austrians who wanted these weapons depots.” In this context, Portisch recalled the discussion in his television documentary of the

\(^{15}\) Ibid, 127-128.
\(^{16}\) Molden, 127-129; and Segur-Cabanac, 55-56.
transport of valuable Austrian art works across the Atlantic. After touring various West European capitals, many of these Austrian masterpieces worth many billions of Schillings in 1998 terms sailed secretly and uninsured (!) onboard a U.S. Navy warship to America. In Österreich II, former foreign minister Gruber stated that these art works were to be sold for “procurement purposes” (i.e. weapons purchases) in case of an emergency. Not until 1952 did these cultural gems return to Austria.\(^{17}\)

Rauchensteiner, in contrast, doubted at the February 1997 symposium that Austrians knew anything about the CIA weapons depots. The “quadripartite divided and occupied Austria,” he declared, “knew about only a few” Western preparations for defending against a Soviet attack against Austria and Europe. “Only a very few leading politicians and military planners knew about one or the other project,” added Rauchensteiner. “About the establishment of the CIA depots they knew nothing.”\(^{18}\) The Austrian diplomat Ludwig Steiner, once a close associate of Foreign Minister Gruber, also questioned Molden’s version of events, given that it would have been hard to keep the CIA depots secret with such a large group of people knowing about them. The American State Department, meanwhile, refuted Molden’s claim that the establishment of the CIA depots was already in 1947 under consideration by the Americans.\(^{19}\)

At the same symposium with Rauchensteiner, Rathkolb observed that “for the present there is no indication at all of participation by then members of the federal government in this specific CIA action in contrast” to other “covert” operations in Austria such as the B-Gendarmerie. As evidence of Austrian ignorance of the CIA depots, Rathkolb noted that “when such depots were discovered before 1955, the relevant

\(^{17}\) Segur-Cabanac, 58.
\(^{19}\) Segur-Cabanac, 58.
American military authorities were immediately concerned with camouflaging these caches as black market activities of individual soldiers.” Such was the case with the discovery of one cache on August 10, 1955, near Königsstadtwald im Hintersee (Salzburg). Rathkolb, moreover, determined that “the available documents allow no statement over whether the discovered weapons depots were actually intended for operations by Austrian partisans or were contemplated for routed Allied units and/or Allied commando units—with or without Austrian participation.”

Even if the arms caches were intended for Austrian partisans, a fellow participant at the symposium, Heimo Siegel, doubted that secrecy considerations would have allowed recruitment of potential partisans before an actual war.

Not to be outdone by the West, the Soviets also left behind secret weapons caches for Communist supporters before Soviet withdrawal in 1955. The KGB established depots in several villages, a monastery, and two ruined castles.

A KGB defector also subsequently revealed before British and German intelligence services in the fall of 1996 that the Soviets had also established secret weapons caches in Austria in 1962. Operation Grot smuggled weapons and explosives by diplomatic pouch into Austria, whereupon Soviet agents established dozens of secret arms depots in preparation for possible partisan activities in Austria. The Austrians received a small taste of these depots in May 1990, when an amateur archeologist stumbled upon a watertight box containing an operational Soviet military radio in a


21 Heimo Siegel, “Waffendepots in Oberösterreich,” in Sorry Guys, No Gold!, 74. For more information on the CIA weapons depots, see the 1996, nos. 4-5 issue of Zoom online at: Es muss nicht immer Gladio sein (accessed September 9, 2005); available from http://zoom.mediaweb.at/zoom_4596/inhalt4596.html.

22 James Jay Carafano, Waltzing into the Cold War: The Struggle for Occupied Austria, Texas A&M University Military History series (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 161.
wooded area of Vienna. In Operation Unterholz, Austrian police observed the cache for weeks in the hopes of catching the radio’s operators. The Soviet agents, though, used a break in the police monitoring caused by a downpour to steal away the radio. By 1997 when the KGB defector’s revelations allowed Austrian police to search in earnest for the Soviet arms caches, changes in landscape and construction meant that only a few rusty pistols were discoverable in six depots.23

These secret arms caches, both from the East and the West, symbolized that neutrality did not keep Austria out of the Cold War. Rather, neutrality merely forced this conflict in Austria undercover into the realm of shadows. As the following vignettes in this chapter demonstrate, more often than not Austria, as a free society and constituent member of Western civilization, took the side of the West in this conflict, in the process skirting or even outright breaking neutrality’s rules.

**Partisan Warfare to the Sound of Music: Franz Olah’s “Social Club”**

Former Austrian union leader Franz Olah stated to the press on January 21, 1996, that he knew nothing about these recently revealed weapons depots.24 This was despite references by Molden in his 1980 memoirs to possessing “a very close and good contact with the Austrian Trade Union Federation [Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund or ÖGB]” and the involvement of “Olah and many of his colleagues in these conversations.” Molden remembered Olah “engaging himself very much in these affairs.”25 Olah claimed, though, to have been told by Interior Minister Helmer that the Americans had

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24 Segur-Cabanac, 57.
25 Molden, 127-128.
cached arms supplies for emergencies because the Soviets had denied the Austrian police appropriate armament. By and large, however, Olah was in no mood to talk. He felt that such matters should remain covert and that it would be best if Molden just shut up.26

Attention immediately turned to Olah in January 1996 because he had his own well-documented involvement with paramilitary activities in Austria during the Cold War. During an embezzlement trial in 1969, Olah described how already in 1947 the president of the ÖGB, Johann Böhm, and the American high commissioner had agreed—“surely with knowledge of the party leadership” of the SPÖ—to empower Olah with the authority “to give necessary declarations over the radio station Rot-Weiβ-Rot” of the Americans “in case of unexpected events.” Olah and others worried about the “possibility of acts of violence by the Communists that could lead to a laming of the Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund’s headquarters in the first district” of Vienna. Olah received a “written confirmation” to enter “at any time” the facilities of Rot-Weiβ-Rot, conveniently located a streetcorner away from Olah’s office in the seventh district in the American sector of Vienna. Olah’s residence was also in the American sector.27

Olah wrote later in his 1995 memoirs that “US-headquarters” told him that “if the situation called for it—regardless of time of day or night—a military jeep would pick me up and bring me to the station.” If, moreover, the Soviets cut off Vienna or their occupation zone, “a US-military plane would first fly me out to the West, in order to enable me to initiate resistance activities after assessing the situation.”28

The “Communist putsch attempt” of 1950, however, led Olah to create an “organization of permanent defense against any eventual new coup or general strike

26 Segur-Cabanac, 57.
27 Wilhelm Svoboda, Franz Olah: Eine Spurensicherung (Vienna: Promedia Verlag, 1990), 34.
28 Franz Olah, Die Erinnerungen (Vienna: Amalthea Verlag, 1995), 146.
attempt” supported by “a relative small cadre of young workers.” This was the charmingly named “Hiking, Sport, and Social Club [Wander-, Sport- und Geselligkeitsverein].” All told, it encompassed about 2,000 individuals.30

This cover organization operated radio stations in the capitals of all Austrian provinces with the exception of Voralberg. Lower Austria, whose capital was then collocated in the city-province of Vienna, also had radio stations in the cities of Wiener Neustadt, St. Pölten, and Krems. Olah’s “social club” also maintained a motor pool in Vienna and various weapons caches in Austria’s Western zones of occupation, the larger of them under a “double key” arrangement allowing Olah and one of his associates to use these weapons. Olah himself always maintained “in a steel cabinet in my office a small supply of weapons, including submachine guns” and “a large number of tear gas bombs.” In the town of Golling in the province of Salzburg, meanwhile, Olah’s club stocked winter furnishings for a “complete company.”31

Olah described at his 1969 trial how club members trained to utilize this equipment in a variety of ways. Many learned how to operate radios while “special groups” trained “in the handling of modern firearms” and “in the use of plastic explosives.” Olah also had a “few judo groups.” The winter furnishings stored in a house in Golling, meanwhile, served the needs of a “special group” created for “winter operations in the mountains.” As Olah described in 1980 to the Salzburger Nachrichten,

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29 Svoboda, 34-35.
31 Olah, 143, 146.
here “according to a conservative estimate...about 200 men” could find shoes, fur jackets, fur hats, fur gloves, sleeping bags, air mattresses, skis, ice picks, and ropes.\(^{32}\)

Many purchases of this equipment occurred initially through the ÖGB, because, according to Olah’s trial testimony, “this was less conspicuous.” Two “special accounts” administered by union officials such as Olah’s secretary Heinrich Daurer reimbursed the ÖGB for any expenses. Olah and his associates later sought the “cover of a firm” because “certain things could be more easily camouflaged this way.” Thus the “lumber” company Atlanta and subsequently the Omnia-Waren-Handels AG came into being.\(^{33}\) Olah recalled in his memoirs, moreover, that Walter Glöckel, the director of the Steyr auto firm, helped the “club” acquire trucks that were then “fitted with roof covers and furnished as troop transports with rows of seats.” “Connections were necessary,” remembered Olah, “in order to get to such vehicles.”\(^{34}\)

Daurer later estimated the complete costs of Olah’s “special project” between eight and ten million Schillings.\(^{35}\) With typical silence, Olah refused throughout the years to reveal his paymasters. Like the conservative Austrian journalist Walter Raming in 1969, though, most students of Olah’s paramilitary activities have suspected the ultimate source of these funds to be American unions such as the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) operating in conjunction with the CIA and the American State Department.\(^{36}\) Such an arrangement would correspond to Olah’s assessment in his

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\(^{32}\) Svoboda, 35, 39-40.  
\(^{33}\) Ibid, 35.  
\(^{34}\) Olah, 151.  
\(^{36}\) Rathkolb, \textit{Washington ruft Wien}, 204; and Svoboda, 40.
memos of the United States as “our strongest support, indeed, our ally. To it we owe the fact that we were able to withstand ten years of occupation.”\textsuperscript{(37)}

Olah’s “special project” continued to exist after 1955, even though the State Treaty should have removed any fear of a Communist putsch. In the words of Olah’s memoirs, however, the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolt the following year “exposed that feeling of security as very brittle indeed and possibly deceptive.” Instead, Olah’s “club” underwent a reorganization and even expansion in such areas as radio communication. Not until 1967 did the “special project” finally disband.\textsuperscript{(38)}

In contrast to the CIA arms caches, Olah left no doubt that high-ranking Austrian officials knew about his activities. Olah in his memoirs cited Interior Minister Helmer, ÖGB president Böhm, and Vice-Chancellor Schärf as being “informed about the special project, without, however, knowledge of the details of the organization.” In addition to these members of the SPÖ, Olah had connections to the “‘black’ half of the empire” through Heinrich Drimmel, a subsequent federal education minister. Introduced to Olah right after the events of October 1950, Drimmel offered to connect Olah in critical situations with all Lower Austrian district leaders via the Catholic student fraternity organization (\textit{Cartellverband}). Most of these individuals, though, Olah wrote, “did not want to know exact details, which surely was the reasonable attitude.” Olah recalled that “even Chancellor Figl never spoke with me about this matter” and “only once made an inside comment when he introduced me to the new French ambassador with the words: ‘Look at him, that is the most dangerous man in Austria!’”\textsuperscript{(39)}

\textsuperscript{(37)} Olah, 146.
\textsuperscript{(38)} Olah, 151-152; and Svoboda, 40-41.
\textsuperscript{(39)} Olah, 151.
Austrian historian Christian Stifter observed that this official insider knowledge of covert paramilitary activities led to “seemingly strange situations that could have probably only taken place in this form in Austria.”\(^{40}\) In 1952, for example, Austrian police confiscated radios from Olah’s subordinates, but then returned them on orders from higher authorities.\(^{41}\) Austrian police during a radio exercise also discovered new radios acquired for Olah’s organization after the Hungarian uprising. Olah, however, personally picked up these radios from the Interior Ministry after their true purpose became evident.\(^{42}\) Given that Olah became interior minister for one year in 1963, Austrian historian Manfred Lechner could not ignore the irony that “at this time the interior minister of the neutral Austrian republic led a secret paramilitary troop paid by American financiers.”\(^{43}\)

Any covert operation such as Olah’s “special project” was bound to raise all sorts of questions and suspicions. The German news magazine *Stern*, for example, once asked Olah whether former Nazis or SS members in the lumber and construction union headed by him had joined his “club.” Olah answered that “at the time a colorfully thrown together group was in the construction business. In part there were *Volksdeutsche* who had been refugees (and had long since become Austrians in the interim), and naturally some former Nazis who had been thrown out of their professions and now were in construction.”\(^{44}\)

Although the limited documentary evidence is inconclusive, Rathkolb thought that the presumed financing of the “special project” via American unions indicated an

\(^{40}\) Stifter, 134.
\(^{41}\) Svoboda, 37-39.
\(^{42}\) Stifter, 134.
\(^{44}\) Stifter, 132.
organization separate from the CIA arms caches established with help of the American army.\textsuperscript{45} Olah’s memoirs themselves rejected any connections between his “club” and other paramilitary activities. “All speculation,” Olah stated, about connections with similar organizations abroad (e.g. “Gladio”) are fairy tales. We knew nothing about such establishments; reports of this kind brought forth by so-called contemporary historians or publicity seekers in broadcasts of the ORF are constructs of fantasy. None of the people who have commented about this in the last few years knew something about our organization or, indeed, about its financing. An especially evil slander is the version according to which contacts from our side existed to terrorist and bomb thrower groups in South Tyrol.\textsuperscript{46}

\textit{Espionage to the Sound of Music: Intelligence Gathering in Austria}

No discussion of covert activities in Austria would be complete without acknowledgement of the prodigious role espionage has played (and yet plays?) in Austria after World War II. The Austrian historian and journalist Otto Klambauer described Austria in 2000 as having been the “playpen [\textit{Tummelplatz}] of East-West espionage.”\textsuperscript{47} Klambauer’s colleague Sigfried Beer also reflected that year that it had “long become a journalistic platitude to characterize postwar quadripartite occupied Austria and particularly its federal capital as target and turntable of European espionage in the Cold War of the secret services.” Beer correctly noted that

this cliché image of Vienna as a dark place of intrigue of everyone against everyone is not infrequently conjoined with the image nourished since a half-century and confirmed again and again for its enthusiastic viewers by the Anglo-American cult film produced on location in 1948 and released in 1949, \textit{The Third Man}: the post-war metropolis as city and meeting place of agents, deceivers, opportunists, and dealmakers.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{46} Olah, 151.
\textsuperscript{47} Klambauer, 124.
As the *Film Archiv Austria* documented with its film series *Besetzte Bilder* ("Occupied Pictures") presented in downtown Vienna from May 5 to June 26, 2005, many films throughout the years have followed in the footsteps of *The Third Man*. *The Double Man* (1967) with Yul Brynner, the Austro-German coproduction *Und Jimmy ging zum Regenbogen* (1971), *The Salzburg Connection* (1972) with Barry Newman, *Scorpio* (1973) with Burt Lancaster, and *Permission to Kill* (1975) with Ava Gardner all chose Austria as a setting for cloak and dagger tales. Even James Bond (a.k.a. Timothy Dalton) made an appearance in Vienna’s Prater amusement park in the 1987 thriller *The Living Daylights*.⁴⁹

According to Austrian facts, such fantasies gave rise. Residents of Vienna such as former deputy mayor Erhard Busek (1978-1987, ÖVP) emphasized that “at the time of the Cold War Chinese, Soviets, and Americans had respectively 500 embassy personnel registered here; for little Austria!” Busek’s Viennese colleague from the SPÖ, former mayor Helmut Zilk (1984-1994), confirmed that the mere “number of embassy personnel” showed that Vienna was a “central meeting point of the secret services….What the Chinese, the Russians had here for employees could have manned 20 embassies.”⁵⁰

Although the figures of Austrian political scientist Anselm Skuhra were not as high as

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⁴⁹ Personal observations of the author in Vienna.
Busek’s, Skuhra still saw a “strong overrepresentation of both superpowers’ embassies”
during the Cold War in staffs of “around 150 persons each.”

Austria’s involvement with Cold War espionage began already during the
quadripartite occupation. Key CIA successes such as the recruitment of Soviet agents
Peter Popov and Peter S. Deriabin took place in Austria. The CIA also participated in a
project initiated by the British intelligence service MI6 in Vienna, Operation Silver/Lord
(American and British codenames, respectively). This involved using a 70 meter tunnel
from 1949 to 1955 to tap into Soviet telephone lines accidentally discovered near
Vienna’s Schwechat airport running from the local Soviet intelligence headquarters in the
Hotel Imperial on the Ringstraße. The information gathered from this tunnel, later
described by one British intelligence officer as “enormous,” often takes credit for
assuring the West that the Soviets had no plans to extend hostilities in the Korean War to
Europe. Silver/Lord then formed the model for the Anglo-American tunnel operation
Gold/Stopwatch in Berlin from 1955 to 1956.

The occupation also witnessed the shadowy activities of the former Hungarian
colonel Dr. Karoly Ney. In the Totes Gebirge region of Austria’s mountainous
Salzkammergut resort area, Ney trained Hungarian emigrants for guerrilla warfare in
Romania, particularly its Alpine Siebenbürgen area. According to some reports, the
suppression of these groups required numerous Romanian units as well as perhaps 72,000
Soviet soldiers. At the very least, Austrian police knew about Ney (or Dr. Neff or Dr.

51 Anselm Skuhra, “Österreichische Sicherheitspolitik,” in Handbuch des politischen Systems
Österreichs, eds. Herbert Duchs, Peter Gerlich, Herben Gottweis, Franz Horner, Helmut Kramer, Volkmar
Lauber, Wolfgang C. Müller, and Emmerich Tülos (Vienna: Manzsche Verlags- und
Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1991), 673.
52 Beer, 96; and Klambauer, 125-126. For more information on Operations Silver and Gold, see:
Peff, Ney’s covers) and Austrian authorities, most likely under the direction of American military authorities, provided Ney in the early 1950s with falsified documents allowing him to emigrate to West Germany where he founded a firm developing artificial resins for construction work.53

War in the shadows could sometimes be deadly for Austrians, as the mystery surrounding the crash of Austria Airline’s Vickers Viscount 837 on September 26, 1960, during a landing in Moscow suggested. Named the Joseph Haydn, the plane went down in a woods after a Moscow control tower guided it over a military security area and ordered it to fly unusually low during a fog, killing all but five passengers and a stewardess from the 31 on board. Speculation flared up as it became known that four Western military attachés accredited in Moscow were onboard: United States Army majors Willis H. Knipe and Edward Wooten, the deputy United States Air Force attaché in Moscow, John Cooke, and the French lieutenant colonel Paul Bertrand. Along with intelligence material gathered by these four during a recent rail trip across the Soviet Union, the Joseph Haydn also carried sensitive material from the American embassy in Vienna. Udo Proksch, meanwhile, the owner of Vienna’s famed Demel pastry maker and café with well-known contacts to Soviet bloc intelligence services, strangely enough did not board the Joseph Haydn even though he had purchased a ticket.54

The experience of Major Alexander Buschek, Austrian military attaché in Moscow and later chief of the Bundesheer’s intelligence service (Heeresnachrichtenamt or HNA), only added to the never fully answered questions surrounding the Joseph

54 Kallinger and Tozzer, 116-117.
Haydn’s crash. As the military attaché of a neutral country, Buschek later described how he had good contacts to other military attachés as well as their Soviet interlocutors, thus resulting in a certain “messenger boy function.” In the case of the Joseph Haydn, Buschek, who was at the crash site within hours of the “accident,” received from the Soviets the task of telling the Western countries that “you do not need to bother, you do not need to search for anything, the Soviets have found everything.”

Usually, though, the possible existence of espionage activities did not concern the Austrians. Former foreign minister Leopold Gratz reflected after the Cold War that Austria was “probably really the turntable” for espionage. But as Austrians we were insofar tolerant as we said, as long as no acts of violence took place, as long as Americans spied in Vienna against Russians or Czechs against Americans, it is not our affair—as long as Austrian state secrets are not revealed. But these cannot be revealed, in Austria it is only necessary to buy an official calendar in order to know all Bundesheer installations.

Yet Austria was not just a passive observer of Cold War espionage. Austrian observers of intelligence activities like Harald Irnberger saw the HNA as an “agency of NATO.” Irnberger discerned evidence for this assessment in the fact that the first head of the HNA’s forerunner, the Gruppe für Nachrichtenwesen, was Kurt Benno Fechner. He was an associate from the days of Hitler’s Wehrmacht of spymaster Reinhard Gehlen, the founding father of West Germany’s Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND).

The leftist Hans Wolker confirmed that along with Fechner “Nazi officers and Hitler spies…SS and Nazi agents, Skorzeny’s people, and men of the bloody Hitler

55 Ibid, 116-118.
56 Klambauer, 127.
sabotage troop *Division zur besonderen Verwendung 800 Brandenburg*” established the Bundesheer’s intelligence service. With people like Gehlen possessing similar backgrounds going back to work in postwar West Germany, the Bundesheer could “very easily” establish “very close” contacts with the BND. It was thus only natural that “under Fechner’s direction” Austrian intelligence “was completely attuned to the needs of NATO and the West German Bundeswehr.” Secrecy regulations and equipment, for example, came “entirely from the American and West German armed forces.”

Irberger described Austrian intelligence cooperation with NATO countries continuing after the Bundesheer’s founding. Austrian intelligence officers regularly received payments from the Americans for various services and met often with American and German intelligence officials. Austrian intelligence officers also attended training courses in NATO countries. Wolker confirmed that among Austrian intelligence officials “almost all leading espionage officers were trained in the USA” while NATO countries kept Austria steadily supplied with up-to-date espionage equipment.

Such links sometimes had suspicious consequences. At the request of the United Nations, several Bundesheer officers participated in observer groups monitoring the Suez Canal region following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Austrian newspaper photographs of these officers contained a concealed “man without a face.” Wolker, however, identified this mystery man as Major Heinrich Zotlöterer, one of the Bundesheer’s leading espionage experts trained in the United States and “enjoying the special faith of the appropriate American intelligence authorities.” Wolker was amazed that “precisely this

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59 Irberger, 189.
60 Wolker, 104.
confidant of American intelligence was smuggled into a UN-observer group as the representative of neutral Austria and was supposed to be deployed to an area in which armies faced each other on war footing!”

NATO efforts in Austria were not for naught. Austrian intelligence officials took over from Western intelligence officials the interrogation of refugees from Soviet bloc countries (escapee program) after the end of the occupation in 1955 and passed on the information gained to NATO countries. After having retired as a brigadier, meanwhile, Buschek confirmed suspicions that Austrian intelligence officials relied upon Austrians with contacts to Eastern Europe to gather intelligence there while underway for business or personal reasons. The Austrians then exchanged this information with other (Western) intelligence services.

Wolker similarly found links between Austrian intelligence and NATO’s Europe-wide network of “stay behind” organizations (Gladio) designed, like the CIA arms caches and Olah’s “special project” in Austria, to support resistance to possible Soviet occupation. Wolker also found it “conspicuous” that Bundesheer intelligence was interested in “defensive weapons systems and defense establishments” such as bunkers, radar stations, defense factories, air fields, early warning installations, etc.” in the Soviet bloc. “Evidently,” Wolker wrote in answer to his own suspicions, “these investigations were all commissioned by foreign states, because it is surely no accident that copies of all of these espionage reports went to American and West German, thus NATO, secret services.” Wolker found a similar arrangement in the Bundesheer’s radio intelligence

61 Ibid, 50-51.
63 Kallinger and Tozzer, 113-115.
operations, for all Austrian listening stations in eastern Austria clearly pointed toward one-time Communist countries like Hungary and Yugoslavia.64

Paul Luif, an Austrian foreign relations scholar at the Austrian Institute for International Affairs (AIIA, or, in German, Österreichisches Institut für Internationale Politik—OIIIP), concluded in a Neue Zürcher Zeitung essay on August 28, 2000, that “it is becoming ever more apparent that Austria was not really neutral during the Cold War. Thus Austria was an electronic ‘spy’ for the West.”65

The central piece of evidence for this judgment is an electronic listening post at the Königswarte promontory in Austria just across the border from the Slovakian capital of Bratislava, termed by Wolker as “probably the largest and simultaneously most dangerous espionage facility on Austrian soil in the service of the USA and therefore of NATO.” “Day and night on the 344 meter high plateau of the Königswarte,” wrote Wolker, “things are heard, sniffed, photographed, and spied upon” in a facility constructed by the Austrians in the late 1950s with equipment delivered from American depots in Frankfurt am Main. Königswarte’s “many electronic feelers reach deep into the former Soviet Union.” Yet “the Austrian Bundesheer has nothing at all from the listened to and sniffed out facts because it can not evaluate them.” Given that the Austrians did not possess the necessary equipment and documents to evaluate the gathered information, photographs and recordings “must all be transmitted to the West German US espionage headquarters in Wiesbaden.”66

64 Wolker, 101, 119-120, 126-127.
66 Wolker, 132-133, 135-136. The Königswarte has become a popular hiking and nature area. Thus directions to it and maps of its location are online. For example, see: Der Aussichtsturm auf der
Johann Zahradnik, a former Wehrmacht lieutenant colonel and first director of the Königswarte listening post, confirmed that most of the gathered electronic intelligence was useless to the Austrians and only useful in a wider NATO context. Thus it was only fair that the Americans paid the two million Schillings necessary for construction of this facility until its completion in 1958. For good measure, the Americans also equipped the Austrians with mobile, vehicle-mounted listening posts.\textsuperscript{67}

American funding for the Königswarte’s operations continued until the late 1960s.\textsuperscript{68} Wolker in 1993, though, took offense in the fact that thereafter “Austrian taxpayers had to take up the costs” of the Königswarte. American oversight over its operations, meanwhile, remained guaranteed through, for example, regular visits by American intelligence officials. The Austrians who took care of the equipment at the Königswarte had “merely auxiliary and client services to perform, they are, so to speak, the guest workers [\textit{Fremdarbeiter}] of the Americans.”\textsuperscript{69} Although perhaps somewhat biased, Wolker was not alone in his views. Zahradnik himself considered Königswarte a violation of Austria’s neutrality while the \textit{Profil} writers Herbert Lackner and Alfred Worm judged this facility in 1990 to be “in truth part of a neutrality violation operated for the last 30 years.”\textsuperscript{70}

Austria’s pro-Western attitude expressed at Königswarte and elsewhere probably explains why, according to the Austrian journalist Berndt Ender in 1982,

it is, as a rule, not hard for Austrian counterintelligence to recognize the activities of Western intelligence services. They march more carefree through Austria because they consider themselves in a “friendly land.”

\textsuperscript{67} Irnberger, 183.
\textsuperscript{69} Wolker, 135.
\textsuperscript{70} Irnberger, 185; and Lackner and Worm, 17.
Supposedly it has already happened—because of pure “carelessness”—that an agent of a Western country with intelligence material has fallen into the hands of counterintelligence without its intentional engagement. Thus it is not surprising that the relationship between blown Eastern and Western agents is 1:5 on average. There were already times when Western agents did not even take the effort to remove London labels from their shirts.\textsuperscript{71}

The KPÖ brought charges against Robert Lichal, defense minister in the late 1980s, under Paragraph 31 of the criminal code declaring that “whoever domestically establishes or operates a military intelligence service for a foreign power or supports in any way such an intelligence service is to be punished with a prison term of up to two years.”\textsuperscript{72} Predictably, nothing came of this, but the Bundesheer’s intelligence activities give rise to a variety of questions in international as well as Austrian domestic law. Although, for instance, Austrian spymasters were clearly not neutral in spirit, did they actually violate the letter of neutrality law? The third article of Hague Convention V merely made it “forbidden” for “belligerents” to “erect on the territory of a neutral Power a wireless telegraphy station or other apparatus for the purpose of communicating with belligerent forces on land or sea” or to “use any installation of this kind established by them before the war on the territory of a neutral Power for purely military purposes, and which has not been opened for the service of public messages.”\textsuperscript{73}

Article 8, meanwhile, stated that “a neutral Power is not called upon to forbid or restrict the use on behalf of the belligerents of telegraph or telephone cables or of wireless telegraphy apparatus belonging to it or to companies or private individuals.”


\textsuperscript{72} Herbert Lackner, “Fast ausgehorcht,” Profil, June 11, 1990, 32.

\textsuperscript{73} Convention Respecting the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers and Persons in Case of War on Land (accessed April 4, 2006); available from \url{http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/ Hague05.htm}.
The subsequent Article 9 demanded that any restriction imposed nonetheless in this area by a neutral country “must be impartially applied by it to both belligerents” and that “a neutral Power must see to the same obligation being observed by companies or private individuals owning telegraph or telephone cables or wireless telegraphy apparatus.” None of these provisions, of course, make any reference to intelligence activities or intelligence gathering facilities, reflecting once again the previously noted rudimentary character of neutrality law.

Whatever its legal status, Austrian intelligence gathering on behalf of NATO countries continued after the Cold War. Profil reporters Andy Kaltenbrunner and Alfred Worm noted in 1993 during the Balkan wars that “Austria has at its disposal—not least because of outstanding military intelligence services—excellent Balkan and East bloc information. Whatever NATO, UN, CIA, or other international intelligence services know about the Balkans—they know it from Austria.” Defense Minister Fasslabend, they observed, “was not just a carrier of secrets—he is also a secrets supplier. Austria would be highly welcome in the ranks of the WEU as an official listening post to the southeast.” Profil subsequently reported during the air campaign over Kosovo that Austria possessed not only listening posts but also sketches and maps of the Balkans from the time of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, some of which marked paths not even recognized by satellites. Former KGB operatives in Austria, meanwhile, offered their services to the Russian mafia in the capitalist world following the collapse of communism.

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74 Ibid.
77 Klambauer, 127.
Not Trading with the Enemy, I: The Curious Case of Austria under the Marshall Plan

Austrian desires to fully participate in the economic life of the Western world presented problems for the West in hindering the Soviet bloc from strengthening itself at the West’s expense, both before and after the State Treaty. Austria, for example, was among the 16 European countries meeting in Paris from July 12 to September 22, 1947, to establish a plan according to which American aid under the European Recovery Program (ERP or Marshall Plan) could flow to Europe.  

After participating in the founding of the Committee of European Economic Cooperation that summer, Austria was also a signatory to the April 16, 1948, agreement founding the Organization of European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) to administer the ERP. Foreign Minister Gruber, whose 1988 memoirs record him signing in Paris “with a certain pride” for Austria, remembered that the “imposing treaty text” in French alphabetically listed Autriche first among the OEEC countries given that Albania and a divided Germany (Allemagne) were not present in Paris. Thus Gruber signed first and “Austria stood in the birth certificate of the united Europe of the future with its signature at the very top.” Austria subsequently complemented its participation in the ERP by helping to establish the European Payments Union in September 1950 as a multinational payments system.

The participation of united but nonetheless quadripartite-controlled Austria in the ERP and wider European economic developments was by no means a sure thing, however. The Austrian diplomat Hans J. Thalberg remembered in his 1984 memoirs that

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79 Stuhlpfarrer, 12.
80 Karl Gruber, Meine Partei ist Österreich: Privates und Diplomatisches (Vienna: Amalthea Verlag, 1988), 146.
81 Stuhlpfarrer, 12.
for Austria new and outright existence-threatening questions developed through the insistence of the American authorities to allow Marshall Plan aid to benefit only the American occupation zone, perhaps the English and French zones as well, but under no circumstances the part of Austria standing under Soviet control. Large-scale and long lasting diplomatic and political efforts were necessary to illustrate to American authorities, the competent departments, and the Congress the seriousness of a threatened division of our country along the lines of Germany.  

A key sticking point for the Americans, remembered Gruber, was that “Marshall Plan regulations allowed these aid deliveries only there where American inspectors could control the distribution of aid. This was out of the question, however, in the eastern zone.” Gruber’s memoirs recounted that “to our great luck” an “especially intensive lobbying of the White House and the Congress” aided by the American high commissioner Lieutenant General Mark Clark “ultimately made understandable to everyone that the control reports of Austrian authorities had to be considered sufficient in Washington.”

“The State Department, meanwhile,” Gruber wrote in 1953,

showed great understanding for our situation. We worked out together a process by which trusted Austrians were supposed to act as commissioners of the Americans and to deliver the necessary control reports. The American representatives began, moreover, to understand very quickly that in our system of free democracy, free press, and free, public criticism the utilization of Marshall Plan resources was an open book for every observer and that therefore special controls were not necessary. For our part, we were naturally very concerned to prevent Soviet authorities from diverting American aid into their own pockets.

Internal State Department documents in the National Archives reveal that the Americans had good reason not to restrict Marshall Plan to Western Austria. Even though some “leakage” of raw materials and products from the Soviet zone in Austria to
the Soviet bloc would occur, according to a late 1940s memorandum on the ERP and Austria, this “would represent the relatively small price which would be entailed in preserving the unity of Austria and thereby its independent orientation.” The memorandum furthermore observed:

It has been the policy of the United States to treat Austria as a political and economic unity and accordingly to provide assistance to the Austrian Government of all the territory and population under its jurisdiction. Moreover, four-power agreements governing the powers and functions of the Allied Council in Austria stipulate that indigenous or imported supplies are to be pooled regardless of zonal boundaries and that restrictions are to be lifted from the movement of persons, goods, and traffic between the zones. Under the circumstances, an attempt to confine United States assistance to the Western zones would be inconsistent with agreements to which we are a party, would encourage and possibly lead to partition, and afford the Soviets an opportunity to place the onus on the United States for partition. If developments threatened partition, the Austrians might finally in desperation submit to Soviet pressures and join the Eastern bloc in order to preserve national unity.85

The memorandum also worried about possible effects on western Austria of any discrimination against the Soviet zone, given that this zone supplied Austria with food and oil supplies.86 Soviet-run USIA firms, meanwhile, also had an important role in the Austrian economy. The Austrian economic historian Wilfried Mähr, for example, recalled that USIA “was the largest producer of electrical appliances and installations in Austria. A withdrawal of USIA products from the entire Austrian market could have a negative effect upon reconstruction.”87

Thus a process was necessary “in order to enable that also USIA firms received very specific ERP goods.” Formed by American authorities, the Vienna Screening

85 Extension of ERP Assistance to Austria as a Whole; ERP (Marshall Plan) Folder I (A-850); Box 6; Entry 1174A; Lot 54D331; Subject Files on Austria, 1945-1950; Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, 1941-1954; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group (RG) 59; National Archives (NA) Building II, College Park, MD.
86 Ibid.
87 Wilfried Mähr, Der Marshallplan in Österreich (Graz: Verlag Styria, 1989), 122.
Committee “reviewed requests of USIA firms in light of macroeconomic effects.” The committee supported the request if it involved “a product important for Austria” and the Austrian federal government confirmed “that no other firm could produce the same product more economically.” The Austrians had to also obtain Soviet assurance that the USIA product made with American assistance would remain available for Austria and not export to Eastern Europe.88

With American objections out of the way, Gruber recalled in his memoirs that the Soviets had little objection to the Marshall Plan in Austria and “seemed ultimately only concerned about securing American aid deliveries for the Soviet zone without discrimination.”89 Thus the Soviet zone in Austria was the only area administered by the Soviets ever to receive Marshall Plan aid.90 As Fritz Molden recalled, though, Soviet sensibilities prevented “the marking of factories rebuilt or newly installed through the Marshall Plan” to the same degree as in the western occupation zones of Austria. “This small gesture,” commented Molden, “for the reassurance of Soviet mistrust or, more appropriately, as compensation for Soviet inferiority complexes cost no one anything and was gladly accepted if Austria’s eastern zone could thereby enjoy Marshall Plan funds.”91

American authorities still remained reticent, however, to invest Marshall Plan funds in Soviet occupied territory. The previously cited State Department memorandum noted that “as for capital equipment sent to Austria under the ERP, informal approaches to the Austrian government could assure that this would for the most part be installed and

88 Ibid.
89 Gruber, Meine Partei, 145.
90 Günter Bischof, Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-55: The Leverage of the Weak, King’s College Cold War History Series (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 102-103.
91 Molden, 140.
utilized in the Western zones.”

The net result noted by Austrian scholars like Michael Gehler is that eastern Austria participated in the Marshall Plan only to a limited degree. In 1953, for instance, only 18% of Marshall Plan funds in Austria went to the Soviet zone. In all, 13% of ERP aid in Austria went to the Soviet zone and six percent to Vienna, Soviet sectors included. The Austrian scholar Hannes Hofbauer analyzed at a November 1991 symposium that in Vienna and Lower Austria there were 5,000 Schillings of ERP monies for every employed person while in Salzburg 66,000 Schillings per worker came from ERP funds. Salzburg was the secret capital of Austria between 1945 and 1955. In this period a structural gap also developed between western and eastern Austria that continued decades later.

Not Trading with the Enemy, II: Austria and the COCOM Embargo

Restrictions on ERP funds in Austria’s Soviet zone were part and parcel of overall Western embargo policies against the Soviet bloc. Austrian participation in the Marshall Plan meant therefore that Austria had to monitor not only the use of American aid in eastern Austria but also Austrian exports to Soviet bloc countries. With two-thirds more Austrian imports coming from the ERP than from Eastern Europe, it was only logical that Foreign Minister Gruber agreed in October 1948 to coordinate the control of Austrian exports with Washington, DC. In the words of Gehler, though, Gruber evinced to the dismay of American officials “subliminal resistance” to export controls in his position

92 Extension of ERP Assistance to Austria as a Whole.
94 Bischof, 102-103.
that the Austrians would only become active in export controls when they had “concrete information” about violations but would not undertake independent investigations of suspicious firms.96

Western Cold War export controls took on formal shape the following year with the formation of the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (COCOM) on November 22, 1949. COCOM included all NATO countries with the exception of Iceland and, later, Japan. The Mutual Defense Assistance Control Act (Battle Act) of 1951 imposed even tighter export controls in the United States.97 Although not formally a COCOM member, Austria allowed American authorities to review planned economic agreements with, and export licenses to, Eastern Europe.98 Thus American ambassador Llewellyn S. Thompson cabled to Washington, DC, from Vienna on May 27, 1953, that despite the special circumstances in Austria vis-à-vis the Soviets, an effective control system has been devised in which the United States participates directly. A close but highly secret liaison with the Austrian Government has been developed which enables the United States to maintain an informal but direct control over strategic shipments of Austrian origin.99

99 Cable from the American Embassy in Vienna, Austria, May 27, 1953; East-West Trade—1953 Folder (A-490); Box 8; Entry 1174B; Lot 56D294; Austrian Desk Files, 1950-1954 (Arthur Compton File); Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, 1941-1954; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
A CIA report dated January 22, 1954, explained that “occupied Austria, for obvious reason, is not a member of this group of sovereign states [COCOM] but it participates in all measures adopted by this body.” According to the CIA, therefore, “Austria’s controls are roughly equal in scope to those prevailing in the United States; they exceed by far the control obligations undertaken by members of COCOM, the informal international control organization, located in Paris.” The CIA report elaborated:

Cooperation between the US authorities in Vienna and the Austrian Government is very close and comprehensive but of necessity completely informal and confidential. US officials sit in on the deliberations of Austria’s interministerial Trade Advisory Board when it discusses licensing problems and questions of commercial policy; US officials follow step by step all trade negotiations with Soviet bloc countries and keep a close watch on the kind and quantity of strategic goods which Austria must agree to deliver in order to obtain certain essential counterdeliveries; US officials exerted their influenced on the composition of the commodity lists which are subject to Austrian export license and which include—but do not reveal—all items on the US and the international strategic lists; US officials intervene in cases of economic hardship caused to individual firms by the blocking of Eastern trade; US officials also review all important export applications for shipments to the Soviet bloc and keep informed on all USIA license requests.100

A fall 1955 State Department memorandum added that during the occupation a “joint Embassy-Foreign Office screening session twice weekly” reviewed strategically sensitive trade issues. “Informally and secretly inaugurated to assist Austria in determining whether proposed shipments would contravene COCOM or U.S. Battle Act standards,” these meetings “enabled an Embassy Officer to screen Austrian export applications of strategic goods.”101

100 Security Trade Controls in Austria; CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); CIA-RDP; Job 79T01049A; Box 0010; Folder 0005; Document 0002-3; Archives Library Information Center (ALIC); NA.

101 Detailed Development of Major Actions Relating to Austria, (NSC 164/1) from April 7, 1955, through November 14, 1955; Austria 1958 Folder; Box 15; Lot 62D430; Records Related to State
Austrian cooperation with Western trade controls was not always effective in the face of Soviet occupation. W. Averell Harriman explained to President Harry Truman in a November 7, 1952, memorandum that “the Austrian Government enacted in 1948 a Foreign Trade Law which subjects deliveries of certain commodities to export licensing regardless of country of destination.” This allowed Austria “in administering this law” to be “cooperative with respect to all problems relating to U.S. aid” even though “as a country occupied by four powers, one of which is the Soviet Union, Austria is not in a position to enact or enforce export controls which specifically prohibit deliveries to the USSR or its allies.” Nonetheless,

Soviet Occupation forces have to date refused to observe the Law and regularly take goods out of Austria without complying with the licensing requirements or subjecting the goods to Austrian customs inspection. The Austrian Government has repeatedly protested Soviet evasions of Austrian trade and customs legislation but these protests have been unavailing.102

The Austrians, moreover, had sometimes granted the Soviets export licenses for strategically sensitive goods because

refusals of the licenses would probably not have prevented delivery of the commodities to the countries concerned. In all probability the Soviet authorities would have designated the goods as “Soviet Military Property” and transported them out of Austria without clearance by the Austrian authorities if the license application had been rejected.103

Ambassador Thompson noted in his May 27, 1953, cable that such Soviet removals would be “without clearance by the Austrian authorities, without payment of

Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and the National Security Council, 1953-1960; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
102 Memorandum of W. Averell Harriman, Director for Mutual Security, to the President, November 7, 1952; East-West Trade (Numeric File 490) Folder; Box 7; Entry 1174C; Lot 54D541; Office of Italian and Austrian Affairs, 1949-1953; Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, 1941-1953; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
103 Ibid.
duties and other fees, and without the benefit of foreign exchange earnings to the
Austrian economy.” Thompson also emphasized American understanding for Austria’s
continuing dependence on traditional trade with Eastern Europe even though, contrary to
prewar trade patterns, “the Soviet bloc has been reluctant to supply material unless
considerable quantities of heavy manufactured goods—some of them strategic—were
offered in return.” Thompson explained that

the continuing need for Eastern products, coupled with the tightening of
Western export controls and Soviet occupation of part of the country, has
placed Austria in a difficult position. The problem was partially met by
American aid, which made it possible for Austria to purchase most of its
foodstuffs and an important part of its vital coal requirements in the dollar
area. But despite this aid, Polish and Czech coal and Rumanian grain
imports continue to make important contributions to the Austrian
economy. If these imports should be further reduced, double pressure on
Austria would result. Additional dollar exchange would be required to
buy the substitute imports. In addition, the exports intended for Eastern
markets would be difficult to dispose of elsewhere, and substantially
increased unemployment could be expected.104

“A final reason for not entirely curtailing all shipments of strategic goods to the
Soviet bloc,” Thompson cited,

is that the U.S.S.R. is an occupying power. Obvious discrimination
against the Soviet bloc could result in direct retaliatory measures by the
Soviets in Austria. The Soviet Union actually exercises the power of
controlling the movement of goods from the Eastern to the Western
Occupation Zones of Austria. This power often has been used for Soviet
political reasons, including the extortion of desired concessions from the
Austrian government. The intensification of Soviet controls to the point of
a complete blockade would completely disorganize the Austrian economy,
and in effect would result in an economic, if not political, partitioning of
the country. Austria is an integrated economic unit with the basic
industries chiefly in the Western Zones, and the processing industries and
chief food crops in the Eastern Zone. The consequences of such a
blockade would be a heavy decline in production, a reduction in exports,

104 Cable from the American Embassy in Vienna, Austria, May 27, 1953.
increased unemployment, and a substantially increased level of import needs in the Western Zones from the Eastern Zone of Austria.\textsuperscript{105}

Austrian and Western officials emphasized the need for secrecy in the implementation of trade controls during the occupation, whatever their effectiveness. Gehler recounted that “in 1951, Gruber secretly told the American Ambassador, Walter Donnelly, that there should be no publicity concerning Austria’s cooperation with the West in restricting exports to the East.”\textsuperscript{106} Thompson as well referred in his May 1953 cable to the “highly secret nature of our relations with the Austrian government in export control matters” and warned that “publicity would have an unfortunate effect not only on our relations with the Austrians, but would also make it difficult for the Austrians vis-à-vis the Soviet occupation forces.”\textsuperscript{107} The CIA’s January 1954 report also warned that since Austria’s controls are directed against one of the four powers which occupy the country jointly and with equal rights, all controls activities have to be handled with special care and discretion to achieve the desired goal and protect the personal safety of the officials involved.\textsuperscript{108}

Although the need for secrecy may have subsided, Austria continued to restrict trade in strategically sensitive goods to the Soviet bloc after the occupation. Writing after the State Treaty, the fall 1955 State Department memorandum noted that “thus far the Embassy-Foreign Office screening sessions have continued.”\textsuperscript{109} Such trade restrictions, however, were extremely questionable for the newly neutral Austria. The previously cited stipulation of Article 9, Hague Convention V, that a neutral country’s restrictions

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{107} Cable from the American Embassy in Vienna, Austria, May 27, 1953.
\textsuperscript{108} Security Trade Controls in Austria.
\textsuperscript{109} Detailed Development of Major Actions Relating to Austria, (NSC 164/1) from April 7, 1955, through November 14, 1955.
“must be impartially applied by it to both belligerents” applied not just to the
communication provisions of Article 8, but also to Article 7, which stated that “a neutral
Power is not called upon to prevent the export or transport, on behalf of one or other of
the belligerents, of arms, munitions of war, or, in general, of anything which can be of
use to an army or a fleet.”

Clearly, though, COCOM regulations administered by Austria did not
“impartially” stop “the export or transport” of “anything which can be of use to an army
or a fleet.” Perhaps the only loophole for Austria was the fact that the Cold War did not
become hot and therefore COCOM remained a peacetime embargo not calling into effect
the Hague Conventions’ provisions for wartime neutrality. According to the letter of
neutrality law, Austria could unilaterally embargo the Soviet bloc in peacetime, but not
during a war, provided that international trade would still exist in any form during a
possible East-West Third World War of however long duration.

Whether Austria adhered to the spirit of neutrality, though, was no mere academic
matter. Traditional understandings of neutrality as expressed in the Official Swiss

110 Convention Respecting the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers and Persons in Case of War
on Land. Article 7 of Hague Convention XIII from 1907 concerning neutrality at sea also stated that a
“neutral Power is not bound to prevent the export or transit, for the use of either belligerent, of arms,
ammunition, or, in general, of anything which could be of use to an army or fleet.” Yet the immediately
following Article 8 demanded that a

neutral Government is bound to employ the means at its disposal to prevent the fitting out
or arming of any vessel within its jurisdiction which it has reason to believe is intended to
cruise, or engage in hostile operations, against a Power with which that Government is at
peace. It is also bound to display the same vigilance to prevent the departure from its
jurisdiction of any vessel intended to cruise, or engage in hostile operations, which had
been adapted entirely or partly within the said jurisdiction for use in war.

The juxtaposition of these two articles appears as further evidence of neutrality law’s undeveloped
nature. As international law scholar Alfred P. Rubin judged, “how the two articles can be reconciled seems
to lie more in the realm of metaphysics than law.” See: Convention concerning the Rights and Duties of
Neutral Powers in Naval War (accessed February 1, 2006); available from
http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/hague13.htm; and Alfred P. Rubin, “The Concept of
Conception of Neutrality promulgated on November 26, 1954, included the obligation of neutral countries “to conduct a policy of neutrality” as part of a neutral’s efforts “to do everything so that the neutral is not drawn into war and to abstain from anything which might draw the neutral into war.”

Austrian legal scholar Hanspeter Neuhold explained that “permanent neutrality entails the obligation to practice a policy of neutrality. The objective of this policy is to strengthen this status in the eyes of the other states beyond compliance with the legal obligations.” Echoing the Official Swiss Conception of Neutrality’s own language, Neuhold recognized that the formulation of this policy is “left to the discretion of each government concerned,” but admonished that “ultimately the success of this policy depends on the response of the rest of international society to it.”

If it was any consolation for Austria, it was not the only neutral country cutting legal corners in the area of trade. Even the classically neutral Switzerland agreed to abide by COCOM regulations in the informal Hotz-Linder Agreement of July 23, 1951, named after its American (Harold Linder) and Swiss (Jean Hotz) negotiators. The ÖVP politician Andreas Khol later noted in 1985 that the Swiss displayed their traditional “pragmatism” by declaring that “considerations of neutrality policy” actually forbade a

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113 Rathkolb, Washington ruft Wien, 134. This agreement is described online at: Hotz-Linder-Agreement (accessed April 6, 2006); available from http://www.lexhist.ch/externe/protect/textes/d/D48308.html. Significant Swiss primary documents concerning this agreement are also available online, see: Haltung der Schweiz im Ost-West-Handel (accessed April 8, 2006); available from http://dodis.netcetera.ch/docs/7230.pdf; and Notice pour Monsieur le Conseiller fédérale Petitpierre (accessed April 8, 2006); available from http://dodis.netcetera.ch/docs/8820.pdf.
neutral country from “bypassing a trade embargo.” A 1959 State Department memorandum later even offered this argument as justification for Austrian cooperation with COCOM. “Failure to cooperate,” analyzed the memorandum, “might endanger the neutral status of Austria since the Austrian economy would then be taking advantage of the self-denial of Western Free World countries to increase Austrian trade with bloc countries. (This is the rationale on which the Swiss Government bases its controls on strategic goods).”

COCOM successively reduced its lists of restricted goods in 1954 and 1958. The Export Administration Act of 1969, meanwhile, loosened the stricter American export controls. As the Cold War entered a phase of renewed intensity in the late 1970s, though, the United States reimposed stricter export controls on the Soviet bloc. Under pressure from the Reagan Administration, COCOM as well reviewed its list of sensitive products in the fall of 1982, resulting in new controls for computer and information technology in July 1984. At the same time, criticism of Austria and other Western countries for their laxity with respect to high technology transfer to the Soviet bloc appeared at the Pentagon, in United States Senate Subcommittees, and in American publications like Business Week and the Wall Street Journal. According to one

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115 Background Memorandum on Strategic Trade Controls in Austria; Austria—Pitterman Visit (1959) Folder; Box 1; Entry 5293; Lot 68D123; Records Relating to Austria, 1957-1964; Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Italy, Austria, and Switzerland (EUR/AIS); General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
117 Paul Luif, “Neutrality and External Relations: The Case of Austria,” Cooperation and Conflict 21, no. 1 (1986): 37-38. For Business Week’s coverage of Western technology transfer to the Communist bloc with particular emphasis on Austria, see: “Technology Transfer: A Policy Nightmare,” Business Week, no. 2784 (April 4, 1983): 94-102. The Wall Street Journal dealt with technology transfer in a two-article series on July 24-25, 1984. In the second article focusing on Austria, one unnamed American trade investigator growled, “I don’t like the Russians, but I hate the Austrians.” “I’ve had it up to my ears with them,” he added. The investigator’s “I hate the Austrians” remark “touched off a furor in Austria and
estimate in the mid-1980s in particular, continental Europe’s four neutral states (Austria, Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland) were responsible for 18% of Soviet high technology imports. Sweden, for example, delivered in the early 1980s the Soviet Union’s only floating dry dock capable of serving Kiev-class aircraft carriers, promptly put into operation by the Soviet Northern Fleet.\textsuperscript{118}

Such trade concerns led the United States in the 1980s to seek stricter trade regulations from neutral countries such as Austria, Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland, as well as India and Hong Kong.\textsuperscript{119} As Luif noted, various individuals in neutral countries such as Austrian and Swedish politicians “refused the demands by the Western allies” as “a first reaction.” They objected that neutrals would not be able to participate in a politically motivated embargo. But their industries required secure access to Western, especially US, high technology. The United States threatened to reduce or even stop the exports of high technology to countries not complying with the COCOM controls. The “high technology vulnerability trap” would have made any prolonged resistance impossible.\textsuperscript{120}


\textsuperscript{120} Paul Luif, \textit{On the Road to Brussels: The Political Dimension of Austria’s, Finland’s and Sweden’s Accession to the European Union}, Austrian Institute for International Affairs Laxenburg Papers series (Vienna: Wilhelm Braunmüller Verlag, 1995), 143. In a particular example, Luif noted that “when state-owned VOEST-Alpine wanted to set up a joint venture for micro-chip
In Austria’s particular case, an American delegation visiting Austria in October 1984 achieved an agreement to expand Austrian trade controls. Austria subsequently amended the Austrian Foreign Trade Act on December 12, 1984, to allow the Austrian Trade Ministry to monitor Austrian importers of high technology so as to prevent illegal reexportation. The new amendment also made computer exports subject to a license. An additional amendment to the Foreign Trade Act passed by the Nationalrat on January 9, 1985, applied criminal penalties to violations of Austrian trade law, previously purely matters of civil contract. Austria also signed a US-Austrian Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement in 1986 and made COCOM lists part of the Foreign Trade Act in 1987.

Enforcement of these Cold War trade regulations presented Austria with various problems and irritations. Interviewed in 2005, former Austrian foreign minister Erwin Lanc (SPÖ), for example, expressed resentment that American officials had committed a “violation of sovereignty” against Austria by visiting Austrian factories to determine what they were exporting. Lanc also took exception to American companies outwitting their Austrian competitors by being better positioned to obtain export approval under American and COCOM trade regulations. Luif also noted in 1986 that the Austrians still insist on the free export of their own high technology. But what is genuine Austrian technology? Today’s international division of labor implies that one product will include parts from various countries. Therefore, a satisfactory definition of Austrian technology has not been

production with American Microsystems Inc. in Austria, the US administration delayed the export of the fabrication equipment.” See: Luif, “Neutrality and External Relations,” 38.
122 Luif, On the Road to Brussels, 143.
123 Erwin Lanc, interview by author in Lanc’s office at the Vienna International Institute of Peace in Vienna on August 10, 2005.
found yet. To reduce its technological dependence on the US, Austria, together with the other EFTA countries, now tries to cooperate more closely with the EC on high technology research.\textsuperscript{124}

While restricting technology exports to the Communist bloc, meanwhile, Austria actually participated in many European research initiatives, a contrast that could only cast on Austrian neutrality policy more of the doubts indicated by Neuhold. Austria, for example, joined the European atomic research organization CERN on November 10, 1959, and became a full member of the European Space Agency (ESA) in 1987.\textsuperscript{125} Austria also received in 1985 an invitation from the American secretary of defense Caspar Weinberger to participate in the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), but rejected the offer outright along with Greece and the Netherlands. French President François Mitterand, however, proposed in April 1985 an initiative to strengthen European civil technology, resulting in the European Research Coordination Agency (EUREKA) supported by the EC and EFTA as well as Turkey. Austria became the third largest participant after Sweden and Finland. As the American historian Thomas O. Schlesinger, once a U.S. Army intelligence officer stationed in occupied Austria, wrote,

the point was to counteract the opening of a technology gap as a result of “civilian” spin-offs from the potentially large investments of resources in SDI. In the absence of an integrated European approach to research, it was feared, that the large funds that were to flow from Washington’s SDI would lead to excessive American government influence on the flow of research investments in Europe. Great advantage might have accrued to those favored by, and politically able, to accept the SDI contracts.\textsuperscript{126}

\textsuperscript{124} Luif, “Neutrality and External Relations,” 38.
After the Cold War’s end, COCOM itself went out of existence on March 31, 1994. Yet this was not the end of export controls among the world’s democracies. Austria and other neutral countries joined control regimes such as those against the proliferation of ABC weapons and their delivery systems. Accordingly, in December 1995 28 countries including Austria, all 14 of its new partners in the EU, Canada, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, and the United States signed the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies. “In a somewhat historical irony,” Luif observed, “the countries agreed to locate the secretariat of the Wassenaar Arrangement in Vienna, Austria.”

Trading with the West: Austria’s Economic Integration into the West

Austria’s dependence upon high technology from COCOM nations was part of a wider trend of Austrian postwar integration into economies of Western Europe and the wider industrialized world. As an example of this, the Austrian diplomat Thomas Nowotny referred in 1986 to Vienna’s airport. “In fact,” he analyzed, “the lion’s share of flights go to the West—where the actual relationships are the closest. Austria is hardly a country ‘between the blocs’ or ‘in the heart of Europe.’ Austria is much more the easternmost state of Western Europe.” The following 1990 graphs showing Austrian trade flows through the years, expressed in percentages, bears out Nowotny’s assessment:

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129 Otmar Höll, “Die österreichische Neutralität und die wirtschaftliche Integration,” in Mitteleuropäische Perspektiven, eds. Thomas H. Macho and Arno Truger (Vienna: Verlag für
Austrian Exports according to Country Groups

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European Community (EC) 1958</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>60.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC 1973/81/86</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>63.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Free Trade Association (EFTA) 1960</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFTA 1970/73/86</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPEC</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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Austrian Imports According to Country Groups

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EC 1958/73/81/86</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>68.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFTA 1960/70/73/86</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPEC</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This phenomenon of Western economic integration was not limited to Austria, but affected all of Europe’s neutral states as Finnish scholar Harto Harkovirta calculated in 1988.130


Shares of NATO and Warsaw Pact Countries in the European Neutrals Foreign Trade (% of Total Trade)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Switzerland</th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Ireland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NATO Countries</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WP Countries</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indeed, the trade flows of Europe’s neutral states were not fundamentally different from those of a NATO state, as shown by the following 1982 graph: 131

**Percentage of Total Import/Exports to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Countries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Switzerland</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Yugoslavia</th>
<th>West Germany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80.56</td>
<td>80.13</td>
<td>76.58</td>
<td>69.36</td>
<td>51.89</td>
<td>75.34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among Europe’s neutral states, however, Austria’s trade with the European Community (EC) throughout the years was particularly pronounced: 132

**Percentage of Total Austrian, Swedish, and Swiss Exports to the European Community**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>60.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>49.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Among various non-Communist, non-EC European states in 1987, Austria had the highest percentage of total foreign trade with the EC. Finland (43%), Iceland (55%), Norway (57%), Sweden (54%), Switzerland (64%), and Turkey (46%) all had less significant trade relationships with the EC than Austria (66%).\footnote{Paul Luif, “Grundbegriffe und Genese der europäischen Integration,” \textit{Politische Bildung} 10, no. 4 (1988): 214.} Austria in 1987 even had stronger trade relationships with the EC than many members of the EC itself. Austrian scholar Manfred Rotter calculated that among EFTA and EC states that year, only Switzerland and Belgium/Luxemburg had higher percentages of total imports from the EC (both 72%) than Austria (68%). Only the EC members Belgium/Luxemburg (74%), Greece (67%), Ireland (73%), the Netherlands (75%), and Portugal (71%) exported more of their total exports to the EC than Austria (64%).\footnote{Manfred Rotter, “Mitgliedschaft, Assoziation, EFTA-Verbund: Die Optionen der österreichischen EG-Politik,” \textit{Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft} 18, no. 3 (1989): 197-198.}

For Austria, economic integration with Western Europe and the wider Western world represented a shift away from traditional markets in the former parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and other areas of Eastern Europe. “In the Cold War,” noted Gehler in 1994, “Austria’s foreign trade with the Soviet satellites was considerably reduced.” Imports from these countries fell to eight percent of all Austrian imports in 1955 from 32% in 1937. Despite USIA exports, Austrian exports to Soviet satellites also fell to eight percent of all Austrian exports in 1955 from 28% in 1937. During this same period, Austrian imports from the countries of the Organization of European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) grew from 40% to 75% of all imports while Austrian exports to the OEEC grew from 53% to 71% of all exports. Scholars like Gehler, though, have observed that the westward trend of Austrian trade already began before World War II
and only intensified under the Third Reich.\textsuperscript{135} Luif, for example, has calculated that the percentage of Austrian exports going to the Austro-Hungarian successor states fell from 46.7\% in 1924 to 38.7\% in 1929 and finally to 31.8\% in 1937.\textsuperscript{136}

As noted by several scholars, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was most pronounced among Austria’s postwar trade partners.\textsuperscript{137} In 1988, for instance, 35\% of all Austrian exports went alone to the FRG while 45\% of all Austrian imports came from there. This was new in Austrian history, for according to Luif, “in the interwar period this extreme concentration on Germany was not there. At that time foreign trade was relatively equally distributed among the neighbors.”\textsuperscript{138} Similarly, 75\% of all tourists visiting Austria and 37\% of all industry investment (itself three-fourths foreign in origin) came from the FRG.\textsuperscript{139}

Neuhold concluded in 1982 that “if the economy of FRG sneezes, its Austrian counterpart will suffer from pneumonia.”\textsuperscript{140} Accordingly, various analysts have noted that since 1955, the Austrian Central Bank and the government had taken deliberate actions to link Austrian policies with those in the Federal Republic of Germany. The government supported Austrian monetary policies that were closely tied to German policy, allowing both to enjoy long-standing stability in currency exchange. Throughout the Cold War, many other aspects of Austrian economic policy were purposefully linked to the more prosperous and stable German economy, including price and

\textsuperscript{136} Paul Luif, “Außenwirtschaftspolitik,” in Handbuch des politischen Systems Österreichs, 688.
\textsuperscript{137} For example: Hakovirta, 47; and Hanspeter Neuhold, “Österreichs Außenpolitik in den Ost-West-Beziehungen,” in Außenpolitik und Demokratie in Österreich: Strukturen—Strategien—Stellungnahmen, eds. Renate Kicker, Andreas Khol, and Hanspeter Neuhold (Salzburg: Wolfgang Neugebauer Verlag, 1983), 312.
\textsuperscript{138} Luif, “Außenwirtschaftspolitik,” 679.
\textsuperscript{139} Anselm Skuhra, “Austria and the New Cold War,” in The Neutral Democracies and the New Cold War, 129.

\textit{Aligned Neutrality}
wage policies and fiscal planning. As a result, Austrian economic indicators, including inflation rates, unemployment, and even gross national product (GNP), often fluctuated parallel with those of Germany.141

“The Anschluß,” Thalberg ironically observed, was dead, but many of my countrymen stared as if enchanted at the FRG that had risen like a phoenix out of the ashes. Politically the State Treaty and, above all, permanent neutrality had set limits to Austria’s relationships with Germany that could not be overstepped. Economically and culturally, however, the FRG proved to be a magnet of continually growing attractive force.142

Not only was Austrian trade oriented to the West, but the Austrian economy as a whole was quite dependent upon trade, as the following 1978 chart illustrates:143

| Austrian Foreign Trade measured as a Percentage of Gross National Product (GNP) (1964 Prices) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Exports | 17 | 23 | 26 | 33 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 39 | 37 | 38 | 40 |
| Total Imports | 17 | 23 | 27 | 32 | 34 | 36 | 39 | 40 | 37 | 41 | 43 |

The Austrian legal scholar Waldemar Hummer observed in 1977 that the importance to Austria of goods exports was “considerable,” making up “longterm” around 20% of Austrian GNP. This was considerably higher than for the FRG (19%), Japan (10%), the United Kingdom (16%), and the United States (6%).144 In 1974, the percentage share of Austrian GNP in goods exports (22.7%) was the sixth largest in the

142 Thalberg, 317.

Aligned Neutrality
world, only smaller than that of Belgium (53.6%), Canada (23.7%), the FRG (23.1%), the Netherlands (48%), and Sweden (28.7%). Noting in 1991 that Austria exported more per capita than France, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, or Taiwan, Die Presse editor Andreas Unterberger concluded that Austria was “extremely dependent on foreign trade.”

Squaring the Circle: Neutral Independence and Economic Interdependence

The lopsided pro-Western nature of trade relationships between Europe’s neutral countries like Austria and the rest of the world was suspect to many from the perspective of Austria’s international obligations. Christian Democratic publicist Ludwig Reichhold wrote in 1968 that neutrality “demands an approximate balance of Austria’s economic contacts with the West and the East, including the world across the seas.” “Only to the extent,” Reichhold added,

in which the West is interested in respecting Austria’s economic ties with the East, and only to the extent in which the East is interested in respecting Austria’s economic ties with the West, can it be spoken of respect for neutrality, which must have not least an economic basis. Conversely, the maintenance of neutrality also in an economic sense an essential criteria against which Austria’s will to be neutral will be judged in the East and in the West.

West Germany’s strong economic presence in Austria throughout the Cold War (and beyond) also raised concerns with respect to the State Treaty’s prohibition of any kind of new Anschluß in Article 4. Although Neuhold dismissed talk of a “violation of

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Article 4 in the Austrian State Treaty and ‘an Anschluß through the backdoor,’” Neuhold could not ignore that “the domination of the FRG in Austria’s trade ties, a domination which is also present in tourism and other economic sectors, would have to give pause from the perspective of neutrality politics.” 148 Whether Austria maintained trade ties with West Germany or any other country, however, the problem of economic dependence with the resulting potential for political pressure remained the same. Swiss legal scholar Dietrich Schindler observed in 1970 that “the credibility of permanent neutrality would be damaged if it became evident that a state would not be capable of maintaining neutrality because of economic reasons.” 149

“Austria as a permanently neutral state,” noted Neuhold, was “actually commanded under international law to strive for an independence, whose realization is today no longer even possible for Great Powers.” Yet efforts to remain independent ran counter above all to the growing interdependence in international society in the economic realm. A state that wants to expand the wealth of its inhabitants cannot exclude itself from the international integration and division of labor, although this increases the state’s vulnerability to the use of pressure. 150

“Today’s neutral states,” agreed the American scholar and former Pentagon official Joseph Kruzel at a November 1986 conference, are obliged to maintain an economic posture in peacetime that will give maximum credibility to their desire to remain neutral in wartime. In other words, no neutral can compromise its capacity to remain neutral in wartime through its economic activities in peacetime. This general principle, so easily enunciated, has become increasingly difficult to follow.

150 Hanspeter Neuhold, “Grundlagen Österreichischer Sicherheitspolitik,” in Wie Sicher ist Österreich, 244.
in an international economic system whose primary feature is growing interdependence.\textsuperscript{151}

Like many others, the Austrian international relations scholar Hans Mayrziedt described in 1970 a

*quickly increasing* interdependence that has taken the place of the traditional, i.e. “qualified” independence of states. In other words: through interdependence the substance of individual state independence is reduced. Interdependence consists of the restriction of the freedom of action of individual states—conditioned by the increasing factual dependency from one another. The observable system of interdependence distinguishes itself by a great—and moreover, increasing—variety. This system stretches across the most varied areas of politics, economics, and scholarship. The needs of states have led to the conclusion of numerous international treaties—at times containing substantial obligations—and to the foundation of many international organizations. Almost simultaneously the economic integration of national economies—and thereby also the dependency of business cycles—have gained strength. The action radius of an individual state’s foreign policy is being strongly restricted with respect to the need for increasing consideration of the interests of other states and of facts created outside one’s own area of influence.\textsuperscript{152}

In a 1988 review of neutrality, a group of scholars addressed what exactly interdependence meant for Europe’s neutral nations vis-à-vis the EC. “In Sweden, Austria and Switzerland,” they observed, “the process is already advanced of their major industries merging or locating within the Community and, effectively, creating a situation where industrially they already belong to the Community but politically they are committed, by their neutrality, to remain outside it.” The scholars concluded that “there is no doubt that in a number of ways neutrality tends to be backward-looking and not


altogether in touch with today’s realities of the international environment such as nuclearism, interdependent economic relations, and increased dependence on military technology.”

Thus throughout the years many analysts rejected conforming Austria’s trade to the demands of neutrality. Austrian scholar Gerhard Rosegger, for example, wrote in 1964 that to argue

as the Soviet Union and the Austrian Communist party have done on occasion—that the geographic structure of trade ought to be a dependent variable of a policy of “economic neutrality”—is clearly an impossible demand upon an economy such as Austria’s, which is oriented so considerably toward foreign trade. In today’s highly competitive world markets, a small country has to trade where it can find partners.

Similarly, Nowotny argued in 1989 that even though Austria’s “close economic integration with the West doubtlessly increased the ‘Western economic potential,’” there was “without a doubt no alternative to this ‘tie to the West [Westbindung].’” “An ‘equidistance’ in economic and foreign trade policy,” stated Nowotny, “would not allow itself to be realized, even if this were desired. Austria could never increase its eastern trade to 50% or lower the ‘West portion’ to 50%.” Nor could Austria do without trade. “Understood in the sense of the largest possible autarchy,” Nowotny explained,

the concept of economic neutrality is senseless. The proportion of foreign trade in Gross National Product is growing in all industrial states. It is growing especially strong among the small industrial states and has reached 40% in Austria. Economic autarchy is therefore, particularly for a small state, not a realistic option.


Rotter described the problem of neutral countries having “to deal with two strongly opposed goals,” namely the “trend of the global economy towards ever stronger integration of the national economies” and the preservation of “the highest possible autonomy of one’s own economic system,” as proverbially “approaching the squaring of the circle.”\textsuperscript{156} In a case of “damned if you do, damned if don’t,” moreover, a lack of economic integration and attendant economic growth could pose its own dangers to neutrality. Bruno Kreisky wrote in a 1959 edition of \textit{Foreign Affairs} that “we should not forget that a nation which withholds cooperation in a necessary venture in economic integration may suffer some degree of economic atrophy and in consequence, as recent history has shown, lose its independence.”\textsuperscript{157} Expressing similar sentiments during an earlier June 20, 1958, address in Vienna, Kreisky speculated whether economic backwardness and hindered economic development do not lead to economic dependence, which in the final analysis hinders a state in the effective representation of its sovereignty. Increasing economic prosperity as the consequence of a strengthened European integration can, at any rate, contribute more to the independence of a state than economic underdevelopment.\textsuperscript{158}

Throughout the Cold War, many Austrians such as the diplomat Hellmuth Strasser in 1972 wondered whether the Austrian people would continue to support their country’s neutrality policy if it entailed economic costs.\textsuperscript{159} Likewise, an October 1961 report of the ÖVP’s foreign policy committee stressed the necessity for Austria to keep up with the advances in living standards and/or wealth of the highly developed nations, because any regression in

\textsuperscript{156} Manfred Rotter, \textit{Die dauernde Neutralität}, Schriften zum Völkerrecht series (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1981), 204.
\textsuperscript{157} Bruno Kreisky, “Austria Draws the Balance,” \textit{Foreign Affairs} 37, no. 2 (1959): 281.
this respect would probably in the long run more endanger sovereignty and neutrality than the complete participation in the strictest form of integration. This means that the sovereignty and neutrality are most endangered there where the economic policy is not capable of maintaining full employment, financial stability, and economic growth, whereby extremist tendencies would be furthered. *This means in the present economic situation that Austria must participate in the economic integration of the Western lands if Austria does not want to be economically isolated and consequently pushed towards the east in economic and political terms.*  

An official Austrian briefing memorandum prepared for the September 1967 visit of French prime minister Georges Pompidou and Foreign Minister Maurice Couve de Murville echoed and gave historical context to the ÖVP’s views. With respect to Austrian efforts at the time to achieve an “arrangement of a special nature” with the Common Market, the memorandum warned that

should Austria, however, remain excluded from participation in the large market of the EEC [European Economic Community] with which Austria is particularly tightly bound on the basis of the traditional structure of its foreign trade and trade flows which cannot be changed at will, so would the Austrian economy gradually fall victim to a shrinking process with very disturbing social effects and consequences, a process which would be not at all propitious for the economy’s viability and independence, but rather, quite the opposite, would have to strengthen the economy’s actual dependence, be it from Germany, be it from the Communist economic block, something which could not at all be in the interest of France or Europe. Specifically in Paris, where a special understanding for historical reminiscences and contexts is gladly invoked, one might not forget and overlook that precisely the hopeless situation of the Austrian economy in the interwar period—still long before the seizure of power by Hitler—was without a doubt one of the strongest roots of the Anschluss movement at the time. The fact that Austria today is thoroughly viable and possessing a will to live is certainly no reason to neglect Austria through and deny it the means and possibilities for a lasting anchoring and further development of its viability.  

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161 Ibid, 408.
Foreign observers as well recognized the relation of economic concerns to Austrian neutrality. The father of West Germany’s Wirtschaftswunder, Economics Minister Ludwig Erhard, warned in a 1962 issue of Österreichische Monatshefte that without a vibrant relationship with the Common Market Europe’s neutral nations would be forced into “isolation” and dependence upon the Communist bloc. Given that Erhard saw benefit in the neutral countries functioning as the West’s intermediaries to the Communist bloc, Erhard was concerned about having the neutral countries as a “desirable enrichment in the mosaic of European integration.”162 Similarly, a January 2, 1964, State Department memorandum agreed that effective neutrality cannot be maintained by a country unable to sustain itself economically. How Austria’s vital trade interests are preserved in its relations with the Common Market will bear closely on its future ability to remain effectively neutral, and to maintain even that degree of latitude in its international actions which it has so far succeeded in maintaining.163

Energy: The other Austrian Economic Dependency

Austria shared not only trade links with the West, but also its largescale dependence on imported sources of energy. One Austrian scholar, Harald Glatz, calculated in 1983 the proportion of net energy imports to Austria’s total energy needs with the following (increasing) annual percentages: 1955: 20.5; 1960: 33.9; 1965: 42.4; 1970: 57.8; 1975: 60.4; 1980: 69.4. For 1983, Glatz estimated that imports from members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) covered 28.8% of Austria’s energy needs while imports from Communist Council for Mutual Economic

163 Austrian Interest in European Integration, January 2, 1964; Austria Folder; Box 249; Entry 5041; Lot File 70D199; Records of the Policy Planning Council (S/PC), 1963-1964; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.

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Assistance (COMECOM) countries covered an additional 31.3%. Broken down into specific energy sources, the import numbers showed that OPEC delivered 62.1% of Austria’s petroleum product imports (supplying 54.7% of Austria’s total petroleum energy needs), while COMECOM supplied Austria with 22.5% of its petroleum-based imports (19.8% of Austria’s total petroleum energy needs), 99.9% of its natural gas imports (60.2% of Austria’s total natural gas energy needs), and 77.7% of its coal imports (60.9% of Austria’s total coal energy needs).  

Unterberger noted in 1992 that while Austrian COMECOM oil imports wavered between 20-30% of all oil imports throughout the years, in some years coal imports from COMECOM topped 80% of all coal imports. “These figures,” Neuhold stated at a November 1984 conference while presenting similar data, “raise the question of whether Austria’s dependence on East European energy is so heavy that it also constitutes a political problem and may pose a threat to the country’s security in crisis situations.” Indeed, the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968 temporarily disrupted anthracite coal deliveries from East Germany to Austria.

With respect to the oil needs of Western nations, Austrian foreign minister Peter Jankowitsch noted in 1981 that “the basic similarity of their interests was always apparent.” Thus Austria joined with 15 other OECD nations in the wake of the 1973-1974 OPEC oil embargo to create the International Energy Program (IEP) on November 164

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18, 1974. As described by Jankowitsch, this was an “explicit and detailed agreement…ambitious” in scope, covering “every major energy policy issue,” and designed “to provide assurances against the disruptive effects of oil emergencies.”

Among other things, the IEP called for member countries to develop an ability to endure 90 days cut off from their normal oil imports (calculated according to the latest annual levels) and created a collective oil pooling arrangement for emergencies. The International Energy Agency (IEA), headquartered in Paris, was to oversee the IEP.

“In deciding to join the International Energy Agency,” recalled Jankowitsch, “Austria carefully weighed its needs as an oil-importing country against certain demands of a policy of permanent neutrality.” Thus a communiqué issued by the Austrian Foreign Ministry on November 18, 1974, explained that the “foreign policy aspects of participation in the agreement had been thoroughly examined. In particular, intensive contacts over the agreement with Sweden and Switzerland took place. To be examined above all was whether the agreement was compatible with neutrality.” The Austrian government came in these considerations to the conviction that participation in the agreement does not contradict the status of a neutral state. Austria, however, analog to the approach of Sweden and Switzerland, also expressly referred to its generally recognized status as a permanently neutral state on the occasion of signing. Austria thereby recalled that its participation in the agreement may not contradict in any way its status of neutrality and that the Austrian government would therefore continue to

169 For a copy of the IEP agreement, see: International Energy Program (accessed May 1, 2006); available from http://www.iea.org/Textbase/about/IEP.PDF.
170 Hummer and Mayrzedt, 681. Austria’s 15 fellow founders of the IEP were: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, Turkey, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Norway formed a special arrangement with the IEP and other countries such as New Zealand have subsequently joined.
171 Jankowitsch, 367.
behave as the government considers necessary in accordance with the generally recognized status of Austria’s permanent neutrality.\textsuperscript{172}

At the time, Jankowitsch noted, “Austria made it equally clear that it did not perceive the new organization as a vehicle for confronting oil-exporting developing countries, with many of whom Austria had long maintained close and friendly relations.” Austria thus “insisted on the urgent need of continuing dialogue with those countries” and “continued to call for a more open and understanding attitude toward the needs of oil-producing developing countries, for many of whom oil remains the only means of promoting their economic and social welfare.”\textsuperscript{173} The Foreign Ministry communiqué emphasized that “Austria is consistently concerned that no confrontation develops in the relationship to the oil producing states, but rather, quite the contrary, that ways and means be sought and found to bring about constructive cooperation with these states.”\textsuperscript{174}

The IEP agreement itself, meanwhile, expressed in its preamble a desire to promote co-operative relations with oil producing countries and with other oil consuming countries, including those of the developing world, through a purposeful dialogue, as well as through other forms of co-operation, to further the opportunities for a better understanding between consumer and producer countries.\textsuperscript{175}

\textit{Neutral Security in Stockpiling?}

Austria was dependent on imports not just for energy but also for other critical raw materials. The \textit{Landesverteidigungsplan} approved in 1983 estimated that fully two

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\item \textsuperscript{172} Hummer and Mayrzdet, 677.
\item \textsuperscript{173} Jankowitsch, 367.
\item \textsuperscript{174} Hummer and Mayrzdet, 677.
\item \textsuperscript{175} \textit{International Energy Program}.
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thirds of the “basic and raw materials” required by Austria’s economy were imported. Among the imports, in the words of the Bundesheer officer and security studies analyst Heinz Danzmayr, were “especially critical items” such as copper, chrome, manganese, and nickel.

Other neutral countries in Europe, meanwhile, faced similar issues and planned accordingly. In an address in Graz on April 23, 1968, for example, Bundesheer colonel Hermann Strohschneider estimated that “the other neutral countries have secured in the course of their stockpiling polices the most important foodstuffs and production goods for the duration of one year.” The Swiss scholar Theodor Veiter wrote that same year that entire factories in Switzerland operated solely for the purpose of creating critical supply stockpiles for wartime emergencies. Swiss law also required private households to store provisions designed to last anywhere from two to four weeks.

Austrian political scientist Gerhard Böhner made similar observations in 1982, noting the one million Swedish Kronen and 1.4 million Swiss Francs expended in Sweden and Switzerland, respectively, for industrial stockpiles. Sweden also required private corporations to stockpile raw materials and “often maintained for military crises entire industries (textile, metal, plastics) in gigantic storage facilities (with a total value of 5.5 billion Schillings), partially in protected mountain bunkers.” Switzerland also stored a year’s supply of foodstuffs.

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176 Landesverteidigungsplan (Vienna: Bundeskanzleramt, 1985), 181.
180 Böhner, 71, 77-78.
As usual, Austrian preparations for wartime neutrality paled in comparison. Strohschneider in 1968 estimated that the “average stock of import-dependent goods stockpiled in Austria covers peacetime needs only for about two months.” Strohschneider considered possible raw material shortages in Austria particularly troubling because Austria, unlike Switzerland, produced very few high value products tradable for vital imports.\footnote{Strohschneider, 278.} Given that “Austria has at its disposal no noteworthy stockpiles in contrast to the two neutral states Sweden and Switzerland,” one scholar noted in 1979, “all factories that are dependent upon foreign raw materials would have to close within three to six weeks in case of barriers to trade.”\footnote{Sverre Baumgartner, “Schattenorganisation der Umfassenden Landesverteidigung,” \textit{Politikwissenschaft} 8, no. 4 (1979): 412.}

Possible food shortages in wartime also worried many Austrians. This was true even though, according to Böhner in 1982, Austria satisfied about 80\% of its food needs through domestic cultivation and could meet all of its nutritional demands without imports in a crisis. Only deficiencies in certain oil-rich plants might lead to dangerous feed shortages.\footnote{Böhner, 71.}

Yet, as \textit{Nationalrat} member and ÖVP defense policy spokesman Heinrich Neisser noted in the same year, Austria lacked a system for properly distributing agricultural products during a crisis.\footnote{Heinrich Neisser, “Dimensionen der Österreichischen Sicherheitspolitik,” in \textit{Wie Sicher ist Österreich? Beiträge zu einer konzeptiven Sicherheitspolitik}, eds. Heinrich Neisser and Fritz Windhager (Vienna: Österreichische Verlagsanstalt, 1982), 344.} Böhner observed that only in 1967 did the printing and distribution to district offices of ration cards for foodstuffs and consumer products take place. Attempts by Voralberg’s provincial government in 1970 to create stockpiles securing the provincial population’s needs for three to six weeks failed because of
lacking funds, storage rooms, and support from the federal government. By 1982, Voralberg alone had stockpiled merely 11,300 calories per person in the province, enough to sustain the population for five days in case of crisis.185 Nor did private Austrian stockpiles exist to make up the difference. “It is assumed presently,” the Austrian political science professor Peter Pernthaler stated in 1982, “that less than a third of all households have decided to stockpile provisions that would make possible the survival of many months without grocery purchases.”186

Strohschneider thus concluded in 1968 that “at the time we hardly possess the ability to maintain our neutrality in a long lasting neutrality contingency and therefore we are, for better or worse, at the mercy of the benevolence or disfavor of the belligerents.”187 Reporting a “complete stagnation during the last years in the stockpiling sector,” Neisser 14 years later warned that “Austria could be plunged from one day to the next into an existential crisis alone through measures of economic blackmail.”188 Although Danzmayr recalled that the Austrian government during the 1980s tried measures such as the development of processes to recycle raw materials from trash and used products, it is doubtful that this was sufficient.189 Unterberger reviewed in 1992 that “economic national defense” was “ignored by various administrations.” Kreisky, for example, declared during a televised discussion on September 28, 1980, that he had “no use” for emergency import substitution measures costing potentially billions of Schillings.190

185 Böhner, 71, 78.
187 Strohschneider, 280.
188 Neisser, 344.
189 Danzmayr, 337.
Advances in technology only made the problem worse. At a September 1973 conference, Strohschneider mentioned that “the determination of vital needs is becoming a very special problem” that in Austria “still has not been investigated.” According to Strohschneider’s readings the Swiss found

this determination becoming ever more complicated because of, for example, the presence of tiny lamps on which depends the functioning of all data processing and that, because these are only produced in America, for example, a new item of vital necessity has been created and if this is not stockpiled the entire preparatory planning work is at once no longer retrievable.\(^{191}\)

Not Allied, but of One Spirit: Austria and the West

Austrian trade flows reflected the fact stressed by Austrian leaders like Kreisky throughout the Cold War that Austria, aside from a narrowly defined policy of neutrality, was a Western country like all others. “The nonaligned countries of Europe,” wrote Kreisky in 1975, “among them Austria, Sweden, and Switzerland—Yugoslavia thus excepted, because it is a Communist state—pledge allegiance to democracy and to political pluralism and are, despite their qualified independence, which is a reflex of their neutrality, a part of the so-called Western world.”\(^{192}\) While explaining Austria’s new neutrality law before the Nationalrat on October 26, 1955, Chancellor Julius Raab himself declared that “our raison d’être not only as a historical entity, but also as an exponent of a democratic-republican, rule of law principle, is of essential importance.”\(^{193}\) Austria underlined this commitment to republican governance by joining the European

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Convention on Human Rights in December 1957. According to Steiner, this “step of ideological positioning of Austria between East and West” showed that Austria “was not subject to any ideological pull from the east, all good relations with the Soviet Union notwithstanding.”

ÖVP Nationalrat member and subsequent chancellor Alfons Gorbach even gave Austria’s profession of democracy a combative tone against the backdrop of the Cold War while addressing parliament a few months before Raab on June 7, 1955. Invoking the traditional Austrian trope of Western bulwark against the East, Gorbach termed neutrality’s “turning away from the centuries-old tradition of Austria at a time when Western Europe faces a threat and is joining together for defense” as a “process of great import that must bring with it a plethora of problems.” Yet despite military neutrality, Gorbach determined that “our old Austrian tradition of always standing on the eastern front has only transposed itself to other more peaceful, and therefore more thankful, areas of life.” “Austria,” Gorbach argued, can never be nor become neutral in this conflict between the forces of godless materialism on the one hand and those of God-oriented Christianity on the other hand. In the fight of spirits and worldviews Austria stands clearly on the side of Christianity, freedom, and human dignity and a true democracy that excludes every one-party system.

“It would be a fateful illusion,” Gorbach elaborated, to believe that next to military neutrality a spiritual and intellectual neutrality may or should appear. Precisely the opposite! From now on we must take up in our country more thoroughly, more sharply, and more mercilessly than ever the spiritual fight against Communism and against every other perversion of materialism, as well against all its open and hidden messengers. Were we not to do this, so would the true differences

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194 Steiner, 235–236.
become increasingly blurred and hidden, and we would unintentionally come upon the path which must unfailingly lead to tyranny and subjugation. In the military area we must maintain our neutrality with exacting care. It is, however, all the more necessary to elevate to the epitome of Austrian essence a very clear and uncompromising stance in all other areas of our national and state existence, that is in economics, in domestic policy, in cultural life, in law and justice, morality and religion, because every act which contradicts these principles is a crime against Austria’s future, because such acts lead to the disease of Austrian neutralism, to that evil neutralism, to that egoistical “without me perspective” which can be best be described as political and moral apathy.196

Gorbach’s associate in the ÖVP, former Austrian foreign minister (1966-1968)

Lujo Tončić-Sorinj, described similar views in his 1982 memoirs. “I saw and see political activity in an individual state, in my case Austria,” Tončić-Sorinj explained, as part of my political activity in a much higher framework: striving for Europe as the political, economic, cultural superstructure of global position; and striving for the great supranational, ideological task, bound to no state, to repel the threat against the Occident by Marxism and, above all, by the power of the Soviet Union and other anti-European forces in the world.197

Another Austrian foreign minister and ÖVP member, Kurt Waldheim, stated during an address on the occasion of the State Treaty’s 30th anniversary that “ideologically there is no neutrality!” “However uncontroversial our policy of non-membership in alliances is—and must remain—and however much the Austrians are principally unanimous that we are no fifth column of the Western military alliance,” explained Waldheim, “so clear is our firm rooting in the ideas of Western democracy.”198

196 Ibid, 25.
The SPÖ member Nowotny agreed in 1989, calling “‘ideological equidistance’ as little possible as economic equidistance.” After all, the “actual motive” for the Moscow Memorandum’s reference to Switzerland was for Austria to “clarify that its neutrality would not hinder Austria in being a ‘Western state’ like Switzerland.” Writing in 1986, Nowotny dismissed misimpressions raised by references to Austria as a neutral East-West “bridge” that

Austria is to be categorized with its inner political and economic structure as a hermaphrodite entity somewhere between East and West; as a half democratic, half Communist state, etc. However many Balkan elements occasionally stick to us, this is nonetheless not the case. We are not a hermaphrodite entity between East and West, but rather, as mentioned, the easternmost “Western state.”

“Now, it is not to be overlooked,” Nowotny conceded, “that both foreign policy goals and/or circumstances—ideological and economic affinity with the West on the one hand and neutrality policy on the other—stand with one another in a certain relationship of tension.” Various Austrian domestic actions with international implications proved this throughout the Cold War. A few months after the occupation ended, for example, Interior Minister Helmer expelled the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), a Communist front organization, from Austria on February 4, 1956.

The WFTU had established its headquarters in Vienna under the protection of the Russian occupiers after being expelled from France. After the occupation, the WFTU had won approval as a registered organization under Austrian law before Helmer ordered the WFTU’s dissolution because of “activity in violation of Austrian laws and interests.”

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Despite Soviet protests, Austrian authorities, in the words of Austrian historian Karl R. Stadler, wanted to be rid of what they saw as “the most important instrument for the unleashing of strikes and unrest in the non-Communist world, particularly in the colonial areas.”

A few weeks later on February 21, 1956, the Austrian cabinet decided to join the Council of Europe despite Raab’s personal opposition. Rauchensteiner attributed Raab’s “clear rejection” of membership the Council of Europe to his understanding of this step as a “clear turn towards the—anti-Communist—West,” something “Raab did not at all believe he could support.” Steiner, Raab’s former assistant, confirmed that the “political realist and practitioner Raab always had a somewhat distanced relationship to the Council of Europe during his time in office.” Although Raab saw “great importance” in Austrian membership in this “important forum for political discussion,” Raab realized that “with the recognition of the principles of the Council of Europe a clear ideological position would have been taken.” Similar concerns, then more pronounced because of the danger of division under foreign occupation, had already motivated Vice-Chancellor Schärf, no particularly fan of the council, to reject the dispatch of an informal parliamentary delegation to the Council of Europe on November 18, 1950.

In joining this league of West European democracies, Austria broke ranks with its Swiss exemplar that had refrained from membership because of neutrality reservations, even while Sweden joined the Council of Europe. As with the WFTU expulsion,

204 Rathkolb, “Austria’s “Ostpolitik” in the 1950s and 1960s,” 137.
207 Tončić-Sorinj, 228.
according to Stadler, “unfriendly reactions in the Soviet press and the threat of official steps” did not stop the Austrian government. As explained in the 1985 booklet *Austria—Permanently Neutral: Austrian Foreign Policy since 1945*, the official Austrian answer to such objections has been that “with no sovereign rights ceded by individual member states to the Council and treatment of military matters excluded from its purview, collaboration with it could in no wise run counter to the requirements of Austrian neutrality policy.”

“In practice,” criticized the Swiss scholar Hans Haug in 1962, “the Council of Europe has, however, repeatedly overstepped the boundaries set in its statute.” The council “has namely concerned itself multiple times with military questions, particularly those of Western defense. Thus the Council of Europe’s polemic character, which surrounds it [the council] as a consequence of its ideological orientation, was considerably sharpened.” This “activity of the Council of Europe in political-military questions” has “presented difficulties at times” for Sweden. Whether in accord with neutrality or not, Austria went on to play a prominent role in the Council of Europe after joining on April 16, 1956, with two Austrians (Tončić-Sorinj from 1969 to 1974 and Franz Karasek from 1979 to 1984) serving as the council’s secretary general and one Austrian (Karl Czernetz from 1975 to 1978) serving as president of the council’s consultative assembly.

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208 Stadler, 457.
While differing over the Council of Europe, both Switzerland and Austria aligned their diplomacy with their West in the “German question.” Like Switzerland, Austria refused to extend diplomatic recognition to the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and limited bilateral contacts to “non-state” trade relations despite East German references to Austrian neutrality. Only on December 21, 1972, the day the Basic Treaty between the two German states was signed, did Austria agree to take up diplomatic relations with the GDR as a sovereign state.\(^{212}\) Thalberg recalled that not only NATO countries, but also Austria and Switzerland adhered to Bonn’s “semantic nonsense” concerning the GDR, “often despite better knowledge.” Austria adopted “without making cheeky questions” successive official West German designations concerning the “Soviet occupation zone,” “zonal authorities,” “zonal affairs,” “Pankow” (a district in East Berlin containing many GDR authorities), “East Germany,” and, finally, the “so-called GDR.”\(^{213}\)

Austrian Communists complained in 1974 to Aurél B. J. Moser, a scholar of the KPÖ, that from Raab to Kreisky, all federal cabinets have more or less oriented their position to the “divided” states solely towards the interests of the USA and the Federal Republic of Germany and, above all, taken sides for 17 years in the German question for the FRG and against the GDR, although the German question was continually controversial. Successive cabinets have taken a similar position with respect to the recognition of the People’s Republic of China. Also with reference to Vietnam existed and exists a difference in attitude towards the Democratic Republic (North Vietnam) and to South Vietnam, to say nothing of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, which was not even permitted to open an information office in Austria, even while there have been for a long time diplomatic relations to the Thieu government. The same applies in principle into the present day for the attitude towards Korea.\(^{214}\)

\(^{213}\) Thalberg, 244.  
Austrian diplomacy, both formal and informal, also revealed pro-Western tendencies during specific world events. During the April 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba by American-supported Cuban exiles, for example, both the Soviet and the Polish ambassadors spoke to Foreign Minister Kreisky and demanded an Austrian protest against this American “aggression.” In response, Kreisky merely emphasized Austria’s intention to refrain from intervention in non-Austrian affairs, carefully examine all facts, and, if needed, address the United Nations. Kreisky, meanwhile, informally assured the American ambassador of Kreisky’s desire to do nothing straining good Austro-American relations.215

As reported by a State Department cable, Kreisky’s successor as foreign minister, Tončić-Sorinj, also informally assured Secretary of State Dean Rusk during a meeting in New York on October 5, 1966. In an hour-long, tour d’horizon conversation among Rusk, Tončić-Sorinj, Austria’s permanent representative to the United Nations, Kurt Waldheim, and the Austrian Foreign Ministry’s director of political affairs, Heinrich Haymerle, Rusk made it crystal clear the US will not permit North Vietnam take South Vietnam by force. To do otherwise would destroy credibility of US which is of fundamental importance to peace and war in world, as Berlin and Cuban missile crises have proved in past. Toncic replied it was good to hear US would not sell out South Vietnam. In his view no political solution possible without first denying other side military victory. In this sense he considered “American victory” now secure. When Toncic asked why US did not destroy Haiphong, Secretary replied that all important military targets except those in heavily populated areas have been covered.216

Interestingly, the protocol of this conversation in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* contains the “comment” that “Toncic’s privately expressed views contrasted rather sharply with those expressed in public in subsequent address before UNGA [United Nations General Assembly], in which Toncic hewed closely to neutral line.”

Indeed, the *Official Records of the 21st Session of the General Assembly* record Tončić-Sorinj proclaiming before the General Assembly on October 5, 1966, that

> the war in Viet-Nam has become a matter of deep concern to all governments and moral authorities in the world. Apart from the tragic human sufferings which this war inflicts on the people of Viet-Nam, it represents a serious danger to international peace. It is therefore indispensable that we seek a solution in the political field before it is too late and before the steadily increasing commitments of power and prestige preclude all possibilities for negotiations. It is of utmost importance that a further escalation and extension of the conflict be avoided and that all efforts be undertaken in order to bring about an end to the fighting and a solution which takes into account the legitimate interests of all parties concerned and corresponds to the wishes of the Viet-Namese people.

Issues of partiality played a role not just in official Austrian diplomacy, but also in areas of what is sometimes termed private diplomacy. Austrian legal scholar Karl Zemanek noted at a 1983 conference that

> the two major Austrian parties participate in movements of like-minded political parties, i.e. the Socialist International and the International Democratic Union, respectively. Within those movements views on major world issues, such as disarmament or the North-South dialogue, or on crisis areas, like the Middle East and Central America, are formed under the influence of majorities from non-neutral countries. Sometimes common initiatives are undertaken. These views and initiatives may or may not coincide with a neutral’s best interests; but even if they don’t, group solidarity will be a strong incentive for a party from a neutral country not to break ranks. Nor is this the only influence of international

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217 Ibid.
affiliation. When a party evaluates another country’s international actions it will, together with other considerations, take into account who is governing in that country. When it happens to be a sister party, sympathy may, not unnaturally, tint the view.\footnote{219}

Even Austria’s oft-proclaimed role as a “bridge” between East and West, both in the past and under the new auspices of neutrality in the Cold War, contained pro-Western leanings. Rauchensteiner noted that references to Austria’s “bridge function” emerged already during the celebrations for 950 years of recorded Austrian existence in 1946. “Therein,” observed Rauchensteiner, “a little bit of titter-totter politics could be suggested, in that to the East it was signaled that Austria had always had especially close ties to the East, while for the West the bulwark of Christianity was held in view more.”\footnote{220}

Foreign Minister Figl, meanwhile, clarified Austria’s ambiguous position between bridges and bulwarks to the British in 1950, stating that Austria could only be an East-West bridge as long as it was “a drawbridge based and hinged on the western side of the gulf.”\footnote{221} Thalberg took fundamentally the same position over 30 years later in his memoirs. The State Treaty, for example, was “the fruit of Austria’s readiness for dialogue with the East,” but “even here the strong engagement of the West was influential for the position of the Austrian government delegation that went to Moscow in 1955 towards the Austrians’ Soviet interlocutor.” “The conversation with the East,” Thalberg elaborated with echoes of Erhard,
is an element of Austrian foreign policy to which great importance comes. But this conversation with the Eastern superpower and its allies is for Austria only possible to the extent that we have abroad in the West and

\footnote{221} Bischof, 75.
above all in the Western superpower a firm and dependable support. The stronger this support is, the greater are the possibilities which offer themselves to us in a dialogue with the East. It remains reserved for fantasy how such a dialogue would look for Vienna if the West would write off Austria and publicly manifest Western disinterest in the existence of a pluralistic-democratic Austria. The conversation with the East and its effectiveness depend therefore also upon our ties to the West.²²²

Chancellor Josef Klaus summarized Austria’s international status in an address before German Christian Democratic politicians in Munich on October 16, 1964.

“Austria,” he stated, “has precisely in our time a double function to fulfill: to be and remain pathway and connection there, where connection is possible; marchland and border to remain, where the ideological, spiritually unbridgeable remains.”²²³ The defense of these borders and marchlands, though, fell to the Bundesheer, an entity that, truth be told in the next chapter, was hardly neutral.

²²² Thalberg, 512.
Chapter VIII
Armed, but not Neutral: The Bundesheer in the Cold War

The Guns of the Bundesheer: Neutrality armed One Way?

Ambassador Karl Gruber cabled to Vienna from Washington, DC, on December 6, 1955, that the American secretary of state John Foster Dulles had presented Gruber with the official American note recognizing Austrian neutrality that day at the Department of State a half hour before noon. At this meeting among Austrian embassy officials and State Department diplomats, Gruber reported Dulles expressing his hope “that it would be clear in Vienna that the single military danger threatening Austria comes from the East and that in construction of military establishments this aspect would be considered, that dependency in armament and ammunition from the possible enemy would not be created.” In response, Gruber “assured the Secretary of State that the Austrian government was thoroughly conscious of the existing danger” and that, in agreement with the results of previous conversations, “the Austrian army would essentially sustain itself in its weaponry from sources of the free world.”

Among the previous conversations cited by Gruber were various meetings with American officials in September 1955. A State Department memorandum from September 20, for example, recorded the comments of Ambassador Gruber during a visit to the State Department four days earlier. The State Department recorded “Gruber’s view…that if the Soviets are in fact prepared to furnish arms and equipment to the

Austrians, the Austrians could not very well refuse to accept such equipment.” Gruber elaborated though that

(1) acceptance of Soviet equipment by Austria would reduce the Soviet potential; (2) it would remove any basis for Soviet objection to Austrian acceptance of U.S. military equipment; (3) any arms received from the Soviets could be stored in Austria and would not be utilized except perhaps for display purposes to keep the Soviets happy; (4) there is no question that the Austrian army utilize U.S. equipment exclusively and that Austria would fight on only one side i.e. that of the West.2

Gruber reiterated these views in a subsequent meeting on September 22, 1955, according to State Department officials, and “assured us that Austria would certainly not allow itself to become dependent on Soviet arms for its defense. Gruber thought such equipment would probably only be used—if at all—in parades or maneuvers as a ‘show’ of impartiality to please the Russians.”3 At a meeting the next day, Gruber assured the State Department that “Austria is just as Western-minded as ever” and that he had had extensive conversations in Vienna in August with Chancellor Raab and Foreign Minister Figl and that he is 100 per cent convinced that Austria has no intention of being armed by the Soviets for two reasons: (1) the use of Soviet arms by Austria would create an impossible logistics problem and (2) Austria has no intention of endangering its present good relations with the West.4

Austria’s willing acceptance of Western, particularly American, military aid in the creation of the Bundesheer was part of what Austrian historian Oliver Rathkolb described as a “consistently completely openly discussed de facto alliance of Bundesheer units in

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2 Military Equipment for Austria; Folder 763.5411/2-2356; Box 3583; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 763.5-MSP/1-555 to 763.62/3-2557; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
3 Memorandum of Conversation concerning Austrian Matters between Dr. Karl Gruber, Austrian Ambassador, Dr. Ernst Lemberger, Counselor, Austrian Embassy, Richard B. Freund, Department of State (Western Europe), George A. Tesoro (DOS-WE), Edgar P. Allen (DOS-WE), and Arthur A. Compton (DOS-WE), September 22, 1955; Coalition—PP +SP (203) Folder; Box 7; Entry 1283; Lot 58D72; Subject Files Relating to Austrian Affairs, 1954-1956; Miscellaneous Lot Files; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
western Austria with NATO units.” “In a series of technical areas,” noted Rathkolb, such as “NATO caliber, NATO standards in equipment, continuing education courses of Austrian officers in the USA, etc.” this alliance took shape. Rathkolb cited the 1956 view of the “Socialist expert for military affairs” Karl Stephani who commented with respect to the Bundesheer that “here a NATO unit is formed. One already talks in this sense.” Stephani observed that the American military attaché “had almost convinced the Austrians to establish their logistics system on the American pattern, which was essential if the U.S. was to supply the Austrian Army with spare parts for equipment already provided or subsequently to be provided.”

The Austrians were even willing to go to considerable lengths in order to maintain a consistent arsenal of American arms. During his June 1959 visit to Austria, Soviet defense minister Rodion Malinovsky offered to sell the Bundesheer Soviet MiG-17 jet fighters and T-54 tanks. General Troop Inspector Erwin Fussenegger noted, however, that “these weapons could only be accepted if we had the support of the Americans, otherwise they would be insulted.” Austrian military historian Manfried Rauchensteiner found the lack of “serious conversations” over such arms sales all the more interesting given that “thereby the State Treaty limitations of Article 13 could have probably already then become obsolete.”

The American embassy in Vienna could thus confidently report on June 8, 1962, that “aside from equipment (now largely unusable) acquired from Soviets just after peace

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treaty [sic]. Austrians have since followed consistent policy making only token purchases from East bloc.”

Bundesheer brigadier Hannes-Christian Clausen, one-time Austrian military attaché in the United States, reflected in 1990, meanwhile, that “a multiphased credit, training, and procurement program ran until the middle of the 1960s, in the framework of which the Bundesheer sometimes received equipment even more modern than that given to a series of NATO states, for example in the area of field communications and main battle tanks.”

Already on July 9, 1955, though, an article in the Austrian Christian Democratic weekly Die Furche raised concerns that excessive Austrian dependence for arms supplies on one country (the United States) would call Austrian neutrality into question and make Austria look like a member of NATO. As the international relations scholar Boleslaw A. Boczek confirmed at the other end of the Cold War in 1989, “excessive dependence on arms imports from one country would cast doubt upon the neutral importer’s credibility as a permanently neutral state.”

Concern over the distinctly partisan nature of Bundesheer weaponry, meanwhile, was not limited to private analysts. Rauchensteiner recalled that Austrian Defense Ministry officials met resistance from American officials when the Austrians requested American aid for an expansion of the Bundesheer to 120,000 men during talks in October 1957. The Americans argued that in American planning military aid was tied up until 1961, but then later revealed the true reason for their reticence: General Troop Inspector

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Fussenegger recorded American comments that “the weapons deliveries encountered difficulties in our foreign office because an excessive understanding of neutrality was dominant there.”  

Skuhra later observed that “since the end of the 1960s the practice of avoiding ‘a plug-in principle’ was begun in weapons procurement, that is to say making only a few weapons purchases from one (particularly the Western) alliance.”

One particular case of Austrian arms procurement in which neutrality policy considerations played a considerable role was the protracted Austrian decision to purchase supersonic jet interceptors. Bruno Kreisky wrote in the second volume of his memoirs appearing in 1988 that “from which military camp the fighters are ordered naturally demands careful consideration so that Austria does not come into the twilight zone of pseudoneutrality. Certainly not from a country from which there is a danger of becoming henceforth dependent.”

For Kreisky, political concerns ruled out Austria’s purchase of the Kfir from Israeli Aircraft Industries (IAI). The Israeli newspaper Yediot Aharonot printed Chancellor Kreisky’s response to its query about a possible Kfir purchase on July 21, 1978. Kreisky did not deny that the Kfir is one of the best airplanes and would be the most suitable for us. But I say to you quite frankly: this kind of cooperation must be put off until it is seen whether there are prospects for a peaceful solution of the Near East conflict. Austria is a neutral state and cannot buy airplanes from Israel without further ado. If there will be peace then there will be many ways of cooperation, but not at the present point in

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14 Bruno Kreisky, Im Strom der Politik: Erfahrungen eines Europäers (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1988), 256.
time. I am completely frank: this will only come into question when peace rules in this region.\textsuperscript{15}

By the time \textit{Yediot Aharonot} interviewed Kreisky, the Austrian National Defense Council (\textit{Landesverteidigungsrat}, a body including the defense minister, foreign minister, general troop inspector, and various party representatives) had already recommended the Kfir acquisition in 1976.\textsuperscript{16} An Austrian parliamentary delegation also traveled to Israel in 1978 in order to explore buying the Kfir. Despite receiving a good price and valuable offers of “off-set” purchases from the Israelis, Colonel Friedrich W. Korkisch from the \textit{Bundesheer}’s aviation section remembered that the Austrian “interest in Israeli fighters disappeared relatively quickly after it was determined in the Soviet press that the purchase of an Israeli airplane would be seen by the Soviet government as a ‘breach of Austrian neutrality!’” The Austrians also worried that with a Kfir purchase Austria’s “relatively significant trade with the Arab countries could be subject to a boycott.”\textsuperscript{17} Brigadier Josef Bernecker recalled that the “acquisition of the doubtlessly most economical combat aircraft of an entire epoch failed because of the protest of all Arab states represented in Austria.”\textsuperscript{18}

Interviewed in 2005, meanwhile, former defense minister Friedhelm Frischenschlager recalled his desire to acquire the American F-16, then a top-of-the-line

\textsuperscript{15} Bruno Kreisky, \textit{Politik braucht Visionen: Aufsätze, Reden und Interviews zu aktuellen weltpolitischen Fragen} (Königstein: Athenäum Verlag, 1982), 204. Interviewed on July 11, 2005, Heinz Vetschera of the Austrian National Defense Academy suggested that Kreisky was particularly opposed to a Kfir purchase because he did not want to ruin his chances for obtaining a Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.
\textsuperscript{18} Bernecker, 594.
fighter, but conceded that this was not “neutralitätspolitisch” possible. The American scholar Joan Johnson-Freese confirmed in 1989 that “the Soviet Union reportedly warned Austria not to buy U.S. F-16 jets…as the Austrian military had wanted.”

The Profil reporter Othmar Lahodynsky noted in 1981 that the Pentagon probably did not help the cause of Austrian F-16s with the faux pas in an official statement declaring that such a purchase would form “a further chain link” in West European defenses and enable Austria to “cooperate” with American air bases in Europe.

As expressed on the pages of Pravda, the Soviet Union was also critical of proposed Austrian purchases of American F-5s or British Lightning fighters. Austrian officials did announce in 1981 an intention to buy 24 French Mirage fighters, but funding was delayed indefinitely. Frischenschlager then announced in December 1983 that Austria would purchase either Anglo-French Jaguars or Swedish Drakens the following year.

The ultimate acquisition of the Swedish Drakens appeared to Austrian security studies scholars like Erich Reiter as “neutralitätspolitisch motivated.” The Drakens, according to Skuhra, was “chosen because it would come from neutral Sweden. The military in fact preferred the British Lightning.” “Although any consideration of foreign reactions was strongly denied,” observed Swiss scholar Stephan Kux, “this

19 Friedhelm Frischenschlager, interview by author in Vienna’s Café Korb on July 12, 2005.
23 Johnson-Freese, 174.
25 Skuhra, “Austria and the New Cold War,” 137.
clearly played a part in the Austrian Government’s decision to buy Swedish interceptors rather than the alternatives on offer.” “The fact that the ‘Swiss model’ means being armed to the teeth with scores of American and British fighters,” added Kux, “was quickly forgotten in an effort to avoid the Kremlin’s wrath.”

Also overlooked by many in the Draken purchase was the fact the Swedish fighters like the Draken contained Anglo-American power plants and significant avionics. Indeed, American licensing agreements allowed the administration of President Jimmy Carter to prevent the Swedish sale of 125 Viggen, the Draken’s successor, to India in 1977. A group of European scholars concluded in 1988 that key components, such as jet engines, and especially advanced electronics, are out of the reach of domestic armaments bases of neutral countries. In fact, the neutralist position has been effectively eroded by modern technology, and all neutrals are vitally dependent in their defense efforts from supplies of sophisticated military technology, be it from the Western or the Eastern alliance.

The German scholar Herbert Wulf noted in 1982 that “even the countries of Western Europe, more industrialized in comparison to Europe’s neutral countries, are often dependent upon US-American technology for the production of modern weapons systems.” Wulf illustrated the military-industrial challenge facing small countries like Europe’s neutrals with an example from the aircraft industry. The first Handley-Page military aircraft developed in 1915 demanded 300 development weeks or around six “man-years.” The Halifax bomber designed on the eve of World War II required 71

26 Kux, 28.
development engineers working roughly 118 weeks (160 man-years). A typical military
aircraft developed at the beginning of the 1970s, meanwhile, claimed 400 man-years.\(^{30}\)

It was therefore apparent to the European scholars in 1988 that developments in
weapons technology had vitiated any possibility of neutral countries being militarily
independent of the world’s leading military powers and alliances. “The range of
conventional weapons which the prototypical neutral was expected to turn out, by
whatever means,” wrote these analysts,

> turned out to be prohibitive with each new spiral in the arms race. As
> smaller industrial powers, Euroneutrals were forced to opt out of the arms
> race in key categories of conventional armaments. Sweden by now is the
> last neutral that relies on its own make of a tank. All other neutral
countries are forced to import this kind of war machinery from abroad.
> Fighter aircraft, another key technology in military preparedness, possibly
> will be discontinued to be developed in Sweden due to cost reasons.\(^ {31}\)

Thus the Finnish scholar Harto Hakovirta analyzed in 1988 that “all the five
 neutrals are dependent on imports in their arms procurements,” including the “most self-
sufficient” countries and “important arms exporters” of Sweden and Switzerland.
Hakovirta found the “asymmetries” between neutral purchases of arms from NATO and
Warsaw Pact countries to be “striking.” Switzerland had American and British aircraft
along with American, French, and Swedish missiles. In addition to aircraft components,
meanwhile, Sweden imported American transports and helicopters, British training and
reconnaissance aircraft, and various American, French and West German missiles.
“French, Italian, and British light aircraft” equipped “Ireland’s minimal armed forces.”
“The only neutral which has maintained a balance between the East and West,” observed

\(^{30}\) Herbert Wulf, “Rüstungsbeschaffung und Rüstungsproduktion,” in Neutralität—Eine
Alternative?: Zur Militär- und Sicherheitspolitik Neutraler Staaten in Europa, eds. Annemarie Große-Jütte

\(^{31}\) Albrecht, Auffermann, and Joenniemi, 117.
Hakovirta, “is Finland, which has bought combat aircraft, for instance, from the USSR.”

In Austria’s case, Bundesheer general Wilhelm Kuntner noted in 1982 a “large-scale autarchy” in Austrian production of “military vehicles, light infantry weapons, types of light ammunition, and also light tracked vehicles (APCs, tank destroyers),” even though Austria had “no broad-based armaments industry as, for example, in Sweden or Switzerland.” Yet Kuntner conceded that “Austria imports a large portion of its armament needs” with “Switzerland, Sweden, and France prominent as countries of origin.” Even Austria’s indigenous military products were dependent upon foreign components such as the turret and gun for Austria’s tank destroyer (Kürassier) or alloys and ignition components for munitions.

Statistics cited by the Austrian security studies scholar Wolfgang Danspeckgruber in 1986 confirmed Kunter’s analysis. Austria’s most important arms suppliers in order of importance were the United States, Sweden, Switzerland, France, and Italy. This was the case even though Rauchensteiner during an interview in 2005 cited “enormous difficulties” in acquiring often expensive weapons from Americans sometimes reluctant to share military technology with a non-NATO country. A September 2, 1959, briefing memorandum for Austrian defense minister Ferdinand Graf’s visit to the United States seems to bear out Rauchensteiner’s contention. “While the U.S. is fully in sympathy with

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35 Manfred Rauchensteiner, interview by author in Rauchensteiner’s office at the Heeresgeschichtliches Museum on July 26, 2005.

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the creation of an effective military posture in Austria,” the State Department paper read, “Austria naturally occupies a much lower strategic priority than those nations which are bound to the United States by treaty.”36 In the end, though, Heinz Vetschera of the Austrian National Defense Academy clearly stated in 2005 that the equipment of the Bundesheer, like that of the Swiss military, was NATO compatible.37

Inside the Bundesheer: Militarily Neutral, or Ideologically Anti-Communist?

In his autobiographical book Tagwache!: Erfahrungen eines Präsenzdieners beim Österreichischen Bundesheer, Josef Baum recounted his six months as a Bundesheer conscript stationed in Vienna’s Maria Theresien Kaserne beginning in October 1981. Baum’s experiences in the “neutral” Bundesheer made for interesting reading. Baum’s platoon commander “often illustrated one-sidedly the ‘enormous armament’ of the Russians,” stating that “the Russians threaten us more and more.” Baum “once objected” that “we are neutral and are supposed to defend ourselves in every direction.” “Surely,” responded the platoon commander, “but when the pedal hits the

36 Briefing Documents for Visit of Minister of Defense, Republic of Austria, to the United States, September 2, 1959; Minister Defense Graf Visit to US—1959 (22.3) Folder; Box 1; Entry 5293; Lot 68D123; Records Relating to Austria, 1957-1964; Bureau of European Affairs, Country Director for Italy, Austria, and Switzerland (EUR/AIS); General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
37 Vetschera interview. General Emil Spannocchi’s comments from Verteidigung ohne Schlacht on arms supply and his neutral strategy of Raumverteidigung form an interesting final observation on Austrian armament. While Austria would fight an aggressor violating its sovereignty, Spannocchi and others assumed that after the initial aggression the aggressor’s bloc opponent would become Austria’s ally or “protective power [Schutzmacht].” In a long struggle of small unit warfare, Spannocchi rather illogically demanded that weapons and other fighting equipment must be to a large percent identical with that of the enemy, thus it must actually come from him. This concerns, above all, the question of ammunition. Until things have come this far, however, prepared bases established according to tactical necessities must supply the fight. As soon as help from abroad becomes effective, the possibility and effectiveness of an infrastructure decides the temporal point of transition to the to the armament scheme of the protective power.

metal [wenn es hart auf hart geht] we will, of course, be on the side of NATO. That is surely clear.” The platoon commander added that this is “naturally only known in higher officer circles. There one does not speak about this so much.”

Conscript Baum found suspicious that Bundesheer recruits faced questioning about foreign contacts in the Soviet bloc but not so much about contacts in the West. Bundesheer policy requiring prior permission before leaving Austria on leave reflected such disparities: travel destinations in the West required one week advance notice, those in the Soviet bloc three weeks advance notice. Baum also remembered a briefing shortly before the end of basic training from the “‘S-2,’ that is the ‘security officer,’ a man with secret service flair.” All of the S-2’s examples of espionage threats involved Soviet bloc agents and the S-2 warned that the Soviet bloc was using peace movements, perhaps innocent in their own right, for “ideological infiltration” and the “promotion of underground forces.”

Baum’s observations were not an exception. Bundesheer opponent Wilfried Daim wrote quite accurately in 1969 that

the original strategic “concept” for the Austrian Bundesheer, worked out more or less with the Americans, was in case of a Third World War to hold the troops of the Warsaw Pact long enough until NATO troops advancing into Austria could take over this task themselves. At first, no one hit upon the idea that not the East but rather the West would attack. Or perhaps, this was already considered, but no one wanted to really defend themselves in such a case. These facts are hardly military secrets. Officers openly explain this to their soldiers—with remarkable naïveté. To them it was told that the Bundesheer has the mission of holding the Soviets 24 hours until help comes to us.

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Anecdotal statements from Bundesheer officers consistently confirm just on whose side the Austrians were during the Cold War. The Heeresgeschichtliches Museum (HGM) docent Richard Hufschmied, a Bundesheer reserve officer, emphatically designated the Soviet bloc as Austria’s “anticipated enemy [Feindbild]” during a Sunday tour of the HGM on July 3, 2005. Hufschmied’s fellow Bundesheer reserve officers, Bernhard Rochowanski and Heimo Probst, respectively FPÖ policy advisors for security and foreign policy, also echoed Hufschmied during an interview on July 21, 2005, by applying precisely Hufschied’s term of “Feindbild” to the Soviet bloc.

Many Austrians like Baum, meanwhile, could not help but notice the extensive training links existing between the Bundesheer and NATO countries. Baum wrote that “Austrian generals of the highest rank who sit in important positions complete and have completed one-year general staff courses in the USA. Precisely there, where thousands of officers from South American banana republics were also trained.”\footnote{Baum, 194.} Brigadier Clausen confirmed that “in the first build-up phase of the Bundesheer an extremely lively contact with the West came into being and was also promoted.” In addition to American equipment, “Austria was able to take part to the highest degree in military training programs in the USA.” France also provided officer training.\footnote{Clausen, 21-22.}

Not only did Austrian soldiers go to the United States for training, but American military trainers came to Austria as well. One particular example that irritated leftists like Hans Wolker was a U.S. Special Forces exercise in Austria’s Allentsteig maneuver area from October 2 to November 19, 1966. Members of the Bundesheer’s special forces, the Jagdkommando, had already attended the United States Army’s Ranger course

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\footnote{Baum, 194.}
\footnote{Clausen, 21-22.}
in the United States by the time an officer and 20 NCOs from A Company of the American 10th Special Forces Group based in Bad Tölz, Bavaria, made the return visit to Allentsteig in Lower Austria’s Waldviertel to train more than two dozen Bundesheer soldiers. According to Wolker, the Green Berets had the task of “familiarizing the soldiers of the Austrian Bundesheer with Ranger ‘experiences’ from the Vietnam War raging at the time and with the finesses of small-unit warfare, espionage and sabotage, partisan warfare, and ‘silent killing.’”

As Wolker noted, the American trainers had left their American uniforms and namesake Green Berets in Bad Tölz in order to slip into inconspicuous Bundesheer fatigues while still on German soil in Bad Reichenhall. The weapons and equipment of the Green Berets, meanwhile, transited the American embassy in Vienna on their way to Allentsteig. This secrecy was ultimately all for naught, though, and the Allentsteig maneuver became a topic of public debate in Austria’s Nationalrat. Unfairly or not, Wolker cited the “particularly large public outcry” because “the American trainers came directly from the Vietnam War, belonged to the Special Forces infamous for their special brutality, and were brought secretly to Austria in violation of neutrality.” Especially notable for Wolker was the fact that “the training teams contained not simply just Americans, as the names clearly revealed. East European refugees, Czechs, Ukrainians, and a man from the German Democratic Republic who translated, belonged to the teams.”

These extensive training links help explain why Wolker imagined himself “in an American barracks” during his visit to the Jagdkommando base in Hainburg an der

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44 Ibid, 74-77.
Donau, “only four kilometers away from the Slovakian, ten kilometers from the Hungarian border.” According to Wolker, Jagdkommando “training was based on American documents (like the US Army Special Warfare School—Counterinsurgency Operations-Extension Course) or on indigenous ‘manuals’ which—by their own declaration—have, in part, foreign regulations as their basis.” Wolker discovered the fatigues, commands, and training drill—all American or at least similar. The American star-spangled-banner march Stars and Stripes evidently belongs just as much to the favorite marches of the Rangers as the old Hitler tearjerker about paratroopers who stand guard under storm and rain on Crete. This is all understandable if it is understood that the majority of all the officers responsible for this special unit were trained at American military and Ranger schools. Many of them, particularly in the first years, came from Hitler’s army.45

Training exchanges between Austria and NATO countries, however, did not run one way. After the Cold War in the 1990s, Profil reported that NATO helicopter pilots and military personnel such as West Point cadets had conducted alpine training in Austria since the 1960s.46 Like the Green Berets at Allentsteig, the NATO pilots often slipped into Austrian uniforms for their stay.47

In contrast to Wolker’s writings, though, there is technically nothing in neutrality law to prevent training exchanges between a neutral country and members of a military alliance. Vetschera observed in 1991 that “Austria has in the military arena taken part everywhere in military cooperation where no obligation with respect to the contingency of neutrality could develop, as in, for instance, international exchange in the area of training.” Nor, according to Vetschera, did Austria try to favor in practice one alliance

(NATO) over another (Warsaw Pact). “Cooperation with the states of the Eastern
alliance system,” wrote Vetschera,

was harder to conduct than with other neutral or Western countries. Above all, this was due to the much stricter tendency towards secrecy and isolation in the armed forces of these states which showed themselves little interested in cooperation with “non-Socialist states” than to any fundamental “antineutrality” tendency on the part of Austria. It would not
have been understandable not to want to take part in an international exchange of experiences merely because the (then) Eastern bloc states largely excluded themselves.48

Not only ties with NATO, but also ties to Austria’s Nazi past undermined the credibility of Austrian neutrality, as the Defense Ministry’s undersecretary Otto Rösch (SPÖ) expressed in a speech on January 25, 1962. Rösch declared that “greater dangers threaten our neutrality from the West than from the East.” Rösch justified this judgment with the argument that “the shortest connecting way between NATO states goes, after all, over Austria while Austria is completely uninteresting for a drive of the Russians towards West Germany or Italy.” Rösch, though, added that “it is much harder to be neutral against the West because we sat in the boat with the West until recently.”49

In clarifying his views to rather irritated American officials, Rösch stated to American embassy officials in Vienna that he

unmistakably meant our relationship with Germany and thereby had in mind those Austrian citizens—and I would like to say quite openly especially also those Austrian officers—who still view the West Germans as their former “wartime comrades” and who can only with difficulty bring themselves to a real neutrality against these.50

50 Roesch Views on Austrian Neutrality, March 7, 1962; Folder 350 Austria; Box 22; Entry 2092B; Vienna Embassy Classified General Records, 1962-1964; Records of the Foreign Service, Posts of the Department of State, RG 84; NA. Some might suggest that Rösch knew a thing or two about sitting “in the Armed, but not Neutral
Rösch was not the only Austrian to speak about too cordial relations between Austria and (West) Germany, its former “occupier.” Writing on the pages of the Catholic weekly Die Furche in 1957 immediately after the establishment of Bundesheer, Konrad Felsner explained in an open letter to a former German Wehrmacht comrade why he had no desire to attend their unit reunions. Felsner’s personal revulsion at being forced against his will as a selfidentified Austrian to fight in the pan-German Wehrmacht under harsh pro-Nazi German commanders naturally disposed him to avoid any reminder of an unusually horrific war. Yet not just past memories, but also present implications disturbed Felsner. His former Wehrmacht comrades continued to invoke among themselves at reunions a pan-German “community of destiny [Schicksalgemeinschaft],” even though West Germany was now in NATO (with many of Felsner’s Wehrmacht comrades resuming a military career in the Bundeswehr) and Austria was “neutral.” For Felsner, this Schicksalgemeinschaft evoked too many parallels with interwar meetings between Austrian and German soldiers formerly allied in the Great War, meetings that all too easily resulted in calls for Anschluß.\footnote{Konrad Felsner, “Wieder ‘Schulter an Schulter’?” Die Furche 13, no. 38 (September 21, 1957): 3-4.}

Other Austrians did not share Felsner’s desire to forswear the past. Immediately after the establishment of the Bundesheer there arose controversy over whether Wehrmacht veterans in the Austrian army should have the option, like their former Wehrmacht comrades in West Germany’s Bundeswehr, of wearing military medals acquired in the Third Reich with the veterans’ new postwar Bundesheer uniforms. Kurt Skalnik, a Die Furche editor, argued in an October 1956 edition of his weekly that

\footnote{Armed, but not Neutral}
Wehrmacht medals in Austria should remain limited to private use, although the Austrian government might consider the issuance of a general medal of remembrance for Austria’s former Wehrmacht veterans.\textsuperscript{52}

Like the Bundeswehr in West Germany, the Bundesheer’s utilization by necessity of soldiers with personal resumes stemming from the Third Reich created a distorted relationship between the Bundesheer and the Austrian people. First among the reasons why the Bundesheer enjoyed little support among the Austrians explained by Foreign Minister Kreisky to American ambassador H. Freeman Matthews on May 16, 1962, was the question of the “discredited military leadership” of the Army. The Austrian generals were generally regarded by Austrians of both parties, and particularly the youth, as politically questionable. The Germans, said Kreisky, had done a much better job of rebuilding their postwar army on the basis of new leadership, not tainted by associations with the Third Reich. The Austrians had failed to do this, and this was a serious liability in getting public support for budgetary increases for the military.\textsuperscript{53}

Interestingly, the “Embassy Comment” on “Kreisky’s views in this regard” judged them “somewhat over-stated. None of the Austrian general officers had significant Nazi pasts, although most of them are strongly conservative and violently anti-Socialist in their views.”\textsuperscript{54} In contrast, many Austrians, particularly individuals like Kreisky on the political Left, begged to differ. Harald Irnberger, for example, noted that many Bundesheer officers like General Troop Inspector Fussenegger belonged before 1938 to the Nationalsozialistischer Soldatenring (NSR), a Nazi organization outlawed by

\textsuperscript{52} Kurt Skalnik, “Der Minister und das ‘Ei des Kolumbus,’” Die Furche, October 20, 1956, 3.
\textsuperscript{53} Memorandum of Conversation on May 16, 1962 concerning Austrian Defense Force between Foreign Minister Bruno Kreisky, Ambassador H. Freeman Matthews, and Dwight J. Porter, Acting Deputy Chief of Mission; Folder 763.003/2-1160; Box 1912; 1960-1963 Central Decimal File from 763.00(W)/12-762 to 763.34/4-262; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
the First Republic. Corresponding to Kreisky’s views, moreover, the Austrian journalist Peter Michael Lingens argued in a 2000 book that the Wehrmacht veterans who filled the ranks of the Bundesheer did not thoroughly discuss the issue of disobedience to immoral orders, in contrast to the Wehrmacht veterans who had to confront this question in the Bundeswehr.

From the Bundesheer’s very beginning in 1955, Ernst Zipperer’s previously cited Zukunft article “Wir wollen keine Soldaten sein” justified Socialist opposition to an Austrian military with the prediction that “Deutschmeister-Tradition und Hitler-Orden” would predominate among its officers. Later Zukunft writers saw this prediction fulfilled. Caspar Franz Peturnig complained on its pages in 1964 of Bundesheer officers who had served in the Wehrmacht, viewed the conspirators who attempted to overthrow Adolf Hitler with an assassination attempt on July 20, 1944, as traitors, and, unlike Felsner, all too willingly attended Wehrmacht reunions in Kamaradschaftsverbände. Austrian defense minister Karl Schleinzer (1961-1964) had even gone on record calling these veterans groups covered in Wehrmacht medals as “supporters of national defense [Träger des Wehrwillens].”

As Profil journalist Robert Buchacher critically reviewed on September 25, 1995, Austrian Defense Ministry support for gatherings of the Third Reich’s Austrian veterans did not remain limited to rhetoric. “As long as can be remembered,” wrote Buchacher, the Bundesheer supported the annual October veterans meeting on the Ulrichsberg north

57 Ernst Zipperer, “Wir wollen keine Soldaten sein,” Zukunft, no. 6 (1955): 166.
of Klagenfurt with “military music, personnel and equipment, elderly world war veterans are carted up the mountain with army vehicles.” The Ulrichsbergtreffen, according to Buchacher, attracted not just Wehrmacht veterans, but also veterans from Hitler’s Nazi Praetorian Guard, the Waffen-SS, and rightwing extremists from throughout Europe.\(^{59}\)

_Zukunft_ writer Hans Eichbauer, meanwhile, cited as worrisome in 1986 not just continuing participation by uniformed Bundesheer officers in gatherings of Third Reich veterans but also incidents of Holocaust denial during officer training in 1981. A former Condor Legion officer instructing at the Austrian Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt also bothered Eichbauer. Indicative of the Bundesheer’s ethos for Eichbauer was the Österreichisches Soldatenliederbuch containing 20 military songs from the Wehrmacht, including the 1935 Panzerlied written for Wehrmacht armored units that soon rolled across Europe in blitzkrieg. Austrian soldiers gave Eichbauer the impression that Austria’s army (and its songs) remained the same throughout the years even as the Austrian state changed.\(^{60}\)

Both Eichbauer and Skuhra argued that, in the words of Skuhra, “conscript swearing in ceremonies worthy of emulation in terms of democratic political formation such as in Mauthausen or Karl Marx Hof [historic Vienna housing development, central site of the 1934 Socialist uprising] remained limited to Minister Frischenschlager’s term of office (1983-1985).”\(^{61}\) For Daim, meanwhile, the “moral apogee” demonstrated by links of Bundesheer officers to the Third Reich was just one more reason that “made the dissolution of Austrian Bundesheer appear desirable.”\(^{62}\)


\(^{61}\) Eichbauer, 32; and Skuhra, “Österreichische Sicherheitspolitik,” 673.

\(^{62}\) Daim, 68.
In the final analysis, then FPÖ member Reiter observed in 1993 that “there developed—whether right or wrong—the impression in some quarters that the Bundesheer was no longer a matter for all Austrians, but rather had increasingly become or would soon become the possession of conservative political and military circles.”

Policy advisors Rochowanski and Probst in the FPÖ, a party often reproached for historic pan-German ideological roots and Third Reich apologetics, confirmed during their 2005 interview that the FPÖ is “very strong” within the Bundesheer.

The Bundesheer’s partisan and ideological proclivities could, of course, only place in doubt its ability to act as a neutral military ready to repel all aggressors. The Austrian historian Aurél B. J. Moser wrote in 1974 that

the activity and also the mere existence of numerous soldier organizations that “maintain the traditions of Hitler’s Wehrmacht and consider themselves bound to the military spirit of this Wehrmacht” has always been termed by the KPÖ as incompatible with the status of neutrality, particularly given the fact that their umbrella organizations are based in the Federal Republic of Germany.

The KPÖ, Moser continued, found the pre-1938 membership of many Bundesheer officers in the Nationalsozialistischer Soldatenring unsettling, to say the least. “In the thinking of these people,” Moser wrote,

but also in the thinking of those officers, NCOs, and soldiers who were trained and lead by these former Soldatenring officers, the idea of Austria

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63 Erich Reiter, Österreichische Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik: Aufsätze und Essays, Rechts- und sozialwissenschaftliche Reihe series (Frankfurt: Verlag Peter Lang, 1993), 71. Interviewed by the author in the Stiftskaserne on August 3, 2005, Reiter expressed his growing dismay with the FPÖ. Along with Frischenschlager, who left the FPÖ in 1993, Reiter was one of the true classical liberals in the FPÖ’s increasingly marginalized libertarian wing. Consequently, Reiter spoke of seeking an “opportune moment” to let his FPÖ membership expire.

64 Heimo Probst and Bernhard Rochowanski, interview by author in their offices at the Nationalrat on July 21, 2005. For more on the FPÖ, see: The Freedom Party of Austria (accessed April 1, 2007); available from http://www.photoglobe.info/ebooks/austria/cstudies_austria_0139.html.

having to be a military bulwark against the East played and plays—often unconsciously—a role; this basic outlook is indivisibly bound up with the conception of the Austrian Bundesheer. That the KPÖ doubts not only the readiness but also the capability of an army with such a leadership, with such a basic outlook, to defend Austria’s neutrality against every possible aggressor, is understandable from the KPÖ perspective.  

Conscript Baum certainly must have had his doubts. Baum recorded encountering at the Bundesheer one 20 year-old officer candidate (Fähnrich) Winter. Winter explained that he and his parents had fled East Prussia in 1968. Near Königsberg (now the Russian, formerly Soviet city of Kaliningrad) Winter’s family possessed until 1945 large landholdings of 180,000 hectares. “Because I considered this number an error,” wrote Baum, “Winter repeated it for me twice.”

Winter’s family counted “highranking National Socialists” among its members and thus faced postwar discrimination from the Soviets. Baum related that Winter had “stuck in his memory how a bulldozer rolled over the family’s mansion.” Thus Winter saw a “Feindbild” in “leftist radicals.” “I have added up everything myself,” Winter meanwhile declared to Baum, “and—you see—it would have been simply technically impossible to gas so many people in the concentration camps.”

Winter justified his presence in the Bundesheer with a desire to “naturally go back to where I grew up.” Puzzled, Baum queried, “Why exactly are you in the Bundesheer of neutral Austria when you want to return to your family property?” Winter answered that this is too much to deal with for now. Austria is naturally neutral through the State Treaty [sic]. But I know from higher officers that there is a kind of military support agreement between Austria and the FRG. In Bavaria there are depots with equipment for the Austrian Bundesheer. Now

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66 Ibid, 133.
67 Baum, 119.
68 Ibid, 119-120.
assuming that NATO launches a preemptive attack against the East, then it will naturally become difficult for neutrality.69

Baum is not the only one to have had surreal encounters with the Bundesheer. Bundesheer (Miliz) brigadier Richard Bayer, for example, worked in the Chancellery from 1974 to 1991 where he coordinated efforts to draft and implement a new national defense plan.70 The resulting Landesverteidigungsplan approved in 1983 and published in 1985 is a rather dry official document stating, among other things, that Austria’s “basis of life [Lebensgrundlagen]” is “bound,” in part, to the “maintenance of permanent neutrality.”71

Interviewed for this dissertation on August 4, 2005, in the offices of the Österreichische Gesellschaft für Landesverteidigung und Sicherheitspolitik (ÖGLS) in Vienna’s Stiftskaserne where Bayer is now managing director, Bayer opened the conversation with a personal introduction. Like so many Bundesheer officers of his generation, Bayer is a Wehrmacht veteran thrice wounded in World War II, during which he manned a rocket launcher battery (“Stukas on foot,” Bayer called them) in the 88th Regiment, an independent artillery regiment. Bayer saw combat against the Americans during the 1944 German Ardennes offensive (Battle of the Bulge) and later in Hungary against the Red Army.

The man who oversaw the formulation of the Landesverteidigungsplan with its praise for neutrality then moved to describe Austria’s situation immediately after the war. Bayer noted the Red Army’s raping and pillaging in Austria as well as the expulsion of

69 Ibid.
70 Richard Bayer, interview by author in Bayer’s office at the Österreichische Gesellschaft für Landesverteidigung und Sicherheitspolitik (ÖGLS) in Vienna’s Stiftskaserne on August 4, 2005.
71 Landesverteidigungsplan (Vienna: Bundeskanzleramt, 1985), 92.
the German-speaking inhabitants from neighboring Czechoslovakia. Communist Yugoslav partisans, meanwhile, threatened to make good on historic South Slav claims to Austrian border regions in Carinthia. Bayer placed these events in a traditional Austrian historical understanding, observing that the Austrians and Russians have often fought each other, such as in World War I. Bayer described the following Cold War in terms of a contrast between a ravaged Soviet bloc under “slavery” and “Western values” that were “worth defending [verteidigungswert].”

In the context of Central Europe’s German-speaking areas, Bayer’s comments are completely ordinary, indeed, perfectly understandable. How these sentiments of an Austrian general so central to the formulation of Austrian defense policy are compatible with any policy of neutrality, though, remains a mystery. Bayer, moreover, seemed completely oblivious to this contradiction and its neutrality policy implications. Presented with the question, so perfectly reasonable to the KPÖ, “How could a Soviet general view you as neutral?” Bayer innocently replied, “Why do you ask me? I am not a Soviet general.”

Bayer merely seemed to exemplify why Austrian historian Günter Bischof considered Austria’s “military-strategic” position as “a kind of ‘secret ally’ of the West” to be “perfectly natural.” “Viewed ideologically,” Bischof judged, “there was indeed hardly a land in the West in which anti-Bolshevism was more deeply ingrained since the East and Central European revolutions of 1917-1919 than was the case with the Austrians.”

Nationalrat member Karl Czernetz, for instance, “emphasized” in an address on September 20, 1961, before members of the European Parliament and the

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe that “Austria is not neutralistic,” even though “the military neutrality of the country is in the present period of history, in the region between both blocs, a vital necessity for this free country that passionately stands for the free world and for the unity of Europe.” “There are in Austria,” Czernetz evaluated, “fewer neutralists and fewer Communists than in a number of NATO member states.”

Austrian international relations scholar Hans Mayrzedt reached the same conclusion eight years later in 1970. Mayrzedt wrote that

in the Austrian populace the feeling of belonging to the “Free World” (to a common social system) is very strong, paired with a more or less marked anti-Communism. At any rate this might be stronger on average in Austria than in many other West European countries, including those belonging to the Western alliance. Moreover, in few “Western” countries do Communists play so small a role as in Austria, despite the opportunity for free political development.

The ÖVP politician Bernhard Görg elaborated in 1971 that

rationally the Austrian does indeed comprehend political and military neutrality; emotionally, though, he has little use for this neutrality because he feels ideologically affinity with one side. From this he derives the conclusion that an existence threatening endangerment of our state, if at all, is to be expected from those powers across the Iron Curtain and that the West counts Austria as one of its own on the basis of our ideological orientation, and would have to feel therefore responsible for us as if we were a NATO state outright. Due to this ideological feeling of belonging many Austrians would consider themselves hardly disturbed if, for example, the Americans would violate our airspace in order to be more quickly present in an international hot spot.

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Neutral between Friend and Foe: Early Bundesheer Defense Planning

Bayer’s apparent political ignorance aside, his persona and the behavior of other Bundesheer soldiers belied official denials of a Feindbild under Austrian neutrality.

Vetschera, for example, wrote in 1987 that Austria’s threat perception essentially differs from the threat perceptions that exist, say, in both European alliances. These identify one another as the main source of threat and have therefore a certain personalized perception of threat that can degenerate to a Feindbild[^1]. Such a simplistic drawing of a threat perception is excluded for Austria, for, in principle, at least, each of the two alliances can have an interest in exercising strategic control over Austrian territory in a possible future conflict. Austria’s threat perception is therefore not a personalized one but rather to a certain degree one abstracted from an offense: whoever and for whatever reasons would attack Austria presents a threat.^[76]

“Austria,” Vetschera explained two years later, “must identify what, rather than who, could threaten Austria’s security.”^[77] Such a threat perception should have entailed consequences for Austrian military dispositions, as Chancellor Julius Raab stated to his cabinet on January 11, 1956. “Because deployments themselves represent the ribcage of national defense,” Raab declared, “and make defense readiness visible, Austria is forced as a neutral state for foreign policy and optical reasons to form its armed forces in such a manner that every possible kind of threat or violation of the borders can be effectively opposed.”^[78] Using Raab’s terminology of military deployments for “optical” and “foreign policy” reasons almost verbatim, Bundesheer colonel Johann Freissler in 1963 wrote that “Austria must protect itself as a neutral state against every breach of

neutrality.” A neutral state, wrote the Austrian political scientist Heinrich Schneider in 1987, may not belie its neutrality pledge through, for example, maintaining a defensive system that de facto expresses a unilateral tie to one of the “camps”—one of the potential conflict parties; a defensive system which is so structured that unbiased observers can recognize: its potential can only then come to a truly effective actualization when it so to speak operates “hand in hand” with the armed forces of one of the alliances.

Throughout the Bundesheer’s history, though, there was considerable evidence that neutral Austria and its Western “allies” ignored the lesson in neutrality given by Schneider and others. Even before the end of the occupation, for example, a September 23, 1953, State Department memorandum made the usual warnings of Austrian neutrality having “serious consequences in Germany and possibly in other countries which could be tempted by the mirage of neutralism” and increasing “the difficulties of the West aiding in the development of an adequate post-treaty Austrian army and of defense planning between the West and Austria.” Given these disadvantages, the State Department was willing to consider Austrian neutrality only “on the understanding that some degree of covert military planning between Austria and the West will still be possible.” A subsequent National Security Council (NSC) Memorandum from December 22, 1953, found that

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81 Proposed Talks with the Soviets—Basic Position Paper on Austria, September 23, 1953; Treaty—September, 1953 Folder; Box 10; Entry 1174B; Lot 56D294; Austrian Desk Files, 1950-1954 (Arthur Compton File); Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, 1941-1954; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group (RG) 59; National Archives (NA) Building II, College Park, MD.
while a prohibition against the direct participation of Austria in EDC or NATO would be acceptable, the United States should not agree to any treaty provision which would prevent the effective cooperation of Austria in Western defense planning or which would restrict the Western powers in giving aid to Austria in the establishment of adequate internal security forces.\footnote{Memorandum for the National Security Council on U.S. Objectives and Policies with Respect to Austria, December 22, 1953; Folder CSS 388.1 Austria (6-8-46), Sec. 13; Box 11; Geographic File, 1951-1953; Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218; NA.}

Little time elapsed following the State Treaty before the real Austrian understanding of their “neutrality” emerged. Merely a week after the passage of Austria’s neutrality law, the Italian defense minister Paolo Taviani meet with American ambassador Llewellyn Thompson on November 3, 1955, in Vienna. Taviani voiced concerns over Austrian defenses and a desire for the NATO member Italy to covertly cooperate with Austria militarily. Taviani, Thompson recorded, “stressed the Italian interest stating the line of the Isonzo was difficult if not impossible to defend.”\footnote{Conversation with Italian Defense Minister Taviani; Folder 763.342/6-756; Box 3582; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 763.13/3-2455 to 763.5/10-1056; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.}

In a meeting eight days later, Taviani reported to Thompson defense conversations with Chancellor Raab, then undersecretary for defense Graf, and ÖVP secretary general Alfred Maleta. During these conversations Taviani had sounded out “Austro-Italian defense planning” and Graf declared his intention to create a long-term link between Austria and NATO via Italian command structures. The initial step in this plan would be a December 18, 1955, visit of Bundesheer general Emil Liebitzky, director of Austria’s Office for National Defense (Amt für Landesverteidigung), to Italian General Giuseppe Mancinelli in Rome.\footnote{Rathkolb, Washington ruft Wien, 122.}
NATO’s commander in chief of Allied Forces, Southern Europe (CINCSOUTH), Admiral William Morrow Fechteler, received a protocol from General Manicelli on February 21, 1956, of the “highly secret conversation he had in his office on December 18, 1955, with his Austrian opposite number, General Liebitsky.” The next day, Edward P. Maffit, the American special liaison officer for CINCSOUTH at the Rome embassy, sent a summary to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), General Alfred Maximilian Gruenther, and his deputy, General Cortlandt van Rensselaer Schuyler.

Liebitzky, wrote Maffit,

pointed out that certain limiting “norms” (Treaty clauses) must be observed, especially during “this early period” when Austria is under the close observation of the former occupying powers. It must maintain an appearance of neutrality, a first step in which have to be balanced distribution of forces an along its frontiers. This should, however, not be misinterpreted by Austria’s friends, since defensive plans are being directed “concretely and exclusively” to the single hypothesis that any aggression that may come will come from the east, from either the Soviet Union or satellites. Furthermore, it would be well to keep in mind that one of the chief Austrian preoccupation is the irredentist attitude of the Yugoslavs toward Carinthia, an attitude so openly exhibited that the people of that arena have built up a spirit of do-or-die resistance to the Slovene encroachment….Stressing the inadequacy of his currently planned forces, General Liebitsky said that a full perimeter defense is not possible and that after a retarding action on the border, the army would fall back to the Alpine redoubt, the eastern line of which would run as follows: from an anchor on the German frontier just west of Salzburg, east through Gmunden to the Enns River, southeast through Weyer to Eisenerz, then south to Leoben and Wolfsberg (just west of Graz), and on to the Yugoslav border near Dravograd; thence, due west to the Italian border.  

As the American scholar Joe Berghold noted in 2002, American foreign policy and NATO policymakers reacted “reservedly” toward this Italian-Austrian defense project. NATO officials “discretely” indicated to all involved parties that Defense

85 Memorandum of February 22, 1956; Folder 763.342/6-756; Box 3582; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 763.13/3-2455 to 763.5/10-1056; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.

Armed, but not Neutral
Minister Taviani had no mandate to negotiate in the name of NATO. NATO officials saw their caution justified by the fact that in both Austria and Italy, according to Berghold, this “strategic alliance” lacked a “broad political basis.” In Austria the SPÖ, and even some ÖVP ministers in Raab’s cabinet such as Foreign Minister Leopold Figl, knew nothing of the Italian initiative. Thus Ambassador Thompson wrote to General Orval R. Cook (United States Air Force), deputy commander in chief of the United States European Command, on March 14, 1956, and termed “contacts between the Austrian and Italian military authorities” to be “not entirely orthodox since, on the Austrian side, they are taking place without the knowledge of one of the two parties in the present coalition Government.” Thompson also worried that “on the Italian side the Government as a whole is not aware of these conversations.”

“Nonetheless,” Berghold judged, “the initiative was cautiously welcomed, because it was able to make a preliminary step in the direction of a later (naturally secret) networking of the Austrian Bundesheer with NATO structures.” Rathkolb confirmed that “the information about the military-strategic plans of the Austrian Bundesheer was naturally accepted without protest.” In return, Taviani showed Defense Minister Graf NATO defense plans for 1958. Italy also unsuccessfully sought a territorial guarantee for Austria in NATO councils after the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolt in 1956.

Whatever the limits of Liebitzky’s Rome trip in 1955, tacit and covert military

87 Ambassador’s Thompson Letter to General Cook of March 14, 1956; Folder 763.342/6-756; Box 3582; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 763.13/3-2455 to 763.5/10-1056; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA. Thompson, according to Rathkolb, pointed out that the SPÖ, in particular, would reject Liebitzky’s proposed retreat to the West and demand a stronger defense of eastern Austria. See: Washington ruft Wien, 122.
88 Berghold, 280.
cooperation between Austria and NATO continued apace in the following years on both sides of Austrian “neutrality.” According to a State Department memorandum from March 1, 1956, for instance,

Austrian military authorities consider active participation on the side of the West as their country’s only possible course of action in the event of a general war. Their plans provide for the disposition of their forces and reserve supplies so that, in the case of a major attack from the east, they could fall back and defend the Klagenfurt basin and the Tyrol. Such a vital delaying and possible holding action would provide time for (1) better organization of defenses in Italy or (2) reinforcement of Austrian positions or (3) more effective use of United States special forces which are currently located in Italy. Unless the Soviets or Soviet-Satellites are willing to accept excessive losses, the above strategy could gain retention by the West of a portion of Austria.\(^90\)

Following the State Department’s analysis, General Troop Inspector Fussenegger issued a *General Directive for Combat Operations of the Bundesheer [Allgemeine Weisung für die Kampfführung des Bundesheeres]* in the summer of 1956. The directive foresaw only two contingencies: an attack from Hungary and Czechoslovakia while Yugoslavia’s actions remained uncertain, and an isolated Yugoslavian attack.\(^91\) The young *Bundesheer* also formed itself into two corps, one north of the Alpine chain running across Austria and another to the south.\(^92\) “The Alps,” Colonel Freissler explained,

divide the state territory from the West to far in the East into two parts, something which in the initial considerations forced a grouping of military forces north and south of the main Alpine ridge according to local tasks because north-south redeployments are extremely hard and time-

\(^{90}\) *Military Aid for the Republic of Austria;* Folder 763.5MSP/1-555; Box 3583; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 763.5-MSP/1-555 to 763.62/3-2557; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.


consuming, if at all possible under the influence of a strong hostile air force. 93

“This structure, though,” observed Rauchensteiner, “corresponded only to the eastern operational contingencies. A restructuring would have been necessary for a contingency ‘NATO.’” 94 Ambassador Thompson could thus rejoice in his January 17, 1957, cable that the Bundesheer had “the greater part of its strength and supply installations in the western part of the country.” This was a reflection of Austria’s Western sympathies meaning that “even in the military field Austria has shown herself ready to cooperate with the West to the maximum extent possible without exposing herself to the charge of violating her international commitments.” Accordingly, Thompson pronounced that “Austria should be given a sufficiently high priority with respect to other commitments, including requirements of North Atlantic Treaty countries or other military aid programs.” Thompson judged that “because of the quality of her soldiery, the extreme strategic importance of her geographic location and the excellent defensive characteristics of her terrain, it would be difficult to visualize an area where an equal investment could achieve greater results.” 95

Another cable from Ambassador Thompson little more than a week later on January 25, 1957, showed just how farreaching Austria’s covert military ties with NATO could be. Thompson recalled being invited by Austrian finance minister Reinhard Kamitz “shortly before the Hungarian crisis” to a luncheon with Defense Minister Graf

93 Freissler, 481.
94 Rauchensteiner, “Österreich und die NATO,” 177.
95 Military Aid for Republic of Austria, File M-104-56; Folder 763.5MSP/1-555; Box 3583; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 763.5-MSP/1-555 to 763.62/3-2557; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
and Trade Minister Fritz Bock, “apparently at the instigation of the latter.” Thompson recorded that

Minister BOCK pointed out that he had been obliged, because of budgetary limitations, to cut back the program for the completion of the Salzburg-Vienna autobahn and that at the present rate it would be many years before it could be completed. He and the Defense Minister said they considered that the completion of the autobahn and particularly the Salzburg-Linz portion was in the military interests of the United States and the other NATO powers, and he inquired whether, in these circumstances, we could give them any assistance in speeding up the construction, at least of this part of the road.\footnote{Proposed use of Counterpart Funds; Folder 763.5MSP/1-555; Box 3583; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 763.5-MSP/1-555 to 763.62/3-2557; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.}

Colonel Sloan from the United States Army, meanwhile, reported from his post as American military attaché in Vienna on February 11, 1957, that Austrian military contacts with NATO countries continued after the somewhat limited Libietzky-Manicelli talks. In his conversations with Sloan, Defense Minister Graf explained that he maintained contacts with his German and Italian counterparts. “Since both Germany and Italy are members of NATO,” Sloan recorded Graf saying, “this contact will give him the opportunity to fashion Austria’s Armed Forces in regard to organization and equipment so it will fit into the NATO pattern with a minimum of difficulty if the need should arise.”\footnote{Austrian Military Planning; Folder 763.13/1-1559; Box 3582; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 763.13/3-2455 to 763.5/10-1056; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.}

On the part of the Americans, an April 16, 1957, State Department memorandum later confirmed that “despite the Austrian neutrality as established by international agreement, the U.S. maintains strong covert intelligence and military liaison.” The clear goal of this liaison “is to make Austria the eastern anchor of western defenses in
Austrian officers themselves agreed and designated Austria as “the flank protection and glacis of the West” in a 1958 “military geographical and strategic assessment of Austria.”

“From 1955 to 1958,” concluded Rathkolb, “Austrian neutrality had a considerable pro-Western bias, including a de facto military alliance with NATO in case of overall war.”

The relationship between Austria and NATO in this period was one of “working level” arrangements maintaining the Bundesheer as a “secret ally” of NATO behind a façade of “temporary neutrality.”

Austrian military historian Johann Christoph Allmayer-Beck thus concluded in 1974 that “it was no wonder when the renowned military correspondent of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Adalbert Weinstein, reported in 1957 after a visit to the Austrian Bundesheer: ‘For Vienna, the danger can only come from the East.’”

Austria, though, was not alone in tilting its neutrality to one side during this period. Field Marshall Bernard Law Montgomery reported his recent contacts with Swiss defense minister Paul Chaudet to British prime minister Anthony Eden in a secret memorandum on February 10, 1956. Montgomery, then Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR), recorded declaring his belief to Chaudet that “in general war neutrality would not be possible, there would be extensive use of nuclear

98 Outline Plan of Operations for Austria, April 16, 1957; Austria 1958 Folder; Box 15; Lot 62D430; Records Related to State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and the National Security Council, 1953-1960; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.


100 Rathkolb, “Austria’s ‘Ostpolitik’ in the 1950s and 1960s,” 144.


weapons.” Chaudet agreed, saying “that the Swiss will join NATO in time of war,” but asked “that this be kept secret.”

*Raumverteidigung in the Service of NATO: Are some Areas more equal than others?*

Austrian historians like Günter Bischof argue that the “strict anti-Communism and close orientation towards the West” that characterized Austria as “a quasi ‘secret ally’ of the West” in the 1950s “diminished as its neutral role between East and West became more pronounced under Bruno Kreisky, once he became Foreign Minister in 1959.” Yet evidence for the *Bundesheer’s* alignment with NATO exists beyond the army’s early years. The American embassy in Vienna reported on November 30, 1962, that

> in the course of recent contacts between members of the Military Attaché staff and certain staff officers in Austrian Defense Ministry in connection with the expected US sales of military equipment and the provision of training, Austrians pointed out the desirability of some degree of joint NATO-Austrian defense planning re use of the new equipment. While this suggestion came from working-level officers without policy responsibility and presumably without approval or even knowledge their superiors, it is a noteworthy indication of the interest in relating the defense organization and planning of the Austrians to military forces now in Western Europe….Department and Defense comments are requested, particularly regarding extent to which training of Austrian military personnel in NATO countries can be employed to satisfy what we think will be persistent interest on part of many Austrian military for working ties with West. Perhaps the relationship can never go beyond a “training” one, and we doubt that the GOA [Government of Austria] will be prepared to ask for something more, at least as things now stand. It might accept, however, a degree of secret cooperation (based on unwritten

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understandings) which could expand rapidly in the event of a crisis which seriously threatened Austrian neutrality.\textsuperscript{105}

Three years later, the German author Manfred Sell wrote in \textit{Die neutralen Alpen} that the \textit{Bundesheer} “frivolously played with the thought, heard not seldom and unfortunately even in influential circles in the West, that hopefully Austria does not take its neutrality so seriously as Switzerland.” “Therefore,” noted Sell, “military planning takes place in a manner from which every laymen can deduce that a breach of neutrality one way or the other is counted on.”\textsuperscript{106} The name of the \textit{Bundesheer}’s failed 1969 \textit{Bärenatze} maneuver, meanwhile, indicated not so subtly \textit{Bundesheer} perceptions of its true threat, namely a Soviet bearclaw.\textsuperscript{107}

Moser reviewed in 1974 other “indisputable indices cited by the KPÖ” clearly demonstrating the nonneutral outlook of the Western-armed \textit{Bundesheer}. “Provable without objection” was the longstanding assumption of the Austrian general staff that Austria’s neutrality is threatened alone—or at least primarily—by the armies of the Warsaw Pact in case of a military conflict. All maneuvers of the Austrian \textit{Bundesheer} have proceeded from the assumption that Austria will be overrun by armies from the north (ČSSR), the east (Hungary), or southeast (Yugoslavia) and could count on the help of NATO, according to a \textit{Volksstimme} report a General Staff major even “called upon the air force of NATO” during a staff exercise and operated with it as if it were a constituent part of the Austrian \textit{Bundesheer}.\textsuperscript{108}

Moser noted in addition that the fortifications built in Austria by the Defense Ministry at a cost of nine billion Schillings by 1972 were “almost exclusively directed

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\textsuperscript{105} Airgram of November 30, 1962 concerning Joint Planning for Austrian Armed Forces; Folder 763.003/2-1160; Box 1912; 1960-1963 Central Decimal File from 763.00(W)/12-762 to 763.34/4-262; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
\textsuperscript{106} Manfred Sell, \textit{Die neutralen Alpen} (Stuttgart: Seewald Verlag, 1965), 215-216.
\textsuperscript{108} Moser, 134-135.
\end{flushright}
against the north and the east.” All these facts combined with “Austria’s cultural affinity with the West give rise to speculation that the readiness of the Austrian Bundesheer to defend itself ‘with all available means’ against a serious threat on the part of NATO is not particularly great and is not expected from the broad mass of the public.”

Evidence suggests, though, an attenuated military relationship between Austria and NATO by the time Moser wrote in 1974. Brigadier Clausen recalled that Austrian-NATO military contacts “beyond purely logistical concerns leveled off considerably in the last years before 1970.” Clausen sees this as “the point of departure for, in part, subsequent perceptibly distanced professional relations of the Bundesheer with the West that found their clearest expression in the fact that it came to a 12-year interruption in high-level Austria-USA military visits beginning in 1972.”

The early 1970s, of course, marked the Bundesheer’s transition to Raumverteidigung. In theory, the allround nature of Raumverteidigung would preclude any partiality towards an alliance. Bundesheer colonel Karl Semlitsch observed in 1986 that Raumverteidigung “limits the capability for flexible operations in a strategic sense.” Thus “a territorially-bound defense system is evidently less compatible with alliance systems.” Indeed, the Bundesheer’s second largescale Raumverteidigung exercise in 1982 in Tyrol intended to demonstrate the impartiality of Austria’s defenses. “By shifting the exercise area to the western part of Austria,” explained Rauchsteiner, “it

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109 Ibid, 135.
110 Clausen, 22-23.
could be demonstrated that the essence of Austrian neutrality demands taking security precautions not in one, but rather in every conceivable direction.\textsuperscript{112}

Yet it was questionable whether Raumverteidigung could guarantee a neutral application of Austrian national defense, even though Commandant Emil Spannocchi had warned in 1976 on the pages of Verteidigung ohne Schlacht that a small neutral state “must guard itself with all clarity against personal sympathies in decisionmaking.” There was no avoiding “personal sympathies,” however, when considering the implications of Spannocchi’s “third phase, namely the phase of restoring the status before aggression.” Spannocchi, namely, clearly saw that a military retaking of conquered territory was “probably seldom possible for the small state alone” and required the help of the initial aggressor’s enemy.\textsuperscript{113}

Alignment with NATO against Warsaw Pact aggression corresponded to the natural sympathies of the Bundesheer and the Austrian people, but what if the roles of “aggressor” and “defender” in relation to Austrian neutrality were reversed? “What then,” asked Rauchensteiner retrospectively in 2000, “if in case of war it should actually come to pass that Warsaw Pact troops avoided Austria, but NATO did not want to or could not renounce the short line of communication between Italy and Germany? Would one then have to declare war against NATO and call upon the help of the Warsaw Pact?”\textsuperscript{114} For that matter, the ultimate sympathies of Europe’s neutral states in a European bloc confrontation were never in any doubt. “The fact is,” wrote the American scholar and former deputy assistant secretary for defense Joseph Kruzel, “that none of the

\textsuperscript{113} Guy Brossollet and Emil Spannocchi, \textit{Verteidigung ohne Schlacht} (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1976), 61, 86.

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European neutrals could hold out for long against a Soviet Union that controlled the rest of the Continent from the Urals to the Atlantic.”

Rauchensteiner was not the first to raise such questions in a country already well-acquainted with a previous “liberation” by the Red Army. In May 1955, VdU (forerunner of the FPÖ) Nationalrat member Willfried Gredler gave the American embassy in Vienna an analysis of Austrian neutrality written by his associate Herbert Kier, an Austrian international law scholar. Contemplating an Austrian defense of the Brenner Pass against NATO, the paper worried that

in adherence to her obligations, Austria would then have to accept support, from that guaranteeing Power which helps her to defend the blocking bolt against the Occident. Although we do not intend to regard the assisting powers as personified devils, we have gained enough experience in order to know what amenities we have to expect from the liberation by an anti-occidential power.


116 Austria’s International Legal Status and the State Treaty, May 9, 1955; US Treaty Policy—1955 (501/2) Folder; Box 8; Entry 1284; Lot 58D223; Subject Files Relating to the Austrian Occupation and Peace Treaty, 1949-55; Miscellaneous Lot Files; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA. I am indebted to Volker Kier, the son of Herbert Kier, and to the invention of the internet, which enabled the instantaneous locating of the younger Kier (http://www.kier.at/) across the Atlantic Ocean, for detailed biographical information concerning a Herbert Kier not described in the National Archives document. Volker Kier also thankfully provided via the internet the original document from which the American diplomats translated the cited excerpt, namely a memorandum by his father to the SPÖ Nationalrat member Ernst Koref discussing Austrian neutrality, then recently foreseen by the Moscow Memorandum. In this memorandum entitled “The Status of Austria in International Law and the State Treaty [Der völkerrechtliche Status Österreichs und der Staatsvertrag],” Herbert Kier questioned whether “Austria was at all able of defending with its own might this blocking bolt [in the Brenner Pass].” “Does not this obligation,” Kier senior asked, “so concretely exceed Austria’s capabilities that it is evident from the very beginning that the breaking of this blocking bolt will follow with a scientific certainty?” As a solution to the possibility of NATO seizing the Brenner Pass in time of war, Herbert Kier suggested that

if the establishment of a neutralized zone between East and West did not occur only at the cost of the occidental powers, but also extended, for example, to the CSSR and Hungary, then a neutralization of Austria would receive a different weight. If not only the “West” had to renounce strategic positions but also the “East” did this by being ready to neutralize states lying today in its power area, then a true probability would be given by this mutual renunciation that both power blocs would bring themselves to the decision to respect the neutrality of the neutralized states also in case of conflict, indeed, perhaps even to renounce at least in the European area a warlike carrying out of their differences.
Not just the theory, but also the ultimate application of *Raumverteidigung* raised questions about the Bundesheer’s very own armed neutrality. Wolker, for example, reviewed in 1993 that the overall character of Austria’s fortifications had not changed since Moser wrote in 1974. Of the well over 3,000 Austrian fortified positions then extant, “the overwhelming majority—around 90%—is directed against the former Socialist countries, directly on their borders or in those areas and Schlüsselzonen where counterattacks of East European troops can be expected, above all in the Danube area.” Of the fortified positions in western Austria, “some had merely demonstrative character” such as the bunker in the Kufstein gorge once showed to Soviet defense minister Marshall Rodion Malinovsky as “proof of neutrality.” According to Wolker, though, “all other fortifications situated in western Austria have the objective of reviving once again the Alpenfestung once established by Hitler.” The guns of the bunker complex guarding the Lueg Pass connecting Salzburg and Tyrol, for instance, were “without exception directed against the East.”

The ultimately truncated application of *Raumverteidigung* in the 1980s raised even more questions concerning its “neutrality.” Noting the limited resources available to the Bundesheer under Heeresgliederung 87, General Troop Inspector Othmar Tauschitz declared in a 1987 interview that “every person will have to understand that with an army size of 200,000 men area saturation with such forces is not possible. We will therefore have to form areas of concentration for the meanwhile until we have reached the ‘expansion phase [Ausbautufe]’ with 300,000 men.”

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117 Wolker, 62-63.
It was precisely these “areas of concentration” that raised so many suspicions in the late 1980s. Austrian leftists like Arno Truger of the Austrian Peace Institute (Österreichisches Friedensforschungsinstitut) in Burg Schlaining could not help but notice that “Heeresgliederung 87 actually foresees a concentration of the Bundesheer (120,000 men) in two Schlüsselzonen in the Danube area. Thus Austria practically abandons the defense of the remaining state territory, but enables thereby a sustained delay of a possible Warsaw Pact drive in the direction of Bavaria.” Moreover, these deployment plans foresaw

mechanized, mobile troop elements in the East and infantry in the West—a clear orientation against the East. That such a troop concentration, above all with mechanized, mobile units, cannot function without air cover, is clear. Because Austria does not and will not for the foreseeable future possess such an air cover, the conclusion is hard to avoid that here the support of the Western “ally” is counted upon.119

_Bundesheer_ reserve lieutenant Kurt Wegscheidler, a leader of the leftist Union of Democratic Soldiers of Austria (Vereinigung demokratischer Soldaten Österreichs) was of one mind with Truger. Writing in December 1987, Wegscheidler cited in the forward to Baum’s *Tagwache* the estimate of SPÖ militia spokesman Friedrich Klocker, according to which the 120,000 soldiers in two Schlüsselzonen encompassed 70% of the Bundesheer’s conscripts. Statements by Defense Minister Robert Lichal confirmed for Wegscheidler that “instead of evading the spear point of the aggressor, our own qualitative and quantitative inferior forces are supposed to be thrown against it.”

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_Armed, but not Neutral_
Wegscheidler saw in Heeresgliederung 87 “the heretofore greatest undermining of the Raumverteidigung concept.”\textsuperscript{120}

Others agreed with Wegscheidler and Truger. Egon Matzner, a professor and Defense Ministry official, wrote on the pages of Zukunft in 1987 that four years after the adoption of the Landesverteidigungsplan in 1983 “its content and goals have been abandoned. The principle of troop concentration in Schlüsselzonen in the Danube area has taken the place of Raumverteidigung.” Matzner termed the result a covert “NATO Anschluß” long desired in the Bundesheer.\textsuperscript{121}

Matzner was not alone in discerning a de facto abandonment of neutrality in Heeresgliederung 87. Profil’s longtime defense correspondent, Otmar Lahodynsky, agreed that same year that the Bundesheer’s new dispositions had “degraded it to an auxiliary NATO force.”\textsuperscript{122} Klocker himself on the pages of Zukunft in 1991 retrospectively termed it an “indisputable fact” that “more than 80% of the Austrian Bundesheer’s disposable forces—deployed in the vicinity of Linz—serve solely to cover NATO’s southern flank.”\textsuperscript{123} Writing two years later, Wolker saw in Heeresgliederung 87 a “cold putsch” against Raumverteidigung mounted by Western-trained Bundesheer officers who were against the Spannocchi Doctrine in the first place. Under Heeresgliederung 87 “strategy, tactics, and military practice were again completely oriented upon the Western military block,” corresponding “to the demands and interests of NATO.”\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{120} Baum, xiii.
\textsuperscript{124} Wolker, 43-44.
Not just the *Bundesheer*’s deployments, but also its maneuvers indicated a revival of covert cooperation with NATO during the era of *Raumverteidigung*. Wegscheidler argued in 1987 that the “military exercises of the last years, by which, among other things, a 30 kilometer-long counterattack over the Danube (!) was tested, point precisely” in the direction of “it being believed that support of military alliance partners will be certain, who will then provide the necessary support of aviation, armored, and paratroop elements.” Only a “corresponding air support of at least 300 to 400 aircraft,” clearly beyond Austria’s capabilities, could assure that such maneuvers would not be “sheer mass murder and/or suicide.”\(^{125}\) A 1987 *Zukunft* article confirmed that the latest *Bundesheer* exercise, *Januskopf*, assumed a Warsaw Pact opponent and contemplated a counterattack with weapons not even possessed by the *Bundesheer*.\(^{126}\)

Wolker did not consider such *Bundesheer* maneuvers exceptional. According to him, the 1975 exercise *Jagd 75* in the Carinthian-Styrian border region opposite Yugoslavia was one of the largest “small unit warfare [*Kleinkrieg*] maneuvers” in the *Bundesheer*. The maneuver’s “top secret” scenario “assumed that Yugoslav troops had advanced deep into Austrian territory and had achieved absolute air superiority,” while “commando, air mobile, and light infantry units of the *Bundesheer* were deployed in order to destabilize the rear area of the enemy.” *Jagd 75* also made “the highly unusual and dangerous in terms of international law assumption” that NATO aircraft would support the *Bundesheer*.\(^{127}\) Conscript Baum, meanwhile, could not avoid noticing that map exercises in the *Bundesheer* involved maps with Czechoslovakian towns.\(^{128}\)

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\(^{125}\) Baum, xv.


\(^{127}\) Wolker, 94.

Not even Austria’s limited air defense efforts were above suspicion. Austrian critics described by Truger classified the Draken purchase as “part of a longterm strategy” to “create a kind of political compatibility with NATO.” Although “24 interceptors were not important for NATO, Austria would create for them an infrastructure that could be used by other forces.” Thus Matzner considered the funds taken from Jagdkampf training so essential for Raumverteidigung and expended on the Draken to be effectively a subsidy for airfields available to NATO in time of war. “In reality, however,” argued Wolker, “all interceptors purchased by Austria, whether Saab, Draken, or other types are, and Austrian military officials know this perfectly well, not at all able for various reasons to secure Austrian airspace, if for no other reason than because our country lacks an appropriate glacis.” Wolker therefore deemed military airfields “superfluous” for Austrian military needs and saw NATO as the airfields’ “exclusive beneficiary, which thereby possesses the possibility of being able to transport as fast as possible troops and material to Austria with the help of alliance aircraft.”

Austrian air surveillance systems such as the Goldhaube radar system raised similar criticisms. Rather than monitoring Austrian airspace, critics suspected that Goldhaube would deliver data to NATO’s early warning system NADGE (NATO Air Defense Ground Environment) and thereby reveal, in the words of Truger, the “previously radar dead area of the Alps—the single blind spot between Norway and Italy.” The same Austrian lack of a “glacis [Vorfeld]” cited by Wolker combined with

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129 Truger, 92.
130 Matzner, 7.
131 Wolker, 63.
132 Truger, 92.
the speed of modern jets meant for him that Austria’s radar systems “had only real value for NATO countries,” West Germany in particular.133

Potemkin Village Neutrality

Referring to Austria’s military preparedness, Reiter in 1989 once described Austrian security policy as “Potemkin village neutrality.”134 Increasingly, though, observers of Austrian neutrality have inferred that this term might describe the totality of Austrian neutrality. Austrian historian Thomas Angerer noted in 2000 that the question that most concerns historians with respect to Austrian neutrality almost reversed itself in the second half of the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. Instead of “How did Austria become neutral?” the question has become in the interim “How neutral did Austria become?” Did Austria ever become more than just neutral in name and according to the constitution? And if yes, when, how, and why?135

As previously indicated, though, for many in Austria the hollowness of its neutrality policy was never in doubt. In Schneider’s words in 1987, leftist Bundesheer critics like Wolker who were, “politely expressed, of rather nonmilitary character,” expressed now and then indications of mistrust in the official defense policy tending in the direction that the fundamentals and concepts of an independent national defense threatening no one in principle (primacy of all-around deterrence and strictly defensive Raumverteidigung) could be somehow covertly subverted.136

133 Wolker, 122.
136 Schneider, 31.
Thus one pacifist brochure in 1985 called Austrian neutrality “merely military neutrality with winks and nudges, one in a NATO jacket.” Wolker himself wrote in 1993 of the “Bundesheer’s NATO Vorfeldfunktion” and criticized that the Bundesheer, founded “in 1955 under the pressure of the US-American government and consistently supported by Austria’s ‘Atlanticists,’ never served Austrian, but rather always foreign objectives.” According to Wolker, the Bundesheer “was, in fact, only the appendix of NATO.” “Passionate discussions and debates—also in high and the highest ranks—between supporters of a purely Austrian defense doctrine and the representatives of a military concept orientated on NATO” always favored the latter “in practice.”

The political scientist Schneider confirmed that “there was actually from the very beginning a fundamental ‘West-orientation’ in the Austrian Bundesheer and indeed the corresponding forks in the road were taken chronologically even before the establishment of NATO or the Warsaw Pact.” Bundesheer deployments corresponded to a “conception very widespread in the officer corps according to which, in the final analysis, only a contingency in the form of an attack from the East was imaginable.” The Bundesheer was only “to hold out long enough until help and relief would be provided on the part of the West.” This “amounted in a certain sense to an indirect or covert de facto membership in the Western defense system, thus, so to speak, to a ‘corresponding NATO membership.’”

Similarly, Georg Breuer in a 1988 issue of Zukunft judged the example of Belgian neutrality to be not just geographically appropriate for Austria. Given that the clear

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138 Wolker, 7-8, 55.
139 Schneider, 31.
majority of Bundesheer exercises assumed the Warsaw Pact as an enemy and defense plans focused on the Danube valley, Breuer felt that the majority of Bundesheer conscripts expected to hold out against the Soviet bloc until NATO arrived. “According to my impression,” Breuer wrote,

there is at the back of the minds of many Austrians, and particularly many members of the Bundesheer’s cadre, the unspoken impression of “neutrality according to a Belgian pattern.” The example of Switzerland is indeed discussed, but in reality one thinks above all about the contingency that Austria is attacked from the east and therefore becomes, so to speak, of necessity a part of the Western alliance."^{140}

The Austrian scholars Michael Gehler and Wolfram Kaiser reflected in 2002 that Austria in the Cold War sustained “extremely low defense expenditure for a token army under the continued de facto political shield of NATO."^{141} A former Bundesheer corps commander, General Albert Bach, reached the same conclusion in 2000, stating that “the Americans were and remained our support.” Only the Americans “came into question for Austria as a protective power,” for “the only armed forces which lay for Austria’s protection in a relevant range were the US troops in Germany and Italy.”^{142} “In the upper military leadership,” Brigadier Clausen concurred in 1990, “the idea was quite present, indeed inextinguishable: In an extreme emergency the West (‘…the Americans…’) would appear as a kind of ‘deus ex machina’ and save Austria from the worst.”^{143}

Austria’s diplomats apparently agreed with the Bundesheer’s officers. Austrian diplomat Herbert Grubmayr remembered an anecdote from Karl Gruber’s years as

143 Clausen, 19.
Austrian ambassador in Washington, DC. “The Austrian ambassador,” Gruber said once to Grubmayr, “has an important duty that places everything else in the background: he must constantly hold ready in his notebook a few telephone numbers of influential people in Washington, whom he can call day and night and with whom he can mobilize help if things ever rumble on our eastern border.” Grubmayr’s colleague Hans Thalberg also dismissed in his 1984 memoirs the “dangerous nonsense of ‘equidistance’” for a state like Austria with “a Western form of society.” “The geopolitical situation of our country,” Thalberg explained,

on the edge of the Soviet sphere of influence and our recent history as an appendage of Germany peremptorily demand the expansion and strengthening of our bridges to the Western great powers....The democratic polity, our independence, our independence and freedom, our way of life are not placed in question by the West; the potential threat does not come from the West. By contrast, only the West, only Washington, could help us in an emergency to repel a threatening situation on our eastern border. We live, whether we like it or not, like all of Western Europe, under a protective American umbrella, and we should do everything in order to strengthen this protection and to secure its operation in case of danger.145

Some Austrian security studies scholars and defense officials interviewed in the summer of 2005 for this dissertation disputed the view of a Bundesheer aligning with NATO just below a surface of neutrality. Rauchensteiner rejected describing Austria as a “secret ally” of the West, and Reiter saw only certain “circles” in the Bundesheer seeking secret cooperation with NATO in the 1950s and 1960s, but no more in the 1970s.146 The FPÖ policy advisors Rochowanski and Probst also believed that the Bundesheer could

144 Klambauer, 108.
146 Erich Reiter, interview by author at Reiter’s office at the Austrian Defense Ministry’s Büro (und Direktion) für Sicherheitspolitik in Vienna’s Stiftskaserne on August 3, 2005; and Rauchensteiner interview.
have fought a NATO advance in western, as well as a Warsaw Pact advance in eastern, Austria.\textsuperscript{147}

Most of those interviewed, however, could not dispel indications of pro-Western partiality in the \textit{Bundesheer}. Vetschera, for example, made a not completely convincing distinction between a “subjective threat” felt by free Austrians who witnessed on their borders Soviet suppression of both the 1956 Hungarian and 1968 Czechoslovakian independence movements and the “objective” level of Austrian neutrality policy, all while being a declared opponent of an Austrian \textit{Feindbild}. The “political task,” stated Vetschera, was to somehow keep these “two levels” separated.\textsuperscript{148}

Vetschera dismissed criticisms printed in \textit{Zukunft} of the \textit{Bundesheer} practicing to fight only a Warsaw Pact opponent as being part of this Social Democratic publication’s antimilitary hostility. According to Brigadier Vetschera, the \textit{Bundesheer} “quite clearly” exercised in places like the Danube valley to meet both Warsaw Pact \textit{and} NATO attacks, with the number of maneuvers positing the two alliances as Opposition Forces (OPFOR) being about equal. Thus Vetschera judged reproaches of pro-NATO partiality in the \textit{Bundesheer} to be “objectively false.” Yet Vetschera at the same time revealed that \textit{Bundesheer} maneuvers assuming a NATO opponent were merely “political demonstrations,” for the Austrians knew that NATO lacked the forces for offensive operations in Austria. Militarily these maneuvers had solely a tactical exercise value for the \textit{Bundesheer}.\textsuperscript{149}

Across the Stiftskaserne’s courtyard from Vetschera’s office, meanwhile, Brigadier Bayer confessed that “no one believed” in a NATO attack on Austria. While

\textsuperscript{147} Interview with Probst and Rochowansi.
\textsuperscript{148} Vetschera interview.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid.
harboring this belief “internally,” though, Austria had to act officially neutral in order to avoid “coming under suspicion” of being aligned with one side. While Bayer described an Austrian expectation of holding out against a Soviet bloc attack until help from the West came, he explained that Austria had to build defenses in western Austria in order to give foreign spies and military attachés an impression of a neutral allround defense.  

The theme of “Potemkin village” defenses facing NATO arose throughout several other conversations with Austrian policymakers and analysts during the summer of 2005. While alluding to possible Warsaw Pact advances through the Danube valley to southern Germany or across southern Austria into Italy, former defense minister Frischenschlager, like Wolker, described Austrian defenses in Tyrol as “demonstrative.” Unlike Rochowanski and Probst, the former FPÖ member Frischenschlager questioned whether it would have been “politically feasible” for Austria to fight NATO. Because of meetings with NATO officials, Frischenschlager, like Vetschera, knew that NATO lacked the troops to undertake operations in Austria anyway, and Frischenschlager also doubted whether NATO would have had the motive. Like conscript Baum, Frischenschlager mentioned rumors that NATO planned to store antitank weapons in southern Germany for quick transfer to the Bundesheer in time of war. All this from a man who, presented in a 1984 interview with the historic example of Swiss general Henri Guisan coordinating defense planning against German attack in 1939-1940 with French Marshall Henri-Philippe Pétain, replied that “joint planning for defense is not permissible under the terms of our neutrality commitment.”

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150 Bayer interview.
151 Frischenschlager interview.
Whatever the technical formalities of neutrality, most evidence seems to suggest that in practical terms the Bundesheer could have fought only on one front. Queried about Austria fighting NATO, Austrian international law scholar Hanspeter Neuhold rejected this possibility out of hand with a curt “of course not.” Neuhold also assented, “if you insist,” to the proposition that Austria’s NATO-facing defenses were “just for show.”

Former defense minister Werner Fasslabend agreed with Neuhold. Although the Austrians “could not allow any doubt to appear in legal terms,” they were “emotionally entirely on the side of NATO.” The oft-noted fact that the Bundesheer hardly ever purchased Soviet bloc armaments (“Ostmaterial”) in contrast to Finland gave Fasslabend a clear sign of the Bundesheer’s NATO compatibility, both in emotional and logistical senses, with NATO. Fasslabend viewed any prospect of largescale fighting with NATO as a “test of cohesion [Reißprobe]” for Austrian society. Fasslabend saw the limit of any Bundesheer resistance to NATO in “perhaps shooting down an airplane.” More likely for Fasslabend, the Bundesheer in a major NATO-Warsaw Pact war would have “immediately found its partner.”

Waiting for NATO…or the Alliance’s Nuclear Strikes?

Austrian historian Anton Pelinka reviewed in 1998 that during the Cold War “any military aggression Austria might have to respond to was only thinkable as an aggression by one of those blocs...as part of a conflict that realistically would result in World War

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153 Hanspeter Neuhold, interview by author in the foyer of Vienna’s Diplomatische Akademie on July 12, 2005.  
154 Werner Fasslabend, interview by author in Fasslabend’s office at the Nationalrat on July 15, 2005.
III.” “Austrian defense doctrine” was, accordingly, to “retreat into the mountainous regions and wait for help.” “The still dominant anti-Communist attitude in Austria” and the “consequence of neutrality law, which permits any neutral country under attack to ally itself with its attacker’s enemy,” resulted in “nothing more than a ‘waiting for NATO’ doctrine.”

Kruzel explained in 1989 that “most neutrals, despite paying lip service to the notion of défense à tous azimuts, see their security as far more likely to be threatened by Soviet than by NATO attack,” even though “this poses a problem: how can a nation be truly neutral when the basic threat to its national security come from one country?”

“As was the case for the Benelux countries in 1914 and 1940,” the Dutch scholar F. A. M. Alting von Geusau affirmed in 1983, “the European neutrals are threatened primarily by the strongest military power in Europe, which today is the USSR.”

Kruzel cited certain Western threats to neutrality in Europe: American cruise missiles transiting Finnish and/or Swedish airspace; “NATO naval forces using the Swedish archipelago for protective cover as they attempt to interdict the Soviet Union’s sea lanes of communication through the Baltic”; NATO use of Swiss “air space in the battle for air superiority in the skies of central Europe”; and/or “NATO’s succumbing to the temptation of shortening the distance between its central and southern commands by cutting across Austria with ground and air forces.” NATO, meanwhile, also had an “interest in solidifying the link between Greece and the rest of the alliance” across Yugoslavia, while Ireland was “temptingly well positioned along the Atlantic lines of

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156 Kruzel, 149.
communication and well suited for use as a tender and staging base.” “The Euro-neutrals,” Kruzel added,

must also worry about providing justification for a preemptive attack. If the Soviet Union were to suspect that a Euro-neutral would eagerly “surrender” to NATO in the early days of fighting, the Red Army might be justified in occupying the neutral’s territory in order to prevent its strategic potential from falling into NATO hands.\footnote{Kruzel, 149.}

Yet United States Air Force Academy professor Paul R. Viotti observed in 1990, though, that “none of the European neutrals appear to feel especially threatened by NATO, which they tend to accept as a defensive alliance.” “The European neutrals,” Viotti elucidated, “in practice remain more concerned with deterring or defending against aggression from the Soviet Union or other Warsaw Pact countries than any hypothetical threat NATO might be said to pose.”\footnote{Paul R. Viotti, “Comparative Neutrality in Europe,” \textit{Defense Analysis} 6, no 1. (1990): 5.} Kruzel himself significantly qualified that the Euro-neutral nations have little doubt about whence the real threat to peace. They do not fear an invasion and occupation by their NATO neighbors. The threat is of a Warsaw Pact or, more specifically, a Soviet, attack. In theory, neutrality has no enemies or looks upon all outsiders as potential enemies. In practice, planning and training that do not presume engagement with Warsaw Pact forces are militarily unrealistic. The requirements of prudent military planning sometimes conflict with the diplomatic dictates of neutrality.\footnote{Kruzel, 150.}

In the specific case of Austria, former German undersecretary for defense Lothar Rühl in 1989 found neutrality to be a “highly artificial foundation of Austrian security,” given neutrality’s requirement of being “passive and balanced with regard to each side; i.e., it must be based on hypothetical contingencies involving a Western as well as an Eastern threat to Austria.” In reality, Rühl judged Austria

\footnote{Kruzel, 149.}
as a border country with relatively easy access from the north and east, i.e., from Bohemia, Slovakia, and Hungary, and as a territory of approach to Western Germany, Italy, and northwestern Yugoslavia for WP forces in an offensive war against the West. The options offered by Austria’s geographical situation for an offensive war by the Warsaw Pact are more obvious and promising than those which a Western coalition or power could use against East-Central Europe. Given the balance of forces and the force structures and deployments of both alliances in Central Europe, the opportunities for the Warsaw Pact would seem largely greater than those for NATO, even for a second phase of war counterattack. This situation means that Austria’s neutrality—like that of Finland, Sweden, or Yugoslavia—would be more threatened in a European crisis from the East than from the West.¹⁶¹

Kruzel, meanwhile, discounted the importance to NATO of the neutral wedge along the Alps bisecting alliance territory. “How serious a problem this would be for NATO,” Kruzel estimated, depends on the duration of the conflict and the interdependence of the two fronts. It is unlikely to pose difficulty in the early phase of a European war because there are no troops in Italy to reinforce the central sector and no troops in Germany are likely to be diverted to Italy. In a conflict of some weeks’ duration, however, NATO might find it useful to shift supplies and forces from one front to the other.¹⁶²

Like Rühl, moreover, many military analysts throughout the Cold War doubted that NATO, in contrast to the Warsaw Pact, had the necessary forces to mount offensive operations. “On the basis of the present division of forces in Europe,” wrote Vetschera in 1987, “a breach of Austrian neutrality in case of a European conflict in the realm of ground operations might bring advantages for the Eastern alliance above all.” “The greater numerical strength of the Eastern alliance,” argued Vetschera, “would more likely allow it to divert forces for a flanking operation across Austrian territory,” something Vetschera considered a “sensible military objective.” “In contrast,” juxtaposed

¹⁶² Kruzel, 141.

Armed, but not Neutral
Vetschera, “the necessary ground forces for such operations are lacking in NATO; there are also no recognizable operational goals which would be achievable with an operation across Austria.” Only in the air did Vetschera see NATO “being tempted” to “outflank” the Warsaw Pact’s “very dense” air defense pursuant to NATO “operational concepts” foreseeing “air attacks far into the Eastern alliance in order to interdict the advance of reinforcements.”

Other analysts like former Wehrmacht colonel general Lothar Rendulic cited not only physical, but also political obstacles against NATO offensive operations. “Only the East bloc states,” Rendulic wrote in 1960, “are so tightly politically and militarily integrated that they could act merely upon orders.” Similarly, Bundeswehr general Günter Kießling, a former DSACEUR in NATO, explained during an Austrian military history conference in 1992 that not only did NATO lack troops for offensive operations, but that the alliance’s multilateral nature prevented keeping any aggressive plans secret.

Moreover, people in NATO countries such as West Germany were averse to any offensive planning. Kießling noted that “the West German public kept a jealous watch so that no member of the military came upon the idea of so much as a single German infantryman setting his foot over the inner German border.” Some in West Germany acted as if “the basic defensive principle of the alliance had to make itself felt all the way down to the training and tactics of a battalion: never attack!” Kießling recalled that the

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“the political leadership of the Bonn Defense Ministry had to be convinced with great difficulty” in 1973 through “long discussions” that a chapter on “Attack [Angriff]” in the new edition of the army manual (Truppenführung) was “indispensable.”

“Public opinion in the West,” concluded Kießling, “would have never accepted an initiative with reference to Austrian territory. Not even then when such an initiative would have been presented as a reaction to aggressive Soviet intentions, perhaps even justified with an Austrian demand for intervention.” In Kießling’s judgement, alone the United States could have maintained plans for offensive operations in Austria.

Austrians could count not only on the impossibility of NATO offensive operations in Austria, but also on NATO’s desire to ultimately cooperate with and defend Austria. Brigadier Clausen recalled that “again and again on the occasion of personal, private or official, contacts of Austrian officers with NATO officers it was made to be understood that NATO truly considered in its operational planning concrete temporal and spatial evaluations of Austria, just as Switzerland did this.” Clausen found it intriguing that the “Béthouart-Line” [named after the former commander of French occupation troops in Austria, Marie-Emile Béthouart] already showed in its time the same tactical ideas about a front line across Austria as the hope expressed by Western generals almost 20 years later, at the beginning of the 1970s, that at least two Austrian brigades should still be capable of building up a sustainable defensive position along the line Salzburg-Villach after an East bloc attack.

_Bundeswehr_ general Klaus Naumann, erstwhile chairman of NATO’s Military Committee, also revealed NATO’s Cold War intentions vis-à-vis Austria to a group of

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166 Ibid, 13-14.
167 Ibid, 12, 19.
168 Clausen, 23, 26.
Armed, but not Neutral

Nationalrat members on July 14, 1997, in the parliament building. Addressing the defense policy spokesmen or Wehrsprecher of the various parties, Naumann stated that “my brigade had in the last 35 years the task of advancing on its own into Austria in case of a Warsaw Pact attack on Austria.” “This,” added Naumann, “was also known here.”

Austrians, of course, could not object to NATO’s ultimate support in case of emergency. Colonel Korkisch, for example, noted the Austrian wish that NATO would extend its air cover over Austria’s small airspace. Yet Korkisch recognized that this was a forlorn hope precisely because the limited NATO forces incapable of conducting largescale offensive operations in Austria could also not offer any aid to the Bundesheer.

Rühl explained in 1999 that “NATO for its part had no forces free to cover Austria and no plans for, or interests in, violating Austrian neutrality.” NATO was forced to “exclude Austria” and to depend upon the Bundesheer’s “passive flank protection.” Colonel Korkisch also recalled in 2005 a visit to Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), during which SHAPE’s deputy chief of staff, Bundeswehr lieutenant general Lutz Moek, said that “there are in NATO neither ground nor air forces that could be deployed for Austria.” Moek referred to NATO’s “concern

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169 Klaus Heidegger and Peter Steyrer, NATO-Streit in Österreich: Handbuch zur Neutralität und Sicherheitspolitik (Thaur, Austria: Druck und Verlagshaus Thaur, 1997), 23.
because of Austria’s insufficient air potential” and the need to “secure the southern flank with other means (atomic weapons).”\textsuperscript{172}

Already in the early 1960s, Austrians had indications that NATO might use nuclear weapons in Austria during a conflict due to leaked documents copied by an American sergeant at NATO’s headquarters. The papers listed 800 strategic targets throughout Europe, including in “neutral” Austria.\textsuperscript{173} Some of the NATO plans involved small guerrilla teams infiltrating Austria with tactical (“backpack”) nuclear weapons in order to destroy targets such as Salzburg’s airfield.\textsuperscript{174} During his national service with the \textit{Bundesheer} in the early 1980s, Baum himself raised the issue of recent reports in the Austrian press that “over 40 cities in Austria, among them Vienna, are targets for atomic bombs.” One of Baum’s instructors replied, “Well, not all of that is right down to the last detail, but the Americans will surely block the Danube valley during a war in Europe with all means—including atomic bombs. These reports are surely true in at least in this respect.”\textsuperscript{175}

NATO nuclear strikes in Austria were latent in the Franco-German army exercise \textit{Kecker Spatz} (“Brave Sparrow”) held during the last two weeks of September 1987 across southern Germany. In the exercise scenario, the fictional country \textit{Rotland} attacked its neighbor to the west, \textit{Blauland}, while both countries shared a border with neutral \textit{Grünland} to the southeast. \textit{Rotland} expected heavy resistance in its frontal attack against emplaced \textit{Blauland} forces and thus undertook a flanking assault across \textit{Grünland}.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[175] Baum, 44.
\end{footnotes}
Blauland then called upon support from its western neighbor Azurland, whereupon it dispatched a rapid reaction force to Blauland’s southern flank. At the end of the maneuver Rotland suffered a repulse and largely retreated to its opening positions.

Austrian international law scholar Sigmar Stadlmeier wrote in 1991 with reference to the fictional color-coded countries that

on the basis of the exercise area and the assumed borders the camouflaged participants allow themselves to be clearly identified: Rotland stands for the then CSSR including (above all) the Soviet armed forces stationed there. Blauland stands for the Federal Republic of Germany, Azurland for France, and Grünland for Austria.\(^{176}\)

In Wolker’s eyes, the “monster maneuver” Kecker Spatz made “especially clear” the assessment of “NATO and especially the German Bundeswehr” of the Bundesheer as their “junior partner.” A correspondent of the Viennese Die Presse confirmed on August 28, 1987, from an official preview of Kecker Spatz that the “grinning on the podium occupied by highranking German and French officers” made obvious why “in West German military circles Austria is always jokingly spoken of as Wehrbereich VII” (West Germany had six Wehrbereiche or “Defense Areas”). Wolker also found in the maneuver a new degree of “effrontery” in NATO’s disrespect of Austrian neutrality “against international law.” The exercise’s director, Bundeswehr lieutenant general Werner Lange, justified the maneuver’s scenario with the openly expressed question “whether an aggressor in Central Europe would observe Austria’s neutrality.”\(^{177}\)

Stadlmeier found in Kecker Spatz even more “interesting deductions with respect to the creditability of Austrian neutrality on the part of highranking military officials


\(^{177}\) Wolker, 56-57.
abroad in the West.” Transposing the maneuver’s area onto Austria, Stadlmeier calculated that Warsaw Pact forces in Czechoslovakia flanking NATO through Austria had in total 100 kilometers to cover, yet “operational norms of the Warsaw Pact called for a division to advance 60 kilometers a day under conventional combat conditions.” Stadlmeier noted that the “maneuver basis assumed that these forces *could have become effective against Blauland in the intended manner without notable losses in personnel, material, or time,*” indicating that Austria would have had “nothing effective” with which to oppose a neutrality violation.\textsuperscript{178}

Although “the maneuver stood under the assumption of an exclusively conventional campaign in order to avoid the particularly sensible and media effective problem of tactical nuclear weapons use,” Stadlmeier ominously observed that “according to French doctrine such use is already foreseen at the individual army command level.” Stadlmeier concluded that if through “a deficient defense against a neutrality violation a correspondingly threatening situation therefore develops, *the use of atomic weapons by the defender against the aggressor situated on Austrian territory is thoroughly conceivable.*” Nuclear strikes in Austria were particularly believable for Stadlmeier given that they were not, in contrast to chemical or biological weapons, “generally prohibited under international law, but rather allowed in the framework of self-defense under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.”\textsuperscript{179}

\textsuperscript{178} Stadlmeier, 223-224. Emphasis in the original.
\textsuperscript{179} Ibid, 226-227. Emphasis in the original.
Many analysts of Austrian neutrality like Zukunft writer Breuer in 1988 argued that NATO would even have an advantage in using nuclear weapons on the soil of a neutral country.\textsuperscript{180} Stadlmeier explained that due to the explosive nature of the decision by the defender to use atomic weapons on its own territory, the decision to strike foreign territory would be considerably easier, in part because the need to undertake consultations is obviated, if the military situation allows no other result: above all, however, less consideration would certainly be taken for a foreign civil population than for one’s own.\textsuperscript{181}

Interviewed in 2005, Vetschera even claimed that only the use of nuclear weapons at sea was easier than on neutral territory. Like Stadlmeier, Vetschera noted that a defendant inflicted damage on himself through nuclear strikes on native soil. Nuclear strikes against an aggressor, though, entailed the risk of retaliation and escalation. In contrast, nuclear devastation in neutral countries entailed hardly greater consequences for belligerent alliances than the loss of marine life at sea due to nuclear attacks on enemy naval units.\textsuperscript{182}

Far from offering help, NATO at times even seemed to be seeking aid from Austria for a potential conflict. Former Austrian foreign minister Erwin Lanc (1983-1984) could not forget the proposal made by the Bavarian CSU politician Alfred Seidl during a meeting in the late 1970s. In a suggestion that seemed harebrained not only to Lanc, Seidl asked if Austria, by then known for its practice of giving asylum to refugees, could prepare to receive refugees from Bavaria if NATO had to use nuclear weapons along Bavaria’s borders during a Warsaw Pact attack.\textsuperscript{183}

\textsuperscript{180}Breuer, 13.
\textsuperscript{181}Stadlmeier, 227.
\textsuperscript{182}Vetschera interview.
\textsuperscript{183}Erwin Lanc, interview by author in Lane’s office at the Vienna International Institute of Peace on August 10, 2005.
What Point Neutrality?

Kruzel observed that the Euro-neutrals are understandably concerned about keeping their military distance from NATO, a consortium of nations with which they have everything in common except the bond of formal military alliance. Strategic considerations require that the European neutrals downplay their general Western orientation. ¹⁸⁴

According to the Austrian historian Karl Gutkas, for example, Austrian reactions in 1983 were “highly allergic” when President Ronald Reagan “promised to guarantee neutrality” in a dinner address during a state visit to America by Federal President Rudolf Kirchschläger. ¹⁸⁵ This was despite historic Austrian interest in (Western) foreign guarantees of Austrian sovereignty and neutrality.

Yet little evidence suggests that the Europe’s neutral countries such as Austria were able to convince the Cold War blocs that neutrality could survive a general European war. Perhaps somewhat overstating the degree of Austria’s neutrality, Vetschera conceded in 1989 that “Austria’s strict neutrality in military and security matters, and her uncompromised adherence to Western democracy, can be perceived by both sides as a split identity, leading to residual mistrust against Austria.” ¹⁸⁶ “In the eyes of states whose social-political or other values a neutral state shares,” analyzed Neuhold, its abstinence in other areas (particularly in the military area) appears unsatisfying. These states have either the tendency to not take seriously the permanent neutrality of the friendly state because they expect it to take their side when “the balloon goes up [es hart auf hart geht]” and/or they exert pressure upon the neutral state to not remain sitting on the fence. The neutral state is rather also supposed to stand up for a cause already recognized as just and right, if necessary with weapon in hand, instead of

¹⁸⁴ Kruzel, 158.
¹⁸⁶ Vetschera, “Austria,” 76.
allowing others with references to neutrality to “pull the chestnuts out of the fire.”

With respect to the Communist bloc, Finnish scholar Hakovirta asked, “How would the neutrals be expected to act in East-West politics if nothing else were known about them except the asymmetries of their general identitive orientations and their functional ties in the East-West division?” Hakovirta concluded that “obviously” such indices “would lead to the hypothesis that they were inclined and even compelled excessively to favor the West.” “The basic problem of contemporary neutrality,” explained Hakovirta,

lies in its inherent partiality and bias arising from the neutral states’ Western values and ties. In terms of value premises and dependencies, this is not neutral neutrality but Western neutrality, or a paradoxical effort at maintaining a neutral image and label despite Western starting-points and predispositions. With the general post-war of multiplication of international contacts and ties and the progress of Atlantic and West European integration processes, the inherently Western character of contemporary European neutrality has just become increasingly pronounced.

Not surprisingly, Hakovirta noted

the widespread assumption that the neutrals, with perhaps the partial exclusion of Finland, fall within the category of countries the West would be willing to shelter and defend against the East. Accordingly, there are beliefs that the neutrals themselves are anticipating Western help and basing their plans partly on this contingency.

“If a large-scale war were to break out,” concluded Harkovirta,

four out of the five major neutrals would either maintain their neutrality or—driven by political, economic, and cultural pressures—join the West.

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188 Hakovirta, 47, 249.
189 Ibid, 49.
It is absolutely out of the question that they would side with the Warsaw Pact. The most likely prospect for the West would of course be Ireland. Sweden would probably be next. Even the fifth case, Finland, might seek to maintain its neutrality longer than would be desirable from the Soviet point of view.\footnote{Ibid, 107.}

Thus, not only did European neutrality suffer “from some lack of credibility and respectability even in the eyes of the Western powers,” but “the credibility of the wartime neutrality of the West European neutrals” was “obviously fairly low in Soviet eyes.”\footnote{Ibid, 107, 249.} Neuhold agreed that it was “in fact not easy” for Europe’s neutral nations “to make believable to both blocks (and, at any rate, parts of their own population) that neutral countries would also fulfill their obligations under international law during neutrality violations by a NATO member and would oppose it, if necessary, with weapon in hand.”\footnote{Neuhold, “Supermächte und Neutralität,” 305.} In the specific case of Austria, Neuhold suggested that historic reminiscences from “the era prior to World War I” when “both Russia and Austria were Great Powers” might have played a role in Soviet thinking. “In the minds of those Soviet leaders who have studied Russian history and do not reject this past but accept a certain degree of continuity in their thinking,” wrote Neuhold, “the name of Austria, of the Austrian Empire and later on of the Dual Monarchy must evoke mixed associations.”\footnote{Hanspeter Neuhold, “Austria and the Soviet Union,” in \textit{European Neutrals and the Soviet Union}, eds. Bo Huldt and Atis Lejins (Stockholm: The Swedish Institute of International Affairs, 1986), 83-84.}

Speaking before the \textit{Nationalrat} on December 16, 1970, Chancellor Kreisky therefore “assumed—because we do not know, after all, but it seems to be logical—that in the contingency planning of NATO and in the contingency planning of the Warsaw Pact the territory of Austria—I want to express it politely—finds, at any rate,
consideration. This can probably be presumed.”\textsuperscript{194} Correspondingly, it is not hard to see why Alting von Geusau in 1983 considered Austria’s “permanent neutrality since 1955 as a status is best comparable—though in different political and strategic circumstances—to the status of Belgium after 1839. In case of major war, it stands no better chance to be respected than Belgian neutrality in 1914.”\textsuperscript{195}

Post-Cold War interviews in Czechoslovakia belie such assumptions of an ultimately unviable Austrian neutrality. Describing his service in the general staff during the 1960s, Colonel Karel Štěpánek related in a March 28, 2000, interview that “in all exercises the neutrality of Austria was consistently maintained.”\textsuperscript{196} Lieutenant General František Šádek also recalled in 2005 that “nobody ever dealt with Austria, in any connection. It was more of a neutral country.” This was because the Austrians “never had any army, not a regular one.”\textsuperscript{197}

Perhaps indicative of a lack of trust and communication within the former Communist bloc, though, revelations from other parts of the defunct Warsaw Pact indicate far more sinister designs for Austria. The Hungarian daily \textit{Népszabadság}, for example, printed on December 15, 1990, an article by retired General Lászlo Damo, the Hungarian Army’s deputy chief of staff in the years 1975-1985. Damo outlined how Warsaw Pact plans assigned Hungarian forces the task of advancing into Austria and Italy.\textsuperscript{198}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Alting von Geusau, 60.
\item See \textit{Interview with Colonel (retired) Karel Štěpánek at: Taking Lyon on the Ninth Day?: The 1964 Warsaw Pact Plan for Nuclear War in Europe and Related Documents} (accessed November 20, 2006); available from \url{http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/collections/coll_1.htm}.
\item \textit{Oral History Interviews with Czechoslovak Generals} (accessed November 28, 2006); available from \url{http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/collections/coll_ceska.htm}.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Damo’s successor, retired Major General Róbert Széles, elaborated upon Damo’s views during a 1994 conference in Austria. While describing Warsaw Pact operations on Austrian soil, Széles cited “two evaluation factors with respect to Austria” remaining constant throughout the years. Firstly, Austria as “indeed a neutral, but a Western state, and therefore NATO-oriented,” presented a “potential enemy of the Warsaw Pact during an armed European conflict.” Secondly, “Austria was to be treated as a potential deployment area of NATO.” “Neither NATO nor the Soviet Union,” summarized Széles, “would have observed the neutrality of Austria.”

Former Soviet military leaders as well revealed ominous plans for Austria during the Cold War. Soviet colonel general Adrian Danilevitsch, once responsible for operational planning in the Soviet Army’s general staff, described in detail for Hugo Portisch’s television documentary Österreich II Warsaw Pact operations against Austria in case of a general European war, including nuclear strikes. Danilevitsch related how the Soviet bloc considered war with the West inevitable well into the 1970s. Only after the conclusion of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in 1975 with the Helsinki Act did the Warsaw Pact’s war plans lose their immediacy.

One indication of these war plans having come to light after the Cold War are the records of a Warsaw Pact staff exercise held June 21-26, 1965, in Mátyásföld, southern Hungary. The exercise assumed that the “Westerners” had “started direct preparations for a surprise attack on the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries under cover of various exercises,” whereupon the “Easterners” had “strive[n] to ease international


tensions and prevent war.” The Warsaw Pact “at the same time” was to “increase all types of intelligence activities” and “secretly conduct partial mobilization.”

In the subsequent conflict, Warsaw Pact units in Hungary launched “the main strike in the direction of Vienna, Linz, and another strike in the direction of SZOMBATHELY, GRAZ, VILLACH, to complete the destruction of the advancing groupings of the Austrian troops” and West German and Italian NATO forces. These offensives would “eliminate Austria from the war” after about five or six days of operations. Ominously, the “Easterners” first nuclear strike on June 23, 1956, included Vienna on the target list (two 500 kiloton weapons, according to the exercise, had the result of “city completely destroyed”) and the airfields of Klagenfurt and Linz (20 kiloton weapons destroyed “70% of the surface buildings” at both of these installations).

Imre Okváth, chief of the Analysis Division of the Office of History in Budapest, summarized online at the website of the Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact that

Soviet-Hungarian operational plans took it for granted that in case of a war NATO would violate the neutral status of Austria and Austria would—voluntarily or under pressure by the West—give assistance to the attack on the Socialist countries. Acceptance of Austrian neutrality never appeared in the plans of the Warsaw Pact as Austria was always mentioned as an area of advance operations or a buffer.

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202 Ibid.


Cold War scholar Vojtech Mastny confirmed in 2006 that Warsaw Pact “planning documents took” NATO’s “violation of Austrian neutrality for granted.” “At least one field manual, however,” Mastny added, “envisaged unprovoked passage” of Warsaw Pact troops “through a ‘neighboring territory’ in order to bypass NATO’s nuclear minefields in West Germany.”205

The irrelevance attributed by Warsaw Pact leaders to Austrian neutrality in a possible Third World War has become an almost universal view. “Of course there was also…the conception that neutrality indeed protected us,” Schneider stated in a 1998 interview. Yet since 1989 “after our comrades, friends, and colleagues from Hungary and Czechoslovakia, for example, showed us the plans about Warsaw Pact troops movements,” the truth had become known “that it would have been just like the NATO faction in the Austrian military predicted and how the Austrian army always practiced in maneuvers. Red attacks blue, green intervenes.”206

_Bundesheer_ corps commander General Erich Eder also expressed similar sentiments three years before during a July 4-5, 1995, conference in Vienna. “Today we know,” Eder declared,

just as many already maintained at the time [of the Cold War], that the calculation [of neutrality] would not have worked. At the outbreak of war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, Warsaw Pact forces would have attacked in the direction of Linz, Munich, and Graz with a strength unmanageable for the Austrian _Bundesheer._207

Both British diplomat Fraser Cameron and Swiss scholar Mauro Mantovani also dismissed Austrian neutrality’s relevance, citing in 1994 released war plans from Warsaw Pact countries such as Hungary and Czechoslovakia to this effect. In the words of Mantovani,

the evaluation of the Warsaw Pact’s aggressive plans revealed that its aggression directed itself without differentiation against NATO states as well neutral states like Austria, Sweden, and Switzerland….This means simply that neutrality is already since forty years irrelevant as a security strategy; Switzerland owes the inviolability of its territory in the Cold War exclusively to NATO. That the neutral states would not have remained inviolate during a Warsaw Pact attack should have surprised no one because they unmistakably sympathized and cooperated with the West….The neutral states thus pursued a neutrality policy that clearly benefited one side and had to appear in the eyes of the other as pseudo-neutral.208

Former German ambassador Hans Arnold concluded at the same time that “even more than in the two world wars the security of the neutral states would have been dependent not on their neutrality and the possibility of self-defense but rather on East-West military opportunity.”209 Former Bundeswehr brigadier Georg Bautzmann confirmed during a June 11, 1999, presentation that the Soviet Union would have “‘observed’ the Austria’s neutrality probably as long as the functioning of the neutral barrier [i.e. along the Alps through NATO] would have been of interest for the Soviet war leadership.” Conversely, in agreement with Undersecretary Stephani’s “Burgenland-Tyrol” tradeoff, “it might have been advantageous for NATO to observe Austria’s

neutrality” in order to preclude Warsaw Pact advances through Austria. The Soviet Union, though, assumed that NATO would violate Austrian neutrality.  

Austrian neutrality’s lack of creditability in Soviet eyes appeared to many Austrians as the real explanation for Soviet reticence to relax in any way the missile prohibition in the State Treaty’s Article 13. “From the Soviet perspective,” Daim noted in 1969, the probability that a strengthened Bundesheer decides for the West in battle is to be considered extraordinarily high. The Soviets therefore mistrust the neutral position of the Austrian people, their government, and, above all, though, many Bundesheer leaders who in Soviet eyes evince a very bad past, and will thus not approve of a State Treaty modification with respect to a decisive improvement of military potential in any even somewhat foreseeable time.  

Austrian military historian Allmayer-Beck observed in 1975 that Soviet interests in Austria consisting “solely” of the “around 1,000-kilometer long blocking bolt from the Neusiedlersee to the French eastern Alps” did not require Austrian armament. “The same thing,” he noted, would have been certainly achievable through the transformation of Austria into a demilitarized zone. In case this blocking function would not be respected by NATO, the Soviets, for their part, could restore the status quo ante at any time, and indeed with even less friction to the extent that Austria was weakly armed.  

The Austrian scholar Gerhard Böhner confirmed in 1982 an East-West disparity of interest in Austrian armament highlighted by the missile issue. “In the negotiations for

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211 Daim, Analyse einer Illusion, 16-17.  
the Austrian State Treaty,” Böhner explained with a somewhat dubious understanding of Article 13’s origins,

the interest of the Western Allies in an effective Austrian national defense was clear. Above all, they feared an insecure eastern flank of NATO along the border of the Federal Republic of Germany and Austria. By comparison, the Soviet Union was not interested in an effective Austrian defense. The armaments restrictions imposed upon Austria (particularly State Treaty Article 13) are due mainly to the initiative of the USSR. Later attempts of the government to achieve a lifting of the armament restrictions failed because of a Soviet veto. The oppositional attitude towards the Bundesheer of the KPÖ, which stands under Soviet influence, shows that the Soviet Union supports the idea of disarmed neutrality.213

To get around this possible Soviet calculation, Vetschera made references to air defense missiles countering NATO violations of Austrian neutrality in the air corridor over Tyrol in his advocacy for Article 13’s amendment.214 Fasslabend agreed with Vetschera that the Soviets “would have had an interest” in an Austrian air defense capability, particularly given that military air transits over Tyrol might very well have been “the first violation of neutrality” in any European conflict. Fasslabend feels, though, that Austria’s clear pro-Western sympathies precluded any Soviet accommodation of Austrian missile systems during the Cold War.215

Even if a conflict between the Cold War blocs miraculously avoided Austria, it was doubtful whether a Third World War very likely waged with nuclear strikes would have shielded Austria from war’s effects. Given the nuclear arsenals of the superpowers, the Austrian militia officer and security studies analyst Heinrich Payr argued in 1990, “what sense—it is not seldom asked—is neutrality supposed to have? Even if the neutral

214 Vetschera interview.
215 Fasslabend interview.
state remains spared from atomic weapons strikes—from its effects the neutral state will surely not remain shielded.‖ A bloc conflict in Europe, agreed Austrian international law scholar Karl Zemanek in 1983, “when fought with nuclear weapons, would not stop at the neutral’s border since atoms, once set free, know of no neutrality.‖

With hindsight, the comments of ÖVP parliamentarian and subsequent Chancellor Alfons Gorbach before the Nationalrat on June 7, 1955, seem quite naïve. Neutrality, declared Gorbach, “corresponds above all to the sincere will of all Austrians to remain military neutral in the great struggles of both power blocks because any participation on the one or the other side would completely destroy this land. What remained would be an unlivable wasteland.‖

On the other end of the Cold War, Reiter in 1996 concluded that “neutrality would have kept us out of war for not a single hour on X-Day.” “Austria,” Reiter assessed, would very well have been exposed to military attacks of the Warsaw Pact in case of a “Third World War,” without being able to count on sufficient military protection from NATO. Naturally, Austria would have become a theater of war and operations for both powers, and it cannot be excluded that it would have come to a limited use of atomic weapons on our territory by NATO in order to delay Soviet movements through the militarily only very weakly defended Austria. Neutrality only gave a subjective feeling of security, in actuality neutrality would have effected no protection in case of an actual contingency.

216 Heinrich Payr, Die schwierige Kunst der Neutralität (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1990), 37.
218 Alfons Gorbach, Gedanken zur Politik, 2nd ed. (Vienna: Wilhelm Frick Verlag, 1962), 16.
219 Erich Reiter, Neutralität oder NATO: Die sicherheitspolitischen Konsequenzen aus der europäischen Aufgabe Österreichs (Graz: Verlag Styria, 1996), 15, 34.
Chapter IX
In Name Alone?: The Reality behind “Voluntary Neutrality”

What might have been: The Austrians consider NATO and Neutrality

Contrary to the many public statements foreshadowing Austrian neutrality during the Allied occupation, future Austrian abstinence from military alliances (i.e. NATO) was not a foregone conclusion. “From the very beginnings of an Austrian foreign policy after 1945,” stated Austrian political scientist Anton Pelinka at a conference on April 5, 2001, at the University of Minnesota’s Center for Austrian Studies, “it became obvious that Austria was tempted to side with the Western powers.”

The occupation in Austria was a time when a self-proclaimed “sharp polemic” on the part of ÖVP Nationalrat member Lujo Tončić-Sorinj was not out of place. “The Austrian people,” he concluded in an address on May 19, 1954,

have held their land through almost a millennium as a bulwark of the Occident, as antemurale christianitatis. Sometimes we were alone; sometimes we had helpers and allies. Today we also fight our old fight. The entire Austrian nation stands together from Bodensee to the Iron Curtain, and God will not abandon it. May our people find the strength to withstand all trials and dangers and win its freedom!

The British historian Gordon Shephard wrote in 1957 shortly after the occupation’s end that

throughout the period of post-war reconstruction and throughout the five years of Cold War which followed, the Austrian Government stood, openly, unreservedly and apparently proudly, in the political camp of the West. During all this time, when Austria’s Coalition leaders were constantly on private or state visits to Western capitals, the only Austrians to be seen in Moscow were confessed Communists or fellow-travelers;

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and it was fashionable to describe them, and the four Communist deputies who sat in the Austrian Parliament, as “traitors in the Kremlin’s pay.”

“Indeed,” Shephard elaborated,

between 1945 and 1953, when Karl Gruber was Austrian Foreign Minister, Austria’s attachment to the West went far beyond the limits even of a formal diplomatic alliance. It was allowed to grow into an exaggerated subservience to American foreign policy which on occasions even proved embarrassing to the other members of the Western Alliance. One did not need to be a dupe of Communist propaganda to know that, during these years, the American High Commissioner was potentially the most powerful man in Austria, or to see that Austria herself was, for all practical planning purposes, already considered to be part of NATO. If neutrality was the official aim of the Austrian Government during these long and critical years, it was brilliantly concealed from all the four great powers concerned.

Thus Austrian commentator Herbert Denk concluded in 1985 that “there cannot be any talk of a conscious neutrality policy between 1945 and 1953/54.” “Rather,” Denk argued, “an approach to the West was sought, an engagement that found its boundaries in the danger of a division of Austria.” The conservative Austrian publisher Fritz Molden agreed, writing one year later that although “a price had to be paid” for freeing an independent Austria from quadripartite occupation, “many in the country were against permanent neutrality, not least a series of politicians, particularly in the Socialist camp.” Also from “ÖVP leaders, above all in western Austria,” came “skeptical voices.”

Erwin Scharf, a renegade SPÖ politician who went over to the KPÖ in the 1940s, confirmed Molden’s assessment from the opposite end of the political spectrum in 1974.

“In the leadership councils of both ruling parties,” Scharf revealed to Aurél B. J. Moser, a

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4 Ibid, 269-270.
student of the KPÖ, “were very many politicians setting the tone who saw Austria’s entry into NATO, an active engagement of Austria on the side of the Western powers in the Cold War as a matter of course, and therefore opposed the plan of creating a neutral status for Austria.” In particular, “the non-Communist declaration of principles by the Socialist International” bound the SPÖ to “an anti-Soviet course.”

Austrian military historian Manfried Rauchensteiner concluded in 2000 that many influential leaders in occupied Austria welcomed NATO’s founding and sought Austrian membership in it. The Austrian diplomat Heribert Köck and the Austrian scholar Margit Hintersteininger agreed that same year that neutrality was (against the resistance, above all, from circles in the SPÖ extending to the then vice-chancellor and later federal president Adolf Schärf) seen by Chancellor Julius Raab and Foreign Minister Leopold Figl as a necessary sacrifice in order to finally shake off the occupation and thereby reduce the danger that Austria could ultimately be divided along the lines of Germany.

That the “leadership of the SPÖ” had “swung round to the belief that Austria should sign” Western defense pacts like “the Brussels Treaty” intrigued many students of Austria such as the American historian Robert Knight. This development showed that “inner party opposition based on anti-Americanism and anticapitalism or the hope of a ‘Third Force’” had become “marginalized, as elsewhere in Western European social

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democracy.”¹⁰ Leftist Bundesheer opponent Wilfried Daim also attributed at a March 28, 1985, symposium the “greater difficulty” of the “SP people” in comparison with the ÖVP towards neutrality to the American wartime exile of several SPÖ leaders. These leaders “were Marxists and were taken in by capitalists, in the process they had guilt feelings...which they overcompensated by demonizing the Communists more than the Schwarzen.”¹¹

Meanwhile, the SPÖ’s call for an “Austria free and neutral” at its October 1947 convention was, in the words of Austrian publicist and historian Viktor Reimann, “nothing more than lip service.”¹² The SPÖ’s prohibition of visits to the Soviet Union, (“expressly written into the post-war party rules,” Shephard noted) indicated this. “The fact that this ban was only lifted in the summer of 1955—just in time to allow the chief Socialist publicists to go to Russia with an all-party group of invited journalists,” underlined for Shephard the “bizarreness of the situation” and the “violence of Austria’s political ‘readjustment.’”¹³

Even if SPÖ leaders like Schärf did not consider Austrian membership in a Western alliance possible, he still clearly expressed to British officials “sympathy with the objectives of the parties to the [Brussels] treaty.”¹⁴ Neutrality or not, where Schärf’s sympathies lay was also evident during public addresses like his speech to an SPÖ convention in Graz, Austria, on November 4, 1950. “The world understands us,” he

¹³ Shephard, 269.
¹⁴ Knight, 22.
declared, “when we say that our country is small, weak, and made helpless by the losses of the last war, we therefore do not want and cannot be a participant of a military combination.” Yet Schärf simultaneously denounced “the complete inner hypocrisy of Communist shouting” made “clear to the entire world by the invasion in Korea that occurred at the same time as signatures were being collected in Austria for peace.” While publicly foreswearing military alliances, Schärf argued that “to work for peace today means making the United Nations strong, because only a strong world organization can protect the weak from the strong. Only the genuine and militant conscience of the world, embodied in the United Nations, offers a small state effective protection.”

Schärf was not alone in the SPÖ with his support for Western military integration and collective security. Austrian scholar Martin Hehemann observed in 1993 that the SPÖ’s pro-Western position in the emerging Cold War entailed positive “reactions from the entire party leadership” towards the founding of NATO on April 4, 1949. Karl Czernetz rejoiced that the “times of aggression and conquest à la Hitler” were finally past. Supporters of European integration in the SPÖ at the same time also supported Western military integration as a step towards European unity.

SPÖ reaction to NATO shows to Hehemann the “basic outlines of a course” subsequently pursued by the SPÖ towards Western military integration: “Military integration guarantees the security of the West against a threat from the East, but Austria could naturally not participate.” Thus the ultimately ill-fated European Defense

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Community (EDC) initiative of 1952 found “broad support” among the SPÖ, particularly against the backdrop of the Korean War. SPÖ support for the EDC, however, brought “conflict with German Social Democrats” opposed to the EDC. “We must frankly say,” SPÖ member Oscar Pollack commented in 1952, “that we admire the fight of the German Social Democratic movement, but we understand it only with difficulty.” In particular, Austrian Social Democrats like Pollack hoped that Containment “politics of strength” would make the Soviet Union give way in Cold War disputes such as the State Treaty.¹⁷

While Daim judged the “invention” of neutrality to have come “primarily from the side of the ÖVP,” views towards neutrality and NATO were, according to Rauchensteiner in 2005, “quite varied” across all Austrian parties during the occupation.¹⁸ Helmut Wohnout, a student of early ÖVP attitudes towards neutrality, found various Christian Democrats to be critical of neutrality. Among them were Theodor Hornbostel, the director of the Political Department in the Foreign Ministry from 1930 to 1938, and the publicists Gustav Canaval (editor in chief of the Salzburger Nachrichten) and Friedrich Funder (interwar publisher of the Reichspost and, as editor of Die Furche, the postwar “doyen of Catholic publishing”). Neutrality “in their opinion offered up a helpless Austria to the Russians.” While both Canaval and Funder had “friendly ties to Raab…, none of these three men were directly linked to the decisionmaking process within the ÖVP and they hardly had any resonance with their opposition.”¹⁹

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¹⁷ Ibid, 331-332.
¹⁸ “Podiumsdiskussion zum Thema: Gibt es einen neuen ‘Consensus Austriacus’?” 50; and Manfried Rauchensteiner, interview by the author in Rauchensteiner’s office at the Heeresgeschichtliches Museum on July 26, 2005.
The single official to publicly call during the occupation for Austrian NATO membership was also from the ÖVP. Undersecretary for Defense Ferdinand Graf called NATO “a development parallel to the Marshall Plan” in an interview with a Swiss journalist printed in mid-July 1949 by the Klagenfurter Zeitung. Because the “active consolidation of the West” protected precisely small countries, Graf showed little comprehension for neutrality either in Austria or Switzerland. Wohnout cites the “fact that no newspaper close to the ÖVP reported this interview or even mentioned it” as proof that Graf’s statements were, in the words of Austrian historian Gerald Stourzh, a “solo excursion [Extratour] not coordinated with the rest of the party leadership.”

Graf’s advocacy of Austrian NATO membership seems, however, to have been coordinated with American military officials, whose activities in Austria such as infrastructure improvements implicitly assumed future Austrian participation in the alliance. Graf and Interior Minister Oskar Helmer had a confidential conversation with, among others, Deputy Secretary of Defense Roger M. Kyes and Lieutenant General William H. Arnold, commander of United States Forces in Austria (USFA). According to a protocol described by Austrian historian Christian Stifter as “downright nightmarish,” General Arnold “explained to Graf at this meeting the ‘recommendations’ of the Pentagon for the choice of candidates for positions of command in accordance with standards of military ‘seniority’ and ‘competence’, which means that those officers are to be preferred who fought in Hitler’s army.” Arnold also drew Graf’s attention to the necessity of hastening the efforts toward the formation of an Austrian General staff so that able personnel would be ready in time to cooperate with the (military) staff of the armed forces of the NATO. Furthermore, General Arnold gave Graf to understand that

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Austria must activate military cooperation with Bonn, which would play an important part in the future at the time of Austria’s entry into the “European Defense Community.” Graf assured General Arnold that the Austrian Government will do everything possible to create the prerequisites for entry of the Austrian Army into the “European Defense Community.”

American scholar James Jay Carafano, meanwhile, saw “lifelong conservative” Ludwig Kleinwächter as “one of the most persistent” of the “strong and influential advocates for throwing Austria’s fate in with the West,” even as most Austrians were “reluctant to openly declare for NATO.” As Austria’s first diplomatic representative to the United States, this former Dachau inmate “was one of the architects of Austria’s pro-Western foreign policy.” As such, Kleinwächter “persistently lobbied” Foreign Minister Karl Gruber “on the importance of taking sides.”

Many have often wondered whether Gruber needed any lobbying in this matter. Wohnout described Gruber along with Graf as the “most West-oriented within the ÖVP.” Wohnout sees this “as possibly not an accident,” for Graf and Gruber “were on the basis of their function in the federal government—the one as undersecretary in the Interior Ministry, the other as foreign minister—those two politicians within the People’s party who were most directly confronted with the caprice of the Soviets.” Whatever the reason, Foreign Minister Gruber rejected neutrality already on March 28, 1946, while speaking in Vienna before the Academic Union for Foreign Policy (Akademische Vereinigung für Außenpolitik, a university affiliate of the Österreichische Liga für die Vereinten Nationen). “Neutrality,” he declared,

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22 James Jay Carafano, *Waltzing into the Cold War: The Struggle for Occupied Austria*, Texas A&M University Military History series (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 139.
has already been for many years a materially hollowed out term. The development of the air force has technically devalued the principle of neutrality, the invention of atomic weapons makes neutrality appear as good as senseless. That some neutral states survived the war without conflict is surely not to be credited to the fidelity to treaties of the Fascist aggressors but far more to the geographic position of those states outside of the main direction of the colliding armies. There therefore has been for a long time in practical terms hardly another system of securing a state’s independent existence than the connection to a larger community if the state does not want to expose itself to the vagaries of global political development.24

Gruber saw “this community” at the time he spoke in 1946 “solely and alone in the United Nations, because it alone neither demands allegiance to a certain ideology nor means the primacy of a certain group.”25 Other public addresses by Gruber, though, did not hide which countries had primacy in Gruber’s affections. Speaking before the Union of Austrian Industrialists (Vereinigung Österreichischer Industrieller) on June 30, 1948, Gruber noted that

often there is talk of a battle between the giants America-Russia. This is a skewed assertion. If America and Russia were only two imperialist powers, at least a temporary understanding would be easier than it actually is. The contradictions come from deeper sources, from the fundamental convictions of the people, from their yearnings and hopes, and ultimately from their material interests.26

“Let us not forget,” Gruber warned, that we need the United States in Europe far more urgently than they need Europe. Nothing against the idea of a Third Force; but as long as the war’s effects in Europe are not overcome to a completely different degree, America’s help is a compelling necessity. Suppose we think of this help leaving us one day and the destiny of Europe is clear—it will become the exercise field of Communist doctrine.27

24 Csáky, Der Weg zu Freiheit und Neutralität, 63.
25 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
Gruber, though, did not equate dependence upon America with subservience to it. “America,” he stated,

must not become our political and cultural leitmotiv just because we are dependent upon the generosity and readiness to help of America and even more upon its power. In this multifaceted land that is so little administered according to the “isms” of Europe, everyone can select a piece that appeals to him and one which he despises. Let us be happy that this great nation has not withdrawn itself again into the oyster shell of isolation like after the First World War.  

Gruber expressed similar pro-Western sentiments after the outbreak of the Korean War before the National Press Club in Washington, DC, on October 10, 1950. “The comparison with the years 1938 and 1939, before the outbreak of World War II,” Gruber determined,

is not without good reason being brought home to everybody. Today’s situation actually bears many resemblances. The community of democratic states, imperfectly armed, entangled in secondary problems, and laboring under the overemphasis of subordinate difference, had their attention drawn to the bitter seriousness of a possible imminent struggle for life by an alarmshot—that of Korea. Once more, there prevails a situation in which the small and the weak states are exposed to the expansion of a totalitarian ideology.

Given such publicly aired views, it is not surprising that Gruber privately advocated against Austrian neutrality and for Austrian participation in Western defense arrangements. The Czech coup beginning on February 20, 1948, for example, removed from Gruber, according to Austrian historian Günter Bischof, any “concessionary mood” towards the Soviets. The events in Prague not only made Gruber into a “relentless advocate for the establishment of sufficient Austrian security forces before a treaty signing,” but also led him on that very February 20 to ask British officials whether

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29 Ibid, 339.
Austrian could join the “Western Union” then being planned by Western leaders in Europe. According to Foreign Ministry notes, Gruber proposed that his country “throw her lot in with the West” by joining this “predecessor of the emerging North Atlantic Treaty alliance” (Bischof). British officials, though, declined to include a country not of the “Atlantic area.” At the same time, Gruber gushed in the Austrian cabinet about creating in the West “a great movement, a security organization because of the Russian advance and blocking its way.”

Gruber made similar statements to American diplomats on May 21, 1948. An American embassy cable reported Gruber expressing reservations that day about Vice-Chancellor Schärf’s recent return from a Stockholm, Sweden, visit “full of ideas about ‘neutrality’ as the proper policy for Austria.” Gruber declared “that he and his party felt this policy to be extremely dangerous and that they believed that Austria’s only salvation is to tie itself in as a closely as possible with whatever cooperative political arrangements are made in Western Europe.”

The American minister to Austria, John G. Erhardt, also recounted a few days later to the American secretary of state Gruber’s opposition to other schemes for Austrian neutrality. Cabling Washington, DC, on June 3, 1948, Erhardt noted the “considerable publicity” given by the “Vienna press” to a “proposal put forward by General [Marie Emile] Béthouart May 28 in speech before France-Amerique Society in Paris concerning

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32 Knight, 23.
33 Office Memorandum on Vice Chancellor’s Ideas on Neutrality, May 21, 1948; Folder 800—Conversations with Austrian Officials (1948); Box 20; Entry 2056; Political Advisor of the U.S. Embassy and U.S. High Commissioner for Austria Classified Records, 1945-1955; Records of the Foreign Service, Posts of the Department of State, Record Group (RG) 84; National Archives (NA) Building II, College Park, MD.
establishment of Austrian ‘neutrality statute’ similar to that of Switzerland 1815 or Belgium 1837.” In response to these suggestions from the commander of French occupation troops in Austria, Erhardt approvingly reported that “Gruber and most People’s Party personalities take realistic line that Austrian security is dependent on closest possible political and military association with Western Europe.” Gruber, in particular, “condemned Béthouart proposal to us in strongest terms and expressed hope Department might find some opportunity to indicate to French danger of throwing out ill-considered schemes of this kind.”34

In reviewing Gruber’s stance towards neutrality, the leftist economic historian and journalist Hannes Hofbauer even went so far during a November 1991 symposium at the University of Vienna as to place Gruber in “that ultra West-oriented group of the ÖVP that pleaded for the separation of the western provinces from the Soviet zone.” According to Hofbauer, “Salzburg was selected as the capital of West Austria,” but “the majority in the ÖVP decided upon an undivided, Western-integrated Austria.”35

Most evidence, though, rejects any deviation by Gruber from an Austrian consensus favoring national integrity over Western military integration. “Even Gruber,” observed the Austrian scholars Michael Gehler and Wolfram Kaiser in 2002, “who is often depicted as unequivocally pro-American and a ‘Cold Warrior,’ did not support full Western integration over national unity, as the West German Chancellor Konrad

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Adenauer did under different external conditions after 1949.” Bischof concurred that “Gruber came to realize that Austrian integrity and future independence would be hard to attain if he moved the country any closer to political and military integration with the West.” As described by Gehler, Gruber, while making an official visit to Bonn on May 19-20, 1953, was “asked by an American journalist whether Austria would join NATO on completion of a treaty” and “replied that he would advise Austria against it.” Gruber added that “the question was in any case one for the Austrian Parliament to decide.”

Gruber, though, harbored views towards Western military integration similar to those in the SPÖ. Commenting upon the recently formed Brussels Pact in a “top secret [streng geheim]” December 1948 memorandum to the chancellor, the vice-chancellor, and Austrian diplomats in Brussels, London, Paris, Rome, and Washington, DC, Gruber conceded that “Austria cannot naturally actively participate” in such an alliance.

“Significant for Austria,” Gruber nonetheless found,

is the question of legal protection. Austria can only count upon the security of its position à la longue if Austria is included in a guaranty declaration of the United States and/or the West. In the given situation, and indeed for a long time, this should be enabled without reciprocal Austrian obligations, perhaps even without an explicit Austrian declaration of acceptance. This is also probably only to be realized if the extension of defense plans to the Mediterranean area including the Adriatic is realized. From this point of view it would also be desirable for Austria as well as for Switzerland, despite a basic maintenance of neutrality, if the defense program would not be exclusively concentrated on the channel zone.  

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39 Gehler, Karl Gruber, 271.
In Hofbauer’s postulated capital of West Austria itself, Salzburg, meanwhile, there were suggestions of following West German chancellor Konrad Adenauer into NATO and national division. James Espy, the special representative of American ambassador Llewellyn Thompson, reported on August 3, 1953, a conversation between Espy and Salzburg’s provincial governor, Josef Klaus, two days earlier at a music concert. Espy

opened the chat with reference to Chancellor Raab’s statement at Dornbirn the day before when he stated that Austria would ally itself with neither the West nor the East. I said that I could only speak personally, but that I felt I should say to him privately, as an official of the People’s Party, that such an attitude was a very difficult one to understand. I ventured the opinion that Austria was now at the cross roads. I said that in my view Austria could not have both and would have to choose which side it wished to be on in this, in effect, war.40

Klaus, according to Espy,

etirely agreed with me. He then went on to say that three months ago—later he corrected himself to say between two and three months ago—Chancellor Raab had told him of his plan to propose “Austrian neutrality” to the Russians. Dr. Klaus said that he told Chancellor Raab that he strongly disagreed with him in such a proposal and argued that it should not be done. He said that he spoke to the Chancellor on several occasions and sent him besides a copy of Adenauer’s speech made at Augsburg [sic] on June 16 in which the latter declared that there was only one course for Germany and that was an alliance with the West. Dr. Klaus told Chancellor Raab that this was the same for Austria.41

According to Klaus, Raab “had retorted that it was all well and good for people in the Western zones to feel the way they did but it was quite different for the Austrians in the Soviet zone where Soviet pressure was becoming so intolerable that it had to be

40 Letter from the Special Representative of the U.S. High Commissioner for Austria, Headquarters USFA, APO 168, U.S. Army, August 3, 1953; Official Letters Folder (A-110); Box 4; Entry 1174B; Lot 56D294; Austrian Desk Files, 1950-1954 (Arthur Compton File); Records of the Office of Western European Affairs, 1941-1954; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
41 Ibid.
alleviated.” As Austrian historian Eva-Marie Csáky noted, Raab’s predecessors had already taken a similar stance in August 1949 when the Austrian government “vigorously protested in Washington” to American officials considering Austrian inclusion in Western defense arrangements. Despite a “clear Western orientation,” Austrians were not willing to accept the national partition along the lines of Germany that military integration entailed.  

Vice-Chancellor Schärf also voiced opposition to Austria joining NATO in a December 30, 1949, letter to Leon Blum, leader of the French Socialists (the letter also became known to the Americans and British in January-February 1950). In a controversial passage excised from the 1955 publication of the letter in Schärf’s book *Österreichs Erneuerung*, Schärf noted hearing that

> there is bewilderment over Austrian statements according to which we want to consider political neutrality for the time after the liberation. It is clear to us that a militarily weak Austria—and Austria must remain militarily weak—presents a vacuum through which one can come from the Hungarian plateau to the Bodensee within a few days; we know that we need integration in a larger political and presumably also military system; but I believe that it would be impossible to, for instance, publicly declare in a condition of four-power occupation that we want to enter the Atlantic pact when we are free—because the Russians view the Atlantic pact as directed against them, such an Austrian declaration would be the desired excuse to vitiate a withdrawal.

While visiting Federal President Karl Renner that same year, Béthouart and Eduard Bonnefous, chairman of the foreign relations committee in the French National

42 Ibid.
Assembly, had their proposals for Austrian NATO membership similarly rebutted. In light of Austria’s historically vulnerable position in Central Europe and possible NATO plans for a defense deep in Western Europe, Renner’s answer was clear. “We are Europeans,” he declared, and belong to the West of the continent. As much as we feel bound to Europe, we must nonetheless remember March 13, 1938, the Anschluß to which you did not react. At the time you were indeed without a government, but a short while later you abandoned Czechoslovakia, which was your creation. Now you demand of us that we defend ourselves and depend in the process on you and our weak powers. But where will you go into defense against an attack of the Red Army? I have heard that it is supposed to be on the Rhine. We find ourselves, however, 600 kilometers behind the Rhine, and the Russians are already in our country. How do you imagine that we, despite our sympathy, despite our affinity to everything that means Western Europe, are not supposed to pursue a policy of strict neutrality?^46

Temporary or Treaty Neutrality

Two weeks after the Moscow Conference on April 28, 1955, Die Presse publisher Molden had lunch with two American diplomats. The diplomats recorded Molden being “afraid that, if Austria becomes a neutral, there will develop in the U.S. resentment against Austria for having bitten the hand that fed it.” Molden “hoped that the American government and the American press would understand why Austria has taken the course it has with regard to neutrality.”^47

Molden’s statements over lunch were just one example of Austrians during the occupation and afterwards expressing a far more conditional attitude towards neutrality.

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^47 Memorandum of Conversation between Fritz Molden, publisher of Die Presse, Richard Freund, Department of State, and Alfred W. Wells, Department of State, April 28, 1955; US Treaty Policy—1955 (501/2) Folder; Box 8; Entry 1284; Lot 58D223; Subject Files Relating to the Austrian Occupation and Peace Treaty, 1949-55; Miscellaneous Lot Files; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
than implied by Renner’s reference to “strict neutrality.” While Gruber, for example, worried about Schärf’s impressions gathered in Sweden, Erhardt’s June 3, 1948, cable contained the more nuanced assessment that Schärf has not committed himself publicly on this issue but privately takes position that Austria, like Sweden, while not directly contiguous to the Soviet Union, is sufficiently close so that any direct adherence to Western Bloc would be considered by Soviets as provocation. He argues Austrian Government must “pretend” to be neutral in East-West controversy in order to persuade Soviets to renew treaty negotiations but maintains this policy purely tactical as Austrian Socialists fully aware that future economic political and military support must come from West.48

American embassy conversations at the same time with Schärf’s SPÖ colleagues Julius Deutsch and Karl Waldbrunner found them desirous of economic, political, and social links with the West while “remaining formally aloof” from the Cold War. “In their view,” the embassy judged, “Austria’s position virtually on Russia’s doorstep does not permit her to become allied with Western Europe, however much Austrian sympathies may tend in that direction,” although both politicians considered a “Western guarantee essential for Austria.” At the time, however, Deutsch and Waldbrunner were “vague and uncertain” on the formula for dealing with Austria’s conflicted situation.49

Interior Minister Helmer echoed Deutsch and Waldbrunner seven years later while speaking with the American diplomat Alexander C. Johnpoll on April 21, 1955. Johnpoll recorded Helmer saying “that it appeared that only by an avowal of neutrality could Austria get a State Treaty, and therefore he personally could not escape giving his reluctant assent to a neutral status for Austria if the Treaty is gained thereby.” In

48 FRUS, 1948, vol. 2, Germany and Austria, 1402.
49 Memorandum for the Record of Conversations with Julius Deutsch, Oscar Pollak and Karl Waldbrunner, leading Socialists, June 2, 1948; and Telegram Sent of June 3, 1948; Folder 800—Conversations with Austrian Officials (1948); Box 20; Entry 2056; Political Advisor of the U.S. Embassy and U.S. High Commissioner for Austria Classified Records, 1945-1955; Records of the Foreign Service, Posts of the Department of State, RG 84; NA.
agreement with Erhardt’s assessment, Helmer “said that SCHAERF shared this
reluctance.” “As an illustration of Schaerf’s attitude,” Helmer referred to his speech
“delivered last Sunday in Lower Austria, expressing doubt that the Russians would really
come through with the Treaty and warning Austria not to forget where her real ties are.”
Schärf “enthusiastically approved,” as did Federal President Theodor Körner “who went
out of his way to congratulate Helmer on his speech.” Helmer called “his own
attitude…clear to all,” and assured the Americans that Schaerf shared Helmer’s
“viewpoint entirely.”50

Two days earlier Johnpoll spoke with Graf. To Johnpoll, Graf “said that he fears
that in the long run” neutrality “will be impossible to maintain.” Graf, though, believed
that Raab, “if no one else, is determined to follow a policy of strict neutrality between
East and West.” Graf felt “that events will in due course force Raab to alter his views,
but for the time being Raab is suffering from something like a messianic complex and it
is quite impossible to reason with him on the subject of neutrality.”51

Graf may have overstated his case, however, for Raab indicated in his previously
noted private conversation “on about 24 October 1953” that he himself was not above
playing a double game. As reported to the State Department, Raab “expressed belief that
his policy towards the Soviets has been misunderstood in the West.” Referring to recent
Soviet alleviations in the occupation regime that year, Raab “contended that the only way

50 Memorandum of Conversation between Oskar Helmer, Minister of Interior, and Alexander C.
Johnpoll, Department of State, April 21, 1955; Coalition—PP+SP (203) Folder; Box 7; Entry 1283; Lot
58D72; Subject Files Relating to Austrian Affairs, 1954-1956; Miscellaneous Lot Files; General Records of
the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
51 Memorandum of Conversation between Ferdinand Graf, State Secretary of Interior, and
Alexander C. Johnpoll, Department of State, April 19, 1955; Coalition—PP+SP (203) Folder; Box 7; Entry
1283; Lot 58D72; Subject Files Relating to Austrian Affairs, 1954-1956; Miscellaneous Lot Files; General
Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
he was able to obtain last summer’s concessions from the Soviets was by making it appear that Austria was drifting toward neutralism.”

Wohnout, meanwhile, has noted that Raab “was not at all committed to neutrality from the beginning, rather the opposite.” The contacts with his brother Heinrich made clear that Julius Raab “originally took a highly skeptical and opposing stand towards a neutrality concept similar to that of Switzerland. “Do you also want to swissify us with your little canton spirit?” Julius once impatiently asked Heinrich.

Given the views of Raab and others revealed to American diplomats, a State Department memorandum from June 15, 1955, concluded that the only form of neutralism “prevalent in Austria” was the belief that “involvement in and responsibility for Western policies in the cold war are…avoidable.” The memorandum judged that “probably all the people are unanimous in supporting this approach.” “As a small country in the immediate proximity of the Iron Curtain,” the memorandum elaborated,

Austria expects to be able to carry out a neutrality policy which is based on the expectation of Western protection in case of attack and on careful avoidance of any act which the USSR could by any stretch of the imagination regard as provocative. Hence it must be assumed that the Austrians would carefully avoid identification with either camp in international bodies and would attempt not to take sides in cold war issues not directly affecting Austria.

Not just the Americans, but also other foreign observers gained a jaundiced view of Austrian neutrality from statements by Raab and other Austrian leaders. Reviewing

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52 Chancellor’s Raab’s Views on Austrian Contribution to Western Defense, October 24, 1953; Neutrality Folder; Box 9; Entry 1284; Lot 58D223; Subject Files Relating to the Austrian Occupation and Peace Treaty, 1949-55; Miscellaneous Lot Files; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.


54 Neutralism in Austria Memorandum, June 15, 1955; Neutrality, 1955, Folder (210); Box 1; Entry 3092; Decimal Files Related to Italy and Austria, 1953-1958; Office of Western European Affairs in the Bureau of European and British Commonwealth Affairs; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
Austrian affairs in a February 1, 1960, memorandum, the West German ambassador to Austria, Carl-Hermann Mueller-Graaf, wrote that “it is clearly fixed for everyone who does not wish to falsify the facts, that the adoption of military neutrality by Austria was the purchase price for the withdrawal of Soviet troops.” Mueller-Graaf reported Raab “repeatedly confidentially remarking” to the American, the British, and the French ambassadors as well as to Mueller-Graaf himself that Austria would always side with the West in war and neutrality was merely a matter of getting the Soviets out of the country “Afterwards everything will be different anyway,” Raab explained.55

This comment from Raab raises the prospect suspected by Austrian international relations scholar Paul Luif that Austrian leaders in 1955 pursued “temporary” neutrality as a “hidden agenda.”56 Such an agenda would have been agreeable to American policy, as expressed in a April 29, 1955, State Department memorandum, seeking “to dissuade the Austrians from referring in their declaration to perpetual neutrality. Neutrality should be viewed as a policy presently accepted by the Austrian Government but not necessarily binding for all times on future governments.”57

Officially, though, Raab sang the praises of permanent neutrality, perhaps even showing his messianic side. In a declaration accompanying the neutrality bill before the Nationalrat on October 26, 1955, Raab rejoiced that

the State Treaty has opened for Austria the possibility of a truly active and constructive foreign policy for the first time since the founding of the republic in the year 1918. Our neutrality will represent the new, futuristic,

56 Paul Luif, interview by author in Luif’s office at the Austrian Institute of International Affairs on July 15, 2005.
57 U.S. Position on Declaration or “Guarantee” regarding Austria, April 29, 1955; US Treaty Policy—1955 (501/2) Folder; Box 8; Entry 1284; Lot 58D223; Subject Files Relating to the Austrian Occupation and Peace Treaty, 1949-55; Miscellaneous Lot Files; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.

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and lasting basis for this foreign policy. If this neutrality is termed permanent in the present bill, so is this of decisive importance. Our neutrality is no provisional, revocable limitation of our sovereignty that we, for example, have grudgingly taken upon ourselves under the force of circumstances, but rather the lasting basis for a foreign policy that should guarantee peace and prosperity in all future for our home and our people.58

Luif, however, saw “indications that in the early days after the Allied departure in 1955 the government, in particular SPÖ officials, did not take neutrality as a ‘permanent’ status.”59 In particular, both Foreign Minister Figl at the Council of Europe in Straßburg and Chancellor Raab in the West German capital of Bonn announced, respectively, on October 23-24, 1956, an Austrian desire to join the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).60 After joining the United Nations and the Council of Europe, Luif speculated that “Austria could have been well on the way to becoming one of the founding members of the European Economic Community (EEC)” by joining the ECSC, “the nascency of European integration.” The events of the Hungarian revolt beginning right during the official travels of Figl and Raab, though, reminded Austrian leaders of the dangers inherent in provoking the Soviets and eliminated any idea of abandoning neutrality in favor of fullfledged European integration. Soviet suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968 only further emphasized the need to avoid a too narrow understanding of Austrian

neutrality and ended for many years all debate in Austria about trying to join an ever more integrated (Western) Europe with some sort of neutrality reservation.\(^{61}\)

Luif attributed the unilateral nature of Austrian neutrality in the Austrian constitution as opposed to the State Treaty in part to this desire for temporary neutrality.\(^{62}\) Figl’s comments in January 1954 to Mueller-Graaf, then merely the head of West Germany’s “Economic Delegation” in Austria, support Luif’s theory. Figl rejected “with great decisiveness” the prospect, feared by West German leaders around Adenauer for its precedent effect upon Germany, that “Austria could purchase the State Treaty with neutralization, because this would contradict all basic ideas of Austrian policy.” Figl insisted that Austria must “be an independent state.” Figl thereby “very clearly” revealed to Mueller-Graaf that neutrality “in the true sense of a free Austrian policy would be basically more of a means to obtain a State Treaty,” but Figl considered neutrality “hardly possible for the longterm.”\(^{63}\)

ÖVP secretary general Alfred Maleta, meanwhile, also tried to quiet the fears of Felix von Eckardt, director of the West German government’s Press and Information Office. Maleta counseled von Eckardt that Austria feared a neutralization of Germany as well, stating that even a partial extension of Soviet influence to the Ruhr and Rhine would develop a “dangerous suction” for Austria. For this reason alone Maleta rejected

\(^{61}\) Luif, 97-99. Alternatively, Heinz Vetschera of the National Defense Academy saw the events of 1956 and 1968 as “windows of opportunity” in which Soviet aggression would have justified and made logical an Austrian abandonment of neutrality for NATO membership. Heinz Vetschera, interview by author in the Offizierskasino of the National Defense Academy in Vienna’s Stiftskaserne on July 11, 2005.

\(^{62}\) Luif interview.

neutrality in the State Treaty, although Maleta would accept neutrality as the decision of independent state subject to change at any time.\footnote{64}{Ibid, 246.}

The Austrians, of course, had their own quite good reasons to oppose putting neutrality into the State Treaty. Former vice-chancellor Fritz Bock (ÖVP) in 1984 called it “immensely important” that neutrality was not in the State Treaty as the “Russians would gladly have seen it.” As in the case of a guarantee for Austria, neutrality in the State Treaty would have given its signatories the “right to butt into Austrian neutrality politics. It can be easily imagined what this would have meant!”\footnote{65}{Maria Sporrer and Herbert Steiner, eds., \textit{Fritz Bock: Zeitzeuge} (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1984), 111.} Already on August 26, 1953, meanwhile, the American embassy in Vienna prefigured Austrian concerns, recommending that “Austrian neutralization should take the form of a unilateral Austrian declaration rather than a quadripartite guarantee” and that the “neutralization of Austria should not be accompanied by any enforcement clause, since the latter could be used by the Soviet Union to impair Austrian sovereignty.”\footnote{66}{\textit{FRUS}, 1952-1954, vol. 7, part 2, \textit{Germany and Austria}, ed. William Z. Slany (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1986), 1895.}

All of these issues came to a head at the Berlin Conference in 1954. Representatives of the three Western powers met with Foreign Minister Figl on January 4, 1954, in Vienna and made clear that they would reject “the possibility of a neutralization of Austria through the State Treaty thrown in the debate by the Russian side” at the upcoming conference. Speaking for the Austrians, Figl agreed, terming neutrality in the State Treaty a “new limitation of our sovereignty” that “would bring the danger of further interventions on the part of foreigners.” Later on January 13, Figl along with Raab, Schärf, and Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs Bruno Kreisky agreed that if...
the question of neutrality in the State Treaty came up in Berlin, the Austrians would
“refer to the repeated declarations of the federal government, according to which Austria
will join no military alliance.” A “neutrality clause” in the State Treaty, though, would
be “undesired” and “would come into question only if a corresponding unambiguous
guaranty declaration of the four powers for Austria were inserted.”

The intended Austrian announcement of unilateral neutrality (ultimately made on
February 14, 1954, in Berlin) nonetheless raised concerns among the three Western
foreign ministers before talks on Austria began in Berlin. At a meeting there on February
10, 1954, recorded in the Foreign Relations of the United States, Figl told them that an
Austrian neutrality declaration in Berlin represented nothing more than what

had been said repeatedly by the Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, and the
Austrian Parliament. When, as anticipated, the Soviets raised the
arguments of remilitarization, U.S. bases, EDC, NATO, etc., the Austrians
would have cut the ground from under them. It was better to anticipate
these arguments by showing Austria with a force of only 53,000 men and
excluded from any military alliances. It was better to keep the initiative
by laying all the cards on the table at the start rather than being forced into
the defensive by waiting for the inevitable attack.

British foreign secretary Anthony Eden, however, responded that the Austrian
declaration would prompt the Soviets to “immediately ask for a treaty article on
neutralization.” French foreign minister Georges Bidault, moreover,

stated that there was a difference between the statement of the Austrian
Government and one made in the four power conference. What did Dr.
Figl propose to do if Molotov wished to pursue the matter further and put
the statement in as a treaty article? With some hesitation, Dr. Figl
answered the Soviets would have a hard time introducing a new treaty
article as it would limit Austrian sovereignty, since the present

67 Alfons Schilcher, Österreich und die Großmächte: Dokumente zur österreichischischen
196.

68 FRUS, 1952-1954, vol. 7, part 1, Germany and Austria, ed. William Z. Slany (Washington, DC:

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government cannot commit future ones, a treaty article would mean that a country which is about to be freed would have its freedom restricted indefinitely. Thus the statement would have to be sufficient.69

Austrian historian Gerald Stourzh has noted that, like the West Germans under Adenauer, the “West opposed strongly” neutrality in the State Treaty. “Above all,” the West “wanted to avoid that Austria might serve as a precedent for Germany, the Soviets having presented neutralization proposals for Germany as early as March 1952, which had made a certain impact on public opinion in West Germany.” A State Department memorandum prepared on September 25, 1953, for Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, for example, warned of the “danger of setting a precedent for German negotiations, making it advisable that, if necessary to obtain a treaty, any neutrality formula take the form of an Austrian unilateral commitment separate from the treaty.” The “Swiss model” mentioned by President Dwight D. Eisenhower shortly before the Berlin Conference, though, enabled Secretary of State Dulles in the words of Stourzh “to deflect the neutrality issue away from Germany to the level of smaller countries.”70

Thus Dulles responded on February 13, 1954, to Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov’s call for including neutrality in the State Treaty with the following words:

A neutral status is an honorable status if it is voluntarily chosen by a nation….Under the Austrian state treaty as heretofore drafted, Austria would be free to choose for itself to be a neutral state like Switzerland. Certainly the United States would fully respect its choice in this respect, as it fully respects the comparable choice of the Swiss nation. However, it is

69 Ibid.
one thing for a nation to choose to be neutral and it is another thing to have neutrality forcibly imposed on it by other nation as a perpetual servitude. A state subjected to such imposed neutralization is not in fact a sovereign and independent state. Such a demand makes a mockery of the language which the Soviet proposal retains that “Austria shall be reestablished as a sovereign, independent and democratic state.”

Meeting with Dulles later that day, though, Kreisky wondered why “if neutrality is a bargaining point in the end and if Molotov withdraws his troop proposal but insists on neutrality in binding form in the treaty, why in Mr. Dulles’ judgment, should that not be accepted.” Kreisky added that “there are other limits on Austrian sovereignty in the treaty.” Later during a radio address on March 20, 1955, Raab also strangely announced approval if Austria’s proffered abstinence from military alliances and foreign bases on Austrian soil “finds acceptance in the draft of the State Treaty.” Such isolated incidents aside, however, both Austrian and Western interests worked to keep neutrality out of the State Treaty.

“Voluntary” Neutrality, I: Freely Chosen...?

In a written declaration on May 7, 1955, Raab asserted that “it should be once again established with all clarity: the Austrian determination to become neutral corresponds without a doubt to the deep desire of the overwhelming majority of the country.” Raab later declared before the Nationalrat on October 26, 1955, that the law to be passed now by this august body stems from the will of the entire Austrian people and thus the expression of a view of the future formation of our foreign policy supported by Austria’s government, the entire

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71 FRUS, 1952-1954, vol. 7, part 1, Germany and Austria, 1087-1089.
72 Ibid, 1132-1133.
74 Csáky, Der Weg zu Freiheit und Neutralität, 370.
people, and the people’s representatives, a view, which the Austrian people and their representatives have long ago formed voluntarily [aus freien Stücken] and of their own free will. The bill before us has only today come to a vote when the last foreign soldier has left Austrian soil in order to clearly show that the taking of this decision by the legitimate, freely chosen Austrian representatives follows in complete independence and freedom.  

As a successor of Raab to the Austrian chancellorship, Kreisky later elaborated during an address in Düsseldorf on May 7, 1980, that “we did not want to expose ourselves to the reproach that we had agreed upon neutrality under the military pressure of one or all occupying powers.” Indeed, the fact that October 26 later became Austria’s national holiday according to a October 25, 1965, Nationalrat vote only emphasized an understanding of Austrian neutrality as voluntary. In these statements, Kreisky and Raab expressed the official Austrian view presented in the neutrality law’s explanatory comments given to the Nationalrat on July 7, 1955, that “Austria is a neutral, not, however, a neutralized state.”

Various other Austrian leaders and scholars have voiced this view throughout the years. The Austrian historian Ernst Josef Görlich, for example, wrote in 1959 that Austrian neutrality came into existence “not in obedience to foreign pressure, but rather as the self-imposition of an obligation for the sake of one’s own state and people.” Chancellor Kreisky’s successor beginning in the late 1980s, Franz Vranitzky, also expressed a desire in 1992 to “clear up a widespread error” that Austrian neutrality was

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77 Hummer and Mayrzelt, 20 Jahre Österreichische Neutralitäts- und Europapolitik, 100.
not “self-chosen.” By the time he became chancellor, meanwhile, Josef Klaus apparently had lost his reservations against neutrality and proclaimed on the State Treaty’s tenth anniversary in 1965 that

Austria’s neutrality—I would like to repeat and affirm this with all clarity here and today—is a freely chosen one. We were forced neither to sign the State Treaty nor to pass the constitutional law on permanent neutrality. We Austrians have freely decided upon this path and will also proceed on this straight path in the future.  

Does the official Austrian view, though, reflect reality? Commenting on a symposium of Austrian public figures, Austrian political scientist Karin Liebhart wrote in 2001 that “the experts today still debate whether the decision, from the Austrian side, to sign the neutrality declaration came about because of Soviet pressure…or whether it originated from Austrian politicians themselves, who thought that neutrality was not a lesser evil but a good way out of the dilemma of occupation.” Subscribing to the former view, Bundesheer major Reinhold Görg “surely” considered it “a historical lie” that neutrality “came about because of free will,” while the statesman Kurt Waldheim (former Austrian foreign minister, Austrian federal president, and United Nations secretary general) adhered to the latter, more positive assessment. In a view “quite popular among military personnel due to their clearcut scenario of threat held up during the Cold War,” Liebhart analyzed, “Görg interprets the political context as if it was solely within the decisionmaking of the Soviet Union.”

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79 Armin Thurnher, Franz Vranitzky im Gespräch mit Armin Thurnher (Eichborn Verlag, 1992), 59.
80 Hummer and Mayrzedt, 20 Jahre Österreichische Neutralitäts- und Europapolitik, 117.
An opinion poll conducted by the Information Service Branch (ISB) of USFA in conjunction with American diplomats in Austria strongly indicated willing acceptance of neutrality in Austria. Reported to the State Department on March 18, 1947, the poll involved “personal interviews by the reporting officer, with Austrian politicians and journalists as well as with random informants.” With respect to “Austria’s Future,” the survey found that “strict neutrality, on the pattern of Switzerland, seems most desirable to 78% of those questioned by ISB. Only 5% thought an alliance with a neighboring country (but the U.S. was also mentioned) would be good for Austria.”

Once Austrian neutrality became a reality a few years later, the Austrian scholar Ignaz Seidl-Hohenfeldern wrote in 1956 that neutrality “was welcomed with enthusiasm by all of Austria.” Alfons Gorbach, an ÖVP politician who became chancellor on April 11, 1961, affirmed in 1962 that “the idea of neutrality took root in the widest segments of the population so that it could be rightfully said that neutrality corresponded to the wishes and ideas of all Austrians.” “It is evident,” the Austrian diplomat and politician Ludwig Steiner said the same year at a symposium, “that permanent neutrality has been approved by the overwhelming majority of the Austrian population since October 1955 and that neutrality has become completely at home.”

“All too long,” Gorbach offered in explanation, “this tried country and its inhabitants were the plaything of foreign powers. The wounds from decades of injustice and tyranny should and could have healed only in a period of peace with the country

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itself and the rest of the world." Bundesheer commandant Emil Spannocchi similarly analyzed in 1975 that the “endangerment of his position and the knowledge that survival is bound up with war are just as embedded in the Austrian as the pessimistic frustration of a deeply psychologically wounded people that has lost in this century about 600,000 people in the vain attempt of preserving itself.” Spannocchi pithily summarized that the “path to neutrality was therefore perceived by most Austrians as an emergency exit from world history.” The Austrian journalist Otto Schulmeister confirmed in 1995 the meaning of Austrian neutrality as “world history without us, please.”

In addition to “all the catastrophes” and the “feeling of living here in Central Europe in a historically exposed and endangered region,” Austrian chancellor Fred Sinowitz also listed during a March 9, 1984, address in Zurich the “thoroughly attractive example of Switzerland” as a factor contributing to the “unanimous approval” of neutrality among the Austrian people and parliament. With this example in mind, the Austrians, former leaders of a great empire, “became conscious members of a small state!” As Rauchensteiner reviewed in 2000, meanwhile, widespread Austrian acceptance of a Swiss exemplar contrasted with Austria’s negative experiences with alliances. The Austro-Hungarian Empire, after all, collapsed after waging World War I to the bitter end as a loyal alliance member of the German Kaiserreich.

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86 Gorbach, 13-14.
88 Otto Schulmeister, Ernstfall Österreich: Stichproben zur Lage der Republik (Vienna: Ibera & Molden Verlag, 1995), 53. Austrian historian Ernst Bruckmüller, the director of the section Neutralität und Vereinte Nationen in the Belvedere Palace exhibit Das Neue Österreich, voiced similar views during a tour of this section (Mittwochabend-Gespräch) on June 15, 2005. Bruckmüller thought that most Austrians welcomed neutrality after the devastation of two world wars.
Federal President Karl Renner also drew an aversion to alliances from Austrian history, as explained in a letter to Schärf on September 17, 1947. “The coupling with the eastern peoples in the framework of the Danube monarchy,” wrote Renner, “lead to the First World War, the rapprochement with Italy to Fascism [in Austria], the annexation by Germany to the Second World War.” Given that the “present European situation threatens the country with being ripped apart and Europe with a new danger of war,” Renner recommended that Austria seek “the single guaranty of its existence, of its own peace and the peace of Europe in Austria’s exclusive membership in the UN” and refuse “any political tie towards any direction of the compass.” Austria should simultaneously “conclude with each of its neighbors economic and cultural treaties without preference for the one to the disadvantage of the other and enter into lasting friendly relations.”

Not just Renner in the SPÖ, but also ÖVP leaders viewed neutrality “merely as a lesson from our past,” as stated in the 1949 ÖVP party program booklet Programm Österreich: Die Grundsätze und Ziele der österreichischen Volkspartei. “It has proven itself again and again,” the author Alfred Kasamas wrote, “that Austria was then best served, when Austria sought the friendship of all states and refused participation in political block formation.” Kasamas’ review of the interwar period showed that successive attempts by the First Republic to form alliances with Germany (in an Anschluß), then with Italy after the Nazis came to power in Germany, and finally with various Danube countries all ended in failure. “Solely the great Federal Chancellor Dr. Ignaz Seipel,” Kasamas estimated, “recognized that Austria must maintain equally good friendships with all states in order to secure its existence” and “pursued for a short time a

very successful foreign policy.” Kasamas concluded on behalf of the ÖVP that “we would be truly bad politicians if we did not know how to properly evaluate Austria’s geographic position and the resulting advantages and dangers. We have long realized as Realpolitiker that our single chance for the maintenance of independence lies in the preservation of absolute neutrality.”

Similarly, Kreisky’s public statements seemed to bear out Helmer’s private observation to Johnpoll on April 21, 1955, that “Kreisky’s acceptance of neutrality is not at all reluctant,” but, to Helmer’s disappointment, showed “alone among the Socialist officials” an “unqualified pleasure at the turn which events have taken.” Kreisky conceded during an address in Warsaw on June 25, 1973, that “conversations and negotiations with the signatory powers of the State Treaty proceeded” Austria’s neutrality law. “It would be false, however,” he qualified, “to therefore assume that Austrian neutrality entailed a foreign policy maxim forced upon us from abroad. Quite the opposite, we have recognized the teaching that history has given us and taken the lesson from it.” On several occasions, Kreisky emphasized “again and again” that neutrality was not imposed upon Austria; neutrality, so to speak, offered itself in a certain global political constellation. I also view Austria’s neutrality as the adequate foreign policy maxim resulting from Austria’s historic, geographic, and economic situation. The more unreservedly we devote ourselves to neutrality, the stronger Austria’s position in Europe will be, the greater our independence, and the more secure our freedom.

Steiner, one of Kreisky’s companions at the 1955 Moscow Conference, made clear in 1962 that “Austrian neutrality did not at all develop from embarrassment and was

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93 Memorandum of Conversation between Oskar Helmer, Minister of Interior, and Alexander C. Johnpoll, Department of State, April 21, 1955.
hardly concluded with a resigned shrug of the shoulders.” The Austrian signature of the Moscow Memorandum “was not made according to the motto: ‘Well, what else remains for us, let’s just simply sign a little.’”95 During a symposium commemorating the Moscow Conference’s 25th anniversary in 1980, Austrian legal scholar Stephan Verosta echoed Steiner, saying that that the permanent neutrality “postulated over and over in Austria since 1946” was “in no way an embarrassing solution,” but rather “was founded in the geographic situation and political and strategic importance of the Austrian republic. This meaning of an independent Austrian state was already present in 1918/19 after the dissolution of the Danube monarchy.”96

Foreign Minister Willibald Pahr offered a similar analysis that same year, arguing that “Austria has chosen the status of a permanently neutral state because this corresponded to its geographic situation and appeared as the most favorable policy in order to be able to achieve and preserve the freedom and independence of our country.”97 Pahr’s remarks paralleled those of one of his predecessors, Rudolf Kirchschläger. Kirchschläger stated during a speech in Vienna on November 25, 1971, that the “experiences of the interwar period” and the “circumstances in the first ten years after the end of the Second World War” led the Austrian government to believe that “permanent neutrality was the most suitable means for the Austrian republic to achieve and maintain independence—one of the most important state goals.”98

95 Steiner, 183.
Rauchensteiner thus concluded in 1987 that “Austria itself did indeed have a large interest in becoming neutral.” “The theory,” he added, “that Austria only became neutral because there was no other way to the State Treaty overlooks that fact that neutrality was already talked about at a point in time when neutrality was still not demanded and, in particular, not even remotely desired by anyone outside of Austria.”

Reviewing Austrian public statements calling for neutrality (while perhaps overlooking Soviet diplomatic hints towards neutrality throughout the occupation), Raab wrote in a 1959 article that “neither in Moscow [in April 1955], nor before, nor after ever occurred, in fact, an intervention from the Soviet side in the question of Austrian neutrality.”

From this “chronicle” of Austrian declarations in favor of neutrality, the Austrian historian Heinrich Siegler also found it “obvious” and “quite clear” that “Austrian neutrality, which was first mooted as early as 1947, was not in any way due to Soviet pressure,” but “was entirely voluntary and not imposed.” In light of the “chronicle of events,” Austrian diplomat Hans Thalberg in 1983 found it similarly “obvious that Austrian neutrality, first discussed as early as 1947, and finally accepted by the Soviet Union as well as by the Western powers was entirely voluntary and not imposed.”

Pahr’s emphasis in 1980 that Austrian neutrality was “completely voluntary,” meanwhile, derived from an analysis of the idea of neutrality having “been brought forth again and again already in the first years after the war” and having “gradually won more and more

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99 Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 266.
100 Julius Raab, “Unsere Neutralität ist mehr wert als ein Linsengericht,” in Neue Fakten zu Staatsvertrag und Neutralität, 260.
support.”\textsuperscript{103} “One can, if one wants,” Bock even asserted in 1970, “posit the hypothesis that Austria would have probably chosen the status of permanent neutrality at a later point in time even if the State Treaty had come about without an assurance in this respect!”\textsuperscript{104}

“Voluntary” Neutrality, II: ...or Price Paid?

Despite the thesis promulgated in official quarters of Austria naturally choosing neutrality, there has often been debate among Austrians over Austrian political scientist Hans Mayrzedt’s question of “how neutrality is politically valued: is it a ‘necessary evil’ or is it the foreign policy formula most adequate for Austrian interests? On this question minds diverge.”\textsuperscript{105} The American historian and diplomat Thomas O. Schlesinger, for example, reviewed in 1991 that “parliamentary debates” as well as Austrian newspaper writings “all testify to the considerable uproar caused by the very mention of possible neutrality at that time” of the occupation.\textsuperscript{106} One indication of the controversy surrounding neutrality came in January 1952 when the ÖVP deleted from a party convention communiqué references to a neutrality-State Treaty quid pro quo made by ÖVP secretary general Maleta. According to Helmut Wohnout, a student of early ÖVP attitudes towards neutrality, Maleta’s proposal provoked “vehement rejection” from his

\textsuperscript{103} 25 Jahre Staatsvertrag, 87.
party colleagues, Gruber in particular.\footnote{Helmut Wohnout, “Frühe Neutralitätskonzeptionen der ÖVP, 1945-1953,” Christliche Demokratie 8, no. 2 (1990): 123.} In a similar fashion, Die Furche ultimately did not publish Heinrich Raab’s manuscript advocating Swiss-style neutrality for Austria after his brother gave this essay to editor in chief Funder. While it met with Funder’s friendly approval, “influential government circles,” in the words of Wohnout, probably considered this material simply too explosive. Although Heinrich Raab acted completely as a private man, his close relationship with the government could not have been ignored, even more so given that his article would have appeared in Die Furche, whose close relationship with influential ÖVP politicians was known.\footnote{Wohnout, Die Haltung der Österreichischen Volkspartei zum Neutralitätsgedanken, 1945 bis 1955, 9.}

A variety of analysts such as Köck and Hintersteininger believed that “permanent neutrality was not popular in Austria at the time of its founding because the government and people felt themselves as belonging to the West.”\footnote{Köck and Hintersteininger, 22.} In contrast to the 1947 ISB poll, for example, a 1952 poll conducted by American occupation forces found 32% of respondents favoring a “United States of Europe,” which, according to Bischof, “very likely meant Western Europe.” Only 25% “preferred a sovereign, independent Austria,” although, as observed by Bischof, “the question was not posed whether this independent Austria should also be neutral.”\footnote{Günter Bischof, “Österreich—ein ‘geheimer Verbündeter’ des Westens?: Wirtschafts- und sicherheitspolitische Fragen der Integration aus der Sicht der USA,” in Österreich und die europäische Integration, 1945-1993: Aspekte einer wechselvollen Entwicklung, eds. Michael Gehler and Rolf Steininger (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1993), 429.}

“The Austrians of the first postwar decade, the so-called occupation time,” Molden wrote earlier in 1986, “irrespective of whether they belonged to the Socialist or

\footnote{108 Wohnout, Die Haltung der Österreichischen Volkspartei zum Neutralitätsgedanken, 1945 bis 1955, 9.}
\footnote{109 Köck and Hintersteininger, 22.}
the bourgeois camp, were not neutral and did not even want to be neutral.”

“The neutral status,” Austrian philosopher and writer Rudolf Burger wrote in 1994, “was not at all popular in the beginning, neither among the people nor among the elites of the political parties.”

“The Austrian,” Schulmeister confirmed a year later, “long ago forgot that the declaration of permanent neutrality would presumably have remained without acceptance had there been a plebiscite in 1955,” given that many Austrians then considered neutrality a Soviet “Diktat.”

“At the time in the western provinces and in the American occupation zone,” Klaus specifically emphasized in 1971, “any thought of Austrian neutrality meant treason against belonging to the free West and a dangerous game with the Eastern occupying power that could have ended with the integration of Austria, at least eastern Austria, into the Communist bloc.”

In contrast to Chancellor Raab’s version of events rendered in 1959, meanwhile, Shephard deemed it incorrect to describe the solution with which Austria’s freedom was bought as being primarily due to Austrian initiative or invention. The first formal offer of military neutrality, made by Austria during the Berlin Conference in January 1954, followed a long propaganda drive launched many months before by the Kremlin and repeated ad nauseam by the Austrian Communists, in which this undertaking was specifically demanded as the price for an Austrian treaty. What is more, this open publicity campaign was backed up during 1953 with secret approaches made to various Austrian political groups by Soviet political agents in Vienna.

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111 Molden, Die Österreicher oder die Macht der Geschichte, 305.
113 Schulmeister, 53-54.
115 Shephard, 270.
Shephard’s linkage of neutrality with the State Treaty already found expression on April 28, 1955, when Nationalrat member Maleta declared in parliament that a “sober investigation of the current situation clearly shows that an indubitably present, real chance for the reestablishment of our freedom and for the withdrawal of the occupation troops in the Moscow offer is tied to the declaration of neutrality.”¹¹⁶ Many other analysts of Austrian neutrality have since assented to Maleta’s understanding. Austrian legal scholar and political scientist Waldemar Hummer in 1970 described neutrality as the political “conditio sine qua non” of the State Treaty just as this was the “conditio sine qua non” for neutrality in international law. Hummer curiously described Austrian neutrality as “not coerced” but as a “foreign policy indispensability.”¹¹⁷ Despite a “formal separation between State Treaty and permanent neutrality,” Austrian international relations scholar Hanspeter Neuhold affirmed in 1980, there exists no doubt about their close factual and political linkage in the sense of “do ut des.” Without the obligation of permanent neutrality Austria would not have achieved the State Treaty and therefore Austria’s full sovereignty as an undivided state. Both constitutive elements of the “packet” in the solution of the Austrian question, though, are not anchored in a single instrument.¹¹⁸

“Price,” “deal,” and other mercantile metaphors fill the literature concerning Austrian neutrality and its relationship to the State Treaty.¹¹⁹ Neuhold himself stated in 1980 that the “framework conditions of the Austrian solution in the year 1955” consisted

¹¹⁸ Hanspeter Neuhold, “Der Staatsvertrag als Grundlage der Österreichischen Außenpolitik,” in Neue Fakten zu Staatsvertrag und Neutralität, 163-164.
“evidently, seen quite simply, of a barter exchange [Tauschgeschäft].” Bischof has written about the “price of neutrality” making “Austria again independent after 17 years of occupation.” Neutrality, Bischof’s colleague Gehler concurred, “was originally not at all self-chosen, but rather primarily a Soviet-desired neutrality with respect to military alliances and the price in exchange for national integrity and continued economic West-orientation.”

“Even though neutrality was not really a free choice,” agreed the Austrian international relations scholars Heinz Gärtner and Otmar Höll, “it was the best deal Austria could get at that point.” Their associate at the Austrian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA), Luif, has also compared Austrian acceptance of neutrality at the 1955 Moscow Conference to saying “uncle.” British international relations scholar Peter Calvocoressi, meanwhile, has called the Moscow Memorandum “a political deal and, given the transparent illogicality of a binding obligation to do something of one’s own free will, unashamedly contrived.”

Although “Austrians prefer to stress that neutrality was freely chosen and not imposed,” American political scientist Joan Johnson-Freese considered it “clearly chosen, however, as the only real option, if they were to have any chance of regaining full...”

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124 Paul Luif, interview by author in Luif’s office at the Austrian Institute of International Affairs on July 15, 2005.
sovereignty.” Austrian security studies scholar Erich Reiter has also qualified “voluntarily chosen” in the context of his country’s neutrality as being “correct only insofar as Austria had the choice of either receiving independence again as a neutral state or simply continuing to remain an occupied state. Austrian neutrality is therefore, if not freely chosen, then self-chosen.” The Austrian diplomat Thomas Nowotny has likewise allowed for calling the “wise insight into that which is necessary” that was Austrian neutrality either “voluntary” or a “Diktat of circumstances that were simply not to be changed.”

Even individuals like Siegler who called Austrian neutrality “entirely voluntary and not imposed” actually defined this in a more nuanced manner. Siegler listed various positive and negative considerations making “neutrality appear to Austrians as the policy appropriate to a small state at the centre of Europe.” On the one hand, “to many Austrians neutrality appeared a continuation of Austria’s historic mission of mediation and reconciliation at the heart of Europe” while the “example of neighboring Switzerland” made a good impression. On the other hand, “if Austria wanted to preserve the unity and integrity of the country, she had to keep out of the growing conflict between West and East. The conclusion of the State Treaty could only be expected if no military advantage occurred to either of the military blocs.”

The tension and dichotomy between choice and coercion also appears, perhaps unwittingly, in the writings of Waldheim. “It was the Austrian federal government,”

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129 Siegler, 30.
Waldheim somewhat simplistically claimed in a 1971 book, “that brought the idea of neutrality into the conversation in connection with the State Treaty negotiations. Thus the assertion that Austria in the year 1955 accepted neutrality only out of coercion at the suggestion of Austria’s negotiating partner cannot be maintained.” Waldheim added later in his book that “Austria’s neutrality did not come about through external pressure, but rather was adopted completely voluntarily.” Yet Waldheim stated in the next sentences that “Austria had to hold itself outside of the East-West conflict for the preservation of the unity of state territory. The conclusion of the State Treaty was only possible under the condition that Austria stayed away from both military blocks.” Neutrality “appeared to the Austrians as the most expedient policy for achieving and also maintaining the freedom and independence of the country.”

A similar delineation of “voluntary neutrality” exists in the writings of Mayrzedt.

“It is indisputable today,” he proclaimed after reviewing the record of postwar Austrian support for neutrality, “that Austrian neutrality came about because of Austrian initiative.” “Surely Austria,” Mayrzedt qualified on behalf of himself and his coauthors like Hummer, though,

did not have—i.e. as a unit—the choice between union with one of the great power groupings, that is with the ideologically related West, and neutrality. The phenomenon of permanent neutrality is in our view only then present and only then has a purpose when there is no such choice. Switzerland found itself in a very analogous situation in the year 1815. No reasonable person has ever conceived of the formula of neutrality due to “free will” in an absolute sense. Therefore, a polemic against this formula is either senseless or rests upon a naïve misunderstanding. Politically more realistic and more easily understandable than the two extreme formulas of neutrality due to “free will” and “coerced” neutrality seems the conception of Austrian neutrality as a “foreign policy indispensability” for the creation of a free and independent Austria and for

the maintenance of a peaceful and cooperative development in Central Europe.\footnote{Hans Mayrzedt, “Spezifische politische Probleme aus österreichischer Sicht,” in Die Neutralen in der Europäischen Integration, 223, 225. Emphasis in the original.}

Even Kreisky often added caveats to the “unqualified pleasure” in neutrality attested to him by Helmer. “For Austria,” Kreisky wrote in a May 1955 article, “there is not the alternative between neutrality and integration into the military systems of the great blocs. The Austria’s alternative is essentially narrower; it means in the best case: [occupied] status quo or neutrality.”\footnote{Csáky, Der Weg zu Freiheit und Neutralität, 417-418.} The question whether Austria’s situation allowed for “voluntary” neutrality interested Kreisky little. “Austria with the geographic situation that we have,” Kreisky declared during an address in Vienna on November 13, 1959, can quite simply not take any other foreign policy line other than that of neutrality, and every discussion about whether this is a coerced or voluntary neutrality is so superfluous as a discussion whether or not Austria has chosen the right place in geography. We lie there where we lie. We lie between the great power blocs and we have received our freedom only by being able to give both blocs, or at least one of them, the assurance that our freedom will not lead to a strengthening of the other bloc. This was the demand and we believed to have best corresponded to this demand through the law on permanent neutrality.\footnote{Bruno Kreisky, Reden, vol. 1 (Vienna: Österreichische Staatsdruckerei, 1981), 109.}

When someone discussing the State Treaty’s and Austrian neutrality “speaks of coercion,” Kreisky argued during another address in Vienna on March 11, 1960, the response can only then be: naturally that was coercion, but a coercion that the geographic situation exerts upon us. We are simply forced, and this applies to equally to states large and small, to examine all preconditions again and again during every foreign policy decision and conscientiously weigh them against one another. In this sense the freedom of action of every state is naturally limited.\footnote{Ibid, 134.}
Kreisky also availed himself of the ubiquitous “price” analogy. During an August 30-31, 1960, conference in Alpbach, Austria, Kreisky defined neutrality as the “price of our freedom. In the process we were just as free as every purchaser is in a free market to buy or not to buy a ware—as far as he is capable of paying the price.” Later during an address before fellow Socialists in Vienna on June 9, 1961, Kreisky answered the criticism of “voluntary” neutrality with the retort, “What is voluntary in life, comrades? What neutrality really was: it was the price for our freedom and, I believe, not a price that did not correspond to the value that we placed on our freedom.”

On the basis of his service in occupied Austria, British diplomat Michael Cullis claimed that the Western allies shared Kreisky’s estimation of Austrian geography. In Cullis’ eyes the Soviets withdrew from Austria in 1955 not due to any offer of neutrality per se but because of “deeper considerations of policy that must have been maturing for some while.” Had neutrality “been the real obstacle to the Treaty, it could have been overcome long ago.” Far from neutrality acting against Soviet diplomatic obstinacy as a “sort of magic wand, a key to unlock a door that had hitherto barred the way,” Cullis asserted that

there never was, or could have been, any serious question of Austria being other than neutral, or nonaligned, as between the West and the Soviet Union, since it was inconceivable that either side would consent to evacuate the country leaving it free to join the other camp. So obvious indeed was this that the question of Austria’s post-occupation status (apart from prohibition of an Anschluß) was at no time raised in the entire course of the Treaty negotiations. But if it had been, we could certainly have given the Russians satisfaction on that point. Neutrality, or something like it, was bound to be an ingredient in any Austrian settlement acceptable to both East and West, and without it there could be no such settlement—none of this is in dispute.  

135 Ibid, 166, 227.  

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Foreigners throughout the years concurred in Cullis’ assessment of Austrian neutrality as unavoidable and involuntary. The Soviet Union, for example, delivered an aide-mémoire to the Austrian government on August 10, 1972, after it had concluded a free trade agreement with the European Community. While emphasizing Soviet expectations that the obligations from Austrian neutrality would take precedence over agreements with the EC in case of conflict, the Soviet note referenced the State Treaty several times. The Soviet Foreign Ministry’s spokesman Vadim Perfilyev stated in this context that, according to Soviet understanding, the call for neutrality in the Moscow Memorandum was a precondition for the State Treaty and any abridgement of neutrality would call into question the basis of the State Treaty.  

Belgian foreign minister Mark Eyskens also saw a linkage between Austrian neutrality and the State Treaty in the early 1990s. After Austria made its intention known in 1989 to join the EC under the terms of a special neutrality reservation, Eyskens feared that Austrian membership with its possibilities for neutrality-influenced vetoes in consensus-dominated EC deliberations would vitiate the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) then being planned. Thus Eyskens in an interview with Austrian journalist Otmar Lahodynsky made the for him “unusual suggestion” that the EC negotiate with the still-existing Soviet Union over an Austrian abandonment of neutrality. Eyskens unwillingness and/or inability to accept Austria’s neutral “bill of goods [Mogelpackung],” according to Lahodynsky, “unleashed a diplomatic éclat between Vienna and Brussels. A highranking Belgian delegation in Vienna had to listen to a

Fröschl, and Josef Leidenfrost (Graz: Verlag Styria, 1991), 226-227. Knight offers a unique contrary view here. “A point which has generally been overlooked,” Knight has written, “is that it is by no means clear that the Soviet Union would—or could—have blocked Austrian membership of NATO at this stage. In the late 1940s, when the Soviet Union seemed on several occasions ready to sign a treaty, it failed to make neutrality a condition.” See: Knight, 24. 

Stadlmeier, 340, 347.
detailed lecture about the State Treaty and a neutrality completely independent from the
treaty according to the official Austrian reading.”\textsuperscript{138}

The Belgian \textit{contretemps} was simply one more manifestation of Schlesinger’s
1972 observation that “Austrian scholars, not to mention Austrian statesmen, vigorously
object” to descriptions of Austria as being “neutralized” rather than independently
“neutral.” Schlesinger discovered that his Austrian interlocutors “insist, albeit
legalistically but not realistically, that their neutrality is entirely self-imposed.”\textsuperscript{139}

Steiner, for example, stated in 1982 that

whenever I speak with politicians and high officials abroad, I usually must
realize with dismay that many of them no longer have the slightest idea
why Austria is actually neutral, how neutrality came about. Mostly the
nonsense is maintained that we buckled under the coercion of the Soviets,
that we obligated ourselves to maintain neutrality in the State Treaty, and
many other things.\textsuperscript{140}

Steiner’s ÖVP party colleague Andreas Khol, meanwhile, offered in 1991 a
rational explanation for what could seem like ideological obstinacy on the part of
individuals like Steiner. Khol openly conceded that Austrian neutrality was a “child of
the East-West conflict” and was “simply an escape from the dilemma” of continued
occupation or partition. Paraphrasing Napoleon’s dismissal of Swiss neutrality as being
“empty and without purpose before me,” Khol called “Austrian neutrality absent the
East-West conflict empty and without purpose.” “The temporal separation” between
State Treaty and neutrality, Khol wrote,

was well-considered and an important part in the concept of Julius Raab.
The Austrian neutrality should not be anchored in international law and

\textsuperscript{138}Otmar Lahodynsky, “Mythos und Lebenslüge der Zweiten Republik,” in \textit{Neutralität im neuen
Europa: Österreichs Beitrag zur Finalität der Union}, eds. Wolfgang Koch, Franz Leidenmühler, and Peter
Steyrer (Münster: Agenda Verlag, 2004), 44-45.

\textsuperscript{139}Schlesinger, 7.

therefore obligatory upon Austria in international law, so to speak imposed and controlled by the great powers, but rather “voluntarily” declared on the pattern of Switzerland. The legal formulation was thoroughly contrived—but the political connection existed naturally. It was Austrian state doctrine not to politically negate this connection, but not to hang it out the window, either, and on the other hand to point to the legal construction that State Treaty and neutrality did not stand in a legal context with one another.141

Schlesinger noted that this Austrian neutrality doctrine had practical domestic purposes, arguing that “it is hard to build a sense of independent nationhood upon historical explanations which stress the nation’s utter lack of independence.” “If the Austrian government were to let Austrian youth grow up with the notion that the neutrality is externally imposed,” he explained in detail, “several trends could result:

1. Reduced pride in the independence of the state; 2. Possible rebelling against the neutrality law as a mere reaction, because it is imposed, rather than on its merits; 3. Increased vulnerability to recruitment from political groups with extreme orientation toward either side in the Cold War; 4. Resistance to Austrian efforts to build respectable defense forces, based on the rationale that if neutrality is externally imposed, then it hardly matters what Austria herself does about defending it; 5. Rationalization of irresponsible violations of neutrality, again on the thesis that if outside pressures are dominant, it matters little what happens in Austria.142

Even in Austria, though, some dismissed the official doctrine as so much mythology. Publicly displaying his own lack of “unqualified pleasure” in neutrality, Helmer wrote in a 1961 article that the “exchange” of neutrality for the State Treaty came about in a dilemma that left us no choice. Precisely this should preserve us from any delusion as a Lucky Leprechaun [Hans im Glück]. Because of our jovial national character, however, we are in lasting danger

142 Schlesinger, 28.
of believing the neutrality fairy tale [Neutralität-Märchen] rather than the hard historical facts.\textsuperscript{143}

Defense Minister Werner Fasslabend, meanwhile, wrote in 1995 that precisely the unwillingness among some Austrians to believe the national “neutrality fairy tale” had negative effects similar to those predicted by Schlesinger. Because of this disbelief, Fasslabend wrote, “and the perception of the international community’s recognition of neutrality as a ‘guaranty’ it was falsely deduced that neutrality and, simultaneously, the territorial integrity of Austrian state territory would now be truly respected, and, if not, then guaranteed by the ‘great powers.’”\textsuperscript{144} Because “our neutrality came about due to a demand of the Russians,” Austrian diplomat Fritz Kolb likewise argued 25 years earlier, “a feeling resulted that taking neutrality seriously is slavishness towards the Russians.”\textsuperscript{145}

Some Austrians openly proclaimed their disbelief in “voluntary” Austrian neutrality from the very beginning. While accepting neutrality, VdU Nationalrat members in 1955 called for the excision of “voluntarily” from the neutrality law.\textsuperscript{146} Ultimately, the 17 VdU parliamentarians in the Nationalrat were alone in abstaining or voting against the neutrality law on October 26, 1955, even as they admitted during the debate that the law enjoyed the support of about 70% of the Austrian people.\textsuperscript{147}


\textsuperscript{146} Jürg Späni-Schleidt, Die Interpretation der dauernden Neutralität durch das schweizerische und das österreichische Parlament, Schriftenreihe der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Aussenpolitik series (Bern: Verlag Paul Haupt, 1983), 153.

\textsuperscript{147} Charles Chaumont, “Nations unies et Neutralité,” Recueil des Cours de l’Académie de Droit international de la Haye 1, no. 1 (1956): 28; and Heymann, 66.
As described by FPÖ member Reiter in 1992, the VdU’s opposition established “a naturally skeptical” relationship of its successor, the FPÖ, to Austrian neutrality.¹⁴⁸ FPÖ party leader Jörg Haider, for example, reviewed in 1997 that “the role of the neutral state between East and West was naturally neither especially honest nor especially voluntary.” The VdU’s opposition to neutrality, Haider explained, was because “it is immoral not to take sides between good and evil.” Haider described the SPÖ sharing this view in 1955 and thereby almost blocking neutrality at the Moscow Conference before the ÖVP “raped the smaller coalition partner” into accepting neutrality. “Naturally,” Haider unequivocally judged, “we were in truth ‘neutralized’ by the Soviets. But this was realpolitisch the best possible solution.”¹⁴⁹

Friedrich Peter, a predecessor of Haider as FPÖ party leader, noted during an address on February 27, 1978, that the FPÖ recognized neutrality as a “precondition for the bringing into being of the State Treaty” despite “political opponents reproaching us very harshly for years because of this determination.”¹⁵⁰ Reiter noted that only “gradually” did neutrality “find a certain acceptance in the FPÖ as one of the pillars of Austrian security policy.” Not until 1985 did the FPÖ party platform “completely” accept neutrality, “shortly before it became obsolete.”¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ Reiter, “Die Europapolitik der Freiheitlichen,” 92.
The Synthesis between Coercion and Choice: Neutrality as a Price willingly Paid

Many Austrians came to the conclusion that, although neutrality was a necessary price for the State Treaty, this price was gladly paid for a neutrality desirable for Austria in its own right. The SPÖ politician Karl Czernetz wrote in a 1955 issue of Zukunft, for example, that, although “neutrality represented a price that we had to pay for our freedom,” neutrality also “will do justice to an old wish, a deep longing of our people.”

In the same year, Alain Stuchly-Luchs, the secretary general of the Österreichische Liga für die Vereinten Nationen, acknowledged that the “reestablishment of freedom was bound to the commandment of neutrality, which surely will be greeted by all Austrians, for whom nothing lies further than any form of militarism or military block formation.”

Speaking before his Socialist comrades on June 9, 1961, Kreisky also proclaimed that “this neutrality was no sacrifice at all, because I believe that neutrality is the most adequate Austrian foreign policy for our geographic situation and our history.”

Die Presse editor Andreas Unterberger later termed neutrality in 1981 a “necessary, if freely chosen means for the reacquisition of Austrian sovereignty.”

Austrian legal scholar Michael Schweitzer similarly noted that the “political success” of being the “only state to achieve once again freedom and state unity after the Second World War despite occupation” was “willingly purchased” with neutrality.

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balanced 1995 assessment of SPÖ Nationalrat member Peter Schieder, neutrality was “truly greeted by the majority, but also realistically perceived as a price for freedom.”  

Federal President Rudolf Kirchschläger offered perhaps the best summary of these views during the State Treaty’s silver anniversary in 1980. “Naturally,” he concluded, “this declaration of neutrality was a price that we had to pay for the State Treaty, but a calculated price appropriate to that which we received and in accord with history: already in 1919 there was the dream of Austrian neutrality.” “Perhaps,” he added,

putting the passage “of free will” into the neutrality declaration could have been avoided. This was done in order to dispel the suspicion of a coerced neutralization, but achieved by many the opposite effect. After all, it is not expressly emphasized during another action that it occurs with free will—when it actually occurs with free will! We, however, actually became a neutral country of free will.  

This “calculated price” was what led Görlich to reject talk of Austria being “neutralized” as “false.” Austrian neutrality “was of course a consequence of considerations and negotiations that led to the conclusion of the Austrian State Treaty.” “In every treaty conclusion,” though, “both treaty partners mutually bind one another.” “It would have been completely at the disposal of Austria,” Görlich analyzed, “to break off the negotiations for the State Treaty, if the question of the neutrality declaration would have appeared as an insurmountable hurdle.” Austria “purchased the State Treaty

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with the neutrality declaration only in the sense that every treaty signatory negotiates a concession from his partner with one’s own concession.”

The limited nature of neutrality’s “calculated price,” meanwhile, eased its acceptance among many Austrians. Writing in the April 6, 1955, edition of the Socialist Arbeiter Zeitung, the journalist Friedrich Scheu judged Austria’s future foreign policy status to be not so much neutrality as “pact-free [Paktfreiheit].” After all, the only specific Soviet demands then known were for Austrian pledges (later incorporated into the neutrality law) against joining military alliances and hosting foreign military bases. Such limited demands allowed Austrians “democrats” for “whom the ideological struggle between democracy and communism cannot be irrelevant” to avoid an “unacceptable ‘neutrality’ in political questions.” Although this Paktfreiheit was also a “limitation of sovereign rights,” it was under the circumstances “worth the sacrifice.”

However limited, neutrality gained acceptance in Austria only as the result of a gradual political process. During the occupation, Molden wrote in 1980, “a function as a neutral state was not to be considered. Neutrality as the Nationalrat ultimately anchored it in the in the law of October 26, 1955, would at the time not have been comprehensible either to the Soviets or to the Western allies or also to the Austrians.” According to Molden, “Austria came to these understandings in the question of neutrality only in the first half of the 1950s” while Austrians “in the second half of the 1940s, in contrast, still had to think clearly in terms of the in an East-West relation.” With Stalin in the Soviet Union and the West focused on Containment, meanwhile, the “Cold War was completely

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159 Görlich, 7-8.
160 Csáky, Der Weg zu Freiheit und Neutralität, 361.
underway,” foreclosing the option of neutrality until it later became “ripe” under Khrushchev.\(^{161}\)

The Austrian scholar Christine Stöckl agreed in 1985 that “continuous political consideration tending towards neutrality can first be made out after the Berlin Conference.” Before the “thought of neutrality had been publicly taken up sooner or later in all political parties—in a very nonuniform and hardly consistent manner, however.”\(^{162}\) While these “declarations of Austrian politicians at the time still did not bring about the desired success,” Waldheim analyzed in 1971,

they did, though, level the foreign policy terrain for the subsequent solution, and, moreover, also prepared the Austrian people psychologically for the neutrality policy of the federal government. As the question concretely presented itself in the year 1955, the problem was not new and could be solved with the complete agreement of all the country’s influential political forces.\(^{163}\)

The involuntary influence of Soviet occupation on Austria’s slowly developing decision for neutrality, though, has left open the door for “what if” historical speculation concerning alternative Austrian alliance politics. “If the East-West border in Europe,” Nowotny wrote in 1986,

had lain somewhere else, far to the west, for example, along the Rhine und the Rhone, then Austria would certainly not be neutral, but rather part of the Warsaw Pact; if the East-West border had lain farther to the east, then Austria would be part of NATO. The permanent neutrality is, viewed politically, the logical consequence of the East-West division along the existing lines on the one hand, and the…long East-West extension of the country on the other hand, which could be cut in two by these East-West

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\(^{163}\) Waldheim, 88.
borders, if this country would not have acquired a status away from military alliances.164

Interviewed in 2005, former defense minister Fasslabend retrospectively viewed Austria as a “hindered” NATO (and European Economic Community) founding member that would have “surely” joined NATO absent the exigencies of Soviet occupation.165 Other Austrian analysts questioned at the same time like the historian Oliver Rathkolb are less certain of this counterfactual hypothesis, noting that the NATO option was “never seriously played” in the occupation years.166 Former foreign minister Peter Jankowitsch is also inclined to see Austrian neutrality as voluntary, resulting from the “purely historical” reasons of Austria’s successive military defeats. Austria in Jankowitsch’s eyes availed itself of the “luxury” of renouncing military alliances, something larger countries must consider more carefully. Jankowitsch, however, is willing to hypothetically concede that Austria “probably” would have joined NATO absent Soviet occupation.167

These views retroactively confirm Rauchensteiner’s 1979 evaluation that “there were very different conceptions in Austria” of neutrality during the occupation and that neutrality’s “rejection and approval balanced each other out.”168 Such an equivocal acceptance of neutrality, according to Gehler, meant that in the first years after 1955 “Austrian leaders were neither wholehearted nor completely convinced about their

164 Nowotny, 31.
165 Werner Fasslabend, interview by author in Fasslabend’s office at the Nationalrat on July 15, 2005.
166 Oliver Rathkolb, interview by author in Rathkolb’s office at the Demokratiezentrum Wien on August 3, 2005.
167 Peter Jankowitsch, interview by author in Jankowitsch’s office at the Österreichisch-Französisches Zentrum on July 28, 2005.
neutrality. This lack of conviction led to inconsistencies, disloyalties, double games, and a dubious political morality.”\textsuperscript{169}

On the basis of such inconsistencies (actually perduring, \textit{pace} Gehler, throughout the Cold War), Austria would face the sometimes tumultuous years to come. Perceptive Austrians in 1955 like Scheu openly admitted not harboring “many illusions over what would happen with Austria if a new world war really broke out.” Although in the following decades of the Cold War both Austria and Europe avoided a general war, events in and around Austria would far too convincingly demonstrate Scheu’s warning against believing “that one can retire from world politics with a ‘declaration of neutrality,’ that one can stick his head in the sand and hope that world events will allow themselves to be diverted solely thereby.”\textsuperscript{170} These historic events would test in practice the capabilities and theories of Austrian neutrality.


\textsuperscript{170} Csáky, \textit{Der Weg zu Freiheit und Neutralität}, 361.
Chapter X
Armed Neutrality in Action, I: The Early Years, 1956-1958

Neutrality and the Hungarian Uprising of 1956: Austria as a Model?

As predicted by individuals such as the American secretary of state John Foster Dulles and Bruno Kreisky, Austrian independence and neutrality had a subversive effect upon the Communist regimes in Austria’s neighborhood. Fighting against the Communists and their Soviet allies broke out in Hungary on October 23, 1956, three days shy of Austrian neutrality’s one year anniversary.1 Asked about Hungarian events by journalists at the end of his official three-day visit in Bonn on October 24, 1956, Austrian chancellor Julius Raab stated that the “idea of freedom seems to be gradually making its way.”

During the following few days of Hungarian independence, Hungarian freedom fighters acknowledged their political debt to Austrian independence by affixing a banner above the road from Budapest to Vienna with the words, “We give thanks to the Austrian people.”2 Austrian journalists from the Neue Tageszeitung, according to the American historian Thomas O. Schlesinger, reported “with pride” how Hungarian freedom fighters explicitly told the Austrians that the uprising fought for “things to be as they are in your country.”3

Hungarian admiration for modern Austria went beyond flattery when Hungarian prime minister Imre Nagy officially proclaimed Hungary an independent and neutral country shortly before eight o’clock on November 1, 1956, thereby withdrawing Hungary from the Warsaw Pact. A British journalist wrote of neutrality the following day as “the word of the day in Budapest.” Neutrality appeared not only in Hungarian diplomatic notes to the Soviets and to United Nations Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld but also appeared in almost every political discussion, whereby it should be said that there are hardly any other discussions these days in Budapest. The role model is Austria, not, for example, Yugoslavia with its indeed proud but complicated conception of active coexistence, and also not Switzerland with its centuries-long peace.\(^5\)

The Hungarians, though, derived neutral aspirations not just from Austria. Coinciding with the de-Stalinization campaign begun by Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev at the 20th Party Congress of the Soviet Communist party in February 1956, several Communist proposals for neutrality had emerged around the world. “Had not,” wrote Austrian military historian Manfried Rauchensteiner, the Swedish Communist party in the spring of 1956 made the proposal in the Stockholm Reichstag that Sweden should also declare its permanent neutrality and request a guaranty of this neutrality from great powers and neighboring states? In the previous year the Soviet Union had made the suggestion that Turkey, Iran, and Iraq should transition to a policy of neutrality. If, therefore, it evidently lay in the interest of the Soviet Union to recommend neutrality to an entire series of states and to cite the Austrian example, why could the same not be true also for Hungary?\(^6\)

As Hungarian hopes for a neutral status free of Soviet occupation had developed throughout 1956, so had Austrian speculation that their country could serve as a role

\(^6\) Ibid, 12.
model for others. “From the still unusual situation of neutrality,” observed Rauchensteiner, “from something that was still more emotionally than purely objectively treated, the belief in seeing the young Austrian neutrality as exportable crept in.” This “Austrian conception that neutrality is an export product, and the East European conception that neutrality could be imported, shook hands.”

The Austrians were not the only ones in 1956 to consider exporting Austrian neutrality. Former Minnesota governor and President Dwight D. Eisenhower confidante Harold E. Stassen “wondered” at a meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) on the morning of October 26, 1956,

if it would not be prudent to try to get some message to Marshal Zhukov indicating that the achievement of freedom in the Soviet satellites should not be considered by the Soviet Union as posing any real threat to the national security of the USSR. We should make clear that this development would not impel the Western powers to make any warlike move against the Soviet Union.\(^8\)

Stassen fleshed out his ideas with specific reference to Austria that afternoon in a conversation with Secretary of State Dulles. Stassen, Dulles recorded, “said he wished to develop the idea which he had expressed at the NSC meeting, namely, that we should let the Russians know that we would accept for the satellites some neutralized status like that of Austria.” Stassen expressed the same thought in a letter to Eisenhower written after the NSC meeting that morning, suggesting that

the Soviet Union may calculate that if they lose control of Hungary that country would be taken into NATO by the United States, and this would be a great threat in Soviet eyes to their own security. May it not be wise for the United States in some manner to make it clear that we are willing

\(^7\) Ibid, 11-12.
to have Hungary be established on the Austrian basis—and not affiliated with NATO?9

Stassen’s proposal seemed to have an effect on Eisenhower, who in a telephone call with Dulles that evening at 5:50 p.m. said that

he [the President] had been turning over in his mind what Stassen had said in the meeting this morning. As far as the border states were concerned, they need have no fear that we might make an effort to incorporate them into NATO or make them part of our alliances. We want to see them have a free choice. We have no access to any of these states except through Austria. The President said he brought this up because the Secretary was giving a speech and he thought he could put something like this in the speech.10

Dulles returned the call at 7:06 p.m. and

said he was thinking over the Pres’s thought and wondered if he approved the Sec’s saying something to the effect—all we want is their genuine independence and that if they once had it that would alter the whole aspect of the European scene and the whole problem of European security would be altered. The Pres. said yes—the whole European and world security would seem to be on the road to achievement. The Sec. mentioned his trying to imply you might not need to build up NATO so much or something to that effect. The Pres. said if they could have some kind of existence, choose their own government and what they want, then we are satisfied and this would really solve one of the greatest problems in the world that is standing in the way of world peace. Then something that this would be of far greater effect than any alliance.11

The next day, October 27, Dulles gave before the Dallas Council on World Affairs an address previously reviewed by Eisenhower. Therein Dulles sought to make clear, beyond the possibility of doubt: The United States has no ulterior purpose in desiring the independence of the satellite countries. Our unadulterated wish is that these peoples, from whom so much of our own national life derives, should have sovereignty restored to them and that they should have governments of their own free choosing. We do not look

9 Ibid, 305.
10 Ibid, 305-306.
upon these nations as potential military allies. We see them as friends and as part of a new and friendly and no longer divided Europe. We are confident that their independence, if promptly accorded, will contribute immensely to stabilize peace throughout all of Europe, West and East.  

In case Soviet authorities missed his comments in Dallas, Dulles cabled this paragraph (i.e. following the colon) to the American ambassador in Moscow on October 29, 1956, with the remark that “this paragraph resulted from intensive consideration here at highest level.” Dulles wanted these remarks “to come attention of highest Soviet authorities, including Zhukov, and to know that they appreciate it is high level policy statement.” Ambassador Charles Bohlen cabled the next day that he had met Marshal Georgi Zhukov and Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov at a reception and was able “to direct their attention to your Dallas speech.” The Soviet foreign minister “listened and made no particular comment, but said he would look up speech in question.” Zhukov, though, “said that he found difficult to reconcile this statement with President’s encouragement ‘rebels’ in Hungary.”

Such a discouraging Soviet response apparently did not reach the Planning Board of the NSC on October 31, 1956. Its draft statement U.S. Policy on Developments in Poland and Hungary suggested that American policy makers “consider whether it is advisable to make in the UN or elsewhere a proposal of Hungarian neutrality on the Austrian model.” The Planning Board advised that such a move might further America’s “immediate objectives of discouraging and, if possible, preventing further Soviet armed intervention in Hungary as well as harsh measures of repression or retaliation.”

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14 Ibid, 357.
Austrian Neutrality’s Sudden Baptism of Fire

Positive views of Austrian neutrality aside, fighting in Hungary forced Austria to take measures for the maintenance of its neutrality, even though the initially domestic Hungarian uprising might not have qualified as a state of war (possible only between states) according to a strict interpretation of Hague Convention V. The uprising disrupted Hungarian border controls for a few days, even allowing two Austrian cabinet ministers to make their own investigation of events in Hungary. Raab’s assistant Ludwig Steiner noted that the chancellor upon his return to Vienna “saw to it that such excursions were stopped.”

Under the direction of the Interior Ministry, a “barrier zone [Sperrzone]” took shape along the border with Hungary, extending deep into the Austrian interior. Only inhabitants of this border region along with individuals possessing special permits, above all from charitable organizations, could enter the Sperrzone. While police and army units deployed to the border had permission to open fire upon hostile intruders, Austrian security forces maintained a 500-meter distance from the border marked with small Austrian red-white-red flags. This was to avoid accidental border violations and involvement in firefights along the border. Bundesheer general Emil Liebitzky, meanwhile, presented the Sperrzone to the military attachés of the four former occupying powers during an inspection tour of the border region.

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15 Nolden, 421.
18 Eger, 67.
The potential for Austrian involvement in the Hungarian events developed not just along the border but also in Austria’s interior. “The Vorfeld of the Hungarian uprising, this can certainly be said today,” Kreisky recalled in his 1988 memoirs, “was Vienna: having fled abroad from Communist Hungary, the exiles living in America and Canada, who came in large part from very reactionary circles, began to assemble themselves in Vienna in order to retake Hungary.” “If at first,” Kreisky explained, “Vienna was only an important transfer station to Budapest, Vienna became after the outbreak of the uprising a kind of control station. For Austria’s young freedom—we had, after all, just been set free—this development was extremely dangerous.”19

Accordingly, Austria imposed an entry ban on persons possessing foreign passports and traveling to Hungary. Austrian police also raided hotels frequented by foreigners and expelled from Austria individuals likely to create trouble.20 Among others, the former Hungarian minister president Ference Nagy deposed by the Communists received orders to leave Austria immediately after arriving in Vienna on October 29, 1956. Embassies of Communist bloc states in Vienna, meanwhile, received greater protection against demonstrations. With all of these measures, according to the German political scientist Reiner Eger, “the Austrian government documented its will to prevent in advance any possible political activity by groups of Hungarian émigrés on Austrian soil.”21

Indeed, the Austrian politician Luijo Tončić-Sorinj noted that “Austria did more than neutrality law demanded,” given that the 1907 neutrality conventions did not

21 Eger, 67.
regulate activities of private individuals.\textsuperscript{22} Hague Convention V’s Article 6 clearly stated that the “responsibility of a neutral Power is not engaged by the fact of persons crossing the frontier separately to offer their services to one of the belligerents.” The Austrian government, though, might have contemplated a violation by Hungarian exiles in Austria, however improbable, of the convention’s Article 4, which stated that “corps of combatants cannot be formed nor recruiting agencies opened on the territory of a neutral Power to assist the belligerents.”\textsuperscript{23} In all, Rauchensteiner has written of a “so to speak überneutrale behavior.”\textsuperscript{24}

The main question facing Austrians during the fighting in Hungary, meanwhile, was whether Communist bloc forces would respect Austrian neutrality. “Austrian decoders (as was explained to me, people from above all Slavic background were considered during the monarchy as suitable for decoding, because they supposedly brought with them a special kind of patience) at the time,” Kreisky remembered, “had intercepted a radio message in which Czech and East German party leaders most urgently demanded the reoccupation of Austria.”\textsuperscript{25} “In Vienna,” Karl Gruber reflected, a rather panic-like mood broke out after an enormous, sweeping enthusiasm for free Hungary. Thus we interpreted at any rate the incoming cables or private letters from leading individuals of Austrian politics. Not a few considered now the outbreak of the Third World War as unavoidable, if not directly imminent. What would happen with Austria if the eastern steamroller should not halt at our borders?\textsuperscript{26}

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\textsuperscript{23} For a copy of Hague Convention V, see: \textit{Convention Respecting the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers and Persons in Case of War on Land} (accessed August 14, 2006); available from \href{http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/hague05.htm}{http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/hague05.htm}.
\textsuperscript{24} Rauchensteiner, \textit{Die Zwei}, 342.
\textsuperscript{25} Kreisky, \textit{Im Strom der Politik}, 230. Austrian historians have since confirmed that there were considerations among Communist leaders in Czechoslovakia and East Germany as well as Hungary to reoccupy Austria in 1956. See: Gunther Hauser, \textit{Das europäische Sicherheits- und Verteidigungssystem und seine Akteure}, 2nd Edition (Vienna: Landesverteidigungsakademie, 2005), 55.
\textsuperscript{26} Karl Gruber, \textit{Meine Partei ist Österreich: Privates und Diplomatisches} (Vienna: Amathea Verlag, 1988), 187.
“That a few people considered such a possibility,” Austrian journalist Janko Musulin commented in 1957, “was proved by the fact that during the critical period money was withdrawn from Vienna and deposited in banks in the West of the country. Official figures are not available, but it is alleged that several million Schillings were moved for this reason.”

Public panic in Austria during this time led to runs on soap, rice, oil, flour, and sugar supplies in Vienna. “The opinion,” Rauchensteiner reviewed in 1981, “that the great powers, at least the Americans and the Soviets, could come back at any time and occupy their former zones once again, particularly in case of a serious contingency, was not to be eradicated.” Outside of Austria during the crisis, meanwhile, “NATO took precautions. A partial mobilization was conducted in Czechoslovakia. Of Yugoslavia it was known that several divisions were transferred near to the Hungarian and Romanian borders.”

American State Department officials noted Austrian concerns in a November 6, 1956, memorandum. The memorandum also ominously warned that “according to reliable information, the Soviet Embassy in Vienna burned large amounts of paper on 2 November.” Such events took place against a background of widespread Communist allegations of Austrian neutrality violations.

As Eger later observed, “numerous articles and commentaries appeared in the Soviet press at the beginning of the month of November that raised the reproach that Austria did not maintain its neutrality carefully enough.” The November 3, 1956, issues

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30 Likelihood of Soviet Violation of Austrian Neutrality, November 6, 1956; Folder 91; Box 3; Entry 29; National Intelligence Estimates concerning the Soviet Union, 1950-1961; Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, Record Group (RG) 263; National Archives (NA) Building II, College Park, MD.
of Pravda and Izvestiya, for example, cited reports from the Austrian Communist
Volksstimme that Hungarian officers and soldiers of the former World War II Horthy
Fascist regime were traveling to Budapest from Austrian airfields. The reports added that
Salzburg had become “one of the centers of reactionary Hungarian emigrants” from
which the “counterrevolution in Hungary was directly supported.” From Salzburg, the
Communists asserted, came the majority of the so-called “free broadcasters” in western
Hungary that were in reality merely “American broadcasters.”\(^{31}\)

Not merely alleged, the State Department memorandum observed, were transits of
various Hungarians, including military personnel, back and forth across the Austrian
border.\(^{32}\) Indeed, Rauchensteiner has written, some cross-border traffic “surely” did take
place.\(^{33}\) Austrian trade union leader Franz Olah, for instance, recalled in his memoirs that
the Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund (ÖGB) delivered food, medical supplies, and
money to Hungary during the fighting. Olah’s assistant Heinrich Daurer and ÖGB
secretary Anton Benya even accompanied deliveries to Budapest. Hungarian
revolutionaries in turn crossed into Austria and received large sums of Hungarian
currency from the ÖGB. “Weapons,” Olah emphasized, “they did not receive. These
Communist party phrases from the time are an invention (unfortunately).”\(^{34}\)

“Most curious” among the border crossings during this time for Rauchensteiner
was the “case of a Swiss militia soldier who illegally went over the border with a packed
uniform, no longer found, though, a field of action in Hungary, and made his way back to
Austria in full uniform where he was received by astonished gendarmes.”\(^{35}\) The

\(^{31}\) Eger, 41.
\(^{32}\) Likelihood of Soviet Violation of Austrian Neutrality, November 6, 1956.
\(^{33}\) Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 349.
\(^{34}\) Franz Olah, Die Erinnerungen (Vienna: Amalthea Verlag, 1995), 151-152.
\(^{35}\) Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 349.
“intermezzo” of this individual abrogation of Swiss neutrality, Bundesheer general Karl Liko noted in 1965, “went through the world’s media” on November 23, 1956.36

Such instances aside, Rauchensteiner observed that a “border crossing was blocked or made impossible for numerous persons.”37 Interior Minister Oskar Helmer similarly dismissed Communist accusations of Austrian neutrality violations. “Is there better proof for the groundlessness of these assertions,” Helmer wrote in an October 22, 1957, Arbeiter Zeitung article, “than the fact that Austria extended in the first phase of the Hungarian fight for freedom political asylum to numerous Communist functionaries who fled before the rage of a people incensed by the functionaries atrocities?”38

In response to demands from Imre Nagy for Austrian confirmation that supporters of Hungary’s Fascist Arrow Cross movement would not cross the Austrian border, meanwhile, Austria’s representative in Budapest, Walter Peinsipp, gave Nagy a memorandum detailing Austrian neutrality measures on November 3, 1956. The Austrian embassy in Moscow presented the Soviet Foreign Ministry with a similar declaration. Thus, Eger wrote, the Austrian government “energetically protested” against the Soviet “campaign of imputations and accusations.” Because of this smear campaign, the public prosecutor in Vienna also had the Volksstimme confiscated on November 4, 1956, to the accompaniment of subsequent protests from Izvestiya ten days later.39

The State Department’s November 2, 1956, memorandum nonetheless warned that the Soviet Union, if it so chose, could use these transits as justification for

37 Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 349.
39 Eger, 42, 48.
disregarding Austrian sovereignty and neutrality. In fact, Czech major general Jan Šejna claimed after defecting to the West in 1968 that Austria was in considerable danger of invasion in 1956. Šejna, the former first party secretary in Prague’s defense ministry, argued that Soviet defense minister Zhukov and other Soviet officers, opposed to the 1955 withdrawal from Austria from the very beginning, wanted to minimize casualties during the suppression of the Hungarian revolt by encircling Hungary through Austrian territory. According to Šejna, Communist officials in Prague received orders to collect “proof” of Austrian neutrality violations, something that could have been found, for example, in Austrian deliveries of medical supplies into Hungary. The ČSSR military, meanwhile, went into a state of alert, requiring only an order to advance into Austria.

Calmer assessments of events, however, provided more assurance. “Austrian politicians,” Eger noted, “did not judge as serious reproaches against Austria” repeated Soviet charges of neutrality violations. Rather,

the time and type of the reproaches allow for recognition of what intention the Soviet press pursued with these accusations: the construction of a system of justification possibilities which should help justify the bloody repression of the Hungarian uprising above all among the population in the Socialist states.

Most Austrian leaders did not suspect the Soviets of intending to extend the area of hostilities into Austria. The Austrian diplomat and federal president Rudolf Kirchschläger reflected in 2000 that the Soviet Union did not at all have the intention of crossing the border. This would have made the entire maneuver with the State Treaty senseless. The policies of the Soviets go only so far as it is absolutely necessary in

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40 Likelihood of Soviet Violation of Austrian Neutrality, November 6, 1956.
42 Eger, 41, 49.
their interest. In this case Hungary was to be disposed of. An escalation to Austria would have only brought complications. The same came also to pass in 1968 [during the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia].

The importance to the Soviets of Austrian neutrality, by March 1956 already recognized by 61 nations, “played an important role” in the Austrian cabinet’s assessment of Hungarian events, according to Eger. Given that the “Soviets saw Austria as a test case of their détente and coexistence policy,” a “direct endangerment or violation of Austrian territory by the Soviet Union would have entailed a complete failure of this Soviet foreign policy strategy.” In looking back on his role as undersecretary for foreign affairs during the Hungarian revolt, for example, Chancellor Kreisky held the view that there was no specific Soviet threat to Austria during the fighting in Hungary. Not only would this have been the end of the Austrian “model” and détente, but a Soviet advance into Austria would also have prompted the three Western former occupation powers, still hopeful of integrating Austria or parts of it into NATO, to move into their former zones.

“We believe,” the State Department concurred on November 6, 1956, “it improbable that the USSR presently intends any substantial military movement into Austria, although some border incidents or minor incursions into Austrian territory may occur.” The Soviets almost certainly would recognize that any major violation of Austrian neutrality would tend to reunite the Western Alliance and would greatly increase the risk of general war. The possible advantages which the USSR might see in a seizure of Austrian territory do not seem to us sufficient to offset these disadvantages.

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44 Eger, 35.
45 Likelihood of Soviet Violation of Austrian Neutrality, November 6, 1956.
Statements by American officials encouraged Austrian confidence. The answers of “my American friends” to Gruber’s questions concerning possible American responses to a Soviet invasion of Austria “consoled” the Austrian ambassador to the United States. Secretary of the Air Force Donald A. Quarles, whom Gruber “could count among my close friends,” went so far as to say that he did not doubt for a minute that the President would immediately act militarily during an attack on Austria. The news went without delay to Vienna, and after some to and fro reassurance returned. And because it was child’s play for the Russians to acquire the most confidential information from our offices, we could be sure that also this ominous item was read not without attention in Moscow.\footnote{Gruber, \textit{Meine Partei ist Österreich}, 187-188.}

On November 3, 1956, meanwhile, the day before the Soviet assault to retake Budapest, Deputy Undersecretary of State Robert Daniel Murphy expressed concern to the Soviet ambassador in Washington, DC, over strong Soviet troop concentrations in Hungary near the Austrian border.\footnote{Eger, 44.} That same day, American ambassador Llewellyn Thompson in Vienna met with Foreign Minister Leopold Figl and Kreisky during the morning. Thompson cabled to Washington, DC, that the Austrians asked casually what would happen if Soviets did not stop at Hungarian frontier. In effort head off formal raising of guarantees question I said I had no instructions but pointed out was great distinction between whether Soviets evacuated country they now held and an attack on a free country like Austria. Did not think there was any likelihood of other than minor border incidents but felt no doubt whatever that a real attack on Austria would result in showdown between West and East.\footnote{\textit{FRUS, 1955-1957}, vol. 26, \textit{Central and Southeastern Europe}, ed. John P. Glennon (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 43.}

Three days later on November 6, 1956, State Department spokesman Lincoln White proclaimed that the “United States has respected and will continue to respect and
observe the neutral character of Austria and considers that the violations of the territorial integrity or international sovereignty of Austria would, of course, be a grave threat to the peace."49 “With this declaration,” Eger commented,

the American government set clear boundaries by including Austria in the area of the American protective zone. The Eisenhower administration gave the Soviet Union unmistakably to understand that any Soviet violation of Austrian neutrality, which simultaneously meant a violation of the status quo in Central Europe, would be a signal for the United States to intervene.50

Although no official statements from Raab’s cabinet concerning this American declaration were forthcoming, members of the Große Koalition greeted White’s statements in the Nationalrat. This revealed to Eger that the “Austrian government itself surely derived satisfaction and consolation from the fact that a political and military upgrading of the status of neutrality in Central Europe took place on the part of the Americans.”51 Bolstered by statements from American officials, both public and private, Austrian confidence probably helps explain Raab’s positive mood exhibited to Thompson on November 9, 1956 (Steiner described Raab in these “hectic days” as a “pole of repose.”). The American ambassador reported that the Chancellor told me this morning he would make broadcast soon designed calm nerves of Aust public who had been making run on food stores. Said he did not consider Sov attack on Aust likely but that should Sovs make any attempt against Aust he was confident West world immediately come to Aust’s aid since their failure do so would mean their loss of Europe.52

The extent of an American commitment to Austria, however, was not clear. “From America,” Kreisky recalled, “came unsettling reports of our diplomatic

49 Ibid.
50 Eger, 44.
51 Ibid, 45.
52 FRUS, 1955-1957, vol. 26, Central and Southeastern Europe, 44; and Steiner, 234.
representatives, through which was indicated to us not to indulge any hopes with respect to an expected military intervention as long as Soviet power did not cross the boundaries of its former occupation zone in Austria.”

Musulin asked in 1957 how ought we to interpret President Eisenhower’s prompt warning that a violation of Austrian sovereignty would create a very grave threat to peace? Two schools of thought emerged. The first maintained that an attack on Austria would touch off World War III, and Eisenhower’s warning meant that if the Red Army crossed the frontier the hammer blows of nuclear war would fall upon Russia. The second argued that the White House might embark on another course, send in troops (a certain concentration seems in fact to have taken place), and establish them along the River Enns, the old demarcation line between Soviet and US occupation forces, thus restoring the north-south line of communications of the NATO forces across the Brenner, which had been cut by the declaration of Austrian neutrality. Obviously, even this limited operation would have been fraught with immense danger.

The Second Republic’s Night of Nights: November 5-6, 1956

Even with American assurances, a certain amount of anxiety in Austria was unavoidable under the circumstances. “On the morning of November 5,” wrote Rauchensteiner in 1987, “reached the Defense Ministry information—by which way, however, has remained unclear until today—that had such a believability that it simply could not be ignored.” According to this intelligence, Soviet forces engaged in operations primarily to the west of Budapest would drive on Austria and begin its reoccupation during the night of November 5-6, 1956.

“If only for a few initiates,” Rauchensteiner judged, this night was “one of the most dramatic, if not the night of the Second Republic,” coming on the heels of “steps of

53 Kreisky, Im Strom der Politik, 231.
54 Musulin, 137.
55 Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 344-345.
escalation.” After preparing for intervention on November 3, Soviet forces invaded
Hungary during the night, unleashing fighting that raged the following day and was
simultaneously, in Rauchensteiner’s words, the “highpoint” of the Communist media
campaign against Austria. In New York, meanwhile, the United Nations General
Assembly met in special session on November 4 for debating and voting on an American
resolution calling for a Soviet withdrawal from, and the admission of neutral observers
and emergency relief into, Hungary.56

Shortly before the vote, Valerian Zorin, the Soviet UN ambassador, took aside
Heinrich Haymerle, the Austrian Foreign Ministry’s director of political affairs
dispatched to New York, and warned that an Austrian affirmation of the American
resolution would indicate that Austria had abandoned neutrality, with Austria accordingly
responsible for the consequences. Unable to establish contact with Vienna in time, the
Austrian delegation decided to vote for the American resolution in obedience to previous
instructions. After the American resolution passed with only eight votes in opposition
and 15 abstentions, Ambassador Zorin playfully threatened Haymerle with finger
gestures.57

November 5, 1956, the day Austria received warnings of a Soviet advance into
Austria, was also the day that Anglo-French paratroop units landed in the Suez Canal
zone in order to foil the nationalization plans of the Nasser regime in Egypt. The Anglo-
French military operation in Egypt provoked Soviet threats of nuclear missile attacks
upon the United Kingdom and France. As indicated by a visit of the American defense
attaché in Vienna to the Austrian Defense Ministry, Soviet threats raised the concern of

56 Ibid, 346. Emphasis in the original.
57 Ibid.
Soviet escalation in Europe. At the same time, the United States, according to Rauchensteiner, was “disoriented” and “politically lame” because of the presidential elections on November 6, 1956.

In this setting a crisis meeting under Defense Minister Ferdinand Graf’s leadership took place on November 5, 1956, in the Austrian Defense Ministry. The result was orders to pull back *Bundesheer* units deployed along the border in preparation for delaying actions in case of Soviet attack. The *Bundesheer* also received orders to evacuate all barracks during the night under the cover of “night exercises” so that in case of air attack the barracks would be empty. Because secrecy concerns prevented even most *Bundesheer* participants in the “night exercise” from knowing its true purpose, military families living in the barracks had to stay behind in ignorance.

While only armored reconnaissance units remained as a screen on the border to Hungary, *Bundesheer* soldiers took up defensive positions on the night of November 5-6, 1956, in pouring rain, something that, according to Austrian military historian Erwin Schmidl, “fit the mood—are the ‘Russians’ coming again, is the Third World War in fact going to begin?” Simultaneously, Austrian soldiers near the airfield Tulln-Lagenlabern prepared for American troop landings and demolition teams with handwritten orders in sealed envelopes took positions throughout Upper and Lower Austria near Danube

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58 Sinn, 473.
In ordering bridge demolition preparations, General Troop Inspector Erwin Fussenegger actually exceeded his authority.

“The waiting,” wrote Rauchensteiner, “began.” “Now it became—not only for Austria—chaotic,” Rauchensteiner added, “and the overview was ultimately lost in light of the massive disinformation concerning a Soviet attack. The wildest rumors circulated whose truth content was completely impossible to test.” Decades later there were still reports of intercepted radio communications from Soviet tank crews asking their superiors whether the Soviet advance should continue into Austria. The answer was, in effect, “If the border is not defended, drive on!” Defense Minister Graf also later claimed to have seen a Soviet sketch marked with the advance of a Soviet armored unit into Austria. “It might be,” Rauchensteiner assessed in 2003, “that a troop commander made himself ‘independent’; that also a high command provided the troops with something that would have been used in a contingency, etc. We would all desire to be able to see for once the sketch mentioned again and again, but I—at least—have never seen it.” The Bundesheer’s state of alarm ended uneventfully on November 6, 1956.

Calm in the Storm: Austria’s Reaction to the Invasion of Hungary

The failure of any threat against Austria to materialize ultimately justified the calm, resolute stand taken by Austrian officials during the Hungarian crisis. Eger noted that Raab did not break off his state visit in Bonn after learning of the Hungarian uprising and arrived in Vienna on the afternoon of October 25, 1956, even though official talks

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62 Sinn, 474.
with the West German government ended the day before. (Steiner, Raab’s assistant, offered the contrary view that Raab “prematurely” ended the Bonn visit because he “wanted to travel as quickly as possible to Vienna.”) Upon his arrival, Raab actually initially ordered a retraction of orders issued by Graf and Helmer the previous day for the Bundesheer to engage in operations along the border. “Raab,” analyzed Rauchensteiner, “evidently proceeded from the assumption that a putting-on-display of Austrian neutrality was not appropriate, the situation in Hungary was under control, and therefore no danger of the unrest being extended was present. Raab thus strove to reestablish again the status quo also in Austria.”

Reflecting an assessment that the “situation in the border area” was “not susceptible to concern,” measures agreed upon by the Austrian Defense Ministry and police authorities on October 25, 1956, were, in the words of Eger, “solely to guarantee quick help for refugees and the immediate disarmament of rebels entering Austrian territory.” Along with Chancellor Raab from the ÖVP, the leading SPÖ politician, Vice-Chancellor Adolf Schärf, must have also found little danger for Austria in the Hungarian revolt, for he began a long-planned East Asian tour to Pakistan, India, and Japan on October 28, 1956.

The very day that Schärf departed for Asia, the new Soviet ambassador to Austria, Sergey G. Lapin, presented his credentials to Federal President Theodor Körner in the president’s private apartment. Afterwards in the Foreign Ministry, Lapin received the following appeal of the Austrian government for transmission to Moscow:

64 Eger, 36.
65 Steiner, 234.
66 Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 338.
67 Eger, 36-37, 66.
The Austrian government follows with painful sympathy the bloody and costly events now lasting five days in neighboring Hungary. The Austrian government implores the government of the USSR to cooperate so that military combat actions are broken off and the shedding of blood ceases. On the basis of the freedom and independence of Austria secured by neutrality, the Austrian federal government advocates a normalization of the circumstances in Hungary with the goal that European peace can be strengthened and secured through the reestablishment of freedom in the sense of human rights.  

In additional oral remarks, Foreign Minister Figl told Lapin that unarmed individuals crossing from Hungary into Austria would be treated according to the Geneva Convention. “Should, however,” Figl warned in comments intended solely for the Soviet Union, “groups enter Austrian territory while fighting and not respond to the demand to lay down arms, the Austrian armed forces shall be ordered to break any resistance.” Figl added that these Rules of Engagement (ROE) included Soviet forces.

As described by Eger, Austria’s “brave appeal” on October 28, 1956, (along with the ROE) “reflected the estimation of the Austrian government” that the fighting in Hungary “presented no direct threat of Austrian territory or even Austrian sovereignty.” Eger saw Austria’s reaction deserving of “special note” in comparison to the “cautious approach of the American government.” Austria, moreover, made its “challenging appeal directly to the government of the USSR” as the “lone Western, democratic state—directly bordering the Soviet sphere of influence, the ten-year experience with a Soviet occupation regime in fresh memory, and an independent and sovereign nation for only

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68 Rauchensteiner, Späterherbst 1956, 44.
69 Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 341.
less than a year.” Rauchensteiner confirmed that the “clear position” of the Austrian government deserved the adjective “notable.”

According to him, the Austrian Foreign Ministry saw “mainly problems of protocol” while considering its response to Hungarian events on October 25, 1956. Reminded of Hungarian foreign minister Imre Horváth’s invitation for lunch at the Hungarian consulate during his October 27, 1956, visit in Vienna, Figl determined to express Austrian disapproval of Communist actions in Hungary through a refusal by him and Haymerle to attend. “More awkward,” according to Rauchensteiner, was the imminent visit to Austria of First Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan, not only one of the most influential politicians in the Soviet Union, but also in Soviet handling of Hungary. This first visit of a high-ranking Soviet functionary since the State Treaty would be under suspicious eyes in both East and West, but particularly in the West. Haymerle observed that against the backdrop of Soviet repression in Hungary the unavoidable emphasis on good Austro-Soviet relations during such a visit would provoke unfavorable reactions in the West. Figl suggested difficult budget negotiations as an excuse for delaying Mikoyan’s visit.

“Because this visit was quite welcomed for other reasons,” observed Rauchensteiner, “the issue came very close to squaring the circle.” Austria’s “main concern” during this visit would have been a requested reduction of Austrian oil deliveries under the State Treaty’s terms. Yet if the Soviets agreed to a reduction in order to demonstrate to the West the results of “good” neutral behavior while subjugating Hungary, this coincidence could signal that Austria had profited by ignoring Hungary’s

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70 Eger, 34.
71 Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 342; and Spärherbst 1956, 44.
72 Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 338-339.
plight. Thus Figl made the “notable” decision that Austria would forego requesting the desired reduction in oil deliveries if it were impossible to delay Mikoyan’s visit. In the end, though, Mikoyan’s preoccupation with subjugating Hungary led him to cancel his Austrian trip. 73

Austrian individuals and private groups reflected their government’s strong stand against Communist repression in Hungary. State Department official Jacob D. Beam, chairman of the interagency Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, summarized that the “Austrians” were “doing well to encourage” the Hungarians “despite neutrality” at the committee’s 40th meeting on October 29, 1956. 74 Peinsipp, for example, became known as the “hero of Budapest” while distributing penicillin to the city’s hospitals, even if, as Peinsipp stated in a telephone call with Haymerle, “at times, it is only possible to do this in a hail of bullets.” 75

In Austria itself, according to Eger, the ÖVP, SPÖ, and newly renamed FPÖ “unanimously welcomed in appeals and resolutions the developing revolution in Hungary, only the tone of the declarations varied.” All parliamentarians from these parties “demonstratively” left the Nationalrat’s chambers as Johann Koplenig, the leader of the pro-Soviet KPÖ, took to the speaker’s podium during the Soviet invasion. Austrian workers also responded to union calls to remember Hungary with a moment of silence on November 2 and a work pause on November 8, 1956, while voluntary donations collected by the ÖGB for Hungarian relief totaled over 16 million Schillings. Popular outrage in Vienna against the KPÖ, meanwhile, led to the demolition of party

73 Ibid, 339.
offices and initiated the “complete” isolation of the KPÖ, culminating in its loss of Nationalrat representation after garnering only 3.27% of the vote in the 1959 elections.\(^76\)

Nonetheless, Austrian policymakers mindful of not giving the Soviets any pretext for violating Austrian neutrality did show some restraint. The Nationalrat, for example, delayed debating the Hungarian issue. The Foreign Ministry’s Political Department also admonished on October 30, 1956, that “our protection lies in our neutrality” and took the “liberty once again to warn against declarations by Parliament that could create the impression in Moscow that our neutrality has been swept away by the uprising in Hungary….Our task now will be to continue our assistance, but quietly.” In a similar vein, Ambassador Peinsipp reported to the Foreign Ministry later in November that “the broadcasts of Radio Vienna have been anything but helpful during these times.”\(^77\)

Soviet forces in Hungary showed also restraint before the Austrian border. For Eger, the distance of a few kilometers maintained by most Soviet units from the Austrian border as well as the lack of rounds falling on Austrian territory during combat around Hungarian border posts “allowed the conclusion that units of the Soviet army had the strict order to respect the Austrian border.” The Soviet response to events at the Austrian border town of Rechnitz in Burgenland on November 23, 1956, also evinced reticence. Here three Soviet soldiers crossed the Austrian border in pursuit of fleeing Hungarian refugees. Austrian gendarmes killed one Soviet soldier, captured another, and forced the third to escape back into Hungary. In a move that must have pleased the Austrians, though, Ambassador Lapin’s note discussing the incident presented to the Austrian

\(^{76}\) Eger, 68, 70, 71.

government four days later made clear the accidental nature of the soldiers’ crossing and emphasized Soviet orders restricting the Soviet military to Hungary.78

Such incidents continued even after the last Bundesheer units deployed to the border returned to their barracks on December 24, 1956. While firing their submachine guns, for example, Hungarian border soldiers of the restored Communist regime pursued fleeing Hungarians across the Austrian border near the town of Nikitsch in Burgenland and brought them back into Hungary. The Hungarian soldiers even forced Austrian civilians into Hungarian territory. A delegation of mayors then traveled to a Vienna, met with Graf in January 1957, and requested Bundesheer support for Austrian customs officials. Only on April 23, 1957, therefore, did the Bundesheer’s border operation officially end.79

For its part, the Austrian government also sought to minimize tensions. “The Austrian Government,” wrote Musulin in 1957, “not unaware of the implications, refrained from dramatizing further frontier incidents in which Austrian soldiers—most of them are now in a hospital in Graz—were wounded.”80 Given the forces at Austria’s disposal, this was wise. A State Department report covering developments in Austria up to December 14, 1955, stated that the young Bundesheer “has a current strength of 7,200. This force will provide the training cadre for the Austrian Army which is expected to reach a strength of 25,000-30,000 men by late 1956.” The report concluded that this Bundesheer,

78 Ibid, 50.
80 Musulin, 138.
as it is now constituted and envisaged for the future, will be capable of maintaining internal security and protecting the Austrian borders in minor border incidents; however, it will not be able to offer more than token resistance in the face of a Soviet and/or Satellite military invasion of any magnitude.81

The passage of a year had hardly made a difference in the Bundesheer’s strength. The defense budget, noted Schmidl, “was much too small—of 1.5 billion Schillings in 1956, 1.1 billion were needed alone for pay and administration.”82 Budgetary constraints and the Bundesheer’s youth even meant that some Austrian officers lacking uniforms had to wear civilian clothes.83 Schmidl’s colleague Christine Stöckl similarly described the weapons donated by the former occupying powers as “hardly sufficient,” and even for these weapons ammunition was deficient. The Bundesheer’s first 13,000 conscripts, meanwhile, had only entered the military on October 15, 1956.84 Thus, according to Kreisky, when the Bundesheer received its first orders on October 24, 1956, to assist in securing the border, these young men were still making “military attempts at walking.”85

As described by Stöckl, this lack of training precluded the “unified use of planned organizational units.” The Bundesheer had to fall back to a “mixed form” of cadre personal pulled from training duties and grouped in “alarm units” filled out with recruits performing less important functions.86 These Bundesheer units fielded about 2,000 troops assisting some 500 gendarmes along the border. According to Bundesheer

82 Schmidl, 253.
83 Sinn, 464.
84 Kreisky, 337
85 Stöckl, 83.
86 Stöckl, 83.
brigadier Franz Freistetter in 1990, though, the new recruits “formed rather an obstacle for the measures taken.”

Later assessments by *Bundesheer* commandant Emil Spannocchi credited the Austrians on the ground with no more than 50 armored vehicles. Antitank weapons, in the words of Schmidl, were “almost completely lacking and/or the crews were still not confident in their use.” “As a young general staff officer,” added Schmidl, “tried to explain that M-8 armored cars with their 37-millimeter cannons in suitable positions could also be used against tanks, he was unable to convince experienced combat officers.” These troops also received little help from a Yak-11 training aircraft (one of eight in the *Bundesheer*) and a helicopter held in readiness. In light of these inadequacies and concerns that American equipment deliveries would not arrive soon enough, Fussenegger suggested on November 4, 1956, that the Swiss government give, lend, or sell on credit to the Austrians the “necessary equipment for at least two brigades.”

With the *Bundesheer* caught by a crisis “in the most unfavorable time imaginable,” Spannocchi, like others, found in retrospect the “hard and correct reaction” of the Austrian government to be “even more notable.” Austria’s “modest military would have been naturally not at all suited for an aggressor determined to violate neutrality.” “In case of attack,” Schmidl agreed, “the chance of a defensive success was almost zero, the available armament was too weak.” As evidence, Schmidl cited the report of British

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89 Schmidl, 255, 263.
91 Spannocchi, 137.
colonel J. J. Packard, one of the four military attachés representing the former occupying powers in Vienna shown Austria’s border security measures on October 30, 1956. Although “a most valuable demonstration of Austria’s determination to defend her neutrality in this particular eventuality,” Packard reported, “precautions taken by the Austrian government were, of course, completely inadequate to deal with any attack in any strength across the frontier.”

Rauchensteiner calculated that across the border in Hungary in 1956 were about 200,000 troops in the Hungarian army and about an equivalent number among Soviet forces. Many of the officers unimpressed with puny 37-millimeter guns, Schmidl noted, “had experienced the war and were correspondingly without illusions. Some had just returned only the year before as Soviet prisoners of war and went into this operation with a queasy feeling.”

These Austrians could nonetheless make a good impression despite themselves. Some Hungarian refugees fleeing into Austria, observed Rauchensteiner, “succeeded to the same error that could be attributed to the East bloc press in a very conciliatory interpretation: they presumed to see Americans in the Austrian soldiers largely clothed with American uniforms and equipped with American weapons and vehicles.” Believing themselves among the “yearned for Americans,” Schmidl wrote, “some Hungarian officers declared to the Austrians in a commanding tone that they wanted to be brought to the responsible US-commanders; they wanted to have nothing to do with the Austrians.” Radio Free Europe, surmised Schmidl, “evidently did a thorough job.” The Austrians disarmed and interned the Hungarians all the same. Some of these Hungarians,

92 Schmidl, 258.
94 Schmidl, 263.
Rauchensteiner wrote, “reacted at times surprised and disappointed when they found out that it was not US-troops at all who received the Hungarians but rather members of the Austrian army.”

Invasion’s Aftermath

However misinformed, 170,000 Hungarians had fled to the sanctuary of Austria before Communist control established itself once again along the Hungarian border in the spring of 1957. By May 1957, 30,000 of them remained in Austria, but 135,000 had traveled to new homes in Europe and across the oceans (6,000 returned to Hungary). In the end, various Western nations such as America responded to Ambassador Gruber’s comments made to Deputy Undersecretary of State Murphy on October 29, 1956, that while Austria is concerned with the economic burden of this policy [of welcoming Hungarian refugees], they [síc] are even more concerned with the potential political difficulties. They therefore are appealing to us to give immediate consideration, presumably in concert with other Western Nations, to the possibilities of moving Hungarian refugees out of Austria to some other location at an early date if the flow becomes significant. Otherwise Austria will be placed in a most difficult position as a neutral country in its relations with the East.

“We turned the gates wide open,” Kreisky later reflected.

The famous bridge of Andau was more than a symbol: over this narrow border bridge there poured day after day an unceasing stream of refugees into Austria, and the Austrians took the refugees in, although this could have become highly dangerous in foreign policy terms and there was, naturally, also among us a full measure of xenophobia.

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95 Rauchensteiner, Spätherbst 1956, 94; and Schmidl, 270.
96 Eger, 68.
98 Kreisky, In Strom der Politik, 231.
As provincial governor of Salzburg, Josef Klaus summarized in a 1957 article that “Austria showed with its diplomatic and social measures a brave and independent posture during the uprising in Hungary.” This “confirmed in fact” that the “State Treaty and neutrality indicate no alienation of Austria from the Free World of the West, no turning away from the traditions and values of the Christian Occident, indeed, not even foreign policy passivity.”

Schlesinger later observed in 1972 an “interesting paradox. The Hungarian Revolution created for Austria the unusual opportunity to demonstrate at one and the same time her neutrality and her commitment to the West.”

“All reservations that Washington shared with the British,” wrote Austrian historian Oliver Rathkolb, “were eliminated through Austria’s active neutrality policy during the bloody Soviet intervention in Hungary in 1956,” combining a “clearly pro-Western stand” with “numerous refugees from Hungary accepted into Austria.”

Steiner, for example, recalled Vice-President Richard Nixon’s three-day visit to Vienna beginning on December 19, 1956, during which Nixon toured refugee camps and the border with Hungary. Along with a “more generous process for the immigration of Hungarian refugees” into the United States, Steiner recorded the visit resulting in Nixon’s expression to Raab that the “government of the United States is deeply impressed by the behavior of Austria in this difficult situation.” The Americans “rejoiced that the policy taken by Austria had brought such successes.”

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99 Josef Klaus, “Österreich zwischen Ost und West,” Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur 1, no. 3 (1957): 139.
100 Schlesinger, 52.
102 Steiner, 235.
“Since the conclusion of the State Treaty,” Ambassador Thompson concurred in his previously cited January 17, 1957, cable,

Austria has steadily consolidated her alignment with the West in the political, economic and cultural fields in direct opposition to the Soviet Bloc. She took a courageous and forthright stand in the Hungarian crisis and in the United Nations she has openly demonstrated that her military neutrality has not affected her political independence.\(^\text{103}\)

“Austria’s neutrality,” Schlesinger wrote in 1991 while reviewing the Hungarian crisis, “could in some respects be interpreted as an asset to US strategic and political interests….Austria’s neutral status and the deft handling of the crisis by Austrian authorities, lessened the danger of direct superpower confrontation and probably assisted the humanitarian efforts.”\(^\text{104}\) On the other hand, though, Czech-born scholar Vojtech Mastny countered in 1982 that a “neutral Austria also made it easier for Moscow to master the challenge once it came. The absence of NATO troops from neutral Austria provided perhaps the critical margin of safety that prompted the visibly hesitant Soviets to suppress the Hungarian rebellion by force of arms.”\(^\text{105}\) Whatever the value of neutral Austria during the Hungarian uprising, Austrian scholar Anton Pelinka in 1998 described

\(^{103}\) Military Aid for Republic of Austria, File M-104-56; Folder 763.5MSP/1-555; Box 3583; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 763.5-MSP/1-555 to 763.62/3-2557; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA. Americans like Thompson might have had more reason than the British and French to be pleased with Austrian policy in the UN during 1956. “If one observes,” Eger analyzed, the voting behavior of the Austrian delegation in the General Assembly of the United Nations—Austria turned against, in strict correspondence with the charter, both the Soviet invasion in Hungary as well as the British-French invasion in Egypt—it becomes thus clear that Raab’s demand for realization of the nations’ right of self-determination and free expression of opinion was not only directed to the Soviet government but also referred to the behavior of Great Britain and France during the Suez crisis.

See: Eger, 48.


his compatriots as grateful in hindsight for a “window of opportunity” in 1955. Concern about this window’s closure

was the driving force behind the policy of the Austrian federal government to take Soviet signals seriously in 1955—if necessary against the skepticism of the USA. And this Austrian policy was vindicated—1956, after the Hungarian revolution, everything would have perhaps been, would have probably been, completely different.106

Austrian thankfulness for their freedom, however, did little to increase Austrian concern for their freedom’s defense. “The Hungary shock,” Rauchensteiner assessed, “subsequently contributed to the ability of more narrowly outlining the purpose of the army, but precisely the use of army forces operating under the most difficult of conditions on the Hungarian border became for the Bundesheer the measure of all things.”107 Gehler concurred that the “events in Hungary suggested that neutrality was a credible option and offered a certain guarantee of protection,” a belief from which “excessive conclusions were subsequently derived.” The Bundesheer “continued to eke out a shadow existence,” being only able to “offer ‘good services’—providing aid to refugees and carrying out humanitarian measures.”108

This was the case even though continuing border incidents like the one at Nikitsch during the spring of 1957 unsettled observers from Austria’s neutral neighbor and role model, Switzerland. These events showed Swiss observers that Communist bloc states like Hungary did not take Austrian neutrality along the border seriously because “the few

107 Rauchensteiner, Spätherbst 1956, 106.
108 Gehler, “From Non-alignment to Neutrality,” 122.
units, which show the flag here, guard themselves against provoking through a counterattack an incident that they then could not control.”

Unchanged by the Hungarian crisis was also Austria’s good relationship with the Soviet Union. According to Eger, negotiations begun by the Raab cabinet in mid-November 1956 to reduce Austrian oil deliveries “led to success in a surprisingly short time.” The Soviets made the concession to Austria of accepting various Austrian trade goods in place of an original delivery of 100,000 tons of raw oil from January to March 1957. Austria enjoyed amicable relations with the Soviet Union during this period even as Pravda criticized the Austrian government for closing on February 1, 1957, the Vienna offices of the World Peace Council, a Communist front organization, because of its propaganda activities during the Hungarian crisis.

Also opposed by the Soviet press was Raab’s suggestion during a January 20, 1957, radio address to consider some sort of neutral status for Hungary. This was, according to Tončić-Sorinj’s 1982 memoirs,

a fascinating vision to extend the neutral belt in Central Europe, which reached from Lake Geneva to the Neusiedlersee, to the Carpathians. Raab also did not make his proposal from the blue: on the basis of reports from the United Nations and various conversations with politicians of other countries, he considered it not completely hopeless.

Raab’s initiative formed the last act in the lesson described by Austrian historian Michael Gehler and learned during the Cold War in succession by the Germans and the Hungarians (and, implicitly, the Austrians). Whatever neutrality’s popularity, “neutrality

109 Eisterer, 318.
110 Eger, 51.
112 Eger, 54.
is not necessarily an export item, but something reserved for a few states.” The Hungarians and others, in particular, might have done well to review the Melian Dialogue in Book Five of Thucydides’ study of The Peloponnesian War (434-404 B.C). Therein Athens’ brutally subjugated the island of Melos despite Melian professions of neutrality in order to deter other defections from the Athenian empire.\textsuperscript{115}

As the reaction of Molotov and Zhukov to Ambassador Bohlen might have foreshadowed, Soviet media decried Raab’s initiative as Austrian interference in the internal affairs of a neighboring country.\textsuperscript{116} The official Soviet position remained the same when First Deputy Premier Mikoyan finally visited Austria in April 1957. In a discussion of Raab’s radio address on April 23, 1957, Mikoyan clearly stated that “Austria with its neutrality” was a “special case…not repeatable under present circumstances.” “Since then,” Rauchensteiner wrote in 1981, “nothing in these circumstances has changed.”\textsuperscript{117}

\textit{A Passage to Lebanon: The 1958 Overflight “Crisis”}

Communist bloc forces were not the only ones to call into question Austrian neutrality in the 1950s. American military forces also made their own breaches of Austrian sovereignty, although more benign in form. As recorded by a member of the

\textsuperscript{114} Gehler, “From Non-alignment to Neutrality,” 117.
\textsuperscript{116} Eger, 54.
\textsuperscript{117} Rauchensteiner, Spätherbst 1956, 107-108.
American embassy in Vienna on March 22, 1956, for example, the Austrian diplomat Hans Thalberg informed the Americans that a

U. S. soldier, Pfc William Fox, home Cleveland Ohio, carrying identity card US 52371908, Signal Corps, APO 165, was picked up a few days ago in Vienna where he was visiting his sister. Pfc Fox was in uniform and was asked by the police to change to civilian clothes. He complied but stated that he had been informed by his unit that he could wear the uniform while in Austria.\(^{118}\)

In contrast to Private Fox’s statement, Austrian law generally prohibited the public wearing of foreign uniforms in Austria pursuant to Austrian neutrality. Thus “Thalberg dismissed the alleged incident as a minor matter and was skeptical of the veracity of the soldier’s excuse. He asked, however, if we would remind the Army that US soldiers may not appear in uniform in Austria.” Thalberg, though, also cited the case of the “special permission” requested by the American air attaché in Vienna to land a US military plane in Austria in order to pick up an American skier who had broken a leg. Such permission was granted. Thereupon, according to Dr. Thalberg, a Flying Boxcar carrying ambulance equipment landed in Innsbruck in the morning. Nine persons emerged, one a woman in uniform. All were quipped with skis. They disappeared in to the hills and reappeared at night, whereupon the plane took off. No one appears to know whether the injured skier was picked up. Three of the nine persons allegedly had no passports or other identity documents.\(^{119}\)

\(^{118}\) Memorandum of Conversation between Dr. Hans Thalberg, Foreign Office Officer in Charge of the American Desk, and Mr. Puhan, March 22, 1956; Transit Rights, 1955-1956, Folder (212); Box 1; Entry 3092; Decimal Files Related to Italy and Austria, 1953-1958; Office of Western European Affairs in the Bureau of European and British Commonwealth Affairs; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.

\(^{119}\) Ibid. Austrian prohibitions against foreign uniforms are still in force in the 21\(^{st}\) century. While on his way to breakfast at the Café Florianigasse on June 21, 2005, the dissertation author passed First Lieutenant (Oberleutnant) Geldmacher of the German Bundeswehr’s Eighth Panzer Division wearing a German rocket artillery officer’s uniform in the courtyard of the Bezirksamt (city hall) for the 8\(^{th}\) Bezirk (Josefstadt) of Vienna across from the café. Asked by the author about the German uniform, Lieutenant Geldmacher displayed his official Austrian documentation allowing him to wear a German uniform during his wedding (hence the Bezirksamt) in Vienna to an Austrian woman.
More than a year after the discovery of these Americans apparently dissatisfied with the neutralization of their favorite ski slopes, another unauthorized border transit by American forces in West Germany occurred. Ambassador Gruber complained on September 5, 1957, during a visit to the State Department that a

United States Army helicopter had crossed the Austrian border recently and made a landing near Thiersee, Tyrol. The helicopter left six uniformed members of the 11th United States Airborne Division in a field and took off again heading back across the German border. The six men were reportedly being punished for some misdemeanor by being required to return by foot a hundred sixty miles to their base camp.\(^\text{120}\)

Subsequent talks in Vienna between Thalberg and American embassy personnel on September 16, 1957, confirmed that this incident took place on August 13, 1957, and involved the six soldiers marching back to their base in Augsburg, West Germany. As reported by the United Press on August 14, 1957, the six soldiers received their punishment for missing an exercise.\(^\text{121}\)

Individual American soldiers and their commanders, however, could perhaps be forgiven their negligence with respect to Austrian sovereignty and neutrality, for the American government was not very scrupulous in this regard, either. American authorities in West Germany during the 1950s, for example, often set loose balloons containing propaganda material (and perhaps espionage instruments) destined for Eastern Europe. Wind currents blew them across Austrian territory, provoking Austrian diplomatic protests.\(^\text{122}\)

\(^{120}\) Memorandum of Conversation on September 5, 1957 concerning the Violation of Austrian Border by United States Army; Folder 763.5411/2-2356; Box 3583; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 763.5-MSP/1-555 to 763.62/3-2557; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.

\(^{121}\) Memorandum of Conversation on September 16, 1957 concerning U. S. Army Helicopter Crossing of Austrian Border; Folder 763.5411/2-2356; Box 3583; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 763.5-MSP/1-555 to 763.62/3-2557; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.

\(^{122}\) Rauchensteiner, Spätherbst 1956, 24.
Then again, Austrian protests against American violations of Austrian sovereignty and neutrality were themselves not very convincing. Before the occupation ended on July 16, 1955, Raab and Schärf met with American officials including Lieutenant General William H. Arnold, commander of United States Forces in Austria (USFA). As recorded by the Americans, they expressed the hope that the Austrian Government would view sympathetically the U.S. desire to have military air and ground transit rights across Austria after the entry into force of the State Treaty….we would also like to obtain special favorable rail rates for this traffic. In discussing this subject further General Arnold explained that we might want to send sealed freight and personnel trains across the Tyrol between Germany and Italy and receive permission for military planes to overfly Austria on more or less that same route.123

In response, Raab “stated that he would have to consult his Government. He added that as long as the Russians were here this was extremely difficult, but that he would in the future consider sympathetically specific requests we might have.”124 Yet American requests for military transit across Austria remained in question as the State Department’s report on Austrian events up to December 14, 1955, showed. Austria’s relationship with the West, the report wrote,
is complicated by the fact that the Austrian Government is still considering what the nature and scope of its neutrality should be. In this regard the U.S. should encourage Austrian interpretation of its neutrality in a manner which allows the greatest freedom and flexibility possible to allow closest cooperation with the U.S. on matters such as transit rights, etc., as well as with Western and international non-military organizations.125

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123 Memorandum of Conversation between Chancellor Raab, Vice-Chancellor Schaerf, J. K. Penfield, General W. H. Arnold, H. G. Torbert, Col. Noel, Col. Nixon, Capt. Schlesinger, and Mr. Puhan, July 16, 1955; Military Installation Turnover (405) Folder; Box 7; Entry 1283; Lot 58D72; Subject Files Relating to Austrian Affairs, 1954-1956; Miscellaneous Lot Files; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
124 Ibid.
A later State Department report from January 16, 1956, noted that

for several months Embassy Vienna has been negotiating with the
Austrian Government for an agreement which would permit the USAF to
make approximately 450-550 overflights per month across western Austria
between Southern Germany and Northern Italy. This traffic, which moved
freely during the occupation period, was halted ninety days after the
signature of the Austrian State Treaty pending the development of new
arrangements required by Austria’s changed status. The USAF [United
States Air Force] has stated that the requirement is a continuing one and
that no satisfactory alternative route is available.\textsuperscript{126}

The report revealed that the Austrians ultimately took a coy position. Even

though American officials consoled that “each aircraft would be over Austrian territory

for only a few minutes,” according to the American embassy in Vienna,

present indications are that while the Federal chancellery has decided to
approve these overflights in principle, subject to US adherence to flight
clearance procedures, it does not wish to enter into a special agreement, or
indeed to make a formal reply to our approach. The Austrians, in the
Embassy’s opinion, are endeavoring to avoid any written agreement so as to
retain freedom of action in the event the overflights cause unfavorable
repercussions. Our Embassy believes that our insistence on a formal
agreement with the Austrians at the present time might jeopardize the
entire arrangement and might bring up the difficult problem of
interpretation of the definition of “unarmed planes” in view of Austrian
neutrality. The Embassy recommends therefore that we accept the
Austrian position, which would mean that there would be no formal
agreement and that USAF aircraft would simply comply with certain flight
notification procedures. We and the USAF would definitely prefer to have
a written and signed agreement with the Austrian government on this
subject in view of its importance to the USAF, the desirability of
committing the Austrian Government as firmly as possible and our wish to
be able to point to specific authorization by the Austrian government
should the Soviets ever protest these overflights as a violation of
sovereignty or military neutrality.\textsuperscript{127}

\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Proposed US-Austrian Agreement on USAF Overflights of Austria, January 16, 1956; Transit
Rights, 1955-1956, Folder (212); Box 1; Entry 3092; Decimal Files Related to Italy and Austria, 1953-
1958; Office of Western European Affairs in the Bureau of European and British Commonwealth Affairs;
General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.}

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid. En lieu of a formal agreement, the Americans wanted at least an initialed protocol of their
conversations with the Austrians over transit requests.
The result of these Austro-American talks was a system of informal, behind-the-scenes cooperation. As described by Foreign Minister Figl to Ambassador Thompson on February 23, 1956, the American air attaché in Vienna would request per telephone transit authority from the Austrian Foreign Ministry upon being informed by United States Air Force Europe (USAFE) headquarters of upcoming flights. According to Thompson, Foreign Minister Figl stated that permission “is almost invariably granted at once and Austrians ask only the number of the plane and the estimated time it will be over Innsbruck corridor.” Under the circumstances, Figl “repeated Austria desired to avoid any formal agreement on this subject. After long discussion Figl urged that for time being at least we continue present system which appears to be working reasonably satisfactorily.”

Talks between Figl and Thompson, however, revealed a common desire to attempt the concealment of these flights over Tyrol. Thompson “strongly” recommended in his February 23, 1956, cable, for example, that “such flights be held to a minimum and that so far as possible they take place at such altitudes or under such conditions as to prevent their being observed.” Later on March 23, 1956, Figl “expressed hope that number of flights would be kept as low as possible particularly until after elections. He also again urged flights be made at altitudes and under weather conditions which would prevent ground observation.”

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128 Incoming Telegram of February 23, 1956; Folder 763.5411/2-2356; Box 3583; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 763.5-MSP/1-555 to 763.62/3-2557; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
129 Ibid.
130 Incoming Telegram of March 23, 1956; Folder 763.5411/2-2356; Box 3583; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 763.5-MSP/1-555 to 763.62/3-2557; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
In accordance with Austro-American arrangements, Rathkolb wrote, “hundreds of overflight approvals were routinely granted in advance by a subordinate official in the Office of Civil Aviation since 1955.” In comparison to this cooperation, isolated Austrian objections to some American air transits such as four unauthorized flights in March 1956 or the helicopter landing at Thiersee were insignificant. While the Austrian Chancellery and Foreign Ministry quietly dealt with these incidents, East European infringements upon Austrian airspace were, in the words of Rathkolb, “mostly immediately and publicly protested.” Following Thompson’s suggestion, meanwhile, the American military in Europe “inconspicuously” mixed military supplies without formal Austrian approval among commercial rail traffic crossing the Brenner Pass. Although leading Austrian politicians displayed a “quiet toleration” of this practice, the Soviets, having discovered it, made their displeasure already known in a February 22, 1956, Izvestiya article.131

Izvestiya’s criticism indicated that the cozy Austro-American transit arrangement was fraught with the peril of discovery despite concealment measures. In fact, the events ultimately bringing an end to America’s shuttle service through strategic but supposedly “neutral” Tyrol received a foreshadowing two weeks after the Izvestiya article on March 8, 1956. That day Major R. G. Bankert of the Operations Division (G-3) in the Department of the Army spoke with William M. Owen from the State Department. As reported by Owen, Bankert

asked for my views on a possible project which the Department of the Army planners were considering in view of the tense Israeli-Arab situation. The project would involve the deployment of certain elements of the United States ground forces in Germany to an unspecified

designation in the Middle East, and the question was whether these US. Army personnel which would be transported in USAF aircraft, could overfly Austria as the most direct route. The planners estimated that the troops would be transported in seven increments in a six-day period, with 115 aircraft involved on a shuttle basis. Major Banket emphasized that the project was only tentative at this stage but that it might be necessary to move rapidly if basic decisions were made, in which case the Army would be most anxious to know whether or not the Austrian route could be utilized or whether some other route would have to be selected.\textsuperscript{132}

In the end, it was events in Iraq and Lebanon that prompted an American military force to transit Austrian airspace on its way to the Middle East. The July 14, 1958, overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy raised Western fears that violence and unrest could spread to Lebanon as well. President Eisenhower’s administration thus decided that day to militarily intervene in Lebanon and evacuate American citizens there.\textsuperscript{133} For three days beginning on July 16, 1958, about 100 multi-engined, propeller-driven transports (C-119s, C-124s, and C-130s) transported two American combat groups (\textit{Force Alpha} and \textit{Force Charlie}; \textit{Force Beta} took a detour because of Greek and Italian objections) from West Germany across Tyrol into Lebanon. Jet fighters from the 86\textsuperscript{th} Fighter-Interceptor Wing escorted the transports. Alone Force Alpha carried 1,600 soldiers and 350 tons of military equipment.\textsuperscript{134}

“In light of the large number of overflights in mid-July 1958,” Austrian military historian Walter Blasi wrote, “failed namely the attempt to conceal the flights through

\textsuperscript{132} Memorandum of Conversation between William M. Owen, Department of State (EUR/RA), and Major R. G. Bankert, Operations Division (G-3) of the Department of the Army, concerning Possible U.S. Army Project for USAF Transport of Troops to Middle East Involving Overflights of Austria, March 8, 1956; Transit Rights, 1955-1956, Folder (212); Box 1; Entry 3092; Decimal Files Related to Italy and Austria, 1953-1958; Office of Western European Affairs in the Bureau of European and British Commonwealth Affairs; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
\textsuperscript{134} Rauchensteiner, \textit{Die Zwei}, 383-384.
altitude and weather conditions.”¹³⁵ Force Alpha’s transport across Tyrol began at 9:45 a.m. on July 16 with ten F-86 jet fighters escorting ten C-124 and 36 C-130 transports.¹³⁶ Austrian air control authorities in Innsbruck, though, falsely reported 150 to 200 transports crossing Tyrol. The local KPÖ in Innsbruck then reported this estimate to Vienna where it entered the newspapers the next day, July 17, 1956.¹³⁷ Force Charlie’s transport began that day and led to more reports of American aircraft crossing Tyrol even though some American planes flying during the night, at high altitude, or around inhabited areas escaped detection by sight or sound.¹³⁸ Given that Austria had ordered but not yet received radar equipment, only Austrian ears and eyes equipped with binoculars could detect the American aircraft.¹³⁹

“The Austrian government,” Blasi wrote, began now a political “balancing act [Eiertanz].” On the one hand neutrality had to be maintained, and on the other hand no one wanted to ruin relations with the Americans. As a further difficulty, the visit of an Austrian government delegation in Moscow, during which the achievement of economic concessions was desired, was imminent. The strategy was thus to officially protest (because of the Soviets), but to simultaneously— unofficially — put the Americans at ease and ask for understanding.¹⁴⁰

During a telephone call on July 16, 1956, for example, Foreign Minister Figl informed the American ambassador in Austria, H. Freeman Matthews, of a forthcoming Austrian “press release” dealing with the overflights. Figl emphasized, though, that this action was not to be understood as a protest. Haymerle as well explained that Austrian

¹³⁵ Blasi, 247.
¹³⁶ Rathkolb, Washington ruft Wien, 130.
¹³⁷ Blasi, 247.
¹⁴⁰ Blasi, 247.
actions with the need to preclude future Soviet overflight requests. The Austrian ambassador in Washington, DC, Wilfried Platzer, also presented protests in the State Department. According to Rauchensteiner, though, Platzer had a “difficult position insofar that he indeed protested, on the one hand, because of the overflights, on the other hand, however, had to actually request that the Americans during their intervention in the Near East would also evacuate Austrians living there from threatened areas.”

The next day, July 17, 1956, domestic and foreign journalists asked the Austrian Defense Ministry about its efforts to stop the overflights. Defense Minister Graf then ordered the immediate transfer of Bundesheer aircraft and antiaircraft batteries to the area of Tyrol and Voralberg (the antiaircraft guns ultimately did not go). Yet the Austrians at the same time assured Matthews, noted Blasi, that the “refusal of overflight approvals and the stationing of Bundesheer aviation units in the area of Innsbruck were first and foremost intended for the records.” In this regard the Austrians cited both the impending Moscow trip (which the Austrians had considered canceling because of feared Soviet pressures to strengthen Austrian observance of neutrality) and the need to preclude through respect for neutrality future Soviet overflight requests. “However,” Blasi observed, “the competent Austrian authorities did not also expressly demand that the still necessary flights were to be halted.”

The following day, July 18, Austrian authorities announced the closure of Austrian airspace west of 13° longitude (i.e. west of Salzburg) and above 5,000 meters for two weeks beginning at midnight. The duration of this prohibition meant that American forces in Lebanon could not return to West Germany via Tyrol. Platzer also

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142 Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 384.
143 Blasi, 249.
called at the State Department for an American declaration forswearing future overflights. Vienna received oral statements from the Americans but demanded a press release. The Americans only agreed to a press release the following day, justifying the delay with the excuse that American planes destined to transit Tyrol could not be reached in time.\footnote{144}{Blasi, 250; and Rauchensteiner, \textit{Die Zwei}, 384.}

Matthews reported to Dulles on July 19, meanwhile, that pro-American Austrian officials had concern for American (“our”) concerns even as the Austrians suspended further transit flight approvals. \textit{Bundesheer} aircraft transferred on July 18 to the Tryol area, on the other hand, presented, in the words of Blasi, “rather a sign of helplessness.” The \textit{Bundesheer} utilized namely two Yak-11 propeller-driven trainers and three DH-115 Vampire jet trainers to “enforce” the Austrian “no-fly” zone. “At least,” commented Blasi, “it was desired to prove goodwill.”\footnote{145}{Blasi, 250, 253.}

“Could one, though,” Rauchensteiner retrospectively asked, “actually react in case the Americans did not cease their overflights? Military authorities contended with all their might against political demands for an armed intervention.” According to Fussenegger’s notes, Graf hesitated, but his undersecretary Karl Stephani advocated a “stubborn upholding of our neutrality and orders to shoot upon American aircraft.” Rauchensteiner rightly judged that orders to shoot could have only had “demonstrative character” in light of the “\textit{Bundesheer}’s inferior armament and the flight altitude of the American machines,” but this did not dismay Stephani. Fussenegger, nonetheless, achieved on July 18 a delay in the decision to issue combat orders.\footnote{146}{Rauchensteiner, “Landesverteidigung und Außenpolitik—Feindliche Brüder?” 142-143.}
“Viewed comprehensively,” judged Rathkolb, “the Lebanon-overflight crisis was no page of glory for Austrian decision makers.” While Stephani along with Raab at times advocated orders to open fire upon the American planes, the Foreign Ministry on other occasions during the crisis approved routine American overflights, thereby enraging Raab.¹⁴⁷

Austrian debates over a practically nonexistent enforcement of Austrian air sovereignty only highlighted the difference between Austrian neutrality and its Swiss model. “Swiss airspace,” noted Rauchensteiner, “was also violated, but only by very few aircraft.”¹⁴⁸ “No airplane,” commented former Wehrmacht major general Hans Kissel in 1967, “chose the surely not longer way across better armed Switzerland.”¹⁴⁹

After the Crossing

Following the heated controversies created by these three days in July 1958, dispute emerged concerning whether the American overflights to Lebanon had received prior Austrian approval. The September 12, 1958, Progress Report on Austria from the American embassy in Vienna declared that the Austrian Government had actually given clearances for most of the overflights, but a few planes flew over without clearances. Press reports of the flights and public reaction led the Austrian Government to suspend the granting of overflight clearances for the time being. In taking this action, and in talking publicly of a “protest” which was never made, the Austrian Government made no mention of the fact that clearances had been granted for most of the flights in question, while the Austrian press treatment of the matter left the impression that all the flights were unauthorized. The manner in which the Austrian Government handled this event was undoubtedly motivated largely by the fact that the

¹⁴⁷ Rathkolb, Washington ruft Wien, 131.
¹⁴⁸ Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 384.
Chancellor and other members of the Government were scheduled to leave for Moscow on a state visit only a few days after the flights occurred.\textsuperscript{150}

The noted American journalist and author John Gunther repeated this assessment in his 1962 book \textit{Inside Europe Today}. “During the Lebanese crisis in July, 1958,” he wrote,

U.S. military aircraft had to fly over Austria to get to Beirut in a hurry. The American authorities were punctilious in asking for permission for each flight, but the haste of the operation produced a certain amount of confusion and a few Air Force ships passed through Austrian air space without getting the required authority. In each such case, the Austrian government registered an immediate sharp protest, even though its sympathies were altogether on our side.\textsuperscript{151}

Austrians in 1958 and afterwards, however, had a far different story to tell. Before the actual overflights in July 1958, Rauchensteiner wrote in 1987, “the American embassy had only very generally sought overflight approval within the framework of a not specifically defined humanitarian action. No more.”\textsuperscript{152} Blasi reported the Austrian Foreign Ministry having given “oral” approval for 32 transport flights to the American embassy in Vienna on July 14, 1958. Three days later, as significantly more than 32 American planes were crossing Austrian airspace, the Foreign Ministry confirmed this initial approval with “written approval for evacuation measures over Austrian state territory with 32 flight movements into Lebanon and back.” Yet this limited Austrian approval for overflights, Blasi wrote, led USAFE headquarters in Wiesbaden, West

\textsuperscript{152} Rauchensteiner, \textit{Die Zwei}, 384.
Germany, to think that “the State Department had at any rate achieved all necessary overflight approvals for Austria.”\textsuperscript{153}

Thus, according to Rauchensteiner,

the loading of the troops began on the afternoon of July 15, and, while it was still ongoing, it occurred to the planners around 1:00 a.m. on July 16 that they still had not given themselves any thoughts about whether they could roar away across Central Europe without further ado for the intervention in the Near East. There was, in fact, a basic directive of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, according to which any resulting problems were simply supposed to be ignored if overflight approvals were not to be reached. But how did matters stand with international law? In order to not deny surprise to the intervention, the chiefs of staff did not want to call upon Vienna or Bern to discover whether there was agreement for the overflights. Neither Austria nor Switzerland, moreover, would have been able to approve this, because the transport of armed units into crisis and/or war areas contradicted neutrality law obligations.\textsuperscript{154}

Predictably, the size and character of the American overflights in July 1958, unexpected by the Austrians, provoked their protests. Figl complained during his July 16 call to the American embassy that fighters in military formation accompanied far more than the agreed upon 32 transports crossing Tyrol.\textsuperscript{155} State Department notes of a subsequent December 8, 1958, conversation in Washington, DC, between Haymerle, Platzer, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Frederick W. Jandrey, and other State Department officials recorded that Haymerle repeated his familiar arguments that the United States had only discussed overflights of thirty to fifty planes, that he had requested that the note be predated for the sake of appearances, and that he had understood that the flights were to evacuate civilians from Lebanon. Austria could not permit flights of armed men over its territory. Such operations would be precedents for requests from Eastern European countries to overly Austria.\textsuperscript{156}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[153] Blasi, 247.
\item[154] Rauchensteiner, \textit{Die Zwei}, 384.
\item[155] Blasi, 248.
\item[156] \textit{Memorandum of Conversation on December 8, 1958 concerning Austrian Matters between Dr. Wilfried Platzer, Ambassador, Embassy of Austria, Dr. Heinz Haymerle, Director, Political Department,}
\end{footnotes}
The Americans, though, observed Rauchensteiner,
did not understand the Austrian position. Military officials calculated only
that large detours would increase fuel costs, tire the pilots, and also allow
a more difficult supply situation to develop. And finally Austria was, after
country that the Americans had helped very much, which was
therefore obligated to a certain gratitude, to at least an understanding of
the American position, what was thus all the excitement about, why all the
difficulties?  

“If after 1956,” observed Bundesheer brigadier Hannes-Christian Clausen at a
1990 conference,
Austria had left behind in the West the impression of state strategically
acting, in the final analysis, within one’s own sphere of influence, with
which one could have felt of one mind in security policy terms, so brought
the energetic protests of Austrian authorities against those overflights that
were not correctly announced and presented violations of neutrality
precisely the opposite effect—there was disappointment that free passage
was not as a matter of course and routinely granted.  

Yet, Rauchensteiner assessed,
the American authorities did not consider or considered, at least, too little
that for Austria it was not a matter of nurturing old friendships and
showing understanding and thankfulness, but rather of demonstrating
neutral behavior. And here it was certainly more than a matter of the
interpretation ultimately taken by the State Department that Austria must
so act because otherwise the Soviets would equally cross Austrian airspace
hither and thither. Here it was a matter of basic questions of neutrality a
and even more a question of self-presentation. The “Austrian variant of
neutrality” simply could not be an invitation with a wink for a free flyover.
The next thing would then be free troop transit and an open house policy
that cannot exist in neutrality.

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Austrian Foreign Office, Mr. Frederick W. Jandrey, Deputy Assistant Secretary, European Affairs, Mr.
McBride (WE), Mr. Cameron (WE), Miss Harvey (WE), and Mr. Chapin (WE); Folder 611.63/1-358; Box
2537; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 611.63/1-358 to 611.63921/12-2156; General Records of the
Department of State, RG 59; NA. Curiously, this document misidentifies the given name of Heinrich
Haymerle as Heinz. 

157 Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 384.
in Schild ohne Schwert, 14-15.
159 Rauchensteiner, Die Zwei, 385.
As a small consolation, the Austrians did allow American transports to return to West Germany from Lebanon via Austria. Although Jandrey on December 8, 1958, expressed being “dismayed by the public criticism of our overflights in July when we thought that the matter had previously been worked out,” the Americans “were, however, appreciative of the permission to return troops from Lebanon over Austrian territory.”

As explained by Haymerle, though, “the return flight from Lebanon was different matter because it was in connection with a resolution of the UN. Switzerland followed the same general policy as Austria with regard to overflights.”

With respect to the return trip from Lebanon, noted Rauchensteiner, Matthews in an “initial rage” had suggested “simply secretly proceeding with the necessary overflights; as if not enough damage had already been done anyway.”

Yet, wrote Rathkolb, “between July and September 1958 the relations between the U.S. embassy in Vienna and the Austrian politicians and leading officials notably deteriorated.” While “Raab’s insistence on the neutrality law” during the 1958 overflights triggered “these tensions,” he “used the 1958 debate, which was conducted publicly and could no longer be checked and mediated by the Austrian Foreign Ministry, to demonstrate his detachment from the West.”

“Chancellor Raab,” Rathkolb elaborated in another article,

realized over the years that his idea of remaining equidistant from both superpowers had not really worked, so he used the Lebanon crisis to dispense with earlier transit “rights” for overflights by American aircraft and to restore full sovereignty, thereby cutting the north-south communication line of NATO. This policy, which the Foreign Ministry

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161 *Memorandum of Conversation on December 8, 1958 concerning Austrian Matters.*
did not support, succeeded. Austrian neutrality began to resemble more markedly the Swiss form.\textsuperscript{164}

To this end, noted Rathkolb, the “state visit to Moscow, coincidentally planned” for July 1958, “provided great publicity” and “was highly criticized” by the United States.\textsuperscript{165} Jandrey, for example, reviewed after the Moscow visit that the “United States Government is disappointed with the Chancellor’s statement at the Moscow airport that the State Treaty was concluded ‘mainly thanks to the Soviet Union’ and that it proved that the Soviet Union wanted peace.” Raab’s criticism of the recent American overflights in Moscow also provoked, according to Jandrey, official American “regrets” given that supposedly “at least seventy-eight out of ninety-six flights were made with the clearance of the Austrian government.”\textsuperscript{166}

As reported by the American embassy in Vienna on August 1, 1958, following the Moscow visit the Soviet military attaché in Vienna gave a dinner for Graf and Stephani “at which they were only two non-Russians.” “Attended by Ambassador Lapin and ranking members Soviet Embassy,” the dinner “was marked by continuous eulogy of Raab as great Austrian statesman whose skill and understanding alone produced Austrian State Treaty and now had made Moscow visit such a success.” The Soviets also praised Raab as a defender of Austrian neutrality and, in confirmation of Austrian concerns expressed to the Americans,

then proceeded to say that if Austria had further trouble with overflights of American planes, Soviet Air Force would immediately come to Austria’s assistance if requested. Both Graf and Stephani spontaneously replied that

\textsuperscript{164} Oliver Rathkolb, “Austria’s ‘Ostpolitik’ in the 1950s and 1960s: Honest Broker or Double Agent?” \textit{Austrian History Yearbook} 26 (1995): 144.
\textsuperscript{165} Rathkolb, “The Foreign Relations between the U.S.A. and Austria in the late 1950s,” 31.
\textsuperscript{166} \textit{Telegram to the Secretary from EUR-Mr. Jandrey on Chancellor Raab’s Visit to Moscow}; Folder 611.63/1-358; Box 2537; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 611.63/1-358 to 611.63921/12-2156; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.
Austria would take care of its own neutrality obligations without outside assistance. They did add that if Soviet government wished to help Austria defend her neutrality it could lift treaty restrictions on Austrian armament.\textsuperscript{167}

During his December 8, 1958, remarks, Haymerle assuaged his American interlocutors that “any statements made in Moscow were not to indicate a policy change. They might have been made in the heat of Moscow’s summer and as a result of the Chancellor’s poor physical condition.” Yet, despite requests from Jandrey, Haymerle clearly stated that he “did not think it would be possible to go back to the system of clearances of overflights which had existed before mid-July. The system had been very informal and strictly within the Foreign Office, but now other Ministries were interested.”\textsuperscript{168} During this same period, meanwhile, Jandrey also expressed American concern over the Austrian announcement during Raab’s Moscow visit to adhere to the 1948 Belgrade convention regulating Danube navigation, an organization dominated by Communist states.\textsuperscript{169} Austria also abstained from a vote against the People’s Republic of China at the United Nations and sent Defense Minister Graf on a visit to the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{170}

In light of all these developments, Ambassador Matthews viewed Austrian policy differently from Haymerle during a meeting of American officials in Washington, DC, on October 26, 1959, the third anniversary of Austrian neutrality. Matthews

\textsuperscript{167} Incoming Telegram of August 1, 1958; Folder 763.5411/2-2356; Box 3583; 1955-1959 Central Decimal File from 763.5-MSP/1-555 to 763.62/3-2557; General Records of the Department of State, RG 59; NA.

\textsuperscript{168} FRUS, 1958-1960, 796; and Memorandum of Conversation on December 8, 1958 concerning Austrian Matters.

\textsuperscript{169} Telegram to the Secretary from EUR-Mr. Jandrey on Chancellor Raab’s Visit to Moscow. For a copy of the Belgrade Convention, see: Convention Regarding the Regime of Navigation on the Danube. Signed at Belgrade, on 18 August 1948 (accessed December 16, 2006); available from http://ksh.fgg.unilj.si/danube/belgconv/.

\textsuperscript{170} Rathkolb, “The Foreign Relations between the U.S.A. and Austria in the late 1950s,” 31-32.
said Austria is exceedingly well disposed toward the United States but is now also disposed to be forgetful of the occupation period and of the 9-year postwar struggle against Soviet opposition to achieve a Treaty; Austria is now more nearly straddling the East-West division and is beginning to develop a greater sense of neutralism, not only in the military sense, but also from the point of view of psychological, political and economic interests. Another difficulty in the neutrality idea of the Austrians is that, when they come to a vote in the UN or are called upon to decide one way or another on a problem, they show a growing tendency to abstain, except in cases where they have an aroused strong general public opinion and sympathy towards a problem. The Tibet issue is one in which the Austrians registered their vote favorably to us.\footnote{FRUS, 1958-1960, 815.}

Accordingly, Matthews had already discerned a “sort of Soviet-Austrian honeymoon” entailing an Austrian view of neutrality with a “more general equating of East with West.” The result, noted Rathkolb, was the “recourse to disciplinary means” in American policy towards Austria. Beginning in late August 1958, Matthews refused to give the necessary American consent for the release of “counterpart funds” garnered by the Austrian state through the domestic resale of Marshall Plan aid until Austria complied with outstanding Jewish claims resulting from Article 26 of the State Treaty and Anglo-American commercial oil claims stemming from the 1955 Vienna Memorandum.\footnote{Martin Kofler, “Eine ‘Art Nabel der Welt’: Österreich und der Chruschtschow-Besuch 1960,” Zeitgeschichte 26, no. 6 (1999): 398; and Rathkolb, “Austria’s ‘Ostpolitik’ in the 1950s and 1960s,” 144; and Rathkolb, “The Foreign Relations between the U.S.A. and Austria in the late 1950s,” 32. The State Treaty’s Article 26 concerning the “Property, Rights and Interests of Minority Groups in Austria” stated that in so far as such action has not already been taken, Austria undertakes that, in all cases where property, legal rights or interests in Austria have since 13th March, 1938, been subject of forced transfer or measures of sequestration, confiscation or control on account of the racial origin or religion of the owner, the said property shall be returned and the said legal rights and interests shall be restored together with their accessories. Where return or restoration is impossible, compensation shall be granted for losses incurred by reason of such measures to the same extent as is, or may be, given to Austrian nationals generally in respect of war damage.}

For a copy of the State Treaty, see: State Treaty (accessed June 8, 2006); available from http://www.ena.lu/mce.cfm. For a German translation of the Anglo-American Vienna Memorandum signed with Austria on May 10, 1955, see: Eva-Marie Csáky, ed., Der Weg zu Freiheit und Neutralität:
Although criticized by Kreisky after he became foreign minister in September 1959 as a “gunboat policy in Central Europe,” the United States, in Rathkolb’s words, kept up an “unbroken pressure” until achieving fulfillment of the Vienna Memorandum in June/July 1960. “The Jewish claims,” Rathkolb noted in contrast, “which the U.S.A. did not pursue with the same force as the petroleum interests, were not fulfilled until 1961/1962 and then only in part.” While Austria’s new “confrontation” course beginning in 1958 “gave Austrian neutrality the necessary respect” in the United States, “in a financial sense this policy of emancipation from the West, and from the United States in particular, was costly.”

Irrespective of Austria’s newly expressed opposition to American overflights, some things in American policy remained resolutely the same. Among the briefing papers for the March 29, 1962 visit to Washington, DC, of Austrian defense minister Karl Schleinzer and his undersecretary Otto Rösch is the recommendation that “when the time is politically propitious, however, consideration should be given to an effort to obtain more liberal peacetime overflight privileges, as well as dependable overflight privileges in event of crisis.”

Unchanged in later years would also be the recurrence of crises in Austria’s neighborhood.
A Crisis Develops

Austria had to contend with another unannounced airborne intruder on November 30, 1967. A Czechoslovakian MiG-21 jet fighter landed at 1:25 p.m. with deployed brake chute and smoking tires at the small Aspern airfield in Wien-Donaustadt, a Vienna suburb on the northern bank of the Danube, stopping just before the runway’s end. The fighter’s 35 year-old pilot, Major Václav Jaraš, explained his landing as the result of an emergency following his getting lost while flying to Bratislava and running out of fuel. Austrian authorities, though, found this hard to believe in light of Jaraš being one of Czechoslovakia’s best military pilots. Instead, the Austrians surmised that Jaraš’ flight tested whether jets could land in Aspern and how farreaching Austrian radar coverage was, a test with apparently interesting results, given that Austrian flight control in Aspern did not detect the MiG-21 until it landed safely. Despite misgivings, the Austrian desire for friendly relations with Czechoslovakia allowed Jaraš to fly home unhindered.¹

More such strange events occurred in Austria the following year after Alexander Dubček became first secretary of the Czechoslovakian Communist party on January 5, 1968, setting in motion the shortlived effort to liberalize Communist Czechoslovakia known as the Prague Spring.² During the summer of 1968, a Hungarian firm delivered via Stuttgart 1,000 tons of pork and beef to duty-free zones in Vienna’s and Linz’s river harbors. Austrian authorities suspected that these meat supplies, capable of feeding

² Background information on the Prague Spring is available online, see, for example: Prague Spring (accessed June 8, 2006); available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prague_Spring; and Prague Spring 1968 (accessed June 8, 2006); available from http://library.thinkquest.org/C001155/.
80,000 men for two months, were destined for soldiers in an invading Red Army. From July 14, 1968, onwards, meanwhile, 301 Polish and Soviet river barges lay at anchor in Vienna’s Danube harbors. The barges’ cargo manifests described the Soviet bloc crates offloaded in Vienna’s duty-free zones as containing “machine parts,” but Austrian intelligence officials later learned that the “machine parts” were in reality weapons, explosives, and spare parts for tanks and engineering equipment. Austrian intelligence also receives word that the frozen meat supplies concealed military items such as submachine guns and ammunition.3

Not all suspicious Danube traffic during this time carried cargo. Three Soviet tugboats dropped anchor on July 14, 1968, at the Danube town of Tulln west of Vienna. One of them put out special antennas and, according to military experts, served as a radio transmission station for the Communist barge flotilla anchored along the Danube. During the previous month of June, meanwhile, Austrian custom officials in the Danube town of Hainburg across the Czechoslovakian border from Bratislava had reported seeing an unusually large number of Soviet barge trains traveling upriver into Austria. The barges raised attention with their varied assortment of antennas and crews consisting not just of bearded sailors but also civilian-clothed personnel. Austrian intelligence officials determined that the Soviet and East German electronic equipment mounted on the barges was capable of monitoring radio traffic from Bundesheer, gendarmerie, and Austrian customs units as well as telephone calls (including from the few auto telephones then existing) in the areas bordering Czechoslovakia.4

3 Kallinger and Tozzer, 15, 80-81.
Such developments did not take place without consequences. “In view of the political development in Czechoslovakia,” wrote the historian and Bundesheer lieutenant colonel Andreas Steiger, “the military leadership in Austria recognized the signs of the times and initiated measures.” Austrian defense minister Georg Prader discussed in Vienna on May 13, 1968, the possibility of the ongoing Prague Spring provoking a repeat of the 1956 Soviet intervention in Hungary with General Troop Inspector Erwin Fussenegger and General Leo Waldmüller, commander of Bundesheer forces in eastern Austria (Gruppenkommando I). Concerned that Soviet forces might invade Czechoslovakia on a weekend when many Bundesheer soldiers would be on leave, Prader ordered—officially for exercise reasons—that sufficient Bundesheer forces were to remain ready on weekends and holidays for the next two months at the training areas Allentsteig and Bruck an der Leitha near Czechoslovakia.5

The Austrian Defense Ministry subsequently drew up the Urgestein order on July 24, 1968. Urgestein correctly concluded that “the possibility of an intervention by Warsaw Pact armed forces in Czechoslovakia can no longer be excluded,” an eventuality that could involve the “crossing over into Austria of armed Czech soldiers.” Urgestein thus foresaw Bundesheer units securing Austria’s northern border by occupying border crossing sites and patrolling the intervening terrain. At the urging of Prader and Interior Minister Franz Soronics, Austrian gendarmerie and customs officials also received instructions for a Czechoslovakian contingency the day before Urgestein’s formulation at a meeting between officials from the Defense and Interior Ministries.6

5 Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke! (accessed June 7, 2006); available from http://www.bmlv.gv.at/omz/ausgaben/artikel.php?id=332. Steiger’s article is also available in the May 2005 issue of the Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift.
6 Das Bundesheer in den Jahren 1968 bis 1975: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Bundesheeres der Zweiten Republik (accessed June 7, 2006); available from
Austrian preparations were not for naught. Later analysis of Soviet records revealed that the Soviet Union in 1968 feared not only a loss of control over Czechoslovakia and other areas of the Communist bloc such as Romania, but also sought to improve the Soviet strategic position. Without Soviet troops stationed on its territory, Czechoslovakia appeared in Soviet eyes as the Warsaw Pact’s “soft underbelly,” an area inviting NATO attack. Not only would Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia fill the last gap in the line of Soviet forces along the Warsaw Pact-NATO border, but Soviet troops here would allow for the deployment of nuclear-armed, intermediate range Soviet missiles with an improved action radius in Western Europe. Soviet offers to station Soviet forces in Czechoslovakia prior to 1968, though, had met with refusal from Czechoslovakian Communists worried that their popularity would thereby suffer. In 1968, the Czechs and Slovaks, Communist or not, would have no choice; Soviet dictator Leonid Brezhnev ordered the Soviet General Staff to prepare the occupation of Czechoslovakia on March 20, 1968.

_Invasion and a Tardy Response_

At 11:00 p.m. on August 20, 1968, the Soviet suppression of the Prague Spring began with Warsaw Pact troops entering Czechoslovakia. The first report of the invasion in Austria came at 1:50 a.m. on August 21 through intercepts of radio traffic from

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[http://www.bmlv.gv.at/pdf_pool/publikationen/09_vu2_04_bib.pdf](http://www.bmlv.gv.at/pdf_pool/publikationen/09_vu2_04_bib.pdf). The 1998 book Marschmusik für Glockenspiel: 1968, Österreich am Rande des Krieges noted that there are “indices” for a “traitor in the highest command of the Bundesheer.” Two weeks before the invasion of the Soviets the secret order Urgestein was given to a Polish journalist in its basic characteristics.” The KGB at this time also received Austrian military documents from a Bundesheer soldier spying in their pay. “With this, military leaders of the Eastern bloc had many important documents, showing where they would have had to count on resistance in case of an invasion into Austria from the north, where there were weak points, and where the logistics for the Bundesheer could be interrupted by saboteurs or commando units.” See: Kallinger and Tozzer, 19, 66.

Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!

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Czechoslovakian taxis made by Austrian military intelligence (*Gruppe Nachrichtenwesen*). *Bundesheer* staffs and commanders received an initial warning at 3:00 a.m. and General Johann Freihlsler, chief of *Urgestein*’s operational staff, ordered on his own authority at 3:40 a.m. the operational readiness of *Urgestein*’s assigned units. Austrian customs officials schooled by the *Bundesheer* in border observation and tank recognition, meanwhile, made the first reports of Soviet tanks along the Czechoslovakian-Austrian border. Fussenegger then radioed that the intelligence officer (S-2) of the 3rd Panzergrenadier (mechanized infantry) Brigade should drive civilian-clothed in his personal car to the border and confirm the customs officials’ sightings. Customs officials also questioned travelers entering Austria from Czechoslovakia.  

In all, Austrian intelligence did a good job. Later Austrian commentators noted that the *Bundesheer* was the only military in the North Atlantic area that correctly recognized the Warsaw Pact maneuvers preceding the invasion of Czechoslovakia as a deception and thus was not surprised by the subsequent military occupation.  

In Bonn, meanwhile, there was talk of a tactical surprise and NATO authorities gave no prior warning of the invasion. Yet Foreign Minister Kurt Waldheim later declared before the Austrian cabinet on September 10, 1968, that the “military intervention of the Soviet government in Czechoslovakia came for us—as well as the rest of the world—as a surprise.” According to Steiger, talks between Czechoslovakian and Warsaw Pact leaders such as those on July 29, 1968, at Čierna nad Tisou (Schwarzau an der Theiß) meant that Austrian leaders

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8 Ibid.  
no longer counted on an invasion in late summer 1968. The list of politicians who were on vacation and were not immediately available in Vienna for decisions was long. In a “pre-mobile-telephone and pre-email era” making contact was difficult, particularly given the fact that in diverse vacation homes there was still no telephone.10

When the Soviet invasion took place during the traditional summer vacation, many Austrian leaders such as Fussenegger had to hurry back to Vienna from their holidays. Prader was also in a weekend house sans telephone near the Erlaufsee in Lower Austria, something that delayed attempts by the Defense Ministry to contact him. Chancellor Josef Klaus similarly had no telephone in his weekend home in Wolfpassing, Lower Austria, and received word of the Soviet invasion from a gendarmerie moped rider who drove Klaus into a nearby valley. Vice-Chancellor Hermann Withalm, meanwhile, was spending his holidays in Göstling, Lower Austria, and Federal President Franz Jonas was vacationing near the Semmering Mountain on the border between Lower Austria and Styria.11

Gruber, then an undersecretary in the Chancellery, recalled interrupting his vacation “naturally immediately… in order to come back to the federal capital as soon as possible. For the first time since the war I slept a few short hours during the night at a street corner under a tree because I did not take the time to look for quarters.” Gruber arrived in the early morning of August 22, 1968.12 Although the SPÖ was not part of Klaus’ single-party ÖVP cabinet, Kreisky nonetheless hurried home in an “adventurous

10 *Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!*, and *Prague Spring 1968*.
11 *Das Bundesheer in den Jahren 1968 bis 1975*.
“Although many politicians found themselves at their vacation spots,” noted Steiger, “informing them and quickly bringing them to the federal capital with the support of federal authorities functioned exceptionally.” The first crisis meeting of Austrian cabinet officials took place on August 21 at 5:45 a.m. under the leadership of Klaus, who had raced along the autobahn to Vienna after the gendarmerie had retrieved him from his Wolfpassing hideaway. Along with Klaus, Foreign Minister Waldheim, Finance Minister Stefan Koren, Undersecretary of the Interior Roland Minkowitsch, Austria’s police chief Oswald Peterlunger, and Freihsler attended. Joined by Defense Minister Prader, Interior Minister Soronics, and other officials from the Defense, Foreign, and Interior Ministries, a second meeting took place at 8:00 a.m.14

During this time, according to Eger, the previously planned measures of the Interior Ministry functioned “without friction” as 930 additional gendarmes reinforced border posts along the Czechoslovakian border by midday. Freihsler’s readiness order similarly assured that the Bundesheer units assigned to Urgestein were ready to move by 8:00 a.m.15 “It deserves to be emphasized,” Rauchensteiner later judged, “that the units of the Bundesheer were ready to march on August 21, 1968, within a few hours and it

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14 *Das Bundesheer in den Jahren 1968 bis 1975*. These facts, Steiger has observed, “puts in relation the assertion found in the pertinent literature up until now that the government leadership did not come in due time to Vienna.” Once again, Communist bloc espionage monitored this and other meetings of Austrian leaders as well as the information flow from Austrian intelligence, police, and diplomats. Alois Euler, a spy for the Czechoslovakian secret service in the Austrian Interior Ministry, copied secret reports and reported on Austrian deliberations for his Communist masters. Euler would later write a book about his life as a spy after being convicted for espionage and serving a prison sentence in Austria. See: Kallinger and Tozzer, 19.
was subsequently demonstrated that, in total, all measures were taken that seemed necessary for the mastery of a true crisis.”

Yet the Bundesheer did not deploy immediately. In fact, Prader withdrew an order given at 8:00 a.m. for the 3rd Panzergrenadier Brigade to deploy to the Czechoslovakian border even though some units had already started moving. “While the military command staff,” explained Steiger,

pressed for marching orders for the troops ready to deploy since 8:00 a.m., among the civilian decisionmakers developed a debate lasting hours over the question whether the defense minister could give deployment orders on his own authority or whether this accrued only to the federal president as commander in chief.”

The Austrian Constitution’s Article 80 declares namely in its first paragraph that “commander in chief of the Bundesheer is the federal president.” The second paragraph then states that “save in so far as the Defense Law reserves disposal over the Federal Army to the federal president, disposal over it lies with the competent federal minister within the limits of the authorization conferred on him by the federal government.” As Austrian legal scholar Felix Ermacora noted in 1975, conferral of this “disposal [Verfügung]” on the “competent federal minister,” namely the defense minister, required unanimous cabinet approval. Not all cabinet members, though, could make the trip from their vacation spots to Vienna on August 21, 1968.

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17 Das Bundesheer in den Jahren 1968 bis 1975. Steiger observed that this question of competencies was particularly sensitive in 1968, given that President Jonas hailed from the SPÖ and the Klaus cabinet was a single-party, ÖVP government. See: Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glöst die Jacke!
18 For copies of the Austrian Constitution in both English and German, see: Verfassungsvergleich: Austria (accessed June 8, 2006); available from http://www.verfassungsgeschichte.ch/.
According to Steiger, however, the Austrian cabinet on July 28, 1966, had already expanded the previously limited competence of the defense minister such that he could on his own authority undertake “readiness, security, and alarm measures as well as necessary measures for the observation of airspace.” “Although the competence of the defense minister was clearly legally defined,” argued Steiger, debate over this matter meant that not until 1:30 p.m. on August 21, 1968, could Chancellor Klaus and the cabinet members assembled in an extraordinary meeting reach agreement that deployment orders fell within the competence of the defense minister.  

In the words of German political scientist Reinhard Meier-Walser, “blatant weaknesses in the decisionmaking process of the political leadership” led to an eight-hour delay in Urgestein’s deployment. Not until namely 4:00 p.m. did deployment orders go out, to be executed 15 minutes later. Thus Bundesheer units reached their operational areas only in the evening and night hours even though Soviet units in Czechoslovakia had already reached the border of Lower Austria during the morning and reached the border of the more westerly Upper Austria in the evening. In the case of the 1st Jäger (light infantry) Brigade, deployment orders actually arrived after a delay of over an hour at 5:30 p.m. along with orders to officially pretend that the brigade had started moving at 4:15 p.m. “The behavior of the political and military leadership on August 21, 1968, is particularly astonishing,” judged Steiger, “given that in military operations a delay of a few hours can already foreordain a defeat.”

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22 Eger, 108.
The Bundesheer’s Restrained Response: Austrians to the Border?

As it was, the tardy Bundesheer did not even advance completely to the border. Following instructions given by Prader to Freihsl already on July 25, 1968, only one day after the formulation of Urgestein, orders issued on the afternoon of August 21, 1968, called for a mere “reinforcement of garrison areas north of the Danube” and established a boundary about 30 kilometers from the border with Czechoslovakia for Bundesheer operations. Bundesheer units could cross this boundary only with the express permission of the defense minister.24

This change from Urgestein had the unusual result of placing prepared headquarters for the 1st Jäger Brigade closer to the Czechoslovakian border than the brigade’s 2nd and 4th Battalions. Requests of the brigade commander to move his headquarters into a more traditional position behind the possible front line of his troops met with refusal. The headquarters of the 4th Panzergrenadier Brigade near Linz, meanwhile, also appeared poorly chosen, for a lack of proper communication facilities forced the brigade’s S-2 officer to acquire his information from international newspapers. Similarly bizarre (and disappointing to the local population) was the withdrawal of the 9th Panzergrenadier Battalion’s 2nd Company from its barracks in Weitra, a town in Lower Austria within the 30 kilometer border zone. The Bundesheer sought to console the people of Wietra, though, with patrols made by armored personnel carriers (APCs).25

Interior Minister Soronics justified the 30 kilometer boundary with a desire to “clear out every source of conflict.”26 Waldheim later confirmed to the Austrian

24 Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glöst die Jacke!
26 Meier-Walser, 425.
journalists Günther Kallinger and Kurt Tozzer, authors of the 1998 book Marschmusik für Glockenspiel: 1968, Österreich am Rande des Krieges, that “we did not send the Bundesheer right up to the border in order not to take measures that could possibly be interpreted as a provocation. This is indeed the art of finding the right middle road between military considerations and diplomatic estimates.” Soviet ambassador Boris Podzerob’s visit to Chancellor Klaus at 12:30 p.m. on August 21, 1968, for the purpose of officially explaining the Warsaw Pact’s “brotherly help” in Czechoslovakia probably encouraged a cautious Austrian response to the Warsaw Pact invasion. Podzerob declared that the Warsaw Pact intended to limit its action to Czechoslovakia, but warned that largescale Austrian military actions or a general mobilization would appear to the Soviet Union as an “unfriendly act” perhaps having consequences for which the Warsaw Pact could take no responsibility.27

Several measures in addition to the 30 kilometer limit evinced an Austrian desire to avoid what could be seen as an “unfriendly act.” The 3rd Panzergrenadier Brigade, for example, had strict orders not to issue ammunition to its troops, not even after Warsaw Pact tanks took up position across the border. Even the issuance of pistol ammunition to commanders was a difficult matter.28 In contrast to the Bundesheer’s Rules of Engagement (ROE) in 1956, moreover, the Bundesheer in 1968 received no orders to shoot and thus remained limited to regular service regulations for guidance in the use of force.29

A call-up of border protection troops (Grenzschutz) from the reserves was one of the most important measures not taken in order, in the words of Rauchensteiner, to “not

27 Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!; and Kallinger and Tozzer, 17, 161.
28 Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!
provoke the appearance that Austria was taking mobilization measures without cause.‖

The mobilization of the Grenzschutz was subject to the federal president’s authorization, who in turn could only act upon a proposal by the cabinet. Although Prader and the Bundesheer leadership (with the notable exception of Freihsler) supported mobilization on August 21, 1968, the other ministers abandoned an initial desire to call up the reserves after coming to the conclusion during discussions that day that, according to Steiger, the invasion of Czechoslovakia was an “internal affair of the Socialist camp.” Without a “direct danger for Austria” there was no “necessity for a call-up of reserves and/or this would be a too spectacular action not appropriate for the situation.”

Since the establishment of the Grenzschutz in 1961, noted Steiger, its reservists had “conscientiously” prepared and trained for possible contingencies, including those involving Czechoslovakia. Indeed, the very first Grenzschutz battalion had formed in the Mühlviertel along the border with Czechoslovakia in Upper Austria as a “demonstration unit [Herzeigemodell].” Grenzschutz reservists had conducted discussions with civilian authorities and had rented buildings in assembly areas. “Independent of obligatory weapons training,” wrote Steiger, “there were meetings along club lines for the discussion of military problems and the promotion of comradeship. The solidarity and the defense policy motivation to guarantee the ‘protection of the borders’ for one’s own population had a motivating effect.”

Thus, Steiger observed, “when the invasion of the Warsaw Pact was reported in the media, that automated action that had been prepared for this contingency began. One
took leave of family, ended work, and interrupted vacation in order to protect ‘home.’” One Austrian analyst noted that “reservists appeared at barracks in flocks. Some had broken off a vacation in Italy and had driven through the entire night.” Without waiting for orders, reservists had come together at assembly points and waited for the so-called “push button” brigades of the standing army.\textsuperscript{33}

The zeal of the reservists, however, went unrequited. Josef Marolz, in 1968 chief of staff of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Panzergrenadier Brigade and later a corps commander in the Bundesheer, recalled the “spontaneous assemblies of reservists in front of the barracks who asked repeatedly, whether they were needed—they had to be simply sent away. Many reserve soldiers, particularly from the Waldviertel [in Lower Austria along the border with Czechoslovakia], had to accept the derision of their fellow citizens because the reservists were evidently useless.”\textsuperscript{34} Waiting “in vain” for the operational brigades that stayed some 30 kilometers from the border and discovering that mobilization had not been ordered, explained Steiger, “led among many reservists to a deep crisis of purpose. When, if not now, were they supposed to be deployed?”\textsuperscript{35}

Without a call-up, the Bundesheer deployed about 8,239 soldiers north of the Danube by August 23, 1968. This number rose to 9,699 on Sunday, August 24, and reached a final strength of 11,368 on August 30. “In comparison to the soldiers of the Warsaw Pact standing across the border,” Marschmusik für Glockenspiel noted, “a laughable number, namely not even two percent of the potential of foreign troops who, after all, were stationed in and around the ČSSR with about 650,000 soldiers.”\textsuperscript{36} Even

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  \item \textsuperscript{33} \textit{Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!}; and Theuretsbacher, 7.
  \item \textsuperscript{34} Kallinger and Tozzer, 194-195.
  \item \textsuperscript{35} \textit{Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!}
  \item \textsuperscript{36} Kallinger and Tozzer, 257.
\end{itemize}
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the deployed *Bundesheer* soldiers accounted for fewer than half of the 25,000 soldiers in
the standing army (*Feldheer*) divided, according to the first *Bundesheer* reform of 1962,
into seven (three *Jäger* and four *Panzergrenadier*) “push button [Knopfdruck]” brigades
deployable without mobilization.  

Klaus and Waldheim later justified Austria’s restrained reaction to the 1968
Warsaw Pact invasion in Czechoslovakia with the view rejecting a direct threat to Austria
that predominated in the cabinet at the time.  “I belonged at the time,” Waldheim stated
in a 1999 book, for example, “to that group which represented the opinion that the
Russians already had enough problems with the occupation of Czechoslovakia and that
an advance into Austria was very improbable.” Yet not everyone shared Waldheim’s
position. The American ambassador in Vienna, Douglas MacArthur II (namesake
nephew of the famous general), recorded Waldheim stating during a September 10, 1968,
meeting that “some members of GOA [Government of Austria] had been extremely
nervous recently about possibility of Soviet move against Romania, Yugoslavia and even
Austria.” Waldheim “said in strict confidence that Austrian military had bad case of
jitters.”

The *Bundesheer*’s “jitters” resulted in large part from Austrian intelligence
assessments that the Warsaw Pact force utilized in Czechoslovakia was larger than
required by any developments in that country. With this force, a subsequent Austrian

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37 *Das Bundesheer in den Jahren 1968 bis 1975*. The 1962 reform replaced the *Heeresgliederung
56* approved on January 11, 1956, that divided the *Bundesheer* into three *Gruppen* with a total of nine
combat brigades along with support and aviation units.

38 Eger, 88.

117.

analyst noted, “nonaligned Yugoslavia could have been occupied with a drive through Austria and the continually unruly Rumania could have been disciplined.”

Bundesheer officers deployed north of the Danube, for example, recalled a secret meeting at the Allentsteig exercise area with General Fussenegger during which, as related by Steiger, he calculated a “fairly good probability” that “strong enemy forces from Czechoslovakia would push through Austria in order to attack Yugoslavia.” Fussenegger called for a fighting retreat in this case.

Waldheim himself similarly recognized that his confidence was not necessarily self-evident. “At the time,” he conceded,

> an enormous military potential was deployed in Czechoslovakia that went far beyond the suppression of the development under Dubček. The development in Czechoslovakia under Dubček was an internal affair for which so large an armada would not have been necessary. We had to assume that the Soviet Union would violate Austrian sovereignty in order to reach the Adriatic.

Kreisky as well recalled in his memoirs that during talks with government leaders highranking Austrian officers represented the standpoint that the worst was to be feared. The Russians had marched into Czechoslovakia with troop units so strong that it had to be counted upon that the Russians would march on. Yugoslavia was in danger, Rumania was in danger, and eastern Austria, the former Russian zone, naturally as well, because under some circumstances troop transit rights would be demanded.

> “When I arrived in Vienna during the early morning [of August 22, 1968],” confirmed Gruber,

> great confusion dominated everywhere; caused, above all, by the exaggerated pessimism of the military. Thrown down on the desk of the

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41 Theuretsbacher, 7.
42 Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!
43 Kriechbaumer, 115.
44 Kreisky, 253.
chancellor hourly were reports about deployment dispositions, according to which the impression had to unavoidably develop that a Soviet invasion in Austria could no longer be doubted. There were even voices in Austria at the time that considered the situation so serious that the immediate transfer of the government to Voralberg was to be recommended. This attitude may indeed be a certain advance in comparison to the March events of the year 1938, was, however, not at all suited to the circumstances of the time. When I objected to these suggestions that the estimation of political conditions should be reserved to the politicians, I harvested a hearty dressing down on the part of our military officials.\footnote{Gruber, \textit{Meine Partei ist Österreich}, 259.}

Kreisky, though, deviated from the meaning given to the large size of the Warsaw Pact forces in Czechoslovakia by \textit{Bundesheer} leaders when meeting with them on the morning of August 22, 1968. “Gentlemen,” the general tone of Kreisky’s response to them recorded in his memoirs went, “you are all former German officers, and only on the basis of your experiences in the German \textit{Wehrmacht} can you come to such a view.” (Kreisky’s military interlocutors, he recalled, “never forgave me this statement.”) “The error, in fact,” Kreisky explained,

\begin{quote}
 to which they succumbed, was attributable to the different conceptions of German and Soviet warfare. The German army prepared and executed many of its conquests with limited forces—which is why the reproach is justified that the Western governments allowed themselves to be intimidated. While the Germans proceeded according to the law of the minimum and always took upon themselves an enormous risk, Russian waging of war left nothing to accident; it planned every action with such superior forces that nothing could go wrong in human judgment.\footnote{Kreisky, 253-254; and Meier-Walser, 431.}
\end{quote}

“If the Russians did not march into Austria in 1956,” Kreisky concluded, “and they had at the time very good reasons, according to their interpretation, to return to the old demarcation line, then they will also not do it now.” Kreisky termed \textit{Bundesheer} fears of a Soviet invasion of Austria “a completely absurd belief” and rejected as “false”
all conclusions reached on this basis.\textsuperscript{47} Gruber similarly praised Chancellor Klaus who, “thank God, did not allow himself to be led astray” despite the “completely fearful individuals” who would have preferred “to send the government to Innsbruck or Bregenz. Above all—and this cannot be emphasized enough—Foreign Minister Kurt Waldheim maintained his clear and cool head.” “If a superpower intends such a daring adventure as the advance into Austrian territory would have to be,” Gruber judged,

\begin{quote}
then something like this could certainly not be read from technical details. In this respect “General Surprise” is too important of a strategy. Intimidation—this yes—this is a well proven tactic of the radical camp. If the threatening danger does not materialize, however, everyone breathes a sigh of relief and swallows without further reaction the small morsels which the Eastern superpower throws at the free world.\textsuperscript{48}
\end{quote}

Waldheim, meanwhile, found practical reasons for his confidence. There was, he recalled,

\begin{quote}
another school of thought that rejected the possibility of a Russian advance into Austria in the direction of the Dalmatian coast with the argument that the Russians would have a considerably easier time going over Hungary. Why should they call forth an international crisis when they could have always pushed towards the Adriatic across Hungary where Russian troops were stationed anyway?\textsuperscript{49}
\end{quote}

“In hindsight,” judged Steiger, “the assessment of the political situation in the ČSSR proved accurate, but risky.”\textsuperscript{50} Not only did the Warsaw Pact invasion remain limited to Czechoslovakia, but the Presidium of the Communist party in Czechoslovakia appealed for no resistance to the invasion, a call followed by the Czechoslovakian armed forces. Yet, in Steiger’s words, “the excessive caution of Austria in not provoking

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, 254.
\textsuperscript{48} Gruber, 259-260.
\textsuperscript{49} Kriechbaumer, 117.
\textsuperscript{50} Das Bundesheer in den Jahren 1968 bis 1975.
Warsaw Pact troops could have had bad results,” something that Klaus himself recognized. If the Presidium’s appeal, Steiger hypothesized, “had only not been followed in part and had these parts of the Czechoslovakian army begun a retreat in the direction of Austria, they could have pushed in the process 30 kilometers deep into Austrian territory without encountering prepared defensive positions of the Bundesheer.” Most likely Czechoslovakian mechanized units would have established themselves in the “no-mans-land” between the border and the 30 kilometer limit, thus provoking Warsaw Pact units to pursue Czechoslovakian units on Austrian territory. The Austrian decision to respect this 30 kilometer limit, according to Steiger, “contained, in fact, the danger, that northern Lower Austria could have become a combat zone.”

Christian Segur-Cabanac, one of Urgestein’s Bundesheer planners who later rose to the rank of major general, later reflected in Marschmusik für Glockenspiel that the Bundesheer did not so much fear an unprovoked Soviet drive or attack north of the Danube. We rather assumed that the Russians would seize the Danube bridges from the south in order to catch the Czechoslovakian troops who could have evaded towards Austria. These were supposed to be pushed back to the north—through fighting on Austrian sovereign territory! For the Russians it would have therefore been a matter of taking the Danube bridges, beginning with Bratislava and going to Mauthausen or even Ashach.

Bundesheer commanders, observed Steiger, “down to the platoon level could not understand why security operations were not performed directly on the border.” The authors of Marschmusik für Glockenspiel confirmed in 1998 that the “military to this day

51 Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke! Klaus later expressed his fears during an interview given for an Austrian documentary series broadcast on television in 1989, Österreich II (episode 28).
52 Kallinger and Tozzer, 164.
has not come to terms with this decision.” “It also angers us,” Bundesheer officers like Marolz stated, “that the political leadership took no measures to call up reserves, at least for exercises.”

Bundesheer generals interviewed that same year generally judged the army in 1968 to have been in an indefensible position. Bundesheer commandant Emil Spannocchi, director of the Austrian National Defense Academy in 1968, criticized the “discretionary distance” of the Bundesheer troops who “were not even allowed to show themselves on the border” with the comment: “The army was held very far away from the border in order to indicate, in fact, that no one was ready for defense.”

“Left behind,” explained Steiger,

was not only an “unprotected” population on the border, also the gendarmes and customs officials remained left to themselves while they followed the invasion of Soviet troops into the ČSSR in ORF [Österreichischer Rundfunk, Austria’s public broadcaster], which also informed the gendarmes and customs officials about the Bundesheer presence 30 kilometers away from the state border.

“Borderposts of gendarmes and customs officials,” noted Steiger, “did not understand the change in situation in the Bundesheer,” given that “in informal preparations a close cooperation in border security between army, customs, and gendarmerie along the lines of Urgestein was agreed upon.” “As individual officers of the brigades ultimately drove to the border in civilian clothes,” added Steiger, “they had to accommodate themselves to bitter criticism from customs officers, some of whom themselves were reserve officers.” Steiger cited the statement of a customs officer as “representative” for all those persons who expected the Bundesheer to fulfill its

54 Kallinger and Tozzer, 163, 195.
55 Mäder and Vyskocil, 480.
56 Meier-Walser, 425.
57 Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!
constitutional mandate of “protecting the borders [Schutz der Grenzen].” “There may have been many reasons,” the customs officer said, “for keeping the Bundesheer away from the border. They all, however, change nothing in the fact that we were left alone.”

**Jitters on the Edge of War**

Even without a Warsaw Pact invasion in Austria, the situation was tense enough. “The following days,” Meier-Walser explained, “were marked by all possible rumors and speculations in rapid succession about presumed endangerments of Austrian neutrality and sovereignty that were not disposed towards weakening the perceptible nervousness on the Ballhausplatz.”

“The nervousness of the political leadership in Austria,” clarified Eger,

did indeed ebb a bit after it became known that the Czechoslovakian state president flew to Moscow on the morning of August 23 for negotiations with the Soviet government, but already two days later, on August 25, the tense atmosphere in the Federal Chancellery reached a new highpoint; press reports even spoke of a panic mood at the Ballhausplatz.

The specific cause for concern came from observations of troop movements in Hungary along with reports from individuals in Slavic countries. Interior Minister Soronics also recalled that the Austrian government “received intelligence from the American secret service that the Soviets considered within the framework of the crisis in Czechoslovakia also clearing up the question of Yugoslavia.” Because of this intelligence, in the words of Meier-Walser,
the federal government in Vienna—although its members considered it improbable—could not rule out with ultimate certainty that, as a consequence of a “call for help” from Macedonian confidants, the USSR after the occupation of the ČSSR would divert troops from Hungary and Czechoslovakia and transfer them through an eastern Austrian “corridor” to Yugoslavia for its “liberation.”

Fear of a Soviet invasion led to a series of conferences between the chancellor, foreign minister, defense minister, and interior minister as well as Finance Minister Koren and the president of the Austrian National Bank. This “inner cabinet” or “crisis staff” once again discussed the possibility of transferring the government to locales in western Austria such as Linz, Bad Aussee, or Solbad Hall. Austrian leaders also had to consider who might lead the cabinet if Chancellor Klaus and Vice-Chancellor Withalm became indisposed. “Because no one knew,” Soronics recalled, “who would still be ‘available,’ the federal president at the time filled out the nominating document for a successor without citing a name and simply signed.” Colonel Friedrich W. Korkisch from the Bundesheer’s aviation section also recalled that many politicians at this time went to Salzburg with their families, making the “appeasement of the population at the time downright irresponsible.”

The Austrian people certainly did not appreciate reports of their government going west. Interviewed in 1999, Waldheim noted that contingency plans for transferring the government “became known through an indiscretion” and “did great damage to the

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64 Meier-Walser, 425.
65 Eger, 109; and Meier-Walser, 425-426.
66 Kallinger and Tozzer, 20.
government.” As the “impression developed that the government wanted to bring itself into safety, distance was taken from further considerations of this kind.”

Soronics, meanwhile, strengthened the gendarmerie along the border and inspected some border posts in Lower Austria and Burgenland along with policechief Peterlunger. Soronics later related in 1999 executing “special security measures in Burgenland.” “We had to take precautions, for example,” Soronics stated, “with the local school boards that the schools would be kept free for all possible necessities such as war refugees, prisoners, etc. These preparations were taken in secret and could be realized right away.”

At the same time on August 25, 1968, an alerted tank battalion took up positions guarding Schwechat airport in Vienna. Other airfields in Austria also received additional protection. After nothing happened, though, the units returned to their barracks the next day.

Of similar duration was the Austrian government’s decision on August 25, 1968, to cease issuing visas for Czechoslovakian citizens. Rudolf Kirchschläger, then the Austrian consul in Prague, recalled that Austrian intelligence had reported Soviet seizures of large numbers of Czechoslovakian passport forms. The fear therefore arose that Soviet saboteurs could slip into Austria with these documents and Austrian visas. “With reference to the humanitarian duties of a neutral state,” recounted Kirchschläger, “but also with reference to a personal conflict of conscience in which I would come with a refusal to issue visas, I delayed obedience to the directive for so long until Vienna

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68 Kriechbaumer, 116.
69 Eger, 109.
70 Kriechbaumer, 241-242.
71 Eger, 110.
revoked it.” Kirchschläger continued to issue about 5,000 visas daily until the Interior Ministry lifted the visa prohibition on August 27, 1968.

The “jitters” continued for several days, however. Austrian intelligence reported on August 31, 1968, a comment from Slovak Communist party chief Gustáv Husák that, if necessary, the Soviet Union would secure its strategic interests by proceeding to the “old frontline on the Enns.” Austrian intelligence confirmed the same day that Yugoslavia was preparing for a Soviet invasion. Yet the Bundesheer units deployed north of the Danube returned to their barracks on September 2, 1968, although the Bundesheer remained in a state of alert.

The Bundesheer’s continued alert did not go unused, for false reports led to another scare like that of November 5-6, 1956, 12 years earlier. After defecting in West Germany, the leader of the disinformation department in the Czechoslovakian army, Ladislav Bitman, talked of an imminent Soviet invasion in Austria. Austrian intelligence also received word that the Soviets wanted to install a military dictatorship in Czechoslovakia and were ready to push Czechoslovakian troops into Austria if they offered resistance. Reports of troop movements and reorganizations in East Germany and Czechoslovakia added to Austrian suspicions. “As a result of a notable chain of circumstances,” Rauchensteiner observed, “a mood of panic spread.”

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72 Eger, 110; and Meier-Walser, 426.
74 Kallinger and Tozzer, 259-262.
75 Meier-Walser, 426-427.
77 Kallinger and Tozzer, 273.
78 Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!
On September 7, 1968, Brigadier Freihsler ordered a general cancellation of leave for troops in Lower Austria and alerted the defense minister and chancellor. Shortly after 1:00 p.m. began a crisis meeting at the Ballhausplatz with Klaus, Prader, Soronics, Koren (responsible for customs officials as finance minister), Foreign Ministry General Secretary Wilfried Platzer, Staatspolizei chief Peterlunger, Freihsler, and General Troop Inspector Fussenegger. Although Prader urged an immediate mobilization, the other government leaders hesitated and approved only the alerting of troops in the Waldviertel and the 4th Panzergrenadier Brigade. Bundesheer soldiers in western Austria also went on alert, where the infantry school (Jägerschule) formed an operational unit out of its cadre.

“The securing of Austrian airfields,” observed Steiger, “was judged as important by the military leadership. Landings from the air by Soviet air mobile divisions were feared.” After all,” explained Marschmusik für Glockenspiel, “the military knows how the Soviets came into the country of Czechoslovakia: First they occupied the control tower, then they landed transports with troops and tanks. Thus the securing of Schwechat seemed urgent.”

Accordingly, the 1st Company of Panzer Battalion 33 and a Panzergrenadier platoon from the 9th Panzergrenadier Brigade (17 tanks in all) took up positions in Vienna’s Schwechat airport along with an antiaircraft battery from the 1st Fliegerabwehr Battalion. The units were all completely combat-loaded and the Bundesheer soldiers had orders to destroy all landing hostile aircraft. An additional order given by the 9th

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80 Kallinger and Tozzer, 273-274.
81 Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!
82 Ibid.
83 Kallinger and Tozzer, 274.
Panzergrenadier Brigade’s chief of staff called for the destruction of the control tower if occupied. “Since the events in Prague on the night of August 21, 1968,” wrote Steiger, “the tactics of the Warsaw Pact air mobile units were known and anticipated.” A radar station in Vienna’s Stiftskaserne monitoring the ČSSR’s airspace at this time seemed to confirm Austrian fears of Soviet air operations over Austria by identifying strong disturbances of the kind designed to disrupt hostile radar observation in the area of Gottwaldov-Nitra.84

Bundesheer air defense units also took up positions at the airfields of Wiener Neustadt, Vöslau, Aspern (where Major Jaraš had landed in 1967), Thalerhof, Zeltweg, and Hörsching. In total, 17,000 Bundesheer soldiers went on alert. For security reasons the public, meanwhile, received word that the Bundesheer deployments were “exercises for the improvement of operational readiness.”85

Although no Soviet troops came, the deployment at Schwechat was not without moments of tension. Unlike Major Jaraš, an Aeroflot passenger plane truly mistook Vienna-Schwechat for the liner’s intended destination of Bratislava and landed in Panzer Battalion 33’s field of fire, narrowly avoiding destruction. Another unannounced American civilian aircraft with journalists on board assumed on the basis of an Austrian demand for identification that Schwechat was already under Soviet occupation. The plane’s landing caused, in the words of Bundesheer General Horst Pleiner, “considerable confusion,” but “the opening of fire by an M-60 A1 of PzB 33 upon this aircraft was, in the end, avoided after all.”86

84 *Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!*, and Kallinger and Tozzer, 274.
85 Kallinger and Tozzer, 273-275.
The Bundesheer’s latest state of readiness lasted until 8:00 a.m. on September 9, 1968.87 “Then,” noted Rauchensteiner, “the crisis suddenly receded.”88 At the cabinet’s suggestion, nonetheless, Federal President Jonas decreed on September 10, 1968, that the dismissals of serving conscripts into the reserves normally to have taken place between September 26 and September 30, 1968, were to take effect one month later on October 28, 1968.89

Although Soviet forces did not intentionally violate Austrian soil, they certainly flew over it. Foreign Minister Waldheim later listed 49 violations of Austrian sovereignty by Soviet military aircraft during the Czechoslovakian invasion.90 Unlike the Soviet helicopter that mistakenly landed in Retzbach, Lower Austria, on August 22, 1968, and immediately flew back into Czechoslovakia after the crew recognized its error, most of these flights were not accidental.91

“After the violations of Austrian airspace initially came to pass exclusively in areas close to the border and evidently due to technical mistakes,” Waldheim explained to the cabinet right after the invasion, “it later came to numerous overflights of airspace north of the Danube, which raised in the view of our competent authorities the impression of systematic reconnaissance activity by the Soviet air force.”92 These reconnaissance flights concentrated on the former Soviet zone of occupation and, in the words of Steiger,

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87 Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!
92 Eger, 91-92.
“showed special interest in the civilian airfields Schwechat and Vöslau as well as the military air fields in Linz-Hörsching and Langenlebarn.”

“In fact,” Waldheim later wrote in 1985, “the situation was extraordinarily serious for three days.”

Having just begun operation in mid-January 1968, meanwhile, Austria’s emplaced radar system on the Kolomannsberg as well as mobile Bundesheer radars deployed during the Czechoslovakian invasion reported intermittent Warsaw Pact electronic warfare attempts to test making Austrian radars “blind.” Austrian radars noted as well the Warsaw Pact’s massive use of passive Electronic Counter Measures (ECM) against radar in the form of chaff over Czechoslovakia. Austrian radars nonetheless recorded 7,965 unidentified flights over Czechoslovakia between August 24 and August 28, 1968.

Austrian protests against Soviet airborne intrusions proved unavailing. “When I attempted on various occasions to call the Soviet ambassador in Vienna to me,” recalled Waldheim in 1985, “I received at first no answer. Only after three days did the ambassador appear before me at the Ballhausplatz.” Faced with Waldheim’s protests, Soviet ambassador Podzerob then excused Soviet airspace violations with “weather conditions.” Waldheim also “ordered our ambassador in Moscow to present an energetic protest in the name of the Austrian government, but the ambassador was not even received in the Soviet Foreign Ministry. This seemed to be a bad omen.”

In Moscow as well, Austrian ambassador Walter Wodak did not receive an audience with the deputy director of the Soviet Foreign Ministry’s Europe Department.

94 Kurt Waldheim, Im Glaspalast der Weltpolitik, 3rd ed. (Düsseldorf: Econ Verlag, 1985), 64.
95 Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!
96 Waldheim, 64.
until August 26, 1968. The Soviet deputy director also excused the overflights with technical errors and gave future assurances that such airspace violations would not recur. Nonetheless, the Austrian government protested additional violations on September 1, 1968, before Soviet infringements of Austrian sovereignty ceased.\(^{97}\)

Austria’s response in the air to Soviet overflights was equally helpless. Ordered on August 21, 1968, to maintain continuous air observation of Austria’s border region with all available forces, Bundesheer aviation reached, according to Steiger, the “maximum of its performance limit.” In addition to its 21 Saab J-29F fighter-bombers, the Bundesheer called upon 26 Cessna L-19 spotter aircraft, 14 Fouga Magister and eight DeHavilland Vampire jet trainers, three DeHavilland Canada DHC-2 Beaver single-engine transports, and over 70 helicopters (24 AB-204s, 24 Alouettes, ten Bell 47s, and 12 Bell H-13s) during the Czechoslovakian invasion.\(^{98}\) Although Steiger credited Bundesheer aviation with an “outstanding operational readiness” during this time (about 90%, including 18 of 21 J-29Fs from August 22 to the end of September 1968), there were no orders to intercept Soviet aircraft. Against Soviet Tu-16 reconnaissance aircraft flying speeds in excess of Mach 1 and at altitudes of 8,000 to 10,000 meters, the Bundesheer’s best aircraft, the first-generation fighter J-29F, could do little given its slow speed and lack of onboard radar.\(^{99}\) The J-29Fs could only photograph Soviet airspace violations.\(^{100}\)

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\(^{97}\) Eger, 91-92.
\(^{98}\) Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!
\(^{99}\) Das Bundesheer in den Jahren 1968 bis 1975; and Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!
\(^{100}\) Hofbauer, 68.
Thus Defense Minister Prader’s subsequent declaration during a radio interview that *Bundesheer* J-29Fs could have shot down Soviet intruders provoked derision from Colonel Korkisch. “In contrast,” he reflected in 2005,

to demonstrable “generosity” with which violations of sovereignty by the Soviet Union were accepted and simultaneously kept secret before the public, the harmless overflight of an Egyptian An-12 (due to a storm front over the ČSSR and Hungary) on October 3, 1968 engrossed the politicians and media and even involved international law experts. Because, however, the An-12—leaving the air corridor—gave off emergency air signals and, although intercepted by a J-29F, did not allow itself to be forced to land, this highlighted the difficulty of politicians to appropriately judge events.\textsuperscript{101}

In the end, Austrian generosity towards the Soviets was perhaps for the best. “We later learned,” Waldheim stated in 2000, “that the Russians feared that NATO troops would drive from Bavaria to Austria into the area on the Czech border…The Russians feared that then a direct confrontation with NATO would develop from the ČSSR operation.”\textsuperscript{102} Waldheim attributed these fears in 1985 to “false information” received by Moscow. “It can be assumed,” Waldheim wrote, “that the flights were ordered in order to investigate this information. The operations were halted after the Soviets evidently convinced themselves that the rumors were false.”\textsuperscript{103}

“Compared with the systematic air reconnaissance activity over Lower Austria and Burgenland in the first days after the occupation of Czechoslovakia and the ignoring of Austrian protests in Moscow,” Eger wrote, “the aggressiveness of the accusations,

\textsuperscript{102} Klambauer, 138.
\textsuperscript{103} Waldheim, 64.
which Soviet press organs raised against Austrian authorities on August 28, can only be termed harmless.”

Soviet authorities, explained Meier-Walser, had begun namely a propaganda offensive against Austria that climaxed in the grotesque reproaches of the Soviet literary newspaper Literaturnaya Gazeta on August 28, according to which US Special Forces (“Green Berets”) were trained by American and West German officers in the Schwarzenberg Barracks [Kaserne] in Salzburg (adapted as an “American-West German military base”) and smuggled into Czechoslovakia with large amounts of weapons, disguised as tourists.

Eger, though, noted that this “propaganda campaign of the Soviet press against Austria did not reach by far the size and extent of the one during the 1956 Hungarian uprising.” Meier-Walser agreed that this campaign “was not comparable in its intensity with the campaign during the Hungarian revolution of 1956.” Nonetheless, both the United States Department of State and the Austrian Defense Ministry “brusquely” refuted the accusations the very day that they appeared. The next day, Ambassador Wodak in Moscow made the “sharpest protest” against the allegations at the Soviet Foreign Ministry and “attempted—in vain, however—to effect a correction in the Soviet literary newspaper.”

A Limited Partnership: America and Austria in 1968

While Eger found the Soviet press’ treatment of Austria in 1968 milder than that of 1956, he also considered Soviet behavior towards Austria in 1968 to be more egregious than that shown in 1956. “Boundaries were drawn for the size and extent of Soviet violations of Austrian neutrality,” Eger wrote,

104 Eger, 94.
105 Meier-Walser, 421-422.
106 Eger, 94.
107 Meier-Walser, 421-422.
at that point at which the mistrust and the objection of the Western leading power were provoked. The atmosphere of the Cold War and tense relations between the two world powers during the 1950s prompted the Soviet leadership to strictly respect the Austrian border during the suppression of the 1956 Hungarian revolution. Now, after more than a decade, the Soviet behavior with respect to Austria during the Czechoslovakian crisis showed that the rapprochement and partial cooperation of the two world powers proceeded at the cost of the smaller nations. Without reservations the Soviet government violated the Austrian State Treaty, in which the Soviet government had solemnly declared to respect the independence and territorial integrity of Austria, while the American government evidently saw in the Soviet air reconnaissance activity over eastern Austria no infringement of its interests and forewent every objection, although the American government would have been obligated to do this as one of the four signatory powers to the State Treaty.\footnote{Eger, 92-93.}

Not only did America not offer much public criticism of Soviet infringements of Austrian sovereignty in 1968, but American and European military forces in NATO also displayed little activity during the Czechoslovakian crisis. As later noted by an Austrian observer, the American Seventh Army in West Germany increased its reconnaissance along the border with Czechoslovakia and the United States transferred a squadron of F-4 Phantom fighters to West Germany. Given that the United States was embroiled in the Vietnam War at the time, not much more was possible for America.\footnote{Theuretsbacher, 6.}

American passivity could not have been encouraging to the Austrians in light of what Frederick S. Wyle, deputy assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, had said to General Fussenegger earlier in 1968. After giving two lectures at the Austrian military academy in Wiener Neustadt south of Vienna on March 29, 1968, Wyle accepted an invitation from General Fussenegger to join him for a glass of wine in the luxury hotel Bristol across from Vienna’s Staatsoper. “The undersecretary,” Fussenegger
later stated to Prader, “was very interested in our effective defense strength and how far we were capable we were of offering resistance to an attack. He said to me that an attack from the east still lay within the realm of the possible.”

Not just the Americans worried in 1968 about an attack on Austria. Yugoslavia’s defense minister visited the Bundesheer at the beginning of July 1968. One evening the Austrians under General Fussenegger hosted the minister and his entourage to a pleasant evening of schnapps and Tyrolean bacon at the Wattener Lizum training area. Fussenegger’s notes recorded Yugoslavs having “given to understand that it is important for them that we possess a strong national defense, because they want to have quiet on their northern border and we are supposed to guarantee this quiet through a strong national defense.”

Thus the Austrians sought American reassurance immediately after the occupation of Czechoslovakia, perhaps in the form of a territorial guarantee. “The reports that the Austrian government in the tension-filled first days after the occupation of Czechoslovakia waited for such an American guaranty,” Marschmusik für Glockenspiel reported, “did not lack a certain amount of truth, and in the conversations with the American Ambassador in Vienna, MacArthur II, Federal Chancellor Klaus and Foreign Minister Waldheim surely concerned themselves with a clarification of this question.”

The records in the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) substantiate Marschmusik für Glockenspiel with a September 4, 1968, cable from Ambassador

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110 Kallinger and Tozzer, 55-56.
112 Ibid, 97.
MacArthur recording Chancellor Klaus’ desire to know from MacArthur “on most confidential and informal basis” how the United States “would react if in fact Soviets moved in Europe against such targets as Romania, Yugoslavia, West Berlin and particularly Austria.” Although MacArthur did not specify an American response, he did state that with a Soviet invasion of Austria “a very grave situation would obviously arise which would affect the military balance of power and equilibrium in Europe.” On September 7, 1968, moreover, the State Department authorized MacArthur to tell Klaus that the United States “would regard a Soviet attack against Austria as an extremely serious and grave threat to peace.”113

Foreign Minister Waldheim, however, was somewhat coyer during a meeting with the American Secretary of State Dean Rusk in Washington, DC, on October 21, 1968. “Minister Waldheim emphasized,” FRUS recorded, “that, contrary to the impression created by Austrian newspapers, there had not been a sense of panic among the Austrians and there had never been a fear of Soviet invasion, although there had been and still remains serious concern.” Yet Waldheim “said that it was of great importance to make clear to the Soviet Union that an act against a neutral European country would lead to counter-action.” Rusk responded that “at almost any level, any Soviet move against Austria would surely involve a confrontation with the West.” Rusk added “that the NATO Ministerial meeting in mid-November [held in Brussels on November 15-16, 1968] will show a clear response on the part of NATO.”114

114 Ibid, 540-542. Also in attendance was the Austrian ambassador to the United States, Ernst Lemberger, the Austrian Foreign Ministry’s director general of political affairs, Arno Halusa, and the American Austria-Switzerland desk officer, John E. Crump.
Then again, Waldheim suggested that no public action was necessary, stating that “it is clear to the Soviet Union that an action against Austria would bring on a new war and there is therefore no necessity for any further guarantee.” During the Czechoslovakia crisis, Waldheim later explained in 1999, we naturally had contacts to the Americans. Whether there was, however, an assurance of the Americans to intervene equally militarily in case of a Russian invasion is not known. Such contacts could have taken place on a military basis, but this escapes my knowledge. There was no such agreement on a diplomatic basis. The government assumed, though, that NATO would not permit the easternmost bulwark of the West to fall. I am still convinced today that this never would have been the case.

Thus, private assurances and assumptions of American support for Austria in case of emergency masked behind a public façade of neutrality characterized Austria’s response to American statements of reassurance during the fall of 1968. President Lyndon Johnson, for example, spoke on September 10, 1968, of “areas of common responsibility” such as Berlin existing between the superpowers in which no unilateral moves could be tolerated. “Areas,” observed Clausen, “among which also Austria could have been implicitly counted.”

As indicated to Waldheim on October 21, 1968, Secretary Rusk followed President Johnson on November 15 with the comment in the NATO Council that “Austria and Yugoslavia stood in a close relationship with the security interests of NATO.” “This statement,” Marschmusik für Glockenspiel noted, “so expected in the days of August and now following with three months delay, caused considerable

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115 Ibid, 543.  
116 Kriechbaumer, 117.  
118 Ibid.
sensation in Austria.” Facing public suspicions that “neutral” Austria enjoyed a de facto alliance with the West, though, Waldheim “did not directly reject the American assurance of security, but rather reacted with diplomatic skill in that he recalled the common obligation of the State Treaty’s signatory powers to respect the independence and territorial integrity of Austria.”

Waldheim also referred to similar sounding statements from Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev during his 1960 visit to Austria that the “Soviet Union would not remain idle and inactive if Austria’s neutrality were to be violated.” The Austrian cabinet had rejected at the time any unilateral guardianship over Austrian neutrality. With this supposed balancing of American and Soviet concern for Austria, Waldheim, according to Marschmusik für Glockenspiel, “attempted to take away some of the explosiveness from the American declaration and to nip in the bud in advance any possible Soviet reproach that Austria was not observing its neutrality.” Waldheim’s reaction “found an approving echo in the Soviet press because Austria firmly but politely gave to understand that it did not need defense from NATO.”

Rusk later deemphasized his comments, calling them “private,” and they did not find their way into the final communiqué of the NATO Council’s meeting. The communiqué, however, did speak (“generally,” according to Eger) of “any Soviet intervention directly or indirectly affecting the situation in Europe or in the Mediterranean” creating “an international crisis with grave consequences.” Thus, Edger

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119 Kallinger and Tozzer, 98.
judged, the “substantial political content remained unchanged: A violation of the area of interest that the American superpower claimed would not be accepted.”

As ÖVP politician Andreas Khol analyzed, the “NATO guaranty” expressed by Rusk, “was refused by Austria in light of its permanent neutrality but was naturally noted with satisfaction.” This reflected Austria’s security policy with “winks and nudges [Augenzwinkern].” Apart from Waldheim, ministers in Chancellor Klaus’ cabinet and members of his ruling ÖVP refrained from officially commenting upon Rusk’s Brussels statement. “Such an openness,” wrote Eger,

could not be expected from the members of the government and parliamentarians of the ruling party, but surely dominant also among them was the satisfaction and a certain relief that after an initial restrained and indifferent reaction to the occupation of the ČSSR the American government now, in fact, sent a clear warning to the top Soviet leadership, in which Austria’s inclusion into the American area of interest received unmistakable expression.

According to Marschmusik für Glockenspiel, meanwhile, the Austrian public greeted Rusk’s words “with approval and the possible American countermeasures in case of a violation of Austrian neutrality were even listed in detail in press reports.” Karl Czernetz, the SPÖ’s foreign policy spokesman in the Nationalrat, also “unabashedly showed his satisfaction over the clarification of the power and interest relationships by Rusk.” On the other hand, Kreisky, then SPÖ chairman, judged Rusk’s statements to be a “confirmation of his repeatedly presented view that Austria’s neutrality represented a

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123 Kallinger and Tozzer, 98.
124 Eger, 99.
function of the balance of power in the world” and Kreisky “soberly stated that he neither particularly greeted nor condemned the declaration.” The Austrian historian Martin Koffer, though, observed that “for Austria a secret, concrete assurance on the part of Washington before the Prague crisis would have been doubtlessly preferable.”

A Tepid Response: Austrian Protests against the Invasion of Czechoslovakia

Many students of Austrian actions in 1968 such as Steiger credit the fact that the United States “did not immediately address itself, probably, among other things, out of concern for tensions with the Soviet Union—like in 1956” to the Czechoslovakian invasion with creating “insecurity” in the Austrian government. Reflecting Eger’s comments, the Austrian reserve officer and security studies analyst Heinrich Payr wrote in 1990 that

it can already suffice that the antagonism between parties sinks below a certain degree in order to make a neutral policy difficult: In this case the parties could, in fact, reach agreement over their spheres of influence and interest, and indeed over the head of the neutral country. This suspicion developed in Austria during the 1968 intervention of Warsaw Pact troops in the ČSSR: The cautious, if not uncertain, attitude of the government during this crisis was not least attributable to the fact that at the time—in contradistinction to the Hungary crisis of 1956—an official security assurance on the part of the USA was absent, which was attributed to “détente” appearing in the interim between the superpowers.

Eger himself confirmed a “cautious, if not uncertain, attitude” in the Austrian government’s reaction toward the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, an attitude provoked by the “systematic violations of air sovereignty by the Soviet air force

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125 Kallinger and Tozzer, 98.
126 Kofler, 31. Emphasis in the original.
127 *Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!*
128 Heinrich Payr, *Die schwierige Kunst der Neutralität* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1990), 44.
and the imperious treatment of Austrian protests in the Soviet Foreign Ministry” as well as the lack of American reassurance. “The insecurity and latent nervousness of the Austrian government,” Eger argued, “shimmered through in the recurring declarations that for Austria no danger existed because of its neutral status.” Klaus’ justification of his administration’s reaction to the Czechoslovakian invasion before a Nationalrat committee with the fundamental principle of preserving Austrian integrity and territorial integrity also belied official Austrian statements of confidence. Austrian insecurity, though, was perhaps most evident in the “more than cautious evaluation of the moral side of Soviet aggression.” “In the first public comment upon the military occupation of a neighbor state by Warsaw Pact states on the radio on August 21, 1968, at 7:00 a.m.,” Eger noted,

Federal Chancellor Klaus abstained from any critical expression. He found neither words of regret nor of sympathy for the Czechoslovakian government and people, he also did not demand the withdrawal of the occupation troops nor did he express any judgment or even condemnation of the action of the Soviet Union or its allies. The federal chancellor informed the Austrian people about the security measures taken by the federal government but broached the new explosive situation with not a single remark.129

“In its first verbal reactions to the intervention in Czechoslovakia,” Finnish scholar Harto Hakovirta concurred,

the Austrian government confirmed the country’s commitment to neutrality, stressed its determination to assist refugees, emphasized the preparedness of Austrians to defend their country, and expressed anxiety about the recognition of international law, the UN Charter, and the rights of small nations. Austria also found it deplorable that the events in Czechoslovakia had compromised European efforts at détente. However, it carefully avoided an open condemnation of the intervention, and spoke

129 Eger, 87, 90, 97.
instead in abstract terms about the limits which existed to restrict the exercise of power of any nation.\textsuperscript{130}

Analysis of various official Austrian statements to the Czechoslovakian invasion printed in Eger’s 1981 book *Krisen an Österreichs Grenzen: Das Verhalten Österreichs während des Ungarnaufstandes 1956 und der tschechoslowakischen Krise 1968* validates these judgments. Speaking of the “dramatic events in our direct neighborhood,” Klaus stated to his “dear fellow citizens” during the evening news telecast on August 21, 1968, that

we have not for the first time a test of our neutrality to pass—we have already once passed it! The foundations of our state are so firm and secured that nothing in them can be changed by the latest events. The State Treaty and the neutrality law are the firm foundation of our state existence, our independence, and our freedom that we are at all times determined to defend with all available means at our disposal. We cannot and do not want to interfere in the internal affairs of other states, this all the less as we ourselves would have to reject emphatically such an attempt of interference by others in our internal affairs. As a neutral and small state Austria has an especially fine feeling for sovereignty and nonintervention.\textsuperscript{131}

“Only in a third declaration on August 22,” observed Eger, “did Federal Chancellor Klaus indicate a cautious evaluation of the Soviet action in Czechoslovakia.”

Appearing once again on the evening news, Klaus expressed the “great sympathy and attention” with which the Austrian government observed developments in Czechoslovakia. “Our concern today as yesterday,” he added,

is directed toward three things in particular: respect for international law, adherence to the United Nations Charter, and the preservation of the rights of small states. The policies of the federal government have been orientated for a long time around détente, security, and cooperation in


\textsuperscript{131} Eger, 195.
Europe. From the perspective of its strict neutrality policy the federal government can only regret that the events of the last 48 hours place in question such a policy; they are a blow against the détente policies of the last years, against a peaceful coexistence and friendly coming together of the European peoples. The hopeful development in the Danube area sought by us and also already initiated is therefore, at least, interrupted. In this hour I know myself to be of one mind with the entire Austrian population, when I express the hope here that all possibilities still perhaps available today will be exhausted in order to bring about a normalization of the situation in Czechoslovakia; all possibilities of a peaceful, legal political solution, which accounts for the wishes of the Czechoslovakian people themselves to determine freely and independently their destiny.\textsuperscript{132}

“The development of the last weeks and months,” Foreign Minister Waldheim similarly declared that day,

were followed with great sympathy and we had hoped that there would be success in resolving the dispute along the path of negotiations. We truly regret that this did not come to pass, particularly given that the Austrian government has always advocated a peaceful development of interstate relations and will also continue to advocate this. The latest events in our neighborhood mean, however, a serious setback for détente process continually favored by us that had happily proceeded in the last years. It is naturally not possible to judge how matters will further develop. We can only hope that a normalization, which accounts for the wishes of the sorely tested population, will be brought about in our neighboring country with which we feel ourselves bound by so many bands of friendship and kin.\textsuperscript{133}

Waldheim had even excised from Klaus’ first address concerning the Czechoslovakian invasion two passages that had made reference to Chancellor Julius Raab’s address concerning the 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary.\textsuperscript{134} Karl Pisa, an ORF journalist who led an information department established by the Klaus administration in January 1968, was not happy with these deletions. “I went to Tunisia at the beginning of August for vacation,” Pisa later recalled in \textit{Marschmusik für Glockenspiel}, “but I had

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid, 90, 195-196.
\textsuperscript{133} Eger, 196.
\textsuperscript{134} Meier-Walser, 429.
previously left behind what should be said to the public in an emergency—that is during an invasion of Czechoslovakia—in the first hour.” Nonetheless, Pisa conceded the danger presented by the 79 Warsaw Pact divisions (53 of them Soviet) in and around Czechoslovakia in August 1968 with their 650,000 soldiers. “On the side of NATO at the time,” Pisa noted in contrast, “not a single man moved. The hardly present ‘military balance’ in Eastern-Central Europe truly tipped at the time. Because the ČSSR army did not defend itself, the troop strength of the Warsaw Pact was an overdose, these troops could still be made ready for something else.”  

Waldheim’s actions in 1968 reflected, in the words of Eger, his “realistic estimate of international coexistence” proven by “the course of history” that not “every violation of Austrian sovereignty was automatically excluded because of the neutrality declaration.” Waldheim himself stated that the assumption of a neutrality status, even if it was guaranteed by the great powers of the corresponding period, has still not in itself sufficed in order to protect the neutral state with security against an outside intervention. The adherence to rules of international law is an idealistic demand, which can always come into conflict with power interests.  

Yet Austrian diplomatic restraint during the Czechoslovakian invasion reflected more than just caution on the part of Waldheim and others. “That the government restrained itself to an extreme extent,” Meier-Walser wrote, from any evaluation of the events on the basis of self-imposed neutrality policy considerations, despite the supposedly unanimous estimation that Austria was not directly threatened by the occupation of the ČSSR (Bruno Kreisky, moreover, was also of this opinion, while the FPÖ denied this conviction), was connected with the influence of Foreign Minister

135 Kallinger and Tozzer, 151-152.  
136 Eger, 120.
Waldheim, who strictly rejected interference by the Austrian federal government in internal block conflicts.\textsuperscript{137}

“Waldheim’s policy during the Czechoslovakian crisis,” Eger qualified, which strictly avoided every appearance of an Austrian “interference” in the conflict, corresponded not only to the essence of this cautious diplomat, but rather also to his interpretation of Austrian neutrality. Waldheim rejected as an all too simplifying interpretation of permanent neutrality the conception dominant after the conclusion of the State Treaty and the passing of the neutrality law that the Austrian neutrality was of a solely military nature.\textsuperscript{138}

As noted by Brigadier Clausen, the “restraint with which the Austrian government avoided every condemnation of the military intervention during the first days of the invasion in the ČSSR…is related by some authors with Austria’s entry into a phase of so-called ‘active neutrality.’”\textsuperscript{139} “Active neutrality” designated the attempt by neutral countries such as Austria to practice not just what could be seen as a “negative” policy of abstinence from alliances, but also a “positive” policy of facilitating international mediation on the basis of a militarily nonaligned status. According to Austrian political scientist Anselm Skuhra, for example, the “more low-key” and “more reserved stance” of the Austrian government “during the 1968 Czech crisis” in which “official protests were rather moderate” reflected not only an “intent to respect the spheres of influence according to the Yalta agreement,” but also a “desire for the SALT I talks to be held in Vienna.”\textsuperscript{140} Although, according to Meier-Walser, Austria’s official evaluation of the Czechoslovakian invasion was “certainly moderate sounding” in comparison to the “official positions of the governments of Switzerland and Sweden,” this evaluation

\textsuperscript{137} Meier-Walser, 429.
\textsuperscript{138} Eger, 120.
\textsuperscript{139} Clausen, 18.
“appeared to the government in Vienna as the limit of what could be presented on the
basis of neutrality policy considerations.”141

Irrespective of official Austrian restraint, controlling the Austrian media’s
reaction to the Czechoslovakian invasion was another matter. Beginning on August 22,
1968, ORF began broadcasting the news in Czech. “An action,” observed Marschmusik
für Glockenspiel, “that did not meet with undivided joy from all members of the
government.” Gerd Bacher, director of ORF at the time, also noted that during the
Czechoslovakian invasion the ORF “was, after all, the source for the entire world and we
also received much material from the Czechs,” provoking a request from the government
“whether we could not step somewhat more softly.”142 “As already during the Six Day
War [between Israel and its Arab neighbors in June 1967],” Meier-Walser wrote,
a discrepancy between the positions of the federal government in Vienna
and expectations of the Austrian people became once again a problem in
the context of the occupation of Czechoslovakia: While the cabinet Klaus
imposed limitations upon itself because of neutrality policy reasons, in
order to avoid unwanted provocations, the Austrian media recklessly
placed itself openly behind the Czech people and repeatedly transmitted
unverified information as “objective information.”143

Yet sympathy from the Austrian populace for Czechoslovakia remained muted.
Only on August 27, 1968, a week after the Soviet invasion, did Austrian unions organize
a five-minute work pause in sympathy for Czechoslovakia. During this demonstration,
Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund (ÖGB) president Anton Benya celebrated the
bravery of the Czechoslovakian people, but neither demanded a withdrawal of the
occupation troops nor directly condemned the invasion. Adherence to the work pause

141 Meier-Walser, 421.
142 Kallinger and Tozzer, 218.
143 Meier-Walser, 429-430.
was varied; while workers in large firms largely participated in the sympathy strike, many employees of small and medium firms did not follow the ÖGB’s recommendation. “The demonstration was openly rejected in part,” wrote Eger, “and criticism of the trade union federation was expressed, because it had advised against protest actions at the beginning of the invasion and now, after almost a week, when the psychological effect had to be much smaller, called out for a sympathy protest.”

Ultimately, the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia had little effect on relations between the Communist bloc and Austria and the wider Western world. During the invasion, the Austrian Foreign Ministry distributed a circular to its diplomats worldwide whose “diplomatic tone,” according to Marschmusik für Glockenspiel, was “balanced and restrained. The fate of the raped ČSSR was, according to the talking points, not to be mentioned.” Ambassador Wodak cabled Moscow’s recognition of Austrian circumspection to Vienna, noting the “good impression that Austria’s thoughtful reaction left in Moscow.”

“Good impressions” apparently continued to exist after the invasion. “The declaration of the Klaus government,” Eger wrote, “that Soviet behavior meant a serious setback for the détente process between East and West, was itself contradicted by the normal further development of Austro-Soviet relations.” Waldheim openly conceded that economic reasons hindered any Austro-Soviet contretemps, as shown on September 1, 1968, when the first Soviet natural gas exports came to Austria under a 23-year treaty. To mark this event, President Jonas, Chancellor Klaus, and Foreign Minister Waldheim

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144 Eger, 120.
145 Kallinger and Tozzer, 161.
received the Soviet minister for the gas industry during a visit to Vienna on September 17, 1968.\footnote{Eger, 101-102; and \textit{Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke}!.}

The “only concrete reaction of Austria to Soviet aggression,” according to Eger, was the postponement of a planned trip by Nationalrat president Alfred Maleta to the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, Maleta was still the first Western politician to visit the Soviet Union after the Czechoslovakian invasion. On his return to Austria on March 18, 1969, Maleta positively assessed the Soviet desire to demonstrate with Austria a will for further cooperation with the West. For their part, most Western countries sought further cooperation as well. “The behavior of most West European states after the occupation of the ČSSR,” Eger noted, which did not think to change their policy towards the East European states, corresponded to the attitude of the Austrian government that a regression into the Cold War atmosphere of the 1950s would be avoided by a continuation of contacts with East Bloc countries and the measure of détente already achieved in the Central European area could be best maintained.\footnote{Eger, 97, 102.}

\textit{Invasion’s Aftermath, II}

The Czechoslovakian people, Steiger wrote, met Warsaw Pact troops with “rejection, rage, and hatred.” Correspondingly, the “balance of the invasion was bloody: Soviet soldiers shot 53 citizens. Warsaw Pact military vehicles ran over 38 Czechoslovaks and three persons died of causes as yet unknown. Among the ‘interventionists’ there were 58 dead.” Following the invasion, around 75,000 Soviet occupation troops remained in Czechoslovakia as the Central Group of Soviet Forces.
“In the following two decades,” Steiger analyzed, “they embodied as the ‘shadow of invasion’ in the eyes of the Czechoslovakian people the symbol of humiliation and oppression.”

Unlike 1956, however, Soviet invasion did not provoke a massive flow of refugees. From August 21 to October 23, 1968, about 96,000 Czechoslovakian citizens traveled to Austria. Another 66,000 waited out developments in Austria during their vacation. Within a short time, 129,000 of these individuals went home and the rest immigrated to other countries. Only ten percent remained in Austria. The majority of Czechoslovaks crossing the Austrian border did not request asylum and some did not even stay in prepared refugee camps, preferring hotels instead.

After the “normalization” of affairs in Czechoslovakia, the various Communist bloc barges and supplies that had appeared in Austria during the summer of 1968 went back to their countries of origin in November. What these shipments portended has been a subject of speculation ever since. General Pleiner downplayed their importance in a 1995 article of the Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift, seeing these supplies as intended merely for flank protection operations if largescale fighting developed in Czechoslovakia.

Writing ten years later, though, Steiger ominously cited information revealed by a Czech defector in 1973, Major General Jan Šenja, that airborne landings in West Germany as well as an occupation of Austria under certain circumstances were planned.

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148 Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!
149 Klambauer, 140.
150 Eger, 110.
151 Kallinger and Tozzer, 81.
The London Observer newspaper on January 9, 2000, also reported on the release of previously secret British government documents, according to which Western secret services in September 1968 received information that the Soviet Union planned a punitive action against Romania. Moscow was angry that Romania’s leader, Nicolas Ceausescu, had criticized Soviet suppression of the Prague Spring.

The British government of the time under Prime Minister Harold Wilson calculated that Warsaw Pact troops in such an operation would also occupy Yugoslavia and prepared to aid a Yugoslav guerilla resistance with arms supplies and British special forces. If NATO did not respond forcefully enough, Wilson’s cabinet contemplated other targets of Soviet aggression, being particularly “terrified about possible attacks on Berlin and Austria,” according to the Observer. “Evidently,” concluded Steiger, “Europe in 1968 was much closer to a major war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact than presumed.”

As already indicated in July 1968, the possibility of Soviet aggression certainly concerned the Yugoslavians. Waldheim recalled accompanying President Jonas during a five-day state visit to Yugoslav president Josef Tito in Belgrade beginning on September 30, 1968. The recent Soviet invasion, according to Marschmusik für Glockenspiel, became “quickly topic Nr. 1” of conversation. “The first thing,” Waldheim recalled, “that Tito threw in our faces: you must consider that the Russians could drive at any time over your territory towards Yugoslavia because they want to get to the Adriatic.”

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153 Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!
154 Martin Bright, “Revealed: Britain on Brink of War with Soviet Union in 1968,” Observer, January 9, 2000, 12. This article is also online from Lexisnexus.
155 Ibid.
156 Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!
157 Kallinger and Tozzer, 280.
158 Klambauer, 136.
“emphasized,” according to Waldheim, a “firm conviction” that the “Drang of the Russians towards a ‘warm sea,’ that is to the Adriatic, was still present.” 159 “But Mr. President,” Waldheim queried, “why should they drive across Austria? They have, after all, a far easier path across Hungary, Romania. Then the Russians do not need to violate Austria’s neutrality.” “The way across Austria,” Tito replied, “is, however, the most direct and the shortest!” 160

“I can still remember exactly,” Waldheim declared in an interview for Marschmusik für Glockenspiel,

how Tito quasi reproached us: “You Austrians are too naïve, you do not know how dangerous the Soviets are. They will very probably attack you, have you made the corresponding preparations? For us it is very important what resistance we can count on, because this resistance would give us two, three days time to implement our deployment plans.” 161

“Tito declared again and again,” Waldheim remembered, “that we Austrians would have to show the readiness to defend ourselves….Our mobilization possibilities were carefully analyzed.” 162 “You must imagine,” Waldheim stated in Marschmusik für Glockenspiel, “that was almost six weeks after the intervention of Soviet troops in the ČSSR, and the experienced statesman still had fears that the matter could be still open….It was informative for us how urgently the Communist Tito warned us about Communist military leaders in Moscow.” 163 Waldheim consoled Tito that during the Czechoslovakian invasion “we also carefully followed events though our intelligence

159 Kallinger and Tozzer, 280.
160 Klambauer, 136.
161 Kallinger and Tozzer, 280.
162 Kriechbaumer, 115.
163 Kallinger and Tozzer, 280.
service and assumed on the basis of this information that it was not going to come to a Soviet military operation in Austria."  

Brigadier Clausen noted in 1990 that, similar to Waldheim, Chancellor Klaus "vehemently defended the measures taken [during the invasion of Czechoslovakia], although they actually remained perceptibly behind the steps taken nine years earlier [during the Soviet invasion of Hungary]." Yet the government’s restraint in public statements, the missing presence of the Bundesheer directly on the border, the insecure and significantly delayed issuance of orders to military units, and finally the hesitant and contradictory question of visa distribution for Czech citizens who were in flight, have remained until today an object of controversy.

Klaus aside, Steiger found that 1968 left behind in Austria "a bitter feeling of discomfort."  "Deviating from the contingencies in national defense policy—crisis contingency, neutrality contingency, and defense contingency [Krisenfall, Neutralitätsfall, Verteidigungsfall]," analysts like Steiger noted, "the phrase ‘crisis-like situation [krisenhafte Situation]’ was used by the political leadership, a phrase with which the military leadership at first could associate nothing."  "That doubts came to the federal government itself," Brigadier Freistetter confirmed, concerning the rightfulness of the measures taken—or perhaps it rather should be said: omitted—by it, can best be seen in the formulation suddenly appearing after August 21, 1968, according to which the events involved not a Krisenfall but rather only a krisenhafte Situation. Whoever themselves experienced the events at the time and could follow how concerned the population was that the events of the 1956 Hungarian revolution would repeat themselves, or even whoever seeks to reimagine the events on the basis of the contemporary documents, will probably only

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164 Kriechbaumer, 115.
165 Clausen, 16-17. Steiger also criticized poor public relations work on the part of Klaus’ cabinet. Only 14 days after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia did the government call a press conference for news publication editors. See: Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!
167 Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!
be able to recognize in this formulation the expression of a bad conscience.\textsuperscript{168}

In particular, the Austrian security studies analyst Heinz Danzmayr observed, the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia brought about “the deepest crisis of the Bundesheer of the Second Republic. This crisis was a crisis of creditability.”\textsuperscript{169} “Among the population,” Steiger confirmed, “the image of 1968 was marked by the absence of the army—not by the operational readiness of the troops in the barracks. The resulting feeling was clear: the Bundesheer is capable of nothing and abandons the people.”\textsuperscript{170} The Austrian government’s 30 kilometer limit and the fact that Soviet troops reached Czechoslovakia’s border with Austria before the Bundesheer, Major General Mario Duić agreed, “had to harden some mistrust in national defense….Probably nobody could explain how in this manner the Schutz der Grenzen of the republic should be maintained.”\textsuperscript{171}

Concerns for border security had already emerged in November 1956 when the young Bundesheer had to pull back from a border the army was too weak to directly defend. In light of this experience, Interior Minister Oskar Helmer emphasized during the previously discussed February 25, 1958, meeting of Austrian leaders concerned with defense the “necessity of being able to give the population living on the border a feeling of security.” Helmer feared that the Bundesheer would “voluntarily give up in certain circumstances wide areas of eastern state territory and offer resistance only at a line lying

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\textsuperscript{170} Das Bundesheer in den Jahren 1968 bis 1975.
\textsuperscript{171} Mario Duić, “Das Erbe von Kriegs- und Nachkriegszeit,” in Schild ohne Schwert, 120.
\end{flushleft}
in the mountains. The necessary feeling of security would be lacking precisely thereby.”

Steiger ironically observed that the *Bundesheer* in 1968 was much improved from its beginnings in 1956. During the 1960s there was an “outright mood of a fresh start” in the *Bundesheer* as it received new weapons such as the M-60A1 tank, the Saurer APC, the Model 1958 assault rifle, and the Carl Gustav antitank weapon (*Panzerabwehrrohr 66*). The *Bundesheer* also acquired Puch Haflinger all-terrain vehicles and Steyr 680 diesel trucks. The *Bundesheer* had demonstrated its newfound confidence at public events such as a parade in front of the national parliament building on Vienna’s Ringstrasse on the occasion of the State Treaty’s tenth anniversary in 1965.

Moreover,

the Hungary crisis came as a surprise. The operation in 1968, in contrast, was to be seen long in advance. Already from March 1968 on there were preparations for this operation, so that the *Bundesheer* was seldom as well prepared as in 1968 for a possible crisis in Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, the operation became—politically—a disaster.

“When the intervention of Warsaw Pact troops actually began on August 21,” Rauchensteiner judged, “things were improvised and done in a dilettante manner.” Even though “military leaders want to be prepared, and indeed for all possibilities,” Defense Minister Prader and the military leadership could not overcome the belief of Klaus and Waldheim that the Warsaw Pact would limit its actions to Czechoslovakia and that no large refugee movement would develop. That military leaders such as Fussenegger

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173 Das Bundesheer in den Jahren 1968 bis 1975; and Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke! The Sturmgewehr 58 was an Austrian version of the widely-used Fusil Automatique Leger (FAL) from the Belgian arms manufacturer Fabrique Nationale (FN). For more information on the Model 1958 assault rifle, see: Sturmgewehr 58 (accessed June 24, 2006); available from http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sturmgewehr_58.
“wanted to know that a sudden change was also taken into consideration was understood as an enormous and completely inappropriate dramatization.” The resulting confusion led “unexpectedly to the Bundesheer’s greatest crisis until that time.” As shown by the lack of cooperation between the active army and the border troops, “nothing seemed to work anymore.”

The presence of Bundesheer soldiers waiting in their barracks for orders to move could not go unnoticed. “Austria,” Steiger wrote, is, after all, a small country. The soldiers telephoned their families, girlfriends, and acquaintances who learned of the unclear circumstances. The public and regional politicians had to gain the impression that helpless confusion dominated the Bundesheer. Soldiers of all ranks, from private to officer, made the most serious reproaches against the army leadership which was apparently guilty of not allowing the troops to go to the border. Ten years later, 1978, Soronics, the interior minister at the time—1968, emphasized in Burgenland’s radio broadcast: “We simply had to go to the border in 1968.”

Although, Steiger explained, the Bundesheer “wanted to protect the borders,” it could not “because of political mandates” and “was made, in addition, responsible for staying away from the border.” The Bundesheer “was left holding the bag [Schwarze(r) Peter].” Not only did the subsequent Bärentatze exercise from November 8 to 15, 1969, fail militarily, it also failed in its political intent of giving “proof of the performance capability of the Bundesheer” and regaining “lost faith.” Bärentatze seemed to merely demonstrate the “‘swan song’ of a defense concept” and allowed “pressures for reform to grow considerably.” “The jubilation and excitement,” Steiger analyzed, “that the soldiers

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175 Rauchensteiner, “Landesverteidigung und Außenpolitik—Feindliche Brüder?” 163-164. “Precisely the Foreign Office,” Rauchensteiner criticized, “could not see any use in increased military exertions and saw therein a hindrance for political and diplomatic efforts. Yet it must have been better known at the Ballhausplatz than elsewhere how the danger of a Soviet intervention occasioned also internationally again and again concern and how much tapping in the dark there continually was.”

thankfully received during the 1965 parade, were past. The mood towards this institution had become ‘frosty.’ It had become ‘winter’ in the ‘cycle’ of the Bundesheer.”

The Bundesheer’s poor popularity favored the more anti-military elements in Austrian society, concentrated at the time in the SPÖ. As the opposition party before the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, Marschmusik für Glockenspiel noted, “the SPÖ had agitated again and again against the Bundesheer. Demanded again and again as a mantra were a shortening of conscription and savings in the budget. One slogan from the year 1965: ‘pensions instead of cannons.’” When the single-party ÖVP government called in the spring of 1969 for an additional billion Schillings of defense spending, the “SPÖ had their youth demonstrate against this on the streets,” some carrying banners inscribed with “Bundesheer ist ungeheuer—erstens Scheiße, zweitens teuer [Bundesheer is unreal—first it is sh-t, second it is expensive].” “The immediately promised Wehrmilliarde,” Colonel Korkisch remembered, “became half a billion, which flowed primarily into the purchase of trucks.”

Poor impressions of the Bundesheer’s operations in 1968 also helped the SPÖ’s Kreisky succeed Klaus and become Austria’s first Socialist chancellor in 1970. “The Bundesheer,” Kreisky argued during a discussion with Bundesheer soldiers in 1970, “is not even capable of fulfilling guard tasks.” “What is the use to the people,” went the tenor of Kreisky’s statements according to Marschmusik für Glockenspiel, of an army that “only stands a discretionary distance away from the border? Does one want to

177 Das Bundesheer in den Jahren 1968 bis 1975; and Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!
178 Kallinger and Tozzer, 306.
defend an Alpine fortress?"180 “The operational readiness during the ČSSR crisis,”
Kreisky declared later in 1971, “was an embarrassment.”181

The new chancellor’s “view of national defense were ambivalent,” Steiger observed, although “Kreisky advocated an approach to national defense as broad as possible.” “Dr. Kreisky,” Steiger elaborated,

considered military national defense in Austria very important. He saw, however, the task of the Bundesheer in the mastering of the Krisenfall and the Neutralitatsfall. Visions of defending Austria against every aggressor with the help of the Bundesheer, not only symbolically, were foreign to Kreisky. He firmly believed that a general strike of workers and civil disobedience would be more effective against a strong aggressor than the resistance of the Bundesheer. Kreisky was also of the opinion that the UN agencies in Vienna could better protect the city than the entire Austrian national defense. In these views a Bundesheer of very limited fighting power sufficed for Kreisky, above all a rapidly deployable Bereitschaftstruppe....Preparation of national defense was therefore less a political than a technical task for Kreisky. Kreisky considered unnecessary great domestic exertions in the political landscape for strengthening national defense.182

Thus Kreisky, noted Steiger, had advocated to government leaders on August 22, 1968, “the inclusion of workers in a broad defense coalition” in case of Warsaw Pact attack, something Kreisky saw as “historically justified” by the role of Franz Olah and the SPÖ-friendly unions in containing the Communists during the October 1950 strikes.183 Kreisky complained in his memoirs that a “partial mobilization had been ordered out of fear of the Russians, but basically everyone was fairly confused.” What Kreisky wanted to say to Klaus, Kreisky recalled,

seemed to him to be completely incomprehensible. It is actually not understandable to me, I said, why he did not discuss with the great party of

180 Kallinger and Tozzer, 306.
182 Ibid.
183 Das Bundesheer in den Jahren 1968 bis 1975; and Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!
the labor movement in such a situation the consequences that would have
to be taken in case that came to pass, which the generals feared. “What do
you mean?” he naively asked. “Well, precautions would have to be taken,
for example, that, if the Russians need railroad personnel, the locomotive
engineers will not be accessible. The personnel that is necessary for
managing train traffic should be brought into safety, so that the Russians
must first go looking. Here everyday counts, because they will have great
problems without the railroads. I recommend therefore not a military
resistance, because I cannot imagine what value this is supposed to have,
but I would rather make a few unconventional considerations for how life
could be made difficult for the Russians in Austria’s east—because it
does, after all, primarily concern this area.”\textsuperscript{184}

“Klaus,” Kreisky related,

absolutely did not understand me; I cannot even say that he wanted to
understand me, he lacked simply any sense for the spirit of resistance that
I advocated. It was a senseless conversation. Nonetheless, I claim for
myself as party chairman having at least made thoughts about how
resistance could be offered in case the Russians should disrespect Austrian
sovereignty. The attitude of the Socialist party was of particular
importance, because the overwhelming majority of the working people
stood in its ranks or sympathized with it, and during a possible crossing of
the border by the Red Army the Austrian “proletariat,” as we knew from
the past, would make a not inconsiderable contribution to Austria’s
defense readiness. The government had evidently accorded no objective
meaning to this question. Instead, considerations were made to transfer
under certain circumstances the government’s seat to Linz or Bad
Aussee.\textsuperscript{185}

Kreisky’s colleague from the SPÖ, Bruno Pittermann, concurred with Kreisky in

remarks before the \textit{Nationalrat} on September 18, 1968. It was “false” in Pitterman’s
eyes to

allow the opinion to develop that the defense of neutrality by the
\textit{Bundesheer} is something like a soccer game in which a few play and score
and the others could be spectators. A conscious violation of Austrian
neutrality will have to count on not just the modest forces of the Austrian
\textit{Bundesheer}, but also the entire Austrian people’s will to resist. And this

\begin{footnotes}
\item[184] Kreisky, 254.
\item[185] Ibid, 254-255.
\end{footnotes}
can very well be a reason for a superior power to omit a violation of Austrian neutrality.\textsuperscript{186}

As these comments demonstrate, the views directing Socialist governance of defense policy under the Kreisky government were not completely distinct from the pacifism motivating the Daim-Nenning referendum to abolish the \textit{Bundesheer} in the wake of its poor popularity following the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Opposed by a broad spectrum in Austria including the SPÖ, the referendum failed, but the political climate from which the referendum developed would continue to affect the \textit{Bundesheer} in the years to come.

\textit{Polarka: The Invasion that Never Was and Its Implications}

One of the other notable events in 1968 was the defection on February 26 of the previously noted Major General Jan Šejna, first party secretary in the Czechoslovakian Defense Ministry.\textsuperscript{187} According to \textit{Marschmusik für Glockenspiel}, Šejna was the source of intelligence provided by the Americans to Austria and Yugoslavia a few days after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia that the Soviets would also invade Austria at the beginning of September. Šejna indicated that the “Kremlin would occupy with practically one stroke Yugoslavia after the ČSSR and therefore would march through Austria.”\textsuperscript{188}

Interviewed in December 1973 Šejna spoke about the Warsaw Pact’s \textit{Polarka} plan brought with him into the West. This plan foresaw a limited Warsaw Pact attack

\textsuperscript{186} \textit{Es brennt zwar nicht der Hut, aber es glost die Jacke!}
\textsuperscript{188} Kallinger, and Tozzer, 233.
against Yugoslavia across Austria (Šejna also brought documents detailing a *Dunaj* or *Danube* plan for a Warsaw Pact occupation of Austria during a general European war).

Šejna attached an ominous significance to the ultimately suicidal attempt in June 1972 by 19 armed Croatian *Ustaše* exiles to begin a Croatian uprising in the Bosnian hills. The *Ustaše* entered Yugoslavia namely from Austria, a fact that prompted Yugoslav warnings against any Austrian toleration of sectarian anti-Yugoslav movements on Austrian soil. Šejna warned that *Polarka* foresaw using such armed incidents as a pretext to attack Austria along with Yugoslavia and even argued that the 1972 incursion was actually a test of this element of *Polarka* directed by Moscow. \(^{189}\) The Croatians, for their part, as explained by Heinz Vetschera of the Austrian National Defense Academy, hoped to receive Soviet help in breaking up Yugoslavia by offering the Soviet Union coveted basing rights on the Adriatic in a future Croatian state. \(^{190}\)

In answer to the critical question of why the Warsaw Pact would need to attack Yugoslavia across Austria, Šejna argued that an advance across Austria would alleviate the logistical congestion ensuing in an attack along a narrower front. As presented by Šejna, *Polarka* called for Soviet troops to enter Yugoslavia from Hungary while Czechoslovakian troops would occupy Austria (Hence Czechoslovakian military personnel had covertly accompanied the national soccer team on a trip to Italy in 1963.). An occupation of Austria would also act as a defense against any help for Yugoslavia from NATO. For its own sake, an occupation of Austria would round out Soviet positions in Central Europe and remedy the Soviet Union’s disappointment that Austria

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\(^{190}\) Heinz Vetschera, interview by author in the *Offizierskasino* of the National Defense Academy in Vienna’s Stiftskaserne on July 11, 2005.
took a pro-Western course after the State Treaty. Conceivably, Austria could also serve as a bargaining chip in future negotiations.\textsuperscript{191}

Not everyone saw much significance in Polarka. The Austrian diplomat Hans Thalberg dismissed Polarka in his 1984 memoirs as having “evidently come from the CIA’s kitchen.”\textsuperscript{192} Interviewed on June 12, 1975, Otto Rösch, then serving as interior minister after having been undersecretary for defense and before becoming defense minister, also brushed aside Polarka as a “grotesque swindle!” Rejecting any need for the Soviet Union to attack Yugoslavia through Austria, Rösch argued that “one only need look at the map.” Brigadier Michael Schaffer, the federal president’s adjutant, expressed similar sentiments a few weeks earlier during a May 27, 1975, interview. Polarka appeared to him as a “good invention.” “A clever journalist,” he argued,

has taken up this matter over which the grass has long since grown…the reestablishment desire of the Russians with respect to the Enns line is only conceivable in a wider conflict that does not include only Yugoslavia. Moreover, the Russians always refer to the Austrian example in their exertions for the friendship of the small states of the Third World. And they say: “Look how we treat small states.” Something which, in the final analysis, is also true, because they have always treated us relatively good. Only occasionally do they complain, like when the press reports so one-sidedly as in 1968.\textsuperscript{193}

On the other hand, Austrian defense minister Karl Lütgendorf described Polarka in the February 21, 1974, edition of Profil as “credible” and something “to be taken very seriously.” Lütgendorf rejected treating Polarka as a “trifling.” Given the openness of eastern Austria’s terrain, Lütgendorf worried that it was “absolutely possible” for an

\textsuperscript{191} Werner Stanzl, “Moskaus Aufmarschpläne gegen Österreich (II),” Profil, February 21, 1974, 30-32.
\textsuperscript{192} Hans J. Thalberg, Von der Kunst, Österreicher zu sein: Erinnerungen und Tagebuchnotizen, Dokumente zu Alltag, Politik und Zeitgeschichte series (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1984), 457.
attack with the necessary “decisiveness” and “breadth” to achieve Polarka’s goals of conquering eastern Austria in one day.  

Significantly, the Polarka scenario called into question the key assumption underlining the defense policies of Europe’s neutral nations, Austria included, that only secondary attacks from one of Europe’s alliances, particularly the Warsaw Pact, would confront the neutrals. “They are compelled to see themselves,” the American scholar and former deputy assistant secretary for defense Joseph Kruzel analyzed in 1989, “as unlikely objects of any East-West military confrontation. They must assume that committed states cannot afford to divert resources from other more important tasks. Any other assumption unravels the entire fabric of credible neutrality and affordable defense policy.” “Unfortunately,” Kruzel elaborated, “the proposition is also of dubious validity. The Warsaw Pact might well consider one or more of these states to be worth a significant commitment of troops and materiel.”

Already in 1960, for example, an Austrian study speculated that Hungary could attack Austria at the behest of the Warsaw Pact. Hungary’s lack of a direct border with a NATO country could shield it from counterattack. “It would be theoretically conceivable,” the study also worried, “that Yugoslavia in a favorable moment—perhaps when both power blocs are strongly engaged elsewhere—would want to use its chances and seize southern Carinthia without having to run the danger of unleashing a major conflict.”

196 Grundfragen zur Landesverteidigung (Vienna: Sozialwissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft, 1960), 12.
One scenario that particularly worried Austrians like General Wilhelm Kunter, director of the Austrian National Defense Academy, was the Warsaw Pact’s use of Austria as a “test case [Testfall].” In a 1980 interview with Profil, Kunter speculated that the Warsaw Pact could attack Austria alone in order to test NATO’s reactions in a crisis. Kunter also considered the use of a small NATO country like Norway for a Warsaw Pact Testfall, given that an attack on an actual NATO member would more clearly test the alliance’s resolve, although an attack on a neutral country like Austria would run less risk.\(^\text{197}\)

“Singular attacks on Austria,” Vetschera elaborated in the late 1980s, appear less likely than they would be in the context of a major European conflict. Yet one alliance might use Austria as a “test case” (being still a “gray area”) for the resolve of the other side. Risks of escalation might appear minor compared to attacking a member of the opposite alliance. In this case Austria would have to offer resistance against the attempt to create a fait accompli and must escalate the conflict to the point of uncalculable risks for the aggressor.\(^\text{198}\)

“During a drastic worsening of the ‘political climate,’” concurred the Austrian international relations scholar Hanspeter Neuhold in 1982, Austria appears particularly endangered as the object of a “Testfall,” above all given that Austria is so weak that it can be occupied in a few hours. In a stroke an attacker could create a quick fait accompli by exploiting the military vacuum in Austria and force the other military block to react. Whether this block in this test of the block’s strength of nerve will risk an escalation under certain circumstances fateful for the

\(^{197}\) Wilfried Ahrens, “‘Mourir pour Linz,’” Profil, December 1, 1980, 38.

block on behalf of the liberation of Austria, for which no alliance obligation exists, must remain unanswered.\footnote{Hanspeter Neuhold, “Grundlagen Österreichischer Sicherheitspolitik,” in \textit{Wie Sicher ist Österreich? Beiträge zu einer konzeptiven Sicherheitspolitik}, eds. Heinrich Neisser and Fritz Windhager (Vienna: Österreichische Verlagsanstalt, 1982), 251.}

In answer to Neuhold’s question, internal State Department documents indicate that the official American statements during the 1956 and 1968 Soviet invasions in Austria’s neighborhood were not just rhetoric. A Soviet violation of Austrian sovereignty, a July 1964 State Department Policy Planning Council memorandum judged, “would constitute an urgent threat to the peace and to the security of the NATO alliance and would require urgent consideration of military or diplomatic measures to be taken by NATO and/or recourse to the United Nations.”\footnote{Guidelines for Policy and Operations: Austria, July 1964; Austria Folder; Box 249; Entry 5041; Lot File 70D199; Records of the Policy Planning Council (S/PC), 1963-1964; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group (RG) 59; National Archives Building II (NA), College Park, MD.}

Others in Austria remained nonetheless unconvinced that Austria was tacitly under NATO’s protective umbrella. “Nothing is more dangerous,” Ambassador Thalberg wrote in 1984, than the assumption that this protective umbrella is at our disposal in any case without our own contribution. Austria does not belong to the NATO alliance, our country is too small and—seen from the West—too insignificant in order to unleash automatically, so to speak, a decisive military reaction of the Western alliance partners to a threat against our country from the East.\footnote{Thalberg, 502.}

The Austrian historian Oliver Rathkolb agreed in his 1997 book \textit{Washington ruft Wien: US-Großmachtpolitik und Österreich, 1953-1963}. At the time of the State Treaty and afterwards, Rathkolb argued, President Dwight D. Eisenhower “accepted the possibility of a division of Austria in case of conflict.” In Eisenhower’s “grand strategic
conception” there was “no indication that there would be a military counteroffensive, that is, in the final analysis, a Third World War, in case of an attack by the Warsaw Pact clearly limited to eastern parts of Austria.” “Eisenhower’s early rejection of a guaranty for Austria’s territorial integrity and neutrality,” Rathkolb elaborated,

were indications among others that suggested no corresponding military escalation by the USA in case of limited Soviet intervention directed only against Austria. Only when a direct attack upon NATO could be recognized would a total conflict have been calculated. The author knows that this is, now as before, only speculation. But also Eisenhower’s behavior during the Soviet Union’s intervention in Hungary shows a reticent military pragmatist, who would have hardly rashly risked a nuclear escalation.202

“For a long time it was believed,” Rathkolb confirmed during a 1999 Profil interview, “that NATO would take care of us if something happens. A fundamental error; NATO would not have moved a finger in any of the crises—Hungary, Czechoslovakia—as long as the north-south axis [through Tyrol] remained untouched.”203 The Austrian diplomat Thomas Nowotny reached a similar conclusion in a 1987 Zukunft article. Nowotny speculated that an attack against Austria could occur during a moment of crisis, although the advantage to the Soviet bloc (a more direct East-West divide along the old Enns line) would be small.204

In assessing Austria’s vulnerability, many Austrians suggested how détente could be dangerous. Echoing previously cited sentiments, the authors of a 1989 Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift article stated that the “ČSSR crisis highlighted how understanding between the two world powers with respect to the spheres of interest

did not necessarily increase the security of the small states.”205 “During the times,” agreed Austrian author Peter Feldl in 1969 immediately after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia,

in which both atomic superpowers faced each other in the Cold War and were not ready to tolerate any power shift in favor of the other, our neutrality might have been a real protection. Today neutrality is already worth less and will be worth even less tomorrow. Today a Soviet invasion, to say nothing of an invasion by any other East European country, would quite certainly not unleash a world war and, in particular, an American atomic strike.206

*The Threat that Never Was?: Assessing the Soviet Bloc’s Danger*

For all of the events and upheaval in Austria’s Cold War history, many scholars have noted that Austria’s neutrality never actually had to face a test. Just as it was questionable whether the 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary constituted a state of war between states and therefore involved Austrian neutrality, the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia also did not necessarily constitute a war involving Austrian neutrality obligations. “The invasion of Warsaw Pact troops in the ČSSR,” analyzed Meier-Walser, occurred, in fact, in violation of the membership obligations in the UN Charter by the states participating in the invasion; because, however, no armed resistance was offered to the invasion, there was no interstate state of war under the meaning of international law, which is why Austrian neutrality did not actualize itself and Austria therefore was not obligated to observe Hague neutrality law.207

“Because no case of neutrality was present,” added the Austrian scholar Christine Stöckl, the Soviet reconnaissance flights over Austria in 1968 “were not a matter of

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207 Meier-Walser, 428.
neutrality violations, but rather incidents subject to Austrian judgment.” The Austrian legal scholar Karl Zemanek once analyzed not only the 1968 Soviet reconnaissance flights, but also the American 1958 flights across Tyrol, the transit of an Egyptian military transport plane across Austria in 1968, and the 1973 transit of a Turkish military transport across Austria in 1973 that the Bundesheer even forced to land. Only in the case of the Egyptian transport did Zemanek see a violation of Austrian neutrality in light of Egypt’s state of war with Israel. All other incidents considered by Zemanek occurred during a state of peace and were therefore merely violations of Austrian sovereignty.

Because ultimately no general European conflict occurred and Austria never suffered attack during the Cold War, the possibility that Austria’s armed neutrality obligations could have ever become reality remained speculative, with corresponding effects for Austria’s threat perception. “The Austrian,” wrote the Austrian political scientist Werner Pfeifenberger in 1982,

allowed himself to be socialized by neutrality so much, that he expected from it, if not admittedly, then at least secretly, miracles. Invasion plans of others, when they occasionally leaked out from world powers, could not seriously disturb him. Broad effects from educational material about civil national defense are largely lacking. Despite illustrative examples in the world, the Austrian is not prepared for the contingency of unrest imported from abroad with subsequent “calls for help.” Whether Austrian neutrality will one day withstand a national crisis is thus still an open question. Until now Austrian neutrality has been essentially a fair weather neutrality with occasional clouding like in 1956 and 1968.

Complacency, for example, seemed to characterize the Austrian reaction to the tense situation in Europe following the initial erection of the Berlin Wall on August 13, 1961.

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208 Stöckl, 166.
1961. On October 4, 1961, General Fussenegger demanded to know in written form from Defense Minister Karl Schleinzer what decision the Austrian government would take if the Soviet Union suddenly demanded military transit rights during a crisis. Schleinzer refused to even discuss the possibility with Chancellor Alfons Gorbach. (Perhaps it did not matter, for the Bundesheer at the time could only mobilize 9,539 men after 48 hours.)

Low-risk assessments of Warsaw Pact attack were not without justification. Rather than seeing détente as a danger to small countries, some Austrians saw good relations between the blocs as precluding a Soviet interest in risking a major conflict for the sake of imperialist conquest. “I cannot imagine,” stated in 1984 the former minister for trade and reconstruction and vice-chancellor Fritz Bock,

that anyone in Moscow would have warlike intentions against the West as is feared in some places. The attempt to extend the Soviet realm to the Rhine or even to the Atlantic would be a case of a new world war. Above all, a military action against Western Europe would also have the destruction of the West European economy as a consequence, and this would certainly not lie in the interest of the East bloc states.

Interviewed on July 12, 2005, Neuhold similarly argued that the “Soviets emphasized the status quo” in Europe with their actions in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and other diplomatic venues. Neuhold’s personal travels to Eastern Europe also emphasized to him the decrepit state of the Communist bloc, thereby calling into question “how realistic” scenarios of a general European war were and the strength of any Communist threat.

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212 Maria Sporrer and Herbert Steiner, eds., Fritz Bock: Zeitzeuge (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1984), 119.
213 Hanspeter Neuhold, interview by author in the foyer of Vienna’s Diplomatische Akademie on July 12, 2005.
Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact, reflected Neuhold’s low estimation of the Communist bloc in 2006, writing that even the Soviet army’s unopposed occupation of Czechoslovakia “ran into bottlenecks and its supply lines became strained in ways that could be fatal in combat conditions. This was the army supposedly capable reaching the Rhine in a week!”

Interviewed a day before Neuhold, Vetschera at the National Defense Academy also gave chances of a general European war during the Cold War a low probability, even during crisis periods such as the building of the Berlin Wall.

Even the opening of Warsaw Pact archives after the Cold War did not necessarily heighten Austrian concerns in retrospect. “Now there were and are,” assessed the Austrian historian Michael Gehler in 2002,

for all possible war contingencies sand box games and plans on the part of the military. To deduce farreaching political conclusions therefrom and therefore take to the field against neutrality, however, seems not only problematic, but also unsuited for judging the present situation. The fact is, the Red Army did not march into Austria and the former Soviet Union thoroughly observed and respected the foreign policy status of the country, indeed, there developed even a kind of tradition of neutrality partnership with Russia, which saw Austria as a “role model” for other countries or as a kind of “model pupil,” a tradition that Vladimir Putin also recently attempted to revive.

Rauchensteiner agreed during an interview on July 26, 2005, calling Hungarian plans during the Cold War for an advance into Austria “operational gaming.”

Traditionally all militaries, Rauchensteiner observed, have had contingency plans, including the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the German Kaiserreich that prepared to

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215 Vetschera interview.
fight each other before World War I even while being bound together in an alliance. Rauchensteiner, in fact, saw no real threat in the Warsaw Pact “after Stalin.” Moreover, Rauchensteiner’s examination of revealed Warsaw Pact plans found them to be “defensively-oriented” like those of NATO.217

Rauchensteiner’s attribution of defensive intent to the Warsaw Pact plans revealed so far will come as a surprise to many in NATO countries and elsewhere accustomed to hearing about the Communist bloc’s menacing military arsenal. Yet, as analyzed by the Austrian journalist Peter Michael Lingens in 2000, these plans do indeed assume wars beginning with a NATO attack. Lingens, though, questioned whether fears of NATO aggression were genuine or merely imputed in the traditional manner of aggressive dictatorships as political justification for aggression by the Warsaw Pact. Whatever the case, Lingens ominously observed that all revealed Warsaw Pact plans assumed a conduct of military operations such that the main fighting would not take place on Warsaw Pact territory (i.e. quick counterattack following a presumed NATO “attack”).218

Military documents released from former Warsaw Pact archives support Lingens’ contentions. A review of some 25,000 East German military documents by the Defense Ministry of unified Germany released in February 1992, for example, concluded that the “assumption that NATO had committed prior aggression” was a “standard one within the ideological framework of the WP [Warsaw Pact].”219 Not only the previously cited

217 Manfred Rauchensteiner, interview by author in Rauchensteiner’s office at the Heeresgeschichtliches Museum on July 26, 2005.
Hungarian exercise from 1965, but also an October 14, 1964, Czechoslovakian war plan outlining a nine-day Warsaw Pact offensive towards Lyon, France, assumed a NATO attack as the beginning of a general European war.\textsuperscript{220}

A previous Polish war plan from 1951, moreover, not only took NATO aggression for granted but also outlined how to meet such an attack \textit{defensively} at “Poland’s sea border along the Baltic coast,” the “only border at which forces of potential adversaries can directly operate.” The war plan saw indications for such a landing in a presumed “failure of the Anglo-Americans to withdraw landing equipment used for the operations in Normandy” and in a then nonexisting “German army being now created in West Germany.” The Polish planners also assumed that, despite a policy of neutrality, Sweden would contribute resources such as airports and “fishing fleets” to such an invasion alongside Sweden’s NATO neighbors Denmark and Norway.\textsuperscript{221} “Ironically,” noted Mastny, “at a time when NATO was haunted by the nightmare of armed communist hordes sweeping all but unopposed through Europe, the 1951 plan was unequivocally defensive.”\textsuperscript{222} Czechoslovakian plans drafted the same year, Czech scholar and diplomat Petr Luňák wrote in 2006, “remained unequivocally defensive,” although they were to create “advantageous conditions for an offensive.”\textsuperscript{223}


\textsuperscript{221} For a copy and English translation of this war plan, see \textit{Polish War Plan of 1951} on the \textit{Taking Lyon on the Ninth Day?} website.

\textsuperscript{222} See Mastny’s \textit{Introduction} on the \textit{Taking Lyon on the Ninth Day?} website.

\textsuperscript{223} Luňák, “War Plans from Stalin to Brezhnev: The Czechoslovak Pivot,” 74.
In the Soviet Union itself, an August 8, 1964, memorandum from Colonel General Petr I. Ivashutin, head of the Soviet Main Intelligence Administration, to the head of the Soviet General Staff Academy, Marshall Matvei V. Zakharov, also imputed an “aggressive policy” of “global imperialist reaction” to NATO. Supposedly this “aggressive NATO bloc” maintained “substantial ground troops in the state of constant readiness in Europe.” Colonel General Ivashutin dismissed the fact that “at the outset, many NATO maneuvers usually practice defense (or the so-called ‘mobile’ defense, which is essentially a retreat)” and found it “not too hard to discern a simple propaganda trick here.” Ivashutin concluded that “by no means are NATO forces preparing for defense,” but rather for a “rush deep into the territory of the socialist countries without any obstacles” after a nuclear strike.224

Warsaw Pact leaders such as Ivashutin, Mastny noted, viewed “NATO’s defensive preparations” as a “sham” even “in their most secret assessments,” something that “has been something of a revelation once the archives of the former Warsaw Pact countries began to open their doors as a result of the fall of communism in 1989-91.” This Warsaw Pact “assumption that the war would start with a Western surprise attack was mainly justified in Marxist-Leninist terms by the implacable hostility of an inherently ‘imperialistic’ capitalist system.” “The Soviet generals,” contended Mastny, however, were no fools. They knew well enough that NATO was preparing for a defense against them. But they were so mesmerized by their still vivid memories of the very nearly successful German surprise attack on their country in 1941 that they could not imagine any other reliable strategy than that of striking at the enemy before he could strike at them.225

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Thus, despite official pronouncements emphasizing defense, Warsaw Pact training focused almost exclusively on the conduct of offensives. The German Defense Ministry, for example, found that “except for a few exercises in the late 1980s, defense against a NATO attack was not practiced because such an attack obviously was considered implausible.” The Defense Ministry concluded that the East German documents in its possession after the Cold War clearly show how, through political decisions at the highest levels, the armed forces of the former Eastern Bloc were organized and constantly trained in exercises to carry out the option of an offensive war. Only in the mid-1980s, with the advent of the Gorbachev era, was greater emphasis given to defensive tasks, though even this did not lead in any fundamental way to the abandonment of earlier plans.226

In a series of interviews with former Czechoslovakian army officers, General Václav Vitanovský of the general staff similarly found army maneuvers “interesting” in that “defensive combat was never exercised. It was somehow assumed that it had been over, that the counter-offensive was started.” “I just don’t remember,” Vitanovský recalled, taking any defensive measures, “i.e. that we would defend ourselves to a depth of some 100 or 200 kilometers.” His colleague, General Ján Franko of the former Czechoslovakian army general staff, also reminisced that defense was accentuated on the regimental level, maybe on the divisional level, but army-wide, I never saw in those 15 or 20 years of mine an exercise or an intention with somebody being assigned a defensive objective: “And you mustn’t let the enemy beyond such and such line.” So defense was more of an issue of tactics.227

226 Kramer, 13.
The German Defense Ministry’s East German document review also concluded that in the Warsaw Pact “defense against a NATO attack was not practiced because such an attack obviously was considered implausible.” “Normally,” the ministry found, only mobilization and counterattacks were practiced. The preparation and conduct of a defense against an attack, which was the principal aim and central feature of all NATO exercises, was certainly not of comparable importance as an exercise topic for the NVA [East Germany’s Nationale Volksarmee] and WP [Warsaw Pact].

“To conform with the Warsaw Pact’s fundamental assumptions about the enemy,” noted the German Defense Ministry, “the operational planning of the Pact had to depict the intentions and capabilities of NATO’s armed forces in an extremely exaggerated and false way.” “A standard assumption in the plans and exercises of both the NVA and the Warsaw Pact,” for instance,

was that NATO intended to attack in the direction of Berlin with four attack groups. The fact that NATO did not have sufficient forces for such an attack posed no problem at all for NVA planners. On paper, for example, the Bundeswehr (without its territorial forces) could simply be increased by 2 corps with a total of 12 divisions. By supplementing this with other deliberately false information, NVA planners could create the illusion of a 6-to-1 NATO force advantage in the “Berlin Direction,” which certainly appeared to be an alarming threat. Considering that such manipulations went on for many years, it is not surprising that as late as August 1990 (!), at a command training session of a military district, NATO was depicted as harboring far-reaching aggressive intentions.

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228 Kramer, 14-15. The Warsaw Pact staff exercise Buria (“Storm”) during East-West tensions over Berlin in late September and early October 1961 reflected Warsaw Pact understandings of quickly taking war to the enemy. The exercise assumed a NATO effort to militarily reopen transit corridors to West Berlin after East Germany closed them following a unilateral peace treaty with the Soviet Union. “Buria,” wrote German scholar Matthias Uhl, “seemed to reflect the view then held by the Soviet General Staff that all continental Europe could and must be brought under the control of the Warsaw Pact within 10-15 days by means of massive use of nuclear weapons.” Buria assumed Warsaw Pact operations “smashing the European NATO forces in fast, deep operations with a daily attack speed of 80-100 km.” See: Matthias Uhl, “Storming on to Paris: The 1961 Buria Exercise and the Planned Solution of the Berlin Crisis,” in War Plans and Alliances in the Cold War, 46, 52, 64-65.

229 Kramer, 16, 18. Even with these fictional Bundeswehr divisions, NVA staff officers still “found that the enemy numbers were insufficient for their planning,” with the result that “extra NATO forces were ingeniously ‘located,’ so that, for example, in addition to the 12 Bundeswehr divisions there
“The NVA’s so-called Intelligence Directorate,” the Defense Ministry observed, “did not subscribe to its own obvious falsifications.” The directorate had available intelligence findings and judgments derived by the Ministry for State Security and the military intelligence organs of the NVA from original NATO and Bundeswehr documents, which included such items as data from the logistics command of the West German army during 1984 and all the WINTEX materials since 1983.\(^{230}\)

Yet in the NVA any documents such as maps indicating NATO’s true defensive dispositions “were classified as top secret, and were therefore available to only an exclusive circle of people.” While “there is no doubt that the highest-ranking commanders of the NVA were fully aware of the true situation,” briefing documents suggest that perhaps “even the National Defense Council of the GDR [German Democratic Republic] was not kept accurately informed by the defense minister at the time.” NATO’s longstanding “in-depth defense system along the borders of the Warsaw Pact,” therefore, barely figured at all in the exercises and staff planning documents of the NVA intelligence director. The system was kept secret from the participants in exercises, and therefore had no influence on the Warsaw Pact’s offensive operations. Not until 1987 did the first general references to NATO’s system appear in NVA documents, and the system was not fully described until 1990.\(^{231}\)

Predictably, Austria’s noted security policy hardliner, Erich Reiter, has taken a more critical view of former Warsaw Pact intentions than Rauchensteiner. Against claims of a defensive Communist bloc, Reiter objected that the critical Soviet war plans were now 17 (!) French divisions. Even the Spanish armed forces were factored in as a source of additional offensive potential in Central Europe.”\(^{230}\) Ibid, 17-18. \(^{231}\) Ibid, 16-18.
from the Cold War are still inaccessible. As Christian F. Ostermann of the Woodrow Wilson Center’s *Cold War International History Project* observed in 2001, “much of the military history of ‘the other side’ of the Cold War is still shrouded in secrecy as large parts of the records of the former Warsaw Pact remain classified in the Russian military archives.” However, documents revealed so far would seem to support Reiter’s caution as the “more accessible archives of the Soviet Union’s former allies in Eastern and Central Europe have provided a ‘backdoor’ into Warsaw Pact military thinking and planning.”

Because Soviet plans “depended to a significant degree on the participation of the Warsaw Pact allies,” Mastny agreed in 2006 that “what remains in Moscow under lock and key can be largely substituted for by documents from the more readily accessible eastern European archives.”

Although conscious plans for aggression by the Communist bloc’s leading power remain unknown, the policy practitioner Reiter qualified the historian Rauchensteiner’s evaluation in hindsight of documented war plans. No one during the Cold War, Reiter has argued, could have ascertained Warsaw Pact intentions such that the ignoring of potential risks would have been responsible.

Finally, it is questionable what the concept of “defense” could have meant within the warped mindset of the Communist bloc’s leaders. Warsaw Pact assumptions of NATO starting an aggressive war, Mastny wrote, “was but one illustration of the sway ideology continued to hold over leaders whom many Westerners wishfully came to regard as ‘normal’ practitioners of power politics, presiding over a state like any

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232 Erich Reiter, interview by author at Reiter’s office at the Austrian Defense Ministry’s Büro (und Direktion) für Sicherheitspolitik in Vienna’s Stiftskaserne on August 3, 2005.
235 Reiter interview.
other.” In the Soviet Union, moreover, the “Soviet military” was the “most ideologically committed, as well as the most disciplined, part of the country’s establishment.” For Mastny, “there cannot be a doubt that, regardless of the feasibility of the plans” Soviet officers “had drawn, they would have had no qualms about trying to put them into effect. Herein was a clear and present danger.”

This Soviet leadership, as shown during the years under Josef Stalin noted by Rauchensteiner, was also not above aggressive designs. Stalin met with Communist military and political leaders from Eastern Europe in January 1951 when the United States was nearing defeat in Korea. Stalin ordered a massive expansion of East European armies for the next two years in order, according to Mastny, “to exploit to communism’s advantage the favorable situation he believed would develop in Europe.” “Tantalizing bits and pieces found in Russian sources,” Mastny has observed, suggest that during Stalin’s last sickly years his propensity for risk-taking and possible catastrophic miscalculation may have grown into bizarre proportions. He is said to have ordered the production of 10,000 Il-28 long-range bombers, to be stationed on the arctic ice and ready to take off to drop atomic bombs on US targets, presumably in support of an amphibious assault on Alaska.

“Stalin’s death in March 1953,” Luňák noted, means we can only speculate as to what his intentions were in the long run. Given that we know so little about Soviet war planning at the time, the absence of documents in the Czechoslovak archives containing detailed offensive military planning—beyond vague references to creating advantageous conditions for an offensive—does not automicatally confirm Stalin’s stance as irresversibly defensive….It was perhaps just a matter of time before the increasing eastern military power and the consolidation of

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238 Ibid., 18.
Eastern European Soviet dependencies would allow for a strategy that was worthy of true Bolsheviks.\textsuperscript{239}

Austria, of course, obtained its independence and became neutral precisely during the relaxation of Cold War tensions following Stalin’s death. Nonetheless, the threat of the Communist bloc, calculated or not, remained. In the end, perhaps the only thing to be said with certainty is that it was good, in the words of Neuhold, that Austria’s military “bluff was not called” during the Cold War.\textsuperscript{240}

\textsuperscript{239} Luňák, “War Plans from Stalin to Brezhnev: The Czechoslovak Pivot,” 76.

\textsuperscript{240} Neuhold interview.
Chapter XII
Neutrality Assessed: Tertium non Datur

The Narrowness of Neutrality: Neutrality’s Requirements

Throughout the years of the Cold War, various scholars in Austria and elsewhere have attempted to stipulate the requirements necessary for a country to be permanently neutral, something worth reviewing now that Austria has over 50 years of experience with neutrality following the anniversary year of 2005. At various conferences during the previous State Treaty anniversary year of 1980, for example, Austrian international relations scholar Hanspeter Neuhold cited “at least five such framework conditions” required by any successful policy of permanent neutrality. “First,” argued Neuhold, “in such a solution there must exist in the concerned region an approximate balance of power between, above all, the great powers. Secondly, relatively low conflict intensity must dominate between the great powers, as was also the case in 1955.”¹ Thus, the great powers can “mutually lame each other in their drive towards expansion,” and the “striving for increased power at the cost of the other great power, even at a high price, recedes into the background.”²

Neuhold in 1991 described the “success of neutrality” as being “quite decisively” dependent “upon a balance of power between the conflict parties.” “If one side wins a preponderance of power,” he wrote, “neutral states come almost unavoidably under pressure to make concessions—even in violation of neutrality—to that side and to

therefore further strengthen the power imbalance.”

3 “Without an evening out of power relations,” agreed the Austrian diplomat Emil Staffelmayr in 1976, “neutrality cannot develop and cannot last long.”

4 “The permanently neutral state,” emphasized Austrian economist Hans Mayrzedt, “must follow developments among the opposing alliance systems and powers with great interest, because the neutral state under certain conditions would especially quickly and perceptibly come to perceive a change in the balance of power due to the neutral’s particularly precarious position.”

5 One significant example of the “pressure of the stronger” for Bundesheer general Wilhelm Kunter in 1981, then director of Austria’s National Defense Academy, was “Finland’s difficult situation” as a distant Western outpost along the Soviet Union’s northern border.

Neuhold in 1991 similarly found that “the experiences of Sweden and Switzerland, particularly during the Second World War, offer in this regard impressive and sobering examples from the perspective of neutrality.”

Staffelmayr agreed that “the example of Switzerland in the first phase of the Second World War” showed how a neutral country is “exposed to its greatest strains in times of unilateral military superiority.” World War II Switzerland reminded Staffelmayr of the supposed declaration to the Swiss by Napoleon, once as dominant as Adolf Hitler in Europe, that

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“before me your neutrality is a word empty of meaning.”8 Like the Austrians confronting over time their role in the Third Reich, postwar Sweden and Switzerland have had to face a historical record in which these two countries deviated from neutrality due to fear of the Third Reich’s power and/or a desire for profit. Austrian historian Günter Bischof noted in 1999 that

the Swiss and the Swedes are going through similar tectonic shifts that reveal deeper layers of complicity among these neutral countries in helping the Nazis store away their ill-gotten gains. Again, dearly embraced national mythologies make way for a complex past peopled with real people—both bystanders and perpetrators. The hibernating record of the Second World War at last is coming to light among these neutral European nations with their carefully cultivated false notions of innocence.9

Austrian journalist Peter Michael Lingens in 2000, for example, recalled that Sweden supplied the Third Reich with iron ore (something not inherently in violation of neutrality law, provided that Sweden would have been equally willing to supply the Allies) and allowed German troops to transit through Sweden. Switzerland, for its part, extended credits to the Third Reich after the fall of France in 1940. This was even though the Swiss army’s commander in chief, Corpscommandeur Henri Guisan, had previously arranged in secret (supposedly even without the knowledge of the Swiss parliament or Bundesrat) with the French army’s commander in chief, General Maurice Gamelin, for French troops to support Switzerland if attacked by Germany.10

Such arrangements, as noted by the American political scientist Boleslaw A. Boczek, followed Swiss general staff consultations with Austria and Germany during  

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8 Staffelmayr, 342-343.
9 Günter Bischof, Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-55: The Leverage of the Weak, King’s College Cold War History Series (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), x.
World War I “concerning common military measures in case of an attack on Switzerland. These activities were and still are incompatible with the traditional interpretation of Swiss neutrality.”

Particularly with increasing information having come to light about how Switzerland saved itself by, and profited from, cooperating with the Third Reich, Lingens colleague at Profil magazine, Georg Hoffman-Ostenhof, wrote in 1997 that the “old and well-known reference to neutrality along Swiss lines sounds today like a macabre joke.”

“Low conflict intensity between the conflicting parties,” Neuhold found on the other hand in a 1988 book,
is equally important. Détente between them tends to enlarge the neutrals’ freedom of action. Each party is then more likely to tolerate good and intensive relations—above all in the economic sphere—between its opponents and the neutral country. Control of the territory of neutrals will be perceived as less urgent by the adversaries if tension between them is low. In such a situation, the neutral states are also in a better position to render, in their own interests, those useful third-party services within the context of their policy of neutrality for which they are particularly qualified by virtue of their status—and thus to contribute further to the reduction of tension. These functions cannot be imposed on disputants but need their consent. Conversely, mounting hostility between those conflicting parties also increases the probability of the neutrals facing the above mentioned “neutrality dilemma” of being pressured into taking sides and having to antagonize at least one side.

Only after fulfillment of the first two requirements, Neuhold observed in 1980, “can the third precondition come into play; this consists of a relatively low geostrategic, political importance of the concerned candidate, which leads to the great powers being able to agree unanimously to release a territory rather than dividing it, above all then

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Neuhold wrote in 1988,

has a decisive impact on its ability to opt for and to maintain (permanent) neutrality. Its territory must not be regarded as so vitally important by any Great Power that it would be ready to pay even a high price to obtain possession of that piece of land. A balance of power among the main international actors—in particular, in the neutral’s vicinity—and a low level of tension also facilitate the necessary, at least tacit, agreement among those powers on a joint “hands off policy” vis-à-vis the neutral country concerned.\(^\text{15}\)

Neuhold in 1980 qualified this requirement further, stating that the neutral state may

not lie in areas that the great powers view as their exclusive zones of influence, but rather must find themselves, so to speak, far from the firing line. The situation of regions disputed by the great powers, in which positional gains are still sought, has a disastrous effect, even if the political and territorial status quo has already been accepted in other areas.\(^\text{16}\)

“Fourthly,” Neuhold added,

it appears to me that the state in question that is supposed to benefit from such a package solution has to bring forth itself as, so to speak, a dowry a high degree of domestic cohesion and also a minimum of potential power, along with the stability of the state’s environment, upon which the state unfortunately can have very little influence, in order for the state on its part to not sink to the level of a flashpoint and a plaything of great power politics.\(^\text{17}\)

Explaining this fourth condition, Neuhold stated that a “certain power potential” was necessary, “not least in the military realm, in order to allow the costs of aggressions

\(^{15}\) Neuhold, “The Neutral States of Europe: Similarities and Differences,” 132.
\(^{16}\) Neuhold, “Der Staatsvertrag als Grundlage der Österreichischen Außenpolitik,” 162.
\(^{17}\) 25 Jahre Staatsvertrag, vol. 1, 165.
against the neutral to appear disproportionately high in comparison to their value.”

“Neutrals,” Neuhold clarified in 1988,

ought to prevent too wide a gap between their own (in particular, military) power potential and that of the conflicting parties. If they can make an aggressor pay no more than a token “entrance and occupation price”, they run the risk of becoming helpless pawns in the fairly ruthless chess game of world politics. Since keeping pace in the arms race in which the Great Powers are engaged is becoming prohibitively expensive and technologically difficult for small neutral states, they have a vested interest in disarmament and arms control. Agreements to this effect are a particular windfall if they are concluded only by other states, provided that the power equilibrium among them is not tilted.

According to Neuhold in 1980, meanwhile, under the fourth condition a neutral state “further needed stability in its neighborhood, which puts a bar before the danger of recurring changes of the status quo.” Internally as well the “candidate for neutrality” required a “high degree of inner stability” so that “its behavior appears predictable and no abrupt and, above all, radical changes of its political course must be feared.”

“A neutral country,” Neuhold clarified in 1988, “must worry about its internal cohesion, and first and foremost about a unified popular support for neutrality. Domestic instability in a neutral state could tempt others to fish in troubled political waters there.” In conflict with aforementioned power requirements of armed neutrality, though, “this menace may in turn confront the government of a neutral country with the dilemma between ‘guns and butter.’ Should it invest the bulk of its limited resources in national defense or rather

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18 Neuhold, “Der Staatsvertrag als Grundlage der Österreichischen Außenpolitik,” 162.
19 Neuhold, “The Neutral States of Europe: Similarities and Differences,” 132-133. Kunter in 1981 agreed that “Austria, wherever possible, must exert its influence such that the military accumulation is indeed reduced, however in a balanced manner so that the power balance is partly reestablished.” See: Kuntner, 109.
20 Neuhold, “Der Staatsvertrag als Grundlage der Österreichischen Außenpolitik,” 162.
spend, for example, a sizable part of its financial means on programs to reduce unemployment?"  

“Fifthly,” Neuhold in 1980 was “of the opinion that all these preconditions that I have just named have to be fulfilled over a considerable period of time so that the state in question can build up a corresponding, if it can be called this, ‘capital of confidence.’”

This was “especially” true in relation to the “great powers.” The ÖVP politician Franz Karasek alluded to this theme already in 1971, noting the important historical difference between Austria and its Swiss role model. “The last 16 years,” he wrote in an Österreichische Monatshefte article,

stood under the auspices of consolidating this neutrality declaration. It did not suffice merely to conclude neutrality and to notify the state community. It is often overlooked, whenever neutrality is considered, that a de facto application of neutrality lasting more than 250 years preceded the legal anchoring of Swiss neutrality, which occurred at the 1815 Vienna Congress. In other words, Switzerland in 1815 had it incomparably easier than Austria in 1955. Switzerland did not have to first acquire the confidence of the state community in this neutrality. This neutrality was believed because it was a fact long proven in practice.

As if all of this was not enough, Neuhold discerned another requirement in 1988. “Finally,” he wrote, “one important pre-condition for the neutrals’ success has not yet been mentioned here: their need for a better understanding of and more sympathy for their complex status and the resulting problems by public opinion and governments in other countries.”

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23 Neuhold, “Der Staatsvertrag als Grundlage der Österreichischen Außenpolitik,” 162.

Neutrality Assessed
Other scholars have more or less emulated Neuhold’s analysis. Neuhold’s Austrian colleague Christine Stöckl, for example, repeated many of Neuhold’s requirements, writing in 1985 that the permanent neutrality “candidate must be characterized by subordinate strategic and low economic importance.” Stöckl also found that “geopolitically a relative distance to the great powers’ exclusive zones of influence must distinguish the neutral candidate, and there must be equally geopolitical stability in the neighborhood.”

Similarly, the American scholar Audrey Kurth Cronin found in 1986 that the “Austrian experience indicates that there are at least six conditions necessary for a state to declare itself neutral between opposing power blocs.” “First,” Cronin determined, “the territorial boundaries of the state must be clearly agreed, both by the great powers and by the smaller state itself.” In Austria’s case, “early great power agreement upon Austria’s [pre-Anschluß] 1937 boundaries and the Austrians’ clear lack of expansionist ambitions or capabilities satisfied this requirement.” “Second,” Cronin continued, “the state in question must have a single national government capable of undertaking to guarantee its own neutrality.” Perhaps somewhat redundantly in light of neutrality’s definition, Cronin’s third condition was the tautology that the neutral “state must not allow foreign actors to use its territory for military purposes.” “Fourth,” Cronin judged in a diplomatic twist on Neuhold’s geopolitical calculations,

the great powers must be able to save face and maintain prestige when a country chooses neutrality between them. The unusual thing about the withdrawal from Austria was that both major actors gained public approbation: the United States (and its allies, France and Great Britain)

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claimed a diplomatic and moral victory while the Soviet Union earned diplomatic benefits by making a seemingly dramatic concession.²⁷

“Fifth,” Cronin continued, “there must be clear agreement between the great powers and the country itself about the defensive posture of a potentially neutral state. Will it be armed or unarmed? Will there be limits on armaments?” In a somewhat simplified and generous assessment given Soviet disinterest in a pro-Western Austria’s armament, Cronin wrote that “both sides” of the Cold War wanted Austria “to be armed. Complicated motives, East and West, led to this consensus: the Western Allies saw Austrian defenses pointed east, the Soviet Union saw Austrian defenses pointed north, and the Austrians, officially anyway, maintained a tactful silence.” “Finally,” Cronin concluded in an echo of others such as Neuhold, “the country itself cannot be of such absolutely vital strategic, historic, or economic importance to any great power that it would risk war over it.” Like Neuhold, Cronin restricted the scope of neutrality even more, stipulating that

these six conditions are necessary requirements for neutrality, but they may not be sufficient in themselves to guarantee a successful neutral policy...additional international circumstances often complicate the position of any particular state. The Austrian experience shows, however, that only a state that meets all of the above conditions will be able to assume a position of neutrality between opposing great powers.²⁸

Continuity, Community, and the Uniqueness of Neutrality

The “Austrian experience” and the preconditions for neutrality listed by Cronin, Neuhold, and others also seemed to entail that effective permanent neutrality could only

²⁸ Ibid, 169.
exist as a natural national development. Contrary to Wolfgang Lassman’s writings from the Nuremberg trials in 1946, a tradition of impartiality had to precede effective permanent neutrality, rather than vice-versa. In contrast to its Swiss model, though, Austrian neutrality emerged overnight as a de facto foreign imposition upon a country with clear, longstanding partisan sympathies, most recently and brutally manifested in the großdeutschen insanity of the Third Reich. That the Soviet Union never fully trusted Austria’s neutrality following the Habsburg Empire, Adolf Hitler’s Operation Barbarossa, and Austria’s decided rejection of Communism is perfectly understandable. That the Soviet Union insisted upon arms restrictions in the State Treaty originally crafted (by the West!) to prevent a recurrence of Austria’s Nazi past but ruinous to Austria’s defense efforts under neutrality constitutes one of the more bizarre ironies of history.

The Austrians, for their part, never trusted their own attempts at armed neutrality after decades, if not centuries, of military misadventures, both foreign and domestic. Unlike Switzerland, Austria could offer no proud history of citizen-soldiers resolutely defending a mountain fastness. Rather, Austria had only a meager Bundesheer, the cobbled-together and miserly supported remnant of past unloved Austrian militaries, standing athwart some of Europe’s most well-traveled thoroughfares. That Austrians ultimately looked to NATO for their defense was only logical and a fact surely not lost upon the Soviet Union.

For the 1968 book Neutralization and World Politics, furthermore, the requirements of permanent neutrality meant that this could never be a unilateral decision. “The viability of neutralization,” the book’s authors wrote, “is acutely dependent on the existence and reasonable continuity of convergent (though not necessarily common)
interests among the concerned governments.”

“Even a quick glance at” Neuhold’s “neutrality variables” led Neuhold himself in 1988 to “some rather sobering insights,” the first being that “the countries concerned can themselves shape those factors only marginally.”

“Thus,” concurred the Bundesheer officer and Austrian security studies analyst Heinrich Payr in 1990,

"even if neutrality has its origins in an act of will of the concerned state, it still does not lie in the state’s power to bring about these conditions; if the decision is supposed to make sense, so must it also lie in the interests of the participating parties. There is not in my opinion, therefore, a completely free decision for permanent neutrality."

The case of Austrian neutrality revealed considerable partisan calculations of power in both East and West. The denial of Austria to NATO under neutrality offered the Soviet bloc a key strategic advantage by splitting the Western alliance via Austria’s geography running east-west across NATO’s line of defense. By contrast, Sweden’s largely north-south territorial extension allowed Sweden to function in the so-called “Nordic balance” as a truly neutral fulcrum between NATO members Denmark and Norway and a democratic but Soviet-dominated Finland. This buffered NATO’s presence near the Soviet Union’s borders and allowed the Soviet Union to tolerate a Western society close to strategic Soviet cities such as Leningrad (St. Petersburg) and Murmansk. A total Soviet subjugation of Finland, on the other hand, would have induced Sweden to join NATO.

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30 Neuhold, “The Neutral States of Europe: Similarities and Differences,” 133.

31 Heinrich Payr, Die schwierige Kunst der Neutralität (Vienna: Böhlaue Verlag, 1990), 77.

For their part, Western policy makers accepted a strategic disadvantage in Austria in exchange for a political advantage. Soviet evacuation from Austria would count as a Western success in the Cold War and project subversive Western political influence into the Soviet bloc, as the Hungarian revolt showed. The Western occupying powers, moreover, could not maintain the friendship of the Austrians while ignoring the overwhelming Austrian desire for freedom.

Thus, despite the connotation of codification implicit in the term “neutrality law,” Israeli scholar Efraim Karsh discerned a highly pragmatic basis for neutrality. “The *raison d'être* of neutrality is political,” Karsch wrote in 1988, while its institutionalisation in international law is merely an instrumental act. Hence, without a correlation between the political problem to which neutrality seeks to find a solution, and the various modes of solution offered by international law, the term neutrality has no practical significance. In the absence of solid components—conditions, circumstances, power relationships, interests and specific political goals determining the fate of neutrality at a given time—it will, in effect, remain a dead letter in the annals of international law.  

Not only the establishment, but also the longterm practice of neutrality was difficult. The 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia indicated this difficulty as Austrians worried that new superpower strategic calculations under détente devalued Austrian independence. Compared to powerful countries and alliances, according to Payr, the “neutral small state can be hardly more than a survival artist, a kind of Schwejk in global politics, and its neutral policies can be hardly more than the ‘cunning of the weak.’”  

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34 Payr, 78. Payr is referring to the fictional soldier Schwejk created by the Czech author Jaroslav Hušák in the early 1920s. Schwejk used humorous cunning to avoid danger while “serving” in the Austro-
simple and rather pessimistic: small and neutral is, in the main, not beautiful but difficult. Permanent neutrality is not a bed of roses on which the nations concerned can “sit idly by” as more or less detached spectators of world affairs. Their position is better compared with the search by Ulysses for the thin line of survival between Scylla and Charybdis. The winds in that strait are unfortunately to a high degree beyond the neutral states’ control and change frequently.  

On the other hand, permanent neutrality could have its advantages. “There is a certain affinity,” the American scholar Thomas O. Schlesinger wrote in 1972, “between neutrality and small state status.” Permanent neutrality “promotes self-respect of the small state because its most likely policy alternative consists of dependence on a major power with the humiliation which that entails.”

The difficulty of permanent neutrality’s indirect multilateral character and domestic requirements, meanwhile, posed for Neuhold in 1980 “ultimately the question concerning the model character of the Austria problem’s solution in the year 1955, i.e. this solution’s applicability to other states.” “The answer to this question,” Neuhold concluded, “must come up fundamentally negative, because the requirements for a harmonious withdrawal of great powers from an area that is in turn given the status of permanent neutrality can only be brought forth with difficulty.” “From these considerations,” Neuhold summarized, “the conclusion allows itself to be drawn that the State Treaty and the permanent neutrality of Austria represent a special and lucky case that hardly comes into question for other states.”

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Neutrality Assessed

Payr, respectively, agreed that “neutralization is a concept of limited applicability” and

that

it is logically excluded to conceive of the value of neutrality in absolute terms: it is tied to the situation and cannot be “exported” without further ado. Therefore neutrality surely represents no recipe for the solution of international problems or even conflicts. Rather the opposite is the case: if there were such a patent solution, neutrality would probably be superfluous.  

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Large Countries need not Apply: The Inapplicability of Neutrality to Great Powers

Undeterred by skeptics like Payr, however, various proposals to “neutralize” countries in conflict emerged during the Cold War, often inspired by developments in Austria. As feared by many West German supporters of the Western alliance beginning with Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, many of these proposals had Germany as their object. Here neutrality attracted considerable popular support long after the 1950s. “The temptation of a neutrality solution à l’autrichienne,” reflected former French high commissioner General Marie-Emile Béthouart in his 1966 memoirs,

already exercised in Germany, before its entrance into the Atlantic community, a certain influence that remains latent and could be reborn whenever there are new delays or obstacles in the political unification of Europe. This calculation probably played a role in the Soviet decision [to neutralize Austria]. A neutral Germany containing an element already Communist would be, in effect, a vulnerable Germany. 39

According to the confidential results of an official government poll in March 1980, 45% of respondents considered the “military neutrality of the Federal Republic and the GDR” as a suitable security policy while 34% were opposed. A private survey by the

38 Black, Falk, Knorr, and Young, v; and Payr, 77.
West German Emnid polling firm the following August found 43% of respondents supporting neutrality. Among supporters of West Germany’s Social Democratic party, the SPD, there was even a slight majority (49% to 47%) in favor of neutrality.40

“Along with the protest against the nuclear arms buildup,” wrote Austrian historian Andreas Maislinger in 1983,

people in the peace movement attempt to find possible ways out of the armaments insanity. In the Federal Republic of Germany three demands are thereby indicated again and again:

- Freedom from nuclear weapons
- Defensive defense
- Neutrality.41

“All three demands,” noted Maislinger, “are fulfilled in Austria. Many adherents of foreign peace initiatives thus see in the Republic of Austria a kind of role model.”42

The retired Bundeswehr major general Jochen Löser and the West German security studies scholar Ulrike Schilling, for example, proposed a neutral Central Europe encompassing Austria, the Benelux countries, Czechoslovakia, a united Germany, Hungary, and Poland in their 1984 book Neutralität für Mitteleuropa: Das Ende der Blöcke. Following a review of Austria’s adoption, and Adenauer’s rejection, of neutrality in the chapter “Tu Felix Austria,” the authors concluded that

Austria enjoys a favored position in Europe since almost 30 years. Recognized in its voluntarily adopted role as a neutral state between East and West, Austria has proven that it is possible to secure a free societal order in the direct proximity of two antagonistic blocks….Vienna comes

42 Ibid.
into consideration like no other city as the political center for a zone of peace in Mitteleuropa.43

Two years earlier, Dieter S. Lutz, a scholar at Hamburg University’s Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik, predicted the following advantages of German neutrality:

- A neutralization of the two German states could contribute to the stabilization of their conflict-prone relations and especially to the pacification of the continually latent flashpoint Berlin.
- Under the auspices of détente policies, the typical functions of neutral states like “confidence building” and “good services” could be used as a bridge between the blocs.
- A neutral Central Europe could ultimately be a first (intermediate) step away from block and pact formation towards a system of collective security.44

Peter Johnson, a former British director of civil aviation in postwar occupied Germany and attaché at the British embassy in Bonn, presented similar ideas in a 1988 Contemporary Review article. Johnson recommended in Central Europe a gradual extension of neutrality, negotiated state by state, perhaps on the Austrian model, and presenting such a picture at the end of each negotiation that neither super-power would feel that it had suffered a defeat or won a victory. As each European power was added to the neutral camp, the area of nuclear-free, offensive-weapon-free territory separating the sovereign territories of the super-powers would increase and stabilize, according in fact with the true, if concealed, ambitions of the super-powers themselves.45

The weight of analysis and evidence, though, indicates that these visions of neutrality in Central Europe were simply another case where, in the 1973 assessment of

Austrian scholar Manfred Rotter, “the capacity of neutralization as an instrument of international politics is highly overrated.”46 The emphasis by many analysts on the necessary small and insignificant status of neutral states ruled out neutrality in Germany with its possibility of a powerful, unified country free to go its own way without any foreign ties once again after World War II, to say nothing of a completely unattached Central Europe. “Principal sovereign states are not suitable candidates for neutralization,” judged Neutralization and World Politics. Neutrality, the authors wrote, was “potentially attractive only for relatively minor states that, by reason of strategic position or symbolic political value, have become or threaten to become the focal points of contests for control or dominant influence between principal regional or global rivals.”47

While the British scholar Peter Calvocoressi considered neutrality to be “typically a recourse of the weak,” he found neutrality “largely a sham” if “adopted by the strong—for example, by the USA in 1939-41.”48 “A major power is,” agreed Schlesinger, “by definition, not neutral; even abstention from use of available massive power has the effect of involvement.”49 “A great power,” added the Swiss diplomat and scholar Rudolf L. Bindschedler in 1980, “is too much entangled in the contexts of global politics and has too extensive and manifold interests in order to not have to conduct an active, in the long-run neutrality bursting foreign policy.” “A large state,” Bindschedler also determined, “is also too much exposed to the temptations of interventions abroad.” “Permanent neutrality,” moreover,

47 Black, Falk, Knorr, and Young, v-vi.
49 Schlesinger, 142-143.
must be armed. The army of a great power, even if oriented towards the strategic goal of defense, would be, however, too strong in order to not be able to be deployed offensively, even if in only a limited fashion. Without an army, however, the state would present a political and military vacuum and provoke an intervention from abroad, if only to preempt the intervention of a third party.\textsuperscript{50}

Thus Neuhold in 1980 concluded that the “sometimes expressed thought of a reunification of both German states under the auspices of permanent neutrality” was to be “evaluated as divorced from reality.”\textsuperscript{51} Reflection upon a neutral Germany during the Cold War also provoked from the \textit{Die Presse} editor Andreas Unterberger in 1998 the observation that “it would, indeed, also be absurd if America, Russia, or China promised to be permanently neutral.”\textsuperscript{52}

Applying her own conditions for neutrality, meanwhile, Cronin decided that in 1955 (or even later) “Germany met none of them.” “While Germany’s territorial boundaries appeared clear,” explained Cronin, “on the other hand, the recently expansionist ambitions of the Third Reich undercut any faith the great powers (and particularly the Soviet Union) had in a unified Germany’s adherence to those boundaries.” Germany also “could not undertake to prevent foreign powers from using its territory, particularly after the Federal Republic became a member of NATO.” In contrast to Austria, “the situation with respect to Germany” as it touched upon great power prestige was also “entirely different. The Soviet Union was unwilling to give up East Germany, and the United States and its allies were determined to have a West Germany rearmed and in NATO.” In the question of a neutral country’s armament, “no


\textsuperscript{51} Neuhold, “Der Staatsvertrag als Grundlage der Österreichischen Außenpolitik,” 162.

agreement could be reached on this matter with respect to Germany.” Finally, the relative importance of Germany and Austria meant that the great powers “would risk war over” Germany, but not Austria.53

NATO, National Division, and Neutrality: Germany’s Loss, Austria’s Gain

In the specific case of Germany and Austria, moreover, many analysts like the Austrian historian Michael Gehler in 1998 saw proven in the “developments of 1954 and 1955” the thesis that “Austrian national independence could be won because of West Germany’s integration into the West.”54 “If Bonn’s unconditional pro-Western course,” Gehler analyzed in 1994, among other factors, long delayed the Austrian State Treaty, something that became clearly visible in 1952 with the European Defense Community and Germany treaty, the later development with the Paris treaties from the fall of 1954 on showed that Austria’s sovereignty and integrity achieved in 1955 proceeded not only hand in hand with the developing Western integration of the Federal Republic and the division of Germany, but was also, so to speak, dependent upon it. The integration of the Federal Republic therefore brought about Austria’s integrity, or formulated in other words: Austria’s neutrality became possible only before the background of the Federal Republic’s Western integration: as a consequence of the West German NATO membership probably followed the shift in priorities of Soviet Austrian policy. Since the Berlin Conference of January/February 1954 the Soviets had explicitly linked their signature on an Austrian treaty to a definitive settlement of the German question. This was to change on February 8, 1955, as Molotov in his speech before the Supreme Soviet seemed to signal, among other things, a separate treatment of the Austrian question divorced from Germany.55

53 Cronin, 168-169.
“The closer the Federal Republic linked itself to the West,” Gehler summarized in 1995, “the more probable seemed Austria’s prospects to regain her sovereignty through neutrality.”\(^{56}\) “The policy of Western integration doggedly pursued by Bonn had repercussions,” Gehler added in a 2002 book, “and indirectly helped—the Soviet Union attempted to curtail a threatening NATOization of western Austria—to preserve Austria’s integrity and to secure its sovereignty.”\(^{57}\) “Had Soviet threats concerning the future of Austria succeeded in putting off German rearmament,” Cronin contrasted, “the Austrian State Treaty would probably not have been signed in May 1955.”\(^{58}\)

Already in 1955, various observers agreed with Cronin, Gehler, and others. “Mr. Molotov’s insistence on linking the German and Austrian treaties,” the April 23, 1955, issue of The Economist could not help but notice, “persisted all through 1954, and as late as last December 29\(^{th}\) an article in Izvestia declared that ratification of the Paris agreements ‘would render talks on either the German or Austrian questions pointless.’”\(^{59}\) “The simple historical record,” another article in that issue stated, reveals that the encouraging terms now offered to Austria are the product, not of an Austrian refusal to attach itself to the West, but of the West German decision to do so. No hint of such a good offer was held out by the Russians until they became resigned to the parliamentary ratification of the Paris agreements. Indeed, if Austria now wins its freedom, posterity may record that as the first fruit of the agreements.\(^{60}\)

“Although the motives for Soviet actions cannot be ascertained with accuracy,” agreed in 1955 the historian Hans Kohn, a Jewish émigré to America born in the

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\(^{58}\) Cronin, 160-161.

\(^{59}\) “Austria’s Long Road to Freedom,” The Economist, April 23, 1955, 299.

\(^{60}\) “Bluebird from the Vienna Woods,” The Economist, April 23, 1955, 266.
Habsburgs’ Czech dominions, “it may be said that it was only the firmness of Western policy and of German Chancellor Dr. Konrad Adenauer which induced the Soviet Union to make real concessions to Austria to a degree unexpected a year ago.”\textsuperscript{61} No less an authority than Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, meanwhile, analyzed in his statements before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on May 17, 1955, that the “Austrian Treaty is definitely recognized everywhere as being the first fruit of the consummation of the Western European policy and bringing Germany into NATO.”\textsuperscript{62}

The ÖVP Nationalrat member Alfons Gorbach also praised the Paris treaties in his June 7, 1955, address as a “success of the Western military block” that “came to fruition through the policies of the German Federal Chancellor Dr. Adenauer.” “West Germany,” he rejoiced, “is again a sovereign state, it is being rearmed again, it is becoming a member of NATO; the common defense of Western Europe is beginning to become reality.” In addition,

the Soviet Union, which has already placed in its front a broad belt of satellite states, is now attempting to surround itself also with a second belt, which should be formed from neutral states. The conclusion of the Paris treaties was therefore from the perspective of the USSR, among other factors, our neutrality’s hour of birth.\textsuperscript{63}

Gorbach’s views had already found favor in the Austrian Foreign Ministry before 1955. “The Ballhausplatz...,” wrote Austrian historian Oliver Rathkolb, “favored the strong Western integration of the Federal Republic of Germany, which Adenauer advocated, since this might have opened a fair chance for a sovereign, independent

\textsuperscript{62} Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Report by the Secretary of State, 84\textsuperscript{th} Cong., May 17, 1955.
\textsuperscript{63} Alfons Gorbach, Gedanken zur Politik, 2nd ed. (Vienna: Wilhelm Frick Verlag, 1962), 20-21.
West Germany’s integration into NATO, moreover, would complement Austrian neutrality as a de facto prohibition against a renewed German annexation.

“Austrian officials,” wrote Gehler, “did not want to see Germany itself become neutral because they feared that this would leave open the possibility of an Anschluss of two neutral states.” If nothing else, sheer practicality argued in favor of Austrian support for West Germany’s entrance into the Western alliance, for Austrian leaders “knew that Western governments would agree to neutrality only if it did not become a ‘model’ or precedent for Germany.”

Austrian support for West German NATO membership was in evidence during the May 19-20, 1953, visit of Foreign Minister Karl Gruber and his undersecretary Bruno Kreisky to Bonn, the first official contact between leading representatives of Austria and West Germany since 1945. Adenauer’s government heard “with relief” that Austrian undersecretary of the interior Ferdinand Graf considered SPD opposition to Adenauer’s course of Western integration “high treason against Europe.” “Only the Kremlin,” the Austrian officials recorded Graf saying, “could rejoice over this sabotage due to political reasons.” “Agreement,” Gehler recorded,

was achieved with respect to the varied nature of the two states and the incomparability of the situation. Accordingly, Vienna supported the existence of a stable and also militarily defensible system to which the Federal Republic should also belong. This excluded any recommendation of a Germany neutrality policy. Gruber also agreed with Adenauer that it was hardly imaginable “to neutralize a great power” and that there was “no precedent of this kind.”

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Motivated in part by a desire to provoke substantial East-West talks, Chancellor Raab also explicitly supported efforts to ratify the Paris treaties during his November 1954 trip to Washington, DC, even though he received criticism from Moscow.

“Vienna,” observed German historian Bruno Thoß in 1988, “with all of its Western orientation in principle, had long since left no doubt about its military nonalignment, as this stood over all Soviet Austria proposals as a minimal demand.” Nonetheless, Austria, “on the other hand, never allowed itself to be pulled in for diplomatic attempts to disturb the Western powers’ course of economic and security policy integration of Western Europe including West Germany.”67 As reported by American State Department officials working on German issues in London on April 28, 1955, Raab reiterated his support for Adenauer’s course of Western integration in a message sent to Bonn “saying that condition of Austria’s present policy was that Germany continue its present policy rearmament in western alliance.”68

Raab’s secretary, the diplomat and ÖVP politician Ludwig Steiner, noted that the chancellor continued to distinguish between his country and Germany after the State Treaty’s signing. “Raab,” Steiner remembered from the October 1956 state visit to Bonn, was pressed by journalists immediately after arrival to give, in a certain sense, suggestions to the Bonn government concerning how it could solve its problems with the Soviet Union. The federal chancellor clearly refrained and clearly stated in all conversations with journalists that Austria confronted a historical and geopolitical situation completely different from the Federal Republic or the two Germanys. Giving lessons to others was not his thing; he understood the policies of Federal

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Chancellor Adenauer very well. Raab was also asked in Bonn, whether he was encouraged by Adenauer to mediate in the German question. The answer was a clear Nein, whereby Raab emphasized that for him neutrality was not an export product. Federal Chancellor Adenauer repeatedly thanked Raab in private conversations for his clear position.\(^{69}\)

Austrian leaders also saw future benefits for Austrian neutrality in West German rearmament. “In its precarious security policy situation as a direct neighbor of the Soviet power area in Eastern Europe,” noted Thoß, “a neutralized Austria would have to somewhat hang in the air, as long as Austria could not lean on an intact Western security system as a counterweight.” Thus Austrian SPÖ leaders like Adolf Schärf expressed opposition to the neutralist tendencies of their ideological brethren across the German border in the SPD.\(^{70}\) “Unlike its German sister party,” observed Gehler and his colleague Wolfram Kaiser, “the SPÖ did, however, welcome in principle the creation of NATO, the plan for a European Defense Community (EDC) and the eventual creation of the Western European Union (WEU) in 1954-55, although it ruled out Austrian membership.”\(^{71}\)

Commenting that a “coach and four can be driven through the kind of facile reasoning” comparing Austrian neutrality with proposals for Germany neutrality, The Economist in April 1955 noted that “Austrian Social-Democrats have been quick to point out to their West German counterparts” how the “cases of Austria and Germany, superficially so alike, are in essence utterly different.” “In terms of the crudest Realpolitik,” reasoned The Economist,


\(^{70}\) Thoß, 99.

a small country like Austria can be “carried” by a strong and united West; although disarmed and helpless under the shadow of totalitarian power, it can hope to maintain its democratic life because stronger democracies have an obvious interest that it should do so. But Germany is too big a weight for the West to carry in the same way; and if Germany became a power vacuum, how could the West support even the smaller neighboring democracies.72

Friedrich Scheu, editor of the Social Democratic Arbeiter Zeitung, pithily expressed this Austro-German relationship in a May 1955 Zukunft article. Described by Austrian military historian Manfried Rauchensteiner as “one of those Socialists who did indeed critically comment upon the Austrian way,” Scheu explained the State Treaty “very clearly” with the view that it was not merely the result of Austrian efforts but also required the “willingness for sacrifice of others like, for example, the West Germans.” “This view,” Rauchensteiner noted in 1987, “was and is, however, relatively seldom found.”73

“We can be neutral,” Scheu elaborated, “because others are armed.” Scheu warned of the United States reverting to isolationism if in a “neutrality panic” several West European countries tried to emulate Austria’s example. “There is no doubt,” Scheu explained,

that it is preferable for the Austrians, who were never militarists, to belong to no military pact. But we must thereby never forget one thing: Austrian neutrality is the child of German rearmament. There neither exists any reason for us as lucky “neutrals” to look down upon nations who must accept sacrifices for the defense of the West, nor may we may deceive ourselves that our neutral future is independent from the destiny of the Western democracies.74

72 “Bluebird from the Vienna Woods,” 266.
The Need for Balance: Neutrality and Power Politics

Although ignored by advocates of neutrality for an entire region like Lutz, Austrian desires for West German rearmament indicated the importance of a defensive alliance providing the regional stability cited by analysts like Neuhold as necessary for successful neutrality. “From the perspective of the security interests of a permanently neutral state, lying in the middle of the confrontation between powers,” analyzed Maryzedt, “the alliance systems can be seen as complementary to the system of neutrality.”⁷⁵ “In fact,” American scholar Michael H. Haltzel agreed in 1989, “to a great extent the security policies of the neutrals and of NATO have complemented each other. For nearly four decades NATO has provided the shield behind which the democracies of Europe, including the neutrals, have been able to prosper.” “At the same time,” argued Haltzel with the perhaps notable omission of Austria,

several of the neutrals, especially Sweden and Switzerland, and nonaligned Yugoslavia have by their geographical locations and force deployments significantly lightened NATO’s burden. Moreover, bilaterally and within the framework of the CSCE the neutrals are acting as mediators between Eastern and Western Europe.⁷⁶

The official policies of Europe’s neutral states seemed to recognize the observation of Mayrzedt and Haltzel as judged by the 1988 book Neutrality: The Need for Conceptual Revision. “The neutrals,” its authors concluded, “are clearly supporters of the existing East-West order and feel that they have an interest in maintaining it rather than changing it.” “Instead of stressing the deviant side of neutrality,” Europe’s neutral states “made themselves known as status quo-oriented countries rather than advocates of

⁷⁵ Maryzedt, 45.
any systemic change in Europe or in the present international order at large.” 77 “In fact,” confirmed Boczek the subsequent year, “it is an axiom of the security policy of the European neutral, as well as of nonaligned countries, that a military balance between NATO and the Warsaw Pact is an essential element of global and, therefore, their own security.” 78 A 1965 article by the Finnish scholar, army officer, and diplomat Risto Hyvärinen validated Boczek et al. “It can be said,” wrote Hyvärinen, that the so-called “nuclear umbrellas” of the two big powers may also extend over the neutral states. Since neither of these powers can know for certain the nature of the countermeasures (including nuclear warfare) to be taken by the other should it attack a neutral state, an attack against the neutral is not readily to be undertaken. To reinforce such elements of uncertainty is very much in the interest of the neutral states. As long as it is believed that a nuclear umbrella may extend over the neutral state, this state actually possesses a deterrent force far more credible and cheaper than any that it could possibly build up by its own means. 79

Statements by Austrian leaders reflected this analysis. Speaking before a West German audience in Wiesbaden on October 23, 1974, for example, Chancellor Bruno Kreisky “clearly and equally distinctly” said that

I have little understanding for that facet of détente thinking in the West that exhausts itself in considering détente policies as desirable because they proceed in tandem with the emancipation from an ally. I consider it wrong because, in the final analysis, a state of affairs can be brought about that forms the one alliance system in an ever looser manner and consolidates the other for the same reasons. There remains, after all, a basic truth: precondition of détente in any part of the world is a condition of power balance. If these balances are shifted, the preconditions of détente policies are influenced, in the measure in which these power balances are shifted, the chances of détente decline. 80

78 Boczek, 14.
In particular, Kreisky feared an American disengagement from Europe. Speaking years earlier as Austrian Foreign Minister in Warsaw on March 2, 1960, Kreisky offered some clarifying comments on *Disengagement*: in recent times it has been assumed in various quarters that détente could hereby be achieved. According to these concepts (from which their originator, George Kennan, has meanwhile once again distanced himself, because they no longer appear practical to him) both superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States, should withdraw their troops from certain areas of Europe, in order to relinquish the maintenance of order to local powers. A drawing apart of the great powers would de facto release them from their natural obligation to maintain peace, whereby the possibility of local conflicts must be dangerously *increased*. No one will doubt that this could lead to very serious consequences in light of the enormous destructive potentials today at the disposal of these powers. Therefore the great powers may *not* be released from their responsibility.  

A few days later in Vienna on March 11, 1960, the tactical realities of disengagement formed the main concern in Kreisky’s remarks. “Once the American army withdraws from Germany,” he stated,

this would have to result in the Americans withdrawing from all of Europe a short time later—excepting a few small bases. The Russians would certainly also withdraw, but the nearest military bases in the Soviet Union—in the Ukrainian Carpathian range—would then be only about 150 kilometers away from Vienna.  

In the words of the Austrian diplomat Heinrich Haymerle, “this thesis of the federal chancellor” that “détente policies are not a consequence of higher human insight, they are simply the consequence of the fact of a military balance of power” appeared “again and again in the speeches and writings of Kreisky”  

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82 Ibid, 141.
however, recognized the balance of power’s importance. Nationalrat member Andreas Khol, one of the ÖVP’s leading foreign policy thinkers, wrote in 1976 that any unilateral change in the status quo is wrong for Austria in its geopolitical situation because this change can lead to a preponderance of the one or the other power grouping and therefore to confrontations at the rupture points of the blocks in Europe. Because at the time a preponderance of the Warsaw Pact is more to be feared, the objective of Austrian foreign policy is now directed primarily against these efforts.\textsuperscript{84}

\emph{NATO’s Neutral Temptation}

Austrian admonitions, though, could not prevent neutrality’s growing popularity during the Cold War in Western Europe. In a “rough overall estimate… qualified by differences from one country and one point of time to another,” Finnish scholar Harto Harkovirta judged in 1988 that “relevant opinion polls have indicated that something like 30-40 per cent of West Europeans in NATO countries would have fairly permanently preferred neutrality to (Western) alliance.” “In all,” concluded Hakovirta, “there have been and continue to be many more neutral aspirations and sentiments in West European countries on the levels of parties, mass movements, and public moods than could be assumed on the basis of an examination of official foreign policies.”\textsuperscript{85}

Dutch scholar F. A. M. Alting von Geusau explained at an October 1983 conference in Austria why support for neutrality had grown in Western Europe, particularly “on the left side of the political spectrum” where “fear of nuclear war, anti-American feelings and ideological affinity with the Communist parties produce what is


referred to as neutralist tendencies.” “During the late 1960s and the decade of the
1970s,” Alting von Geusau stated,

the cohesion of the Atlantic Alliance has, moreover, been severely
undermined by the American involvement in the Vietnam conflict, the
increasingly uneasy relations between the United States and the European
Communities and increasing divergencies in the policies of détente
pursued by the allies separately. In Western Europe, a profound change in
the intellectual and political climate has taken place. In the minds of many
West Europeans, the image of the USA as the democratic ally to be relied
upon changed to one of an unreliable, if not dangerous, superpower. At
the same time, the image of the Soviet Union as the totalitarian threat to
peace improved to one of a threatened superpower. The fundamental
difference between democratic government and totalitarian rule thus tends
to be concealed by such confusing abstract notions as “military blocs,”
“deterrence systems,” or superpowers. The similarity thus evoked
between the Western and Soviet alliance systems has among its
consequences in the West the view that a policy of neutrality is no longer
ideologically inconceivable.  

Neuhold in 1988 also found many West Europeans questioning the strategic value
of alliances, NATO included. “The value of pledges of mutual armed assistance,” he
wrote,

appears more dubious than ever, above all from the point of view of small
states. They may be drawn into lethal conflicts of no direct concern to
them by their bloc leaders. At the same time, it is not a foregone
conclusion that their allies will really honor their commitments and
actually come to their rescue in case of aggression, as this may lead to
escalation and disaster even for the most powerful of those allied
countries. Moreover, as long as the balance of (thermonuclear) terror
exists, permanently neutral states also enjoy the security it offers as “free
riders” under the “nuclear umbrellas” of the Superpowers.  

On the other hand, Swiss scholar Curt Gasteyger in 1985 judged that the
“profiling of the neutrals and their contribution to the East-West dialogue in general, to

86 F. A. M. Alting von Geusau, “Between Lost Illusions and Apocalyptic Fears: Benelux Views
on the European Neutrals,” in The European Neutrals in International Affairs, eds. Hanspeter Neuhold and
87 Neuhold, “The Neutral States of Europe: Similarities and Differences,” 112.
security in Europe in particular, has led to a positive evaluation of neutrality.”

“Neutrality,” Gasteyger concluded,

has today in Europe a better press than in earlier decades. The thought of holding oneself outside of the seemingly senseless confrontation of the two world powers, of becoming under no circumstances the scene of execution for a nuclear exchange, and of finding new ways to overcome the division of Europe, has something luring.\(^88\)

Perhaps to the surprise of Alting von Geusau, neutrality’s popularity increased in the Low Countries as well. “Benelux views on the European neutrals,” he stated in 1983, thus have evolved from minimal comprehension to increasing attraction. They are attracted—positively—by the neutrals’ policies of mediation between East and West, and—negatively—by their advantage of non-involvement in the painful allied decisions to maintain adequate military strength and political solidarity.\(^89\)

“The growth of neutralist sentiment in NATO countries,” analyzed Gasteyger and the American scholar Richard E. Bissell right at the end of the Cold War in 1990, especially among the successor generation, has led NATO observers to examine the effects of neutrality on security in the alliance countries. The perceptions of neutral issues among NATO states in the last ten years have changed. For instance, there is less concern about “Finlandization” and more about “Hollandization.” Neutrality’s constituency has clearly grown within the young generation in some NATO countries. And, indeed, policies of the European states, whether allied with one side or the other, or neutral, have served to blur the cold war security distinctions in Europe.\(^90\)

The authors of *Neutrality: The Need for Conceptual Revision* agreed, discerning “an increase in importance” among “allied European states” of “neutralism” defined as

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\(^{89}\) Alting von Geusau, 65.

“the adoption of certain features of political concepts brought into being by neutrals.”

Swiss scholar Stephan Kux saw in 1986 “a reminder of the widely differing interpretations given both to neutrality and to alliance participation” in the adoption by neutral Ireland and Switzerland of “positions closer in many respects to those of the principal NATO states than ‘neutralistic’ Greece or Denmark.”

“The evolving outcome of these well-known developments,” Hakovirta noted in 1988,

is an East-West system where the blocs and bloc leaders constitute the still visible but increasingly obscured poles. The total picture of the system is no longer complemented only by a few neutral, non-aligned, or isolationist states; there is also a variety of new international positions and foreign policies within and around the blocs, the character of which scholars have tried to capture by foreign-policy concepts like limited alliance, dealignment, and dissidence. The candidates for corresponding system-level concepts include multipolarization, polycentrism, and, to take the concept that appears in the title of this chapter, fragmentation.

Since the beginning of the Cold War, the Soviet Union was only too happy to encourage “neutralist sentiment” within NATO, using the example of countries like Austria in the process. Already at the end of June 1960, for example, First Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan praised Austria during a visit to Norway as an “exemplary model of healthy coexistence.”

Contributing years later to the same 1983 conference as Alting von Geusau, Viktor A. Kremenyuk, from the Soviet Union’s Institute for the USA and Canada in Moscow, effused praise for Europe’s neutral states. “The neutral states,” he enthused,

thanks to their status, represent a Europe not divided into hostile military blocs. The idea to eliminate military blocs in Europe has its most visible effect in the

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91 Albrecht, Auffermann, and Joenniemi, 3.
93 Hakovirta, 67.
existence of these States. This position of the neutral States attracts the attention of some NATO countries. Essentially, the position of Greece on a nuclear-free zone in the Balkans is very close to that of the neutrals. The governments of Norway, Denmark and Iceland are interested in the Finnish proposals supported by Sweden for a nuclear-free Northern Europe. The governments and public opinion of the “Scandilux” countries (Denmark, The Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg) have expressed an interest in the idea of a nuclear arms freeze in Europe.95

As Neuhold explained at a Stockholm conference the following year,

Kremenyuk’s views were indicative of official Soviet policy. “Mounting East-West tensions,” he analyzed,

until recently, apparently did not affect Austro-Soviet relations. The USSR seems to like presenting these relations as a model for the mutually beneficial effects of a deteriorating East-West climate. In the recent new “Cold War” period, the Soviet Union has even emphasized a specific positive task which Austria and the other European neutrals are to perform: They are to lead the way towards the “Europeanization” of European politics. In other words, they ought to make the West European NATO members better aware of their genuine interests. In Soviet eyes, these countries would be better advised to refuse domination by the USA, a non-European Power which is bent on drawing them into a dangerous arms race and perhaps even armed conflict. Instead, they should opt for détente and friendly relations with the USSR, which has always been a European country.96

Analysts like Alting von Geusau accurately diagnosed Soviet promotion of neutrality within NATO as an element of “Soviet ‘total foreign policy,’ or totalitarian diplomatic warfare, aimed at preserving Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe and at achieving the strategic defeat of the West without having to fight a war.” This policy confronted “Western and neutral States in Europe alike” sharing “a basic interest in

avoiding that Soviet power and control further expand over Europe.”\textsuperscript{97} As \textit{Neutralization and World Politics} stated in 1968, “the Soviet attitude toward neutralization differs from that of the West European states primarily in that it takes neutralization to be a means of changing the balance of power rather than of preserving it.” “In the framework of this Marxist-Leninist point of view,” the book explained, “neutralization—along with neutrality and neutralism—is seen primarily as a method of drawing states away from, or preventing them from being drawn into, the orbit of ‘aggressive military blocs of imperialist states’—of which NATO is the leading example.”\textsuperscript{98}

Prime Minister Imre Nagy’s abortive November 1956 declaration of neutrality and withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, something Neuhold described as “hopeless” given that Hungary clearly lay in one of the Soviet Union’s “exclusive zones of influence,” illustrated the Soviet Union’s one-sided view of neutrality.\textsuperscript{99} “The military intervention of the Soviet Union which followed” immediately after Nagy’s declaration, Swedish diplomat Sven Allard noted, “proved that the purpose of the policy of neutrality” earlier advanced by the Soviet Union in neighboring Austria “was to promote only the dissolution of the military organizations of the Western powers.”\textsuperscript{100} The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 only emphasized the point, as Gasteyger observed.\textsuperscript{101}

In light of Soviet hypocrisy, many Western analysts of the Cold War East-West balance took a dim view of proposals to extend neutralist proposals throughout Western Europe such as advocated by the Austrian Josef Binter in 1987. Binter thought that “it would surely be a politically exemplary effect if Austria would declare itself an atomic

\textsuperscript{97} Alting von Geusau, 67. 
\textsuperscript{98} Black, Falk, Knorr, and Young, 45-46. 
\textsuperscript{99} Neuhold, “Der Staatsvertrag als Grundlage der Österreichischen Außenpolitik,” 162. 
\textsuperscript{101} Gasteyger, 284-285.
weapons-free zone and also demand corresponding security guarantees in the sense of a ‘nuclear weapons use-free zone’—like, perhaps, an atomic weapons-free belt around Austria.”

“A trend toward some kind of neutrality in other European countries” presented by individuals like Binter could, according to Bissell and Gasteyger, “overburden the amount of neutrality Europe can bear. In other words, how many neutral states can the European international system absorb without major repercussions for European security and stability?”

Neutrality’s “effect,” Payr concurred, “can be compared with ‘poorly stowed cargo on a tossing ship;’ it is obvious that the cargo may not exceed a certain volume.” Specifically “in the power constellation of today’s and tomorrow’s Europe,” Gasteyger assessed, “neutrality remains an exception. It is only consumable and digestible in ‘small doses.’” Gasteyger judged the “strategic-political balance of power” to be “more sensible than many advocates of additional neutrality believe,” despite an “appearance of outer robustness.” “The Western alliance,” wrote the Swiss scholar Gasteyger,

could probably survive the neutrality declaration of one or the other of the alliance’s smaller members. Decisive here would be probably under what circumstances the declaration occurred and from whom it came. Wherever it would essentially weaken the alliance, the very balance of power that advocates of additional neutrality view as a precondition for a step into neutrality would be, in the final analysis, endangered.

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103 Bissell and Gasteyger, 3.

104 Payr, 46.

105 Gastegeyer, 285-286.
Gasteyger’s judgment was even more generous than that of his Swiss compatriot Lorenz Stucki almost thirty years earlier in 1956. “One thing we may never forget in our nonneutralistic neutrality,” wrote the journalist Stucki,

it becomes only thereby possible and sustainable in that others, above all the great powers of the free world, are not neutral. Austria and Czechoslovakia could be swallowed by Hitler because at the time still no politically consolidated solidarity of the free world, as realized today in the Atlantic pact, stood against the totalitarian claim to power. This alliance is today strong enough to extend its political (and therefore indirectly military) protection to the neutral small states as long as these neutral small states represent a measurable minority. The free world can, in a certain sense, afford special cases like Austria and Switzerland. The free world, in addition, also affords special cases like Finland and Sweden. With that, however, the limit of what Europe in terms of splintering can tolerate without the collective security, under which we can be neutral, becoming illusionary, is probably reached. Neutrality today is thus no principle and no ideal and certainly no dispensation from the struggles of the present. Neutrality is a delicate luxury plant that only blossoms in certain places—and only under the powerful, warming rays of the solidarity of the Free World, to which we belong without reservation and to whose strengthening we, in the properly understood interest of our own national goals, must contribute with all nonmilitary means.  

Aside from neutrality as a whole, various scholars like Heinz Vetschera of Austria’s National Defense Academy considered even the export of individual components of Austrian security policy to Western Europe unadvisable. “Austria’s strictly defensive attitude toward area defense,” Vetschera noted on various occasions in the late 1980s, “has been advocated by some West European pacifist groups as a model on which to unilaterally restructure NATO’s defense.” Binter, for example, ascribed “a pilot function to the neutrals in the transformation of military strategies and positions towards a more defensive orientation as a confidence building measure.”  

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108 Binter, 48.
proposals, Vetschera explained, developed “in conjunction with the criticism in some NATO states of reliance on NATO’s nuclear component” and the discussion of “alternative operational concepts of a ‘non-offensive defense.’” The proposals “range from the mere replacement of nuclear components with conventional armaments to concepts of a militia-like military structure with the mission of Raumverteidigung and concepts that want to combine military and civil forms of resistance.”

“‘Transarming’ NATO toward area defense,” Vetschera warned, however, “is likely to produce instability in Europe and runs contrary to Austria’s security interests, even if it does quote the ‘Austrian model force structure.’” Such proposals, “so far publicly discussed only on the Western side,” had “thoroughly positive elements because they strove to avoid pressures for an early escalation,” but they suffered the “disadvantage” of “wanting to introduce structural changes unilaterally, in a certain sense as demonstrative concessions even at the price of deficiencies.” In particular, Vetschera saw two disadvantages in proposals to apply Austrian defense policy to NATO.

“Firstly,” he wrote,

they ignore the differing strategic premises of defense in Austria and the alliances. In Austria, Raumverteidigung was developed as a strategy for protection against breaches of neutrality. Raumverteidigung assumes that an aggressor will only then decide upon an attack when he has realistic chances for a success before the other alliance can react in time. Upon this builds the calculated exchange of space for time as the basic idea of Raumverteidigung. It is as a military strategy adequate for the political strategy of deterrence. This may not be assumed, however, as a premise in the East-West relationship. An exchange of space for time unfolds in the relationship between the alliances no sufficient deterrent effect and therefore hardly contributes to military stability. Furthermore, the alternative security concepts expressly renounce threatening the aggressor with a heavy price in case of aggression and limit themselves to the

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attempt of holding one’s own position. This also presents a considerable deficiency. The potential aggressor risks namely only his deployed forces, not, however, his substance, something which drastically lowers the deterrent effect of such concepts.  

In the end, most Europeans in NATO realized that neutrality was not for them.

“A European statesman once said,” wrote Georgetown University professor Walter Laqueur in 1980, “that basically all European countries want a kind of neutralism, a third way, and they are angry and frustrated because they cannot do it.” “As long as there was a balance of power in Europe that was in equilibrium,” Laqueur elaborated using maritime analogies similar to Payr’s,

De Gaulle could afford his special excursions and Swedish statesmen could recommend their policies as exemplary for all of Europe. There existed little danger, the strength of America and the alliance, which would come to help in case of emergency, could be counted upon anyway. Naturally, it was basically clear that these escapades were only possible as long as they were undertaken by only a few, because if all had become Gaullists or neutralists, there would have therefore been no more counterweight to the Eastern bloc, and the house of cards would have collapsed: only a limited number of stowaways can travel along on a ship.  

The Requirement of Choice: Why only Democracies can become Neutral

“So far,” Austrian diplomat Hans Thalberg noted at the October 1983 conference, “neutrality has been a policy practiced exclusively by countries belonging to the Western social system.” “Permanent neutrality,” the German political scientist Werner Pfeifenberger agreed the previous year,

\begin{thebibliography}{10}
\bibitem{111} Vetschera, “Österreich und die Entwicklung der europäischen Sicherheit,” 103-104.
\bibitem{113} Hans Thalberg, “The European Neutrals and Regional Stability,” in \textit{The European Neutrals in International Affairs}, 130.
\end{thebibliography}
seems to show a reference to democracy. Accordingly, it is no ideological accident that the two permanently neutral states Switzerland and Austria are democracies and that also Hungary wanted to transition domestically to democracy as its revolutionary government proclaimed foreign policy neutrality along the Austrian pattern in October 1956. It is surely equally characteristic that the de facto permanently neutral (only alliance-free under international law) Sweden is a liberal democracy, while Yugoslavia, remaining Communist despite its exertions for independence, preferred to enter a loose political alliance with the “Block free” states of the Third World.\textsuperscript{114}

Thalberg suggested, however, that there are no rational reasons why that policy could not also be at least tried by countries of Communist orientation in certain circumstances. Of course, it would be unrealistic to imagine for a member of an alliance, be it the Warsaw Pact or NATO, to break away and declare itself neutral, because this might indeed upset the delicate balance of forces. But the policy of decoupling ideology from military alliance by becoming neutral might serve in certain sensitive cases, particularly in countries of the Third World, to save or to redress the balance of power in the region. It may be that the United States, in spite of their anticomunist feelings, would be considerably less concerned about Cuba’s social system, provided that Havana would take the country openly and reliably out of the superpowers’ military contest. If Cuba refuses to do so and insists on remaining an unsinkable Soviet aircraft carrier pointing its guns against the United States, Nicaragua may be ready in turn to become neutral, to prohibit foreign military bases on its territory and to liquidate military contacts with Cuba and the Soviet Union, whilst adhering to the social system of its own choosing. It would, indeed, be fascinating to watch whether a State of Communist orientation could become militarily neutral or whether the Soviet (and/or Cuban) military presence was an integral part of that system.\textsuperscript{115}

Yet further analysis indicates that the relationship between democracy and neutrality is not just coincidental. “Considering the rights and duties of a permanently neutral state in times of peace as well as in times of war,” argued Rotter, “it seems that the political system of a candidate for neutralization deserves paramount attention.” In

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\textsuperscript{115} Thalberg, 130-131.
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particular, Rotter highlighted the fact that stable societies could maintain neutrality except in face of direct attack while unstable societies invited foreign intervention.\(^{116}\)

Even in case of direct attack, the defense of national sovereignty and, implicitly, neutrality required citizens willing to bear even ultimate sacrifices. “It is the defensive strength of the neutral,” Austrian international law scholar Karl Zemanek stated alongside Thalberg in October 1983,

which gives credibility to its assertion of maintaining neutrality under all circumstances. Since this implies a defensive strategy, its foremost requirement is that the people identify with their society and its institutions and with the neutral existence of their nation to the point that they will resist any foreign attempt at changing it by force, by all means available to them.\(^{117}\)

Zemanek echoed earlier comments concerning popular support in a neutral state made by the Austrian diplomat and subsequent federal president Rudolf Kirchschläger. “Perhaps,” he wrote in 1971, “a clear ideological attitude is even an essential requirement” for preserving neutrality. “If the goal of Austria’s permanent neutrality is the maintenance of Austrian independence,” Kirchschläger explained, “so can this independence only then be secured longterm if the people also have clear impressions about the worth of their societal system.”\(^{118}\)

Contrary to Thalberg’s speculation, it is difficult to see how anything but a mature liberal democracy could maintain the allegiance of its people necessary for neutrality even during the most difficult of crises. Moreover, only a free society can provide the societal consensus necessary for permanent neutrality to last longterm and acquire the


\(^{117}\) Karl Zemanek, “Austria’s Policy of Neutrality: Constants and Variables,” in The European Neutrals in International Affairs, 19.

confidence of the international community. It is also hardly imaginable that other than a free society would possess the same respect for legal norms and interest in stability necessary to rule out foreign adventurism, something that also argues against the neutrality of Communist (or, alternatively, Islamic) regimes dedicated by definition to world revolution. The dependence of Communist regimes upon the Soviet Union for their very survival in the face of domestic opposition demonstrated so many times in Austria’s neighborhood, meanwhile, belies Thalberg’s hypothesis of a neutral Cuba or Nicaragua.

The pitiful demise of “block-free” Yugoslavia during the 1990s also clearly demonstrates the impossibility of a nonaligned foreign policy without a stable domestic basis. The sectarian tensions of this multinational and multiconfessional state, already foreshadowed by the June 1972 Ustaše incursion, exploded in a distinctly nonneutral bloodbath after a functional allegiance to an authoritarian, Serb-dominated Yugoslavia standing against a Soviet threat lost all relevance. Thus, asked in July 2005 whether democracy was a further requirement for permanent neutrality, Neuhold conceded that this was “probably” the case.119

White Man’s Neutrality: The Failure of Neutrality outside of Europe

Difficult as permanent neutrality was in Europe, only here did this policy succeed. “Neutrality as a national strategy of small states,” Karsh observed, “beyond the adoption of an ad hoc neutral policy in a specific war, has remained primarily a European phenomenon, with the exception of some sterile experiments in other arenas, such as the

119 Hanspeter Neuhold, interview by author in the foyer of Vienna’s Diplomatische Akademie on July 12, 2005.
neutralization of Laos in 1962.”  

“Just as the very structural elements of the international system have experienced their fundamental formation in Europe on the basis of the particular development of the political culture of this continent,” Rotter concurred, “so is neutrality also to be seen as the product of the European political system.”

Countries in the underdeveloped or “Third World” often did not possess the stability required for permanent neutrality such that, in the words of British historian Max Beloff in 1980, these countries disposed of a government that rested so much upon a consensus of the population such that the government is not dependent upon help from abroad. Austria fulfills these conditions as well as Switzerland and Sweden. The national state, however, a category into which Austria entered relatively late, is largely a European phenomenon. In the Third World many countries are the arena of such weighty inner divisions on the basis of ethnic, religious, or ideological differences, that a true consensus is hardly possible. The governments see themselves continually threatened and are therefore always tempted to turn towards other states for help. Furthermore, their state boundaries are often more or less haphazardly drawn and therefore territorial disputes with their neighbors are common—a factor, which is hardly compatible with neutrality. One of the prices that Austria has paid for its neutrality is its nonintervention in the problems of South Tyrol.

During the Cold War, of course, the divisions of weak states became entangled with a global ideological struggle. Here “experience taught,” as stated by Neuhold in 1980, that “the (permanent) neutrality of important states has just as little prospect for realization as the attempt of introducing this status in a disputed region with high political labiality.” The aforementioned neutral status for Laos, for example, took its

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120 Karsh, Neutrality and Small States, 7.
123 Neuhold, “Der Staatsvertrag als Grundlage der Österreichischen Außenpolitik,” 162.
inspiration in the administration of President John F. Kennedy from Austria.  

As described by Rotter, the 14-member Declaration and Protocol on the Neutrality of Laos signed in Geneva on July 23, 1962, was an attempt “to separate the parties of the internal conflict from their outside supporters.” It involved a combination of agreements “between the intervening states not to render support to either side of the internal conflict” and “between the parties of the internal conflict to refuse outside support...plus neutralization.”

Yet “the permanent neutrality of Laos,” recalled Neuhold, “by whose founding in 1962 the Austrian example was in the minds of some, suffered shipwreck right away” in the killing fields of Southeast Asia. While an American military advisory group of 750 left Laos immediately following the Geneva agreement, no more than 40 of some 7,000 North Vietnamese troops ever evacuated Laos. The strength of the Communist Pathet Lao in Laos also increased after the Geneva agreement. That same year President Kennedy began a “secret war” of air support for Lao’s anticommunist monarchy and Hmong tribesmen irregular formations, operations that from 1968 to 1973 demanded almost half (47.4%) of all American attack sorties in Southeast Asia.

Like Belgium in 1914, according to Bindschedler, Laos violated the rule that the “neutral state may not be a main object of the policy of other states. The neutral state

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125 Rotter, “Neutralization: An Instrument for Solving International Conflicts?” 58. For a copy of the Geneva accord on Laos, see: *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents—1962* (Washington, DC: 1966), 1075-1083. In addition to Laos, the 13 signatories were Burma, Cambodia, Canada, France, India, the Peoples’ Republic of China, Poland, the Soviet Union, Thailand, the United Kingdom, the United States, and both the Saigon and Hanoi regimes of Vietnam.
126 Neuhold, “Der Staatsvertrag als Grundlage der Österreichischen Außenpolitik,” 162.
must lie in the ‘zone marginale’ of global politics.”

Laotian neutrality, Rotter added, also “failed especially because the internal conflict could not really be brought to an end. Neutralization, therefore, should not be considered to generate but to require national unity.”

Neuhold in 1988 “feared that Laos, whose permanent neutrality established in 1962 never really got off the ground, and not Austria, furnishes the relevant precedent for Afghanistan,” whose neutrality had been proposed eight years earlier. As described by Austrian international relations scholar Waldemar Hummer, following the December 1979 Soviet invasion the British foreign secretary Lord Carrington suggested to the European Community’s (EC) Council of Foreign Ministers in Rome on February 19, 1980, a “voluntary neutrality codified in a treaty along the Austrian pattern” for Afghanistan. The EC’s heads of states assembled in the European Council adopted this proposal during its meeting in Luxemburg on April 27-28, 1980, suggesting that “Afghanistan would have to return again to its traditional position as a neutral and block-free state.” To this end the “great powers and the states of the region should undertake the necessary obligations and, in particular, respect Afghanistan’s sovereignty and integrity.” The European Council repeated its endorsement of the British initiative during its June 12-13, 1980, meeting in Venice.

The Foreign Office’s undersecretary Sir Donald Mitland, meanwhile, gave Soviet ambassador Nikolai Lunkov in London on February 29, 1980, a detailed version

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128 Bindschedler, 319.
of the neutrality proposal. At the time, EC experts also began to put together a definitive plan for Italy, then chairing the EC’s Council of Foreign Ministers, to offer formally to the Soviet Union. The EC initiative met with approval from both the United States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and provoked a Soviet compromise offer linking a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan with a “neutralization” of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. The Soviets made this offer just before the 1980 State Treaty anniversary summit in Vienna of the foreign ministers from the four former occupying powers.¹³²

Of course, nothing ever came of a neutralized Afghanistan, but this did not dissuade some from continuing to advocate neutrality for Afghanistan down through the years. “Since Austria and the other European neutral countries have successfully maintained their neutral policies,” argued Manzooruddin Ahmad from the University of Karachi during a 1989 conference there, “perhaps they could serve as models for strife-torn countries like Afghanistan, which are also strategically placed and have suffered military intervention and civil war, which threaten their survival as sovereign states.”¹³³

Not sharing Ahmad’s optimistic but misinformed understanding of neutrality in Europe, analysts such as Neuhold more acquainted with neutrality had good reasons for seeing more parallels between Afghanistan and Laos than Afghanistan and Austria. Neuhold in 1980 considered the EC Afghanistan initiative “hardly promising.”¹³⁴ Neutrality’s “preconditions,” he predictably argued, “are rather hard to bring about and therefore, in concrete terms, a transposition of the Austrian patent recipe as a cure for the

¹³² Ibid.
¹³⁴ Neuhold, “Der Staatsvertrag als Grundlage der Österreichischen Außenpolitik,” 162.
Afghanistan disease, as was suggested by the European Communities, offers a rather
dubious solution.”\textsuperscript{135} “As for the application of the ‘Austrian model’ to Afghanistan,”
Neuhold repeated in 1988, “present conditions there do not augur well for the success of
this solution. In point of fact, none of the prerequisites...is really met.”\textsuperscript{136} Beloff in
1980, for example, observed that

if the Soviet troops would be withdrawn from Afghanistan and if the
country would declare its neutrality according to the Austrian model, then
the result would either be a non-Communist Islamic regime, which the
Soviet Union could not accept, or a Communist regime, which would not
be neutral in an actual sense.\textsuperscript{137}

The American scholar Helmut Sonnenfeldt concurred with Neuhold in various
statements made during the 1980 anniversary year. “I believe,” he said during an August
conference, “that Austria, for which it has been possible in the past 25 years to achieve a
high degree of stability in its political situation between East and West, is exceptional in a
very special way. Drawing upon Austria as an example for Afghanistan or similar
situations is probably not productive.”\textsuperscript{138} “With respect to the military balance of forces
in the concerned region,” Sonnenfeldt wrote in response to questions posed by the

Austrian publication \textit{Europäische Rundschau} that same year,

in whose framework alone neutrality would make sense, such a balance is
at the moment not present. The Soviet Union is the dominant military
power there and also promises to remain this in the foreseeable future.
Thus Afghan “neutrality” would probably be a deception, even if the
withdrawal of Soviet troops from the country were assumed.\textsuperscript{139}

\textsuperscript{135} 25 \textit{Jahre Staatsvertrag}, vol. 1., 165.
\textsuperscript{136} Neuhold, “The Neutral States of Europe: Similarities and Differences,” 134.
\textsuperscript{137} Beloff, 135.
\textsuperscript{138} Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung and the Institut für Zeitgeschichte der
Universität Wien, \textit{25 Jahre Staatsvertrag}, vol. 5., \textit{Protokolle des Staats- und Festaktes sowie der
Jubiläumsveranstaltungen im In- und Ausland} (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1980), 172.
\textsuperscript{139} “Symposium über den internationalen Hintergrund,” 169.
None of these comments apparently dissuaded Dr. Ahmad, who also found in Austria inspiration for his own homeland, a surprising comparison, perhaps, for those more accustomed to associating Pakistan with poverty, military coups, sectarian conflict (often involving India), border disputes (also with India), Islamic terrorism, and nuclear weapons. “In Pakistan there exists a great deal of ignorance about comparatively small and not very powerful European countries like Austria,” wrote Ahmad in 1989 before proceeding to reveal his own ignorance,

which in a quiet and steady manner are actually contributing a great deal towards the strengthening of peace and security, not only on the continent of Europe itself but for peace throughout the world. With its own brand of “Neutrality” Austria has achieved security by successfully steering away from super-power rivalry in the region and has been instrumental in diffusing tensions and resolving conflicts which could have developed into major conflagrations. Pakistani policy-makers as well as scholars of Political Science and International Relations can find the study of Austria’s conduct on the international scene as a role model since it is but a small and strategically vulnerable country which in a situation filled with pressures has striven to achieve economic and political independence and has been considerably successful in its aim.140

Similarly, Ahmad thought that Pakistan’s fellow “Third World” members in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), many of them suffering the same afflictions as Pakistan, could profit from examining Europe’s neutrals. “The study of the concept as well as the practice of neutrality,” argued Ahmad,

is as important for students of international affairs in the Third World as is the concept of Non-Alignment, to which many Third World countries profess to adhere. The success of the Neutral countries’ individual as well concerted policies in maintaining equidistance between the superpowers and in promoting détente and world peace should be able to provide guidelines to countries belonging to the NAM, which even after many years of the establishment of the Movement have been unable to attain many of its aims and objectives which they had solemnly undertaken to fulfill at the time of the formation of the organization. Now more than

140 Tahir, vi.

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ever the NAM has become prone to divisiveness and a lack of proper
sense of direction and purposefulness. 141

Suggestions of neutrality’s utility seemed to have arisen everywhere. “This brief
study of peace through negotiations in Austria,” proclaimed the preface to the fittingly
titled 1966 book *Peace through Negotiation: The Austrian Experience*, “is being
published in the hope that it will make clearer not only the nature of the lesson Austrian
teaches, but how that lesson can be applied to Vietnam and to other unsettled
international conflicts.” Perhaps in light of the Laotian experience, the book’s author,
Blair G. Ewing, did qualify his argument a bit. “No argument is made, of course,” Ewing
wrote, “nor could any be made, that the lessons of the Austrian treaty are universally
applicable. Austria is not Vietnam, or the Dominican Republic and the conditions of
1955 are quite different from those of the present.” 142

Elsewhere in Asia, Gehler in 2000 thought that the “example of neutralization
could, as ever, recommend itself for the unification of divided states (e.g. Korea).” 143
Previously in 1987, the Korean-born Professor In Kwan Hwang of Bradley University in
Peoria, Illinois, agreed. An international relations scholar, Professor Hwang wrote that
year a 190-page (appendices included) book, *One Korea via Permanent Neutrality:*

*Peaceful Management of Korean Unification*, with the thesis that the “purpose of

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141 Ibid.
142 Blair G. Ewing, *Peace through Negotiation: The Austrian Experience* (Washington, DC:
Public Affairs Press, 1966), v, 3.
143 Michael Gehler, “Quo vadis Neutralität?: Zusammenfassende Überlegungen zu ihrer
Geschichte und Rolle im europäischen Staatsensystem sowie im Spannungsfeld der Integration,” in *Die
Neutralen und die Europäische Integration, 1945-1995*, eds. Michael Gehler and Rolf Steininger (Vienna:
Böhlau Verlag, 2000), 753.
neutralization is to prepare and build the necessary foundation from which it will become possible to begin the process of peaceful unification.”

Gehler’s Austrian compatriot, Ambassador Otto Eiselsberg, disagreed a decade later. Drawing upon his long years of professional diplomatic experience in Europe and Asia, Eiselberg handled a “question, which has been repeatedly presented to me, not only in the Foreign Ministry, but also from politicians and university professors: ‘Is the example of Austrian neutrality applicable to a reunited Korea?’” Citing the oft-noted smallness requirement of neutrality, Eiselberg “always gave as an answer: ‘Neutrality is only for a small state possible. A reunited Korea with more than 50—today more than 60—million inhabitants would exceed the critical mass of a neutral state,’ a formulation that always pleased my interlocutors.”

Additionally, a reunited Korea would not only be a significant state in its own right, but would also probably want to continue the American alliance with South Korea in order to balance the power of China or even Japan, two states that have historically clashed along the strategic land bridge of the Korean peninsula. Most importantly, people like Gehler and Hwang have not bothered to explain how neutrality would remove the most important obstacle to Korean reunification, namely the distinctly nonneutral totalitarian regime of North Korea, a regime that seems only capable of initiating a new Korean War or collapsing into the arms of South Korea. At any rate, the missile- and nuclear bomb-building dynasty of Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-Il has shown precious little interest in neutrality.

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Perhaps just as absurd as a “neutralization” of North Korea were suggestions to apply neutrality to the Middle East. During a November 1986 conference of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, British international relations scholar Philip Windsor added “in passing that possibly the only solution to the tragedy of Lebanon today may lie in some form of neutralization.”¹⁴⁶ (Someone should tell this to Hezbollah!)

Going one step further, Karsh judged “neutralization of the entire Arab-Israeli sector” as the “best, perhaps the only, means to break the deadlock of the Middle East conflict” in his 1991 Bulletin of Peace Proposals article “Neutralization: The Key to an Arab-Israeli Peace.” Karsh proposed a “neutralized bloc comprising Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Egypt to be guaranteed by the two superpowers and possibly, though not necessarily, by the other permanent members of the Security Council.” Karsh’s wished-for “neutralization scheme,” soon to be missing one of its presumptive superpower guarantors, “would be anchored to separate peace treaties between Israel and its Arab neighbors which, apart from the above-mentioned components of peace, would settle the bilateral problems between Israel and the respective Arab state.” Meanwhile, the “guarantor states, for their part, will undertake to remove the neutralized bloc from the sphere of great-power competition and to defend both its security as a whole and the territorial integrity of its individual members.”¹⁴⁷

On the basis of this modest proposal, Karsh appended for would-be Middle East peacemakers his own “Text of the Proposed Neutralization Scheme.” According to the text,

the governments of the neutralized states will undertake the following:

1. To adopt a policy of permanent neutrality and to maintain and defend this policy with all means at their disposal, that is:
   a. renounce war as an instrument of foreign policy and resort to this political course only when attacked by an external factor (i.e. no pre-emptive or preventive wars);
   b. remain neutral in the event of war in the region;
   c. avoid any alliances or collective security arrangements and renounce such commitments that may exist at the time of this treaty;
   d. prohibit both the establishment of foreign military bases and the stationing of foreign troops (except for the international supervisory forces mentioned below) on their territory;
   e. undertake not to invite external military interference in the event of a civil war.

2. To renounce any territorial claims against their neighbors and to outlaw and dissolve any irredentist movements.\(^{148}\)

Historians will long wonder what provoked Karsh, himself an Israeli, to such a flight of fancy. Karsh left unanswered how it would be possible to bring brutal dictatorships such as Syria to “renounce war as an instrument of foreign policy” or to “remain neutral in the event of war in the region” no matter what the proverbial Arab/Muslim “street” might say. Israel, meanwhile, could never renounce either in theory or practice its de facto alliance with the United States. Dubious also is the assumption that a regime fighting for its very life in a civil war could ever renounce “external military interference.” Karsh’s final demand for a foreswearing of “any territorial claims” and “any irredentist movements” would, among other things, require

\(^{148}\) Ibid, 23.
recognition of Israel’s existence, something many regimes (e.g. the Islamic Republic of Iran) and, more importantly, people in the Middle East have no intention of doing.

Karsh’s proposal also included internationally-monitored demilitarized zones in the Sinai Peninsula and Golan Heights, the latter something often proposed, but never achieved. Karsh also proposed an “international force” deployed in the “newly established Palestinian state” in order to monitor restrictions limiting “Palestinian armed forces to 30,000 troops equipped with small arms and armored cars but lacking tanks, artillery (including surface-to-surface missiles), surface-to-air missiles and fighting aircraft. Transport Plane and/or helicopters would be allowed.”149 Whether foreign countries would be willing to deploy a force strong and determined enough to enforce a peace agreement, even in conditions of urban guerrilla warfare, remains questionable, particularly with respect to small rockets such as the homemade Qassam, a favored weapon of groups like Hamas.150

Even under Karsh’s limits, though, 30,000 troops could form a significant pool of suicide bombers and terrorists. After all, the United States Department of State’s website laconically describes Hamas’ strength as consisting of an “unknown number of hardcore members” and “tens of thousands of supporters and sympathizers.” The State Department also estimates the armed strength of Hezbollah at merely “several thousand.”151

Karsh also wanted the “governments of the guarantor states, for their part,” to undertake to contribute to the preservation of the neutralized bloc by:

149 Ibid.
151 Background Information on Foreign Terrorist Organizations (accessed August 1, 2006); available from http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rpt/fto/2801.htm.
1. Removing the bloc from the sphere of great-power competition;
2. Foregoing any attempt to bring the neutralized bloc in any way into a collective security or other agreement inconsistent with its permanent neutrality;
3. Avoiding both the introduction of foreign troops or military personnel and the establishment of military installations of any kind in the neutralized bloc;
4. Defending the independence and territorial integrity of:
   a. the neutralized bloc as a whole against external attack;
   b. any member of the neutralized bloc against an attack by external factors or by other members of the bloc. The defense of the neutralized bloc could be carried out either jointly by all the guarantor states or some of them, or separately in the event that joint action could not be agreed upon.  

Karsh’s proposal again seems divorced from reality. Given the involvement of countries like Iran in the bitter conflict with Israel and the importance of the Suez Canal, it is hardly conceivable how the “guarantor states” could remove this “bloc from the sphere of great-power competition.” Countries like the Soviet Union/Russia, moreover, seem to seek involvement in this region merely for the sake of exerting influence on the world stage. Avoidance of “both the introduction of foreign troops or military personnel and the establishment of military installations of any kind in the neutralized bloc” would also call into question American defense links with both Israel, on the one hand, and Arab states like Egypt and Jordan on the other. Weakening of such ties appears strange, given that Karsh’s call for the defense of the “independence and territorial integrity” of the “neutralized bloc” could, practically speaking, amount only to an American hegemonic management of the region’s security, as already demonstrated by America’s military involvement in the region. Like many other neutrality proposals, Karsh’s “neutralization scheme” remained, in the end, mercifully obscure.

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The Impossibility of a Neutral Third Way between Freedom and Tyranny

The uniqueness of neutrality in general and the 1955 Austrian settlement in particular belied the praise bestowed upon the State Treaty during its 25th anniversary in 1980, if for no other reason than diplomatic etiquette. Responding to a call by *Europäische Rundschau* for comments from the foreign ministers of the four former occupying powers, Lord Carrington called the “Austrian example, however exceptional it might be,” a “source of inspiration for all those who, like me, under completely different circumstances were concerned with finding means and ways for bringing peace to an occupied and contested country.”¹⁵³ “The State Treaty,” Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance concurred, has doubtlessly withstood the tests of time. After two and a half decades the State Treaty has still shown itself to be one of the most significant results of détente in Europe. It was, in fact, the first fruit of détente between East and West—and still serves as an example for diplomats seeking solutions for the great problems of the world.¹⁵⁴

Vance, unfortunately, was not able to attend the State Treaty festivities in charming Vienna. He resigned as secretary of state on April 24, 1980, out of protest against President Jimmy Carter’s non-diplomatic response to the Iranian hostage crisis with a failed military rescue mission.¹⁵⁵ It was left to his successor at the State Department, Edmund Muskie, to officially commemorate the State Treaty in Belvedere Palace on May 16, 1980. “We remain hopeful,” Muskie declared there, “that progress can be made. And this occasion strengthens our hope: for the treaty we commemorate

¹⁵⁵ Vance described the events surrounding his resignation in his memoirs of service under President Carter, see: Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America’s Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 407-413.
today is an enduring reminder. It is a reminder that even in the most difficult time, it is possible, indeed, all the more important, to work for a stable and peaceful world.”

Evaluations of the State Treaty by other observers removed from official diplomatic festivities were more circumspect. The authors of *Neutralization and World Politics* correctly judged in 1968 that the “Austrian case of neutralization…represented the outcome of an unusual opportunity for a mutually advantageous bargain that is not likely to recur.” Similarly, Charles W. Yost, a former deputy high commissioner to Austria (1953-1954), noted at a 1982 conference in Charlottesville, Virginia, that “people often ask what the lessons of the Austrian peace treaty are. I am afraid that there aren’t any that could be applied to the present situation. The factors there were unique and are certainly not likely to be repeated now, as we see in Poland at the moment.”

Although perhaps flattered by praise for an “Austrian model,” Austrians themselves often warned, like Chancellor Raab, against plans to export Austrian neutrality. Austria’s “policy of independence,” argued Foreign Minister Peter Jankowitsch in 1986,

constructed upon special historic, geographic, and national circumstances, understands itself not as a model, and thus can not be imposed upon others as a model. If, therefore, Finland’s independence is not suitable for the “Finlandization” of other countries, then Austria’s neutrality was not won in order to “neutralize” other countries with completely different circumstances.

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157 Black, Falk, Knorr, and Young, 115.
Chancellor Franz Vranitzky was perhaps even blunter during a June 1989
conference in Austria. “We European neutrals,” he stated,

find the equally well-meant attempt to present neutrality as a patent
medicine or panacea for all sorts of political trouble spots in this world
equally disconcerting: a neutral Kampuchea, a neutral Afghanistan; it is
likely that somebody somewhere is already toying with the idea of a
neutral Namibia as well.160

The limited value assigned to Austrian neutrality application reflected the limited
value of neutrality in general. “‘Permanent neutrality,’” argued Austrian scholar Gerald
Stourzh in 1971, “is an exceptional rather than regular (frequently recurring)
phenomenon of international politics. In other words, states considered as ‘permanently
neutral’ are special cases.”161 “Permanently neutral States,” Stourzh’s Austrian colleague
Peter Fischer agreed during a November 1980 conference in New Delhi, India, “are rare
birds in the fauna of the community of States: only Austria, the State of the Vatican City
and Switzerland have this status.”162

Even in Europe, the number of failed attempts at neutrality outnumbered
successes. “Before World War I,” the Austrian scholars Anton Pelinka and Ruth Wodak
noted in 2001, “Belgium was considered a model for neutrality—like Switzerland.”163
Yet Belgium merely helped prove, in the words of Bundesheer commandant Emil
Spannocchi in 1982, that

160 Franz Vranitzky, “Foreword,” in The European Neutrals in the 1990s: New Challenges and
161 Gerald Stourzh, “Some Reflections on Permanent Neutrality,” in Small States in International
Relations (Nobel Symposium 17), eds. August Schou and Arne Olav Brundtland (Stockholm: Almqvist &
Wiksell Forlag, 1971), 93.
162 Peter Fischer, “Legal and Economic Aspects of Austria’s Permanent Neutrality,” in Non-
Council for Cultural Relations, 1982), 55. Fischer was referring only to those states with an internationally
codified status of neutrality, in exclusion of states such as Sweden or Ireland practicing de facto permanent
neutrality as a matter of foreign policy.
163 Anton Pelinka and Ruth Wodak, “Austrian Neutrality,” in Neutrality in Austria, eds. Günter
Neutrality is ultimately not at all always possible. Belgium attempted it twice in this century and failed for very simple reasons. Belgium lay at the beginning of both world wars exactly on the decisive lines of operation of both classical European enemies of this period and, moreover, in a geography hardly protected by any serious natural barriers. No one can be neutral in such a manner. Switzerland, by contrast, could maintain a neutral peace because no major military lines of operations crossed Switzerland and because this country could build into its policies an imposing terrain formation as a hard to conquer obstacle.  

Belgian neutrality was suspect even before World War I, as Austrian legal scholar Stephan Verosta noted. “Belgium,” Verosta wrote in 1967, “acquired before 1914 by means of espionage authentic knowledge of the German Reich’s so-called Schlieffen-Plan, which wanted to achieve a quick German victory over France via a violation of Belgium’s permanent neutrality.” According to contemporary diplomatic practice, though, Belgium or the guaranteeing powers of its neutrality could not make accusations against Germany, itself a guarantor of Belgian neutrality, before an actual neutrality violation. Analogous to Switzerland in both world wars, “Belgium informed the guaranty powers France and Great Britain and secret consultations took place between the general staffs of the three countries.” “It is generally assumed,” observed Verosta in contrast to Swiss evaluations, “that the Belgian feelers with the two other guaranty powers were justified and unobjectionable under international law; however, the proof for a planned surprise attack must be clear and authentic.”

Former foreign minister Lujo Tončić-Sorinj remarked in 1980 that “neutrality concepts and the subsequent realization of neutrality were in most cases doomed to failure.” Not only Belgium and with it tiny Luxemburg failed to maintain to their coordinates.

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neutrality in both world wars, but failure also marked various proposals for neutrality mooted in Iceland, Jerusalem, and Albania.166 “At the outbreak of the Second World War,” elaborated Hakovirta, “there were twenty European states whose international position and foreign-policy orientation could be labeled ‘neutrality.’” Yet at war’s end, “there were only five,” namely Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Ireland, and Sweden, “that, with great difficulty, had succeeded in maintaining their neutral positions.”167 Even the “emphatically neutral policies of the Netherlands with respect to Germany,” noted German diplomat Hans Arnold in 1994, “could not prevent a surprise attack upon the Netherlands.”168

According to General Spannocchi, some states such as Norway wasted an opportunity for neutrality out of negligence, demonstrating that even successful neutrality was not effort-free. “Out of its midrange military-political endangerment, together with an unheard of geographically strong country,” analyzed Spannocchi,

there came nonetheless a Norwegian neutrality policy catastrophe in the year 1940. The sum, which was necessary for effectiveness, was truly naively, i.e. negligently, missed through the rejection of a mobilizable military potential. The some 13,000 men actually present did not even fulfill minimal security needs.169

Even “successful” countries such as Switzerland occasionally suffered violations of their neutrality, as already indicated. Allied troops from the anti-Napoleon coalition marched though de facto neutral Switzerland in 1813 and the Third Reich’s transport planes crossed Swiss airspace in 1936 while ferrying military supplies to General

167 Hakovirta, 3-4, 99.
169 Spannocchi, 300.
Franco’s troops at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. “The course of history up until now shows,” wrote the German scholar Diemut Majer in 1987, “that the great powers are little disposed to respect neutral territory when this contradicts their interests.” 170 “The simple fact of being legally in the right,” agreed Kreisky almost 30 years earlier on the pages of Foreign Affairs, “has never in history saved any country from having its neutrality violated by another country which was determined on that course.” 171

“The success of a neutrality policy in the sense of staying out of wars,” security studies scholar Erich Reiter determined with characteristic sobriety in 1994, depends, among other things, ultimately upon which behavioral expectations the belligerents have vis-à-vis a neutral country. Because these behavioral expectations will be different among the belligerents, the neutral country can certainly come into a situation, in which the neutral country is not capable of fulfilling both behavioral expectations. Whether a neutral country is then actually pulled into the war depends decisively upon the military strength of the neutral country and/or all military power relationships and constellations. 172

“In such cases,” Windsor agreed in 1986, “the most one can say of the smaller countries is that neutrality sometimes worked and sometimes did not. The power criterion was what mattered, as can be seen from the legend of perfidious Albion during the period when Britain was the arbiter of the European balance of power.” 173 In view of these power realities, Laqueur determined that the ideal condition for successful neutrality is a favorable geopolitical situation, far from global politics areas of tension, and a pleasant

173 Windsor, 3.
neighborhood, that is, peace-loving states that live and let live, having no intention of enlarging their territory and interfering in the affairs of other countries. It can therefore be said that neutrality blossoms best where it is least needed.\textsuperscript{174}

Whether Cold War Austria was in a “favorable geopolitical situation, far from global politics areas of tension” is questionable. Neutral Austria certainly witnessed more dramatic events during the Cold War than Ireland, Sweden, or Switzerland. Soviet invasions of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 produced more than enough tension, or at least the Yugoslavs under Tito thought so. Disputes with Yugoslavia over territory and ethnic minorities, for their part, unsettled the stability needed by Austria for neutrality.

The revelation of the cozy Austro-American transit relationship during the 1958 overflight crisis, meanwhile, reminded the world of Austria’s strategic significance. Had a general NATO-Warsaw Pact war broken out, it is doubtful that Austria would have remained peaceful for long. Austrian neutrality evokes in certain ways the Duke of Wellington’s aphorism that the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 was a “damned near-run thing.”\textsuperscript{175}

As the experience of Austria demonstrates, however, not even the few favored neutral democracies in Europe could maintain neutrality in the modern world. Freedom respects no borders, neutral or otherwise, and Europe’s neutral states could not help but be drawn into the orbit of the wider, culturally-related free world. The trade relations of Europe’s neutral states gravitated naturally towards other market-based economies, the popular sympathies of the world’s free societies were the same everywhere, whether in

\textsuperscript{174} Laqueur, 119.  
\textsuperscript{175} See, for example: Battle of Waterloo (accessed August 6, 2006); available from http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/battle_waterloo_06.shtml.
neutral countries or not, and prudent defense policies demanded practical protection against freedom’s enemies such as the Communist bloc, no matter what neutrality said. Pace Alfred Kasamas, but Austrian history demonstrated that phenomena such as the Marshall Plan cannot have “solely economic significance.” The neutrality paradox illustrated by Austria was that the free societies required for neutrality’s implementation simultaneously made neutrality impossible in a world divided between freedom and tyranny.

As Stourzh observed, freedom’s antineutral implications were unavoidable. “Neutrality,” he explained in 1971,

is basically connected with non-participation in military conflict and rules regulating this non-participation….If this fundamental connection with the avoidance of military conflict is disregarded, and if instead a policy of neutrality is considered as an aim in itself, the specter of “total neutrality,” Orwellian in implications, arises: total neutrality with demands impossible to fulfill in all areas of human conduct: demands of complete “symmetry” in many spheres of public (and perhaps private) life; demands of “ideological” neutrality in the area of public opinion, impossible to fulfill except by suppressing freedom of expression: demands of economic neutrality impossible to fulfill except by recurring to an autarchy incompatible with the requirements of world economy etc.

Like many Austrians, Bundesheer brigadier Kurt Landl understood that the “majority of our population certainly stands ideologically, economically, and sociologically closer to the West than to the East.” “It would be carrying coals to Newcastle,” he recognized in a 1977 article, “to explain here that neutrality is not synonymous with neutralism.” It was, though, ultimately merely Landl’s pious wish that “this fact may not influence the neutrality policy of the government.”

Many factors,

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176 Stourzh, 93-94.
including Tončić-Sorinj’s own behavior, belied the former foreign minister’s assertion in a 1992 article concerning Julius Raab’s foreign policy that “for the Soviet Union it was clear from the very beginning, that Austria’s neutrality would not mean a clandestine support for the Western powers and NATO.”

Austrians were ultimately no more successful in compartmentalizing neutrality than the Americans under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who proclaimed in a September 3, 1939 radio address at the outbreak of World War II that “this nation will remain a neutral nation, but I cannot ask that every American remain neutral in thought as well. Even a neutral has a right to take account of facts. Even a neutral cannot be asked to close his mind or close his conscience.” Despite Roosevelt’s protestations of a “neutral nation,” history records that America’s nonneutral thoughts and their policy implications brought America into World War II soon enough. “The question arises according to the analyses published in this collected volume, however,” Gehler similarly noted in the preface to a 2000 collection of essays, “whether the European neutrals are still neutral at all and whether they were ever really neutral in the actual sense of the word.” “Iconoclastically formulated,” Gehler offered as an answer, Europe’s neutrals were actually never neutral in the ideal-definitional sense of classical international law. Contradictions and changes in the conception of neutrality policies were on the agenda. It was a matter of mastering the multidimensional use of termini, which developed notable flexibility in varied constellations and demonstrated an astonishing art of survival. On the basis of changing and varying framework conditions a dubious and duplicitous policy was pursued. In times of crisis there was behind the scenes more or less extensive cooperation with one of the participating

179 For a copy of President Roosevelt’s address, see: Address of the President delivered by Radio from the White House (accessed April 4, 2007): available from http://www.mhric.org/fdr/chat14.html.
sides, above all in the Cold War with the West. While the political elite announced “equidistance” to the “blocks,” trade flows were rerouted, military officials cooperated secretly with the West, and the industry made their weapons deals—also the state industries in part. In the Cold War the neutrals were not only spiritually-cultural, but also economically and politically West-oriented, if not, in fact, totally settled in the Western camp. Neutrality was therefore a multifaceted vehicle of camouflage and acted as a colorful deception maneuver in various directions.\textsuperscript{180}

\textit{Obsolescent Neutrality}

Various comments in the literature concerning neutrality and Austrian neutrality in particular indicate that neutrality as a concept had historically outlived its usefulness at least by the time of the Cold War. “The classical concept of neutrality that largely evolved in the European balance-of-power system from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century,” analyzed Neuhold in 1989,

may be summed up as follows:

1. The wars in which neutral states tried not to become involved were fought for limited stakes in accordance with rules that restricted the means and methods to be employed in battle.
2. Wars affected only the relations between states but not their private citizens. That is, warfare was essentially an armed confrontation between “regular” military forces facing each other on the battlefield, with few if any economic, civilian, or psychological-ideological implications.\textsuperscript{181}

Because wars at the time had limited aims and balances of power existed among many countries, German scholar Stelianos Scarlis noted in 1984 that the “19\textsuperscript{th} century is variously termed in the scholarly literature as the classical age of secured neutrality or as


the ‘l’âge d’or de la neutralité.’"182 Austrian international relations scholar Paul Luif identified in 1979 three factors in particular that enabled the existence of neutrality as an institution of international law in the 19th century:

- Separation of state and society in high capitalism (both domestically and internationally);
- Balance of power of the European great powers, whereby it came to no rigid alliance formation;
- Limited wars encompassing only a part of the state community.183

“In the course of the 20th century,” Luif explained, all of these preconditions underwent a change. The separation of state and society has given way to an extensive integration, both in the Western industrial states (“state interventionism”) as well as in the Socialist states, naturally. After the Second World War military blocs developed, which faced each other in a “Cold War,” which was somewhat alleviated, however, through the policies of détente. Finally, the shape of war has changed; if both world wars were “total wars,” so today there are “untypical wars” like wars of liberation, guerrilla wars, civil wars, etc. The considerable intensification of economic relations lead to a multiplication of primarily nonmilitary conflicts—like the North-South conflict, conflicts over raw materials and energy sources. Because of all these reasons neutrality under international law has lost importance in global politics. Thus only Switzerland and Ireland adhered in the narrowest sense to the rules of neutrality in the Second World War.184

“The neutrality of the Swiss confederacy,” Austrian historian Otto Schulmeister specifically noted in 1979, “was the fruit of European balance of power policies from 150 years ago, these policies could still count on common rules of play and a values

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184 Ibid, 271.
consensus on the part of the participating cabinets.” Indeed, Switzerland before the 20th century may be the only example of truly successful permanent neutrality. Relatively isolated and strongly defended, Switzerland could traditionally abstain from Europe’s wars raging around the Alps. So long as no single power dominated Europe, Switzerland could also remain free of external coercion. The limited nature of international trade and economic warfare, furthermore, limited Swiss exposure to commercial sanctions. Switzerland’s relatively early and isolated democratic development, meanwhile, weakened any affinity the Swiss might have had for Europe’s various autocratic powers, and vice-versa.

Almost all of these factors, however, changed through the course of time. The Nazi Third Reich and the Communist Soviet Union threatened, in turn, all of Europe with a totalitarian domination in which no isolated country could long survive. As Alting von Geusau described the Cold War,

the division of Europe into two “hostile camps”—as proclaimed by the 1947 Cominform Declaration—made neutrality ideologically inconceivable as a policy. The democratic States of Europe appeared to have only a choice between forming an alliance among themselves and with the United States or submission to Soviet political influence or Soviet totalitarian repression…the Benelux countries opted for the first alternative. In their opinion, the division of Europe excluded a policy of neutrality as an acceptable choice for any other European State. They had little or no understanding for the policies of Sweden and Switzerland. They understood the fate of Finland, but feared a similar fate for themselves in the absence of a clear policy in favor of alliance and integration.

In the contest between freedom and enslavement waged for so long in Europe, though, Switzerland’s ultimate loyalty could never be in doubt, as various Swiss military

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186 Alting von Geusau, 63.
feelers in both World War II and the Cold War showed. The Swiss realized that even Switzerland’s naturally strong defenses might have been no avail against modern opponents such as the Warsaw Pact with its Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Nor could Switzerland avoid demonstrating solidarity with Western Cold War trade embargoes if Switzerland wanted to continue to enjoy participation in an increasingly integrated global economy. “Switzerland remained formally neutral in legal terms,” the Austrian diplomat Thomas Nowotny reviewed in 1996, “but became—viewed in a larger context—a ‘tacit NATO partner.’”¹⁸⁷ Switzerland and Austria, Ambassador Arnold agreed two years earlier, “were militarily, influenced geographically and through Western security policies, parts of the Western security area formed by NATO. This was true above all for Switzerland, which is almost completely, and for Austria, which is in good measure, surrounded by NATO territory.”¹⁸⁸ In the end, the Moscow Memorandum asked Austria to practice a neutrality policy that Switzerland itself could no longer meaningfully maintain.

**What Austrian “Neutrality” Wrought**

Reporting on the Benelux experience with neutrality in 1983, Alting von Geusau described a belief in neutrality “as a policy to assure national independence” being “after May 1940…a lost illusion.” “With a state of war already in existence among Germany, Great Britain and France,” Benelux “neutrality had lost its meaning” during World War II before “German forces invaded Belgium, Luxembourg and The Netherlands without any

¹⁸⁸ Arnold, 42.
previous ultimatum.” The only result of Benelux neutrality, Alting von Geusau concluded, was an unwillingness to take defensive measures in concert with their (future) allies and unpreparedness to confront invasion and occupation. The lessons which the Benelux countries have learned so far in the course of this century are threefold: (1) neither the status of guaranteed neutralization, nor their policy of neutrality could keep them out of war or secure their territorial integrity; (2) military considerations on the part of the strongest European power were decisive for the violation (or non-violation) of their territorial integrity; (3) neutrality made them less defensible and less prepared to face invasion and occupation.189

Although Cold War Austrian security policy never faced the prospect of being proved an illusion in the ultimate test of a general war, Alting von Geusau’s analysis seemed to apply to Austria as well. All evidence, of course, indicates that neutrality would have done nothing to protect Austria or influence military considerations in a general NATO-Warsaw Pact war. In addition, neutrality effectively hindered Austrian and, with it, Western defenses against a Communist threat. Austria’s chronically low defense expenditures, for example, are partly attributable to its neutrality policy precluding a clear national identification of friends and foes. “It would be mistaken,” judged the Austrian diplomat Emil Staffelmeyer in 1976, to derive the necessity for national defense only from an obligation under international law. A defense policy, which understood itself only as the fulfillment of an international law obligation, would have a hard time of awakening among the people the will for defense necessary for maintaining independence, even given sufficient education among the population.190

189 Alting von Geusau, 60, 62.
Brigadier Landl recognized this problem as well the following year. “It could be argued,” he wrote,

that justifications for measures of national defense and within the armed forces can be made considerably more easily with a Feindbild than with the attempt to make defense more plausible in another way. For example, on the basis of a permanently neutral state’s obligations, which doubtlessly do not address the human “instinct realm,” something which appears especially receptive for Feindbilder. But this is not supposed to be.¹⁹¹

The “renunciation of a Feindbild,” Landl explained, was “to be justified in terms of neutrality policy.” With a perhaps somewhat dismissive air towards the Communist bloc, Landl qualified his views with the observation that “Austria is now simply not—and it would be completely unreal, to not assume this—surrounded on all sides by enemies.”

“Any Feindbild oriented so much as in a single direction, however,” Landl warned, “would mean the beginning of a departure from the principle of strict neutrality.” Landl, though, found the solution for Austria’s defense motivation dilemma in the belief that the “will for selfpreservation of a free way of life needs no Feindbild and requires no ideological guidance.”¹⁹²

The empirical case of Cold War Austria and logical analysis casts doubt upon Landl’s confidence. History has consistently shown that free peoples can value their freedom while not making sufficient exertion’s for freedom’s defense in the absence of a clear recognition of freedom’s foes. Neutrality, though, excluded Austria from Western defense councils with their positive effect on armed Western solidarity. Neutrality also prevented the formation of a public appreciation for common Western defense efforts in an Austria officially not party to a Western security community, something no amount of

¹⁹¹ Landl, 192.
discrete *Feindbilder* on the part of Austrians like *Bundesheer* brigadier Richard Bayer could counteract. The end result was a fairweather neutrality dependent quite literally (consider *Bundesheer* colonel Josef Marolz’s meteorological rationalization for Austria’s lack of airpower) upon foul weather. At the same time, superficial understandings of neutrality in Austria and other West European countries acted as an alluring neutral fata morgana among NATO populaces, to the detriment of Western defense efforts.

To the extent that Austrians did perceive a Communist threat, it was all too easy in the absence of alliance obligations to take advantage of the “freerider” phenomenon well known in the field of international relations. “It was not the Austrian army,” Pelinka analyzed in 1998,

that prevented any serious violation of Austrian neutrality. The Austrian armed forces are the weakest in Europe, judged on the basis of defense spending. During that critical year, when troops of the USSR and four other Warsaw Pact countries invaded Czechoslovakia, Austria spent significantly less on defense than any other comparable country in Europe, whether neutral, nonaligned, or a NATO-member. Austrians could feel secure in their neutrality due to the power balance the United States and the Soviet Union had established in Europe. As long as NATO was strong enough to deter any possible Soviet expansion, Austrian security was protected too. Austria got a free ride on European security arrangements, independent of its own defense policy. It is remarkable that during the height of the Cold War Austria followed neither the example of the Swiss and Swedish, who felt they had to be better armed than the others because they were neutral, nor the example of small NATO countries, who had to be armed because they were facing a Communist threat. Austria lived in the best of all possible worlds, provided with a security umbrella without having to pay for it.¹⁹³

Interviewed in July 2005, Neuhold confirmed that Austria was indeed a “freerider [Trittbrettfahrer]” of NATO that “increasingly liked the price” of neutrality paid in

Given how the Austrians unilaterally defined neutrality, this is understandable. Previously in 1990, Payr observed that

if one follows the discussions that break out again and again in Austria around security and defense policy questions, then the impression cannot be avoided that many Austrians do indeed have a thoroughly positive attitude towards the our country’s neutrality but shy away, however, from its consequences—particularly from the consequence that this neutrality must be “armed.”

Westerners outside of Austria took a less positive view of neutrality. In a statement with particular pertinence to Austria, former United States assistant secretary of defense Leonard Sullivan, Jr., wrote in 1985 that “neutrality has come to mean simply the enjoyment of the benefits of OECD membership and Western lifestyles with the avoidance of formal military cooperation with NATO.”

Joseph Kruzel, himself a former deputy assistant secretary of defense, commented in 1986 that “Sullivan echoed the implicit sentiment of many American security analysts.” “Discussions with senior officials in Washington and Brussels,” Kruzel explained, “convey the clear impression that the neutrals are seen as free riders on the train of Western collective security, a ride made all the more annoying by the frequent and vocal complaints of the nonpaying passengers.” Although the “United States officially accepts the principle of neutrality, there is also a pronounced undercurrent of suspicion in the United States toward the neutrals dating back to the days of John Foster Dulles.”

Apparently trying to find virtue in necessity, Kruzel qualified that

if there is considerable ideological coolness within the U.S. (and NATO) security establishment toward neutrality, there is also implicit appreciation

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194 Neuhold interview.
195 Payr, 57.
of the fact that the Euro-neutrals make life more difficult for Warsaw Pact military planners than they do for NATO. In indirect ways, which thoughtful NATO leaders would like to encourage, the neutral and nonaligned states can and do make a positive contribution to Western collective defense.\footnote{Ibid.}

Yet Austria’s anemic defense under neutrality was unquestionably inferior for all Western parties concerned to the possibility of an Austria integrated into NATO. What few resources Austria devoted to defense during the Cold War officially had to take account not just of a Warsaw Pact threat, but also of a NATO threat to Austrian neutrality, no matter how impractical the possibility of Austrians fighting the West. In light of Austria’s “Potemkin village” defenses against NATO created “just for show” in the name of neutrality’s strategic aesthetics, the question arises just what other countries prepare for conflicts that they have no interest in waging. After all, Austria’s fellow democracies did not threaten Landl’s beloved “free way of life.” In theory, though, neutrality lengthens the list of a country’s potential enemies.

Contrary to Landl’s dismissal of Feindbilder, meanwhile, many Austrians could not affirmatively answer the question “Mourir pour la neutralité?”. Why Austrians should fight, kill, and die in the name of neutrality waged on behalf of other peoples’ strategic calculations and not Austrian national interest was a bedeviling question for Austrian defense efforts. The mere fact of a (Warsaw Pact) attack upon Austria would signal the failure of any “Aufenthalt und Durchmarsch” costs to deter a determined aggressor from transiting Austrian territory. Why seal this failure with Austrian blood? Austrian combat operations against NATO, moreover, could have even been immoral according to just war theory, given the fact that NATO use and/or occupation of Austrian
Neutrality would have constituted no realistic, longterm evil justifying bloodshed, but rather merely an incitement to Warsaw Pact violations of Austrian neutrality.

The theory that Austrian defenses would deter incursions from all sides, thereby serving Austria’s national interest and, to the relief of NATO officials like Kruzel, indirectly the alliance’s interest in stable flanks, was simply too complex and abstract. Military conflict, however, is not abstract and demands a clear recognition of friends and foes, sometimes even before battle begins, in order for victory to prevail over defeat in struggles involving life and death. Wishing to avoid simplistic caricatures, particularly in light of the Third Reich’s hate-filled racial propaganda, the (West) German Bundeswehr also renounced Feindbilder of the Warsaw Pact but, as one German security studies scholar quipped in 1995, Bundeswehr soldiers “knew where he [the Feind] lived.”

As a caption alongside a picture of a smiling British Royal Marine Commando in The Balance of Military Power explained in 1981, when “NATO soldiers look around them they at least know their allies share the same values.” Neutrality, in contrast, seemed to hinder Bundesheer soldiers in understanding the values for which they were to fight. Landl’s suggestion of neutral “Rambos” ruthlessly killing all violators of Austrian neutrality impartially in a manner befitting native son Arnold Schwarzenegger is simply not realistic.

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199 Personal anecdote from a 1995 seminar at the Bundeswehr’s staff college or Führungsakademie in Hamburg.
Many Austrians like Neuhold actually consider it advantageous to have avoided NATO membership during the Cold War along with alliance-driven pressures for increased defense spending. Neuhold’s economizing in defense matters, of course, leaves aside the question whether it was responsible for Austria to invest so little in its own and, ultimately, Western security. Yet it is questionable just how much more military expenditure NATO membership would have imposed upon Austria. Oliver Rathkolb’s analysis indicates that NATO would have been satisfied with an Austrian force capable of holding the Brenner corridor and perhaps mounting some defense along approaches to NATO territory like the Danube valley.

Moreover, Austrian defense spending in NATO, no matter how small, would have had far more utility than under unilateral neutrality given the synergy effect of an alliance in which, according to the Three Musketeers’ motto of “all for one and one for all,” national interests are aggregated. This would have obviated a complicated Cold War game of second-guessing in which NATO and Austria officially proclaimed respect for Austrian neutrality but ultimately planned on meeting any crisis as allies.

Even if a small Bundesheer had merely planned to abandon most of Austria in a retreat to a strategic redoubt in Tyrol, NATO membership would have committed the alliance politically to recovering Austrian territory at the peace table. On the other hand, had a NATO member Austria devoted significant resources to defense, the Bundesheer could have focused on defending Vienna and eastern Austria, perhaps with a defensive strategy similar to South Korea’s defenses against North Korean attack. Interviewed in

202 Neuhold interview.
Neutrality Assessed

2005, Reiter, for example, speculated about what a Bundesheer containing ten Panzer (tank) divisions concentrated in eastern Austria could have accomplished.\textsuperscript{203}

NATO membership for Austria would have offered other advantages as well. NATO would have allowed Austrians to influence NATO decisions concerning the use of nuclear weapons on Austrian soil. In case of a general war, it would have been best to pool the limited civil defense resources of Austria and other Western states in the aftermath of any WMD attack. Explicit NATO defense guarantees to Austria could also have done much to defuse tensions and eliminate uncertainties during the Soviet invasions of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. There would have been no need for “neutral” Austria to seek such Western assurances covertly. These invasions, and the sometimes muddled Austrian crisis management during them, meanwhile, demonstrate that small states are best advised not to meet crises alone.

In the end, the struggle against Communism in Europe remained largely cold. The Third World War remained a book, the “balloon” did not “go up,” the Bundesheer did not see the “elephant” (or, for that matter, surrender without firing a shot), X-Day never came. Armageddon has not (yet?) come. But this was not due to Austrian neutrality. In certain circumstances such as the Austria of 1955, the price of “neutrality,” liked or not, was necessary for a larger goal, but Austrian neutrality remained a price paid by many in the West.

\textsuperscript{203} Interview with Erich Reiter on August 3, 2005.
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