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International Perceptions of Austrian Neutrality post 1945

This article concentrates on central outside perceptions of Austrian neutrality since 1955 in order to analyze the interpretations of major players in the cold war of a allegedly clear cut concept. in international law. A deeper view behind the scenes of a much more broader perception of neutrality from the outside might be useful in the ongoing domestic debate about the future of Austrian neutrality after the end of the cold war and after having joined the European Union. Despite the fact that Austrian neutrality of 1955 certainly is a result of the first détente signs in the cold war and certainly is a direct product of Allied administration 1945-1955[1] the ongoing discussions produce the myth if it was just the Austrian government (and sometimes the Soviet Union) which formed neutrality and neutrality policy post 1955; in my point of view a typical isolationist and highly reduced view.[2] In real politics neutrality policy always is influenced by the neighboring and great power framework which decides the options and the decision making capabilities.

1) 1955: Austrian (split) Neutrality no model at all
Very early on the new President, Dwight D. Eisenhower, reversed the total anti-neutrality policy of the Truman administration concerning an Austrian solution. From his point of view "neutralization" of Austria only – meaning not to include other "split" countries like Germany or even non-alignment in the "Third World" – would close the gap in conventional forces in the north-south line of NATO. Already as Supreme Commander of NATO he realized that due to massive troop reductions in the three western allied zones of Austria and due to the presence of estimated 30,000 Soviet soldiers in Eastern Austria pro-Western Austrian conventional forces comprising 65 000 soldiers under arms could delay a possible attack of the Red Army and thereby assist NATO forces in mobilizing the north-south-line between Western Germany and Italy through Austrian territory.[3]

It took the Secretary of State John Foster Dulles who preferred clear cut solutions in the Cold War until the end of the Berlin Conference of 1954 to accept the neutral status as an option if, as President Eisenhower has put it, accepted a status like Switzerland and was prepared to defend neutrality with military forces. He, however, tried to keep the Austrian delegation away from a "neutrality declaration" in Berlin since he feared a "negative" copying effect for the German question. Whereas Eisenhower knew that a military neutrality status of Austria would mean a strengthening of prowestern conventional forces in the region, Dulles even reversed the argument of the US president and "noted that Austria could become an inviting invasion route to

[1] The most sophisticated historical research and analysis of primary sources and secondary literature can be found in the impressing recent edition of Gerald Stourzh, Um Einheit und Freiheit. Staatsvertrag, Neutralität und das Ende der Ost-West- Besetzung Österreichs, 1945-1955 (Böhlau Verlag: Wien, 1998).
[2] With regard to the ongoing debate compare the series of contributions in Streitfall Neutralität, ed. Andreas Weber (Czernin Verlag: Vienna 1999); concerning the broader European debate see Beitreten oder Trittbrettfahren. Die Zukunft der Neutralität in Europa, ed. Günther Bächler (Verlag Rüegger, Zürich 1994).
[3] Foreign Relations of the United States (=FRUS) 1951, Vol. IV,2, ed. U.S. Department of State (US Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C. 1985),1034f. Oliver Rathkolb, "The Foreign Relations between the USA and Austria in the late 1950s," in Austria in the Nineteen Fifties. Contemporary Austrian Studies 3 (Transaction Publishers: New Brunswick 1995), 28

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the South comparable to Belgium in 1914".[4] During the Berlin conference realized that the Post-Stalin nomenclatura has reversed the "Neutralization" propaganda which Stalin especially forced in 1952. The Austrian Communists were explicitly told in 1954 not to continue their neutrality propaganda.[5] Obviously the hard-liners around Foreign Minister Molotov were not at all interested in a change of the status quo – not even with regard to Austria which certainly was (in total) beyond the Soviet sphere of influence despite the presence of Soviet troops in Eastern Austria and Vienna. After Khrushchev has taken absolute power in the Kremlin he continued the first options discussed after Stalin's death by Malenkov and Berija to obtain détente.[6] Especially Malenkow referred to Austria as part of a new strategy already in May 1953. He again focused on the Austrian bargaining chip which Eisenhower, too, referred to already in 1953 as an option for relaxation of tension and a follow up summit meeting. In his view the retreat of Soviet soldiers from Eastern Austria, to which Molotov had opposed too, would not really weaken Soviet military strategic abilities although the Soviet Union then had to give up the lines of communication and allocation of troops in Hungary and Rumania.[7] He very well understood that Austria was completely integrated into the western European economy as well as Western culture. At the same time the central post war planning aim of the Soviet Union, separating Austria from Germany,[8] should be guaranteed by neutralization – even at the price that in case of conflict with NATO Austria would side with NATO as a result of US military assistance (at that time already well known as the result of the training and equipping of a nucleus Austrian Army, the B-Gendarmerie).

Austrian Neutrality was from the perception of Moscow- until the late 1980s – primarily a guarantee against a revival of Western German "imperialism" and a move against the Soviet border. At the same time Austria constituted a test case: If Austrian neutrality fell in peacetime, this would constitute – as in 1938 – a strong sign for an attack against the Eastern block. The World War II trauma of the Soviet Communist elites was – before Gorbachev – so strong that they believed in a repetition of history.

Due to the conventional weakness of the Western military block the "other" perception aimed more towards an all-out-conflict, not as in the Soviet case towards an early warning case. In 1955 Secretary of State Dulles urged both the Austrian government to continue to build up an Austrian army under the guidance of US experts and especially nearly exclusively based on US armament and technology. He made it quite clear that this was a precondition for approval of the State Treaty by Congress. US military assistance became the nucleus of the Austrian army until the sixties. From all we know this pro-NATO concept in case of all-out-war was part of NATO.[9] The military attaché in Vienna, Colonel Oden, reported in March 1956 that "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 so that...they could fall back and defend the Klagenfurt basis and the

[4] Oliver Rathkolb, Washington ruft Wien. US-Großmachtpolitik und Österreich 1953-1963. Mit Exkursen zu CIA-Waffenlagern, NATO-Connection, Neutralitätsdebatte (Böhlau Verlag: Wien 1997), 68.
[5] Willi Scholz, Unveröffentlichter Diskussionsbeitrag für die Sitzung des Zentralkomitees der KPÖ, 13 March 1957 (a copy of this statement was given to the author by Dr. Viktor Matejka).
[6] Concerning the power struggle within the post Stalin Kremlin elite see Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin's Cold War. From Stalin to Khrushchev (Harvard University Press: Cambridge 1996), 157 ff..
[7] Manfried Rauchensteiner, Der Sonderfall: Die Besatzungszeit in Österreich 1945-1955 (Styria Verlag: Graz 1979), 332.
[8] Oliver Rathkolb, "Historische Fragmente und die 'unendliche Geschichte' von den sowjetischen Absichten in Österreich 1945, in Österreich unter Alliierter Besatzung 1945-1955, ed. Alfred Ableitinger et al. (Böhlau Verlag, Wien 1998), 142-149.
[9] Rathkolb, Washington, 120-127.

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Tyrol".[10] In case of a military show down this would have resulted in a separation of Austria. This NATO- concept of dividing the concept of military neutrality and self-defense of Austria, however, was implanted by the Austrian general staff until the late fifties (split-neutrality). Efforts of the same military elite to establish a direct liaison office in Rome already as early as November 1955 was blocked by US diplomats since this could create – if known to the public or Soviet intelligence – an excuse for the Soviet Union to question the neutrality status as such.[11]

At this point it should be referred to the military component of Austrian neutrality. From the point of view of the US this should primarily be an army able to suppress a domestic Communist coup d'etat and delay an attack from the Eastern bloc through Austrian territory. This, too, meant a containment of military neutrality since the military equipment was limited to these aims. At the same time the Austrian budget – reflecting the interests of Austrian public – started only in 1956 to reflect the new needs for military spending (which was not at all favorable in public opinion). Only with outside pressure and international US assistance these 10 years of nearly no military spending could be reversed to reach the level of comparable budgets of GNP. Thus Austria was never to reach the Swiss military budget figures nor the figures of smaller NATO countries or Sweden due to 10 years of demilitarization and no need to completely change the postwar budget line post 1955 due to US assistance.

Along the lines of international politics the US government, however, was not at all interested in Austria in general and Vienna in particular becoming a meeting place for East and West détente and disarmament talks – the concept of neutrality should not find more imitators. John Foster Dulles right away opposed to the Soviet "insistent pressures" to organize the Summit meeting of 1955 in Vienna.[12] Even in 1958, when Chancellor Julius Raab, tried to sell to the Americans a more active role of Austria in the Détente negotiations these ideas were not at all approved by Dulles.[13] The Austrian example of 1955 should not be enlarged by any sort of "internationalization" of Austria. The establishment of the International Atomic Energy Organization (IAEO) of Vienna therefore was not considered to be the first sign of the "internationalization" of Austria, but a special case – the result of a Soviet-American compromise (the US were aiming at the position of the Director General and therefore had to offer something to the Soviets, who have always been interested in having Vienna become part of the international détente game) and the fact that the Austrian government accepted US leadership in this institution and offered very generous support for this institution in Vienna.[14]

The two super powers were both convinced that Austrian neutrality would and should not change immediately, although certainly the Soviets would have used Austria more often as a communication place with the West whereas the Eisenhower administration tried to contain this option. The most skeptical European power, however, was Great Britain. Especially British diplomats saw Austrian neutrality of 1955 as just another form of appeasement and forecasted this to be the first step into pro-Soviet non-alignment. Sir Geoffrey Wallinger, the British Ambassador, noted that the Austrian Chancellor Julius Raab resorted to "neutralism" and was convinced that this foreign policy, if continued, would only be the "... first step to satellization".[15]

[10] Oden to Commander in Chief, US European Command, Military Aid, 1 March 1956, National Archives, Washington D.C., Record Group 59, 763.5-MSP/8-2456.
[11] Rathkolb, Washington, 123
[12] FRUS 1955-57, Vol. V, p.181
[13] Wiener Zeitung, 5 June 1958.
[14] Rathkolb, Washington,.136-138
[15] Wallinger to Selwyn Lloyd, Annual Report for 1955, January 24, 1956, copy from the Public record Office in London, cited after a not published research project for the Ministry for Science and Research by the Bruno Kreisky

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This rather negative view which existed in the Foreign Office in London, too, changed immediately in 1956 as a result of the distinct pro-Western political behavior through the Soviet intervention in Hungary 1956. Austria has proved that she was not on her way towards non-alignment, but clearly in the western camp in ideological battles. More than 170.000 refugees poured into Austria and the "young" sovereign small state was prepared – with large international financial and political assistance – to provide asylum. At the same time Chancellor Raab attacked the Soviet Union directly calling the Kremlin to "work cooperatively toward the ending of military hostilities and bloodshed" and asking for "normalization of conditions in Hungary for the re-establishment of freedom in the sense of human rights".[16] Socialist members of government like the Minister of the Interior, Oskar Helmer, even went further applauding the "Hungarian heroes" who "dare to rise against dictatorship and force ...". Raab tried to soften the very aggressive Anti-Soviet media coverage in Austria, but in total the Austrian government has kept to the concept of military neutrality – one Soviet soldier even was killed when being taken prisoner on Austrian territory – but behaved "more Western than the West" and underlined the deep commitment to the West.[17]

Neutral Asylum Country – A Cold War Myth?

Another very important perception began to develop after 1956: Austria as a neutral asylum country. Especially after 1968, the invasion in Czechoslovakia, this perception increased, although already in 1981 – when Polish refugees came to Austria– there existed first signs of opposition in Austrian society. In 1956 and 1968 these prejudices were overruled by the Cold War side show and the international guarantees that the refugees will stay only for a short time and then emigrate to other countries like the US or Canada. One could argue that in 1956 still the economic situation was tense, but on the other hand Austrian economy was to import labor in the early sixties from Yugoslavia and Turkey. The Austrian population never felt prepared to back a larger non-Austrian immigration segment post 1945, and therefore Austria never developed an immigration law or an immigration policy.

From the international point of view, however, 1956 and 1968 international media coverage had established such a strong perception that Austria was considered being "a" neutral Asylum Country which means that the perception "being an asylum country" is even stronger in 1984 than being "a political neutral country". Especially in Eastern Europe and the USSR Austria has established until 1984 a strong perception of being an asylum country, whereas political neutral is a label more associated with Switzerland (the only exception being Hungary). In Western Europe France, Italy and Switzerland still see Switzerland as "the" neutral and "the asylum" country , only Western Germany voting for Austria in the category "asylum". In the US the neutrality perception of Austria, when compared with Switzerland, is extremely low (only 19% despite the possibility of double voting).[18]

Archives Foundation, Vienna (Die österreichische Außenpolitik und der Beitrag Österreichs zur Entspannungspolitik Europas 1953-1966, compiled by Stefan August Lütgenau, Vienna 1991, 51).

[16] Thomas O. Schlesinger, Austrian Neutrality in Postwar Europe. The Domestic Roots of a Foreign Policy (Wilhelm Braumüller, Vienna 1972), 35.

[17] Schlesinger, Neutrality, 52.

[18] Günter Schwaiger, Österreichs Image im Ausland (Vienna 1988), 112.

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"Keep the Peripherals out": Neutrality Accepted, but not "integreable" into European integration

That the new President John F. Kennedy chose Vienna from the Soviet Summit-proposal (Stockholm and Vienna)[19], was a clear sign that the Kennedy administration began to reverse the Dulles strategy of containing neutrality (although they continued on the track of containing non-alignment). But this new strategy included at the beginning a "bitter pill" as a result of the new European strategy of Kennedy's under secretary of state in the Department of State, George F. Ball, who strictly opposed to any form of association of the three neutrals Sweden, Switzerland and Austria with the European Economic Union since this would endanger his vision of a strong political and military EEC.[20] George C. McGhee from the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department argued very early on that the neutrals might turn to the Soviet block if excluded from the large non-communist European block with the argument that "their association would dilute and weaken the Community and even tend to destroy its institutions; that association of a few would open the floodgates to similar demands by many other states, including non-European ones".[21] But in 1961 the mainstream position of the State Department favored a "growing political, strategic, and economic monolith, clearly not neutral..." and did not like the Neutrals association constituting an argument for the major Commonwealth countries to apply for association, too.[22] Since De Gaulle's veto of 1963 against the integration of Great Britain more or less destroyed the real basis of Ball's European visions. This dispute became obsolete, but never was solved in bilateral talks between Austria and the US. To some degree one might draw the conclusion from the written evidence that the Kennedy administration wanted to reverse this westernization of Austria's neutrality policies since they realized that the Soviet Union would never have accepted some form of institutional integration for Austria into the EEC because they feared that this would strengthen the German capabilities within the Community (an argument which by the way blocked Austria's solo into the EEC after 1963, since it has been taken over by French government under Pompidou and therefore enabled the Italians to block the negotiations in 1967 because of the South Tyrol problem). The more Germany tried to push the Austrian case (which they did from time to time) the stronger the French resistance grew. In case of a "special" association of the three neutrals (not full membership) this might endanger the political and military integration of the EEC due to geopolitical pressure from the Soviet Union and alleged neutralization tendencies within the EEC (especially against tighter political and military coordination through supra-national institutions).

It should be mentioned here that Austrian decision makers and journalists until today are not able to see that not only the Soviet Union hindered a closer affiliation to the European Economic Community in the Sixties, but that the EEC was not prepared to accept Austria yet. Austria is and was no special case for the European Integration. Until 1963 the main and overall interest of the EEC was the British question and all other issues – including the negotiations with the neutrals – were sideshows. France was only the strongest force against an Austrian special agreement, and Italy the most outspoken one. The Soviet Union continued to underline the "Anschluß" issue and mixed State Treaty (containing the annexation veto) and Neutrality law, with a high peak in 1959 (Austria's economy – even under an association agreement – would incorporate Austria into NATO).[23]

[19] Compare Michael R. Beschloss, The Crisis Years, Kennedy and Khrushchev 1960-1963 (New York 1961).
[20] Oliver Rathkolb," Austria and European Integration after World War II," in: Contemporary Austrian Studies 1/1992, 51-52.
[21] McGhee to Ball, 21 Nov, 1961, NA, RG 59, Lot 250/5/18/3, Entry 3103, Box 4.
[22] Tyler to The Acting Secretary, Association of Neutrals, 11 Dec. 1961, ibid.
[23] Rathkolb," Austria and European Integration", 51.

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This policy of de-westernization of Austrian neutrality policies in the early sixties continued on the economic sphere under President Johnson, who started to loosen the very tight economic blockade against the "Soviet Bloc" by the COCOM. The Coordinating Committee lists for export goods into Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were considered to be of strategic importance in the Cold War. Austria was very much tied into this system and Raab by the way did not even succeed in a lift of this embargo for specific projects such as the export of a steel mill to Czechoslovakia.[24] East-West trade should become an extremely important barometer for the intensity of détente (the Brandt-Scheel "Ostpolitik" was preceded by economic cooperation through joint ventures). But even in this area not the Austrian efforts towards more sovereignty in economic matters prevailed, but the international tension relaxed a bit – especially in economic relations.

Despite a number of differences of opinion as to the pragmatic approach towards détente in the sixties the Austrian Foreign policy course was accepted by US decision makers and sometimes used as source of information and expertise on the USSR, the Berlin question etc. (compare the Austrian references in the Cuban missile crisis).[25] This specific Austrian "Ostpolitik" has been developed by Chancellor Julius Raab on the basis of good bilateral relationships with the USSR and expanded by the policy of cultivating contacts with some neighboring "Satellite countries" such as Czechoslovakia (which turned out to become a failure even in the seventies), Hungary, Yugoslavia, Poland and Romania), especially conducted by the Foreign Minister Bruno Kreisky (1959-1965), sometimes heavily criticized (Austria on the Yugoslav way etc.) and to some extent continued under the ÖVP-one party government under Josef Klaus 1966-1970.[26] By increasing the level of the bilateral relations with Communist neighbors the Austrian "Ostpolitik" should assist in reducing the tensions of the cold war and even work slowly towards a change within the block system towards a more democratic structure. Especially Kreisky was always interested in sounding out the various groups in an alleged monolithic cold war bloc (e.g. as far as Rumanian opposition to certain policy aims of the Soviet Union was concerned, or Polish efforts for reduction of nuclear capabilities etc.). At the same time this policy should assist in coming to terms with disputes from the past (property and border issues) and increase communication and tourism as well as assist in family integration through the Iron Curtain. This policy worked very well with Hungary and Yugoslavia, but not very effectively with regard to the CSR.[27]

1968 – Austria Under the Nuclear Umbrella of NATO. A myth!
Whereas the Austrian Government in 1956 had placed herself in public statements on the side of the "West", the People's Party government in 1968 under Chancellor Josef Klaus stay more cautious and reacted both in Austria and in the UN with moderate and restrained words. For some time Foreign Minister Kurt Waldheim even asked the Austrian ambassador to Prague, Rudolf Kirchschläger, to stop issuing visa for entry into Austria (due to alleged thefts of visa forms). The media reported rumors that the government would leave Vienna and try to find shelter in the Aussee region. In general the Austrian press and Radio were much more aggressive in attacks against the Soviet Union which certainly is a result of a very strong

[24] More details Rathkolb, Washington, 133-136.
[25] Oliver Rathkolb, "Bruno Kreisky: Perspectives of Top Level US Foreign Policy Decision Makers, 1959-1983," in: Contemporary Austrian Studies 2/1994, pp.132-133.
[26] Reinhard Meier-Walser, Die Außenpolitik der monocoloren Regierung Klaus in Österreich 1966-1970, München 1988, pp.322-376.
[27] More details Oliver Rathkolb, " Austria's "Ostpolitik" in the 1950s and 1960s: Honest Broker or Double Agent?, in Austrian History Yearbook, Vol. XXVI (1995), 129-145.

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"Americanization" of media and journalists in particular during the Allied Administration 1945-1955. Klaus himself summarized in September 1968 that the "chancellor and foreign minister were too cautious" as well as that the press showed too little caution.[28] The socialist opposition party reacted much more concerned in calling for condemnation of the intervention in CSR as well as a more bi-partisan foreign policy which Klaus in the long run accepting by trying to get a three-party-statement of the parliament.

During this crisis in 1968 it again became quite obvious that the Austrian army had not obtained the capabilities to defend the country if the Warsaw Pact decided to move on. Again many people thought that the US would protect Austria against such an intervention, and again this is a myth due to the clear cut strategy of NATO and the US excluding Eastern Austria as well as excluding the Czech Republic which was considered as exclusive Soviet sphere of influence. The opposition leader Kreisky had already at that time considered a concept of "Umfassende Landesverteidigung" (overall defense policy) with a strong international position as much more appropriate (with some ground on the Swedish concept integrating the social partners and the workers in defense preparations).

Neutrality and Détente in the 1970s

The seventies were clearly dominated by the Socialist government under Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, who led the Foreign Policy direction not by authoritarian rule, but by a deep rooted and permanent activism in international relations. He always had been a convinced anti-Communist fully backing the Containment Strategy of the Truman Administration. At the same time he continued in the sixties as Foreign Minister the special policy developed under Chancellor Julius Raab trying to stabilize the East-West-tension by good direction relations with the Soviet Union and the neighboring Communist Countries. Already in 1959, still under secretary of state he outlined the specific "Austrian Ostpolitik" when analyzing Adenauer's "Rußlandpolitik": "In principle, the hard line of Adenauer corresponds to Austrian views, but German tactics were often wrong. The German chancellor tends to offend the sensibilities of the Russians and is much too inflexible and ideologically preoccupied when negotiating".[29]

In stead of "Cold Peace" he very early on focused on increased economic cooperation between the block systems, without neglecting to continue a strict anti-Communist line in domestic policies (e.g. in the declaration of Eisenstadt 1969 Kreisky tried to cut all unauthorized contacts with Communist functionaries abroad as well as in Austria). In contrast to Raab who had developed a tendency after 1955 in neutrality policy towards a "Schaukelpolitik" meaning that when he offended one block by a decision (such as the permission to hold the Sudeten-German-Day in Austria) he agreed as a compromise to give in to the other block in another request (e.g. the Communist World Youth festival in 1959 advocated by the Soviet Union).

The main instrument for a broader and coordinated approach of the neutrals (partly in cooperation with the non-aligned) in the 1970s was the "Conference for Cooperation and Security in Europe" (CSCE). Originally a Soviet initiative from 1953, which for the first time gave the Europeans a chance to negotiate directly with the super powers, Kreisky realized that this even meant that small states' groups like the neutrals or non-aligned could become actors not just objects in superpower "geopolitics". Whereas the US were still much more interested in

[28] Willi Sauber, " Die >Kärntner Straße< zur Zeit der ÖVP-Alleinregierung," in Die Ära Josef Klaus: Österreich in den >kurzen< sechziger Jahren, ed. Robert Kriechbaumer (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag 1998), 201.
[29] "Wiener Lob und Kritik der deutschen Außenpolitik," Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Bonn, ref. 203, vol. 113.

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direct superpower negotiations and the crucial issue of nuclear armament reductions was excluded from the CSCE, the neutrals found their political niche. The four neutrals, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden and Finland coordinated their efforts, focusing on human contacts, information, education and culture in order to increase the level of cooperation between East and West (including the discussion about democratic principles).[30] Concerning the conference agenda for military security the four neutrals established a channel of coordination with Yugoslavia, Cyprus, Malta and Liechtenstein and formed the N+N group (neutrals and non-aligned) on an informal but effective basis.

Still the effect of the CSCE-process to increase the opposition in the Communist block and assist in peaceful transformation is underestimated. Here, too, Chancellor Kreisky continued to stress the importance of peaceful cooperation without suppressing the ideological confrontation (e.g. in the human rights issue). In 1975 Kreisky was one of the very few signers of the Helsinki Treaty to stress this view (which was disliked by the Soviet Union): "We are prepared to continue the confrontation, and we welcome the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe since the main principle which we have agreed upon will allow a global confrontation with peaceful means. We interpret this part of the declaration of principles with regard to the right of each signatory state to choose and develop his political, social, cultural and cultural system without any pressure".[31]

In practice that meant that Austria was prepared not only to assist political refugees from the CSR (Charta 77), but also intervened permanently against the persecution of opposition activists like Václav Havel in the CSR or Alexander Sacharov in the USSR – even when this meant that Austria did not act as a neutral state but intervened in domestic affairs. Both prominent opposition leaders as well as many other people were included in the various negotiation agendas.

The more the Cold War necessity to assist refugees from the East declined and the more Europe was facing a first recession after the "golden years" of the post-war boom, starting in the fifties, the Austrian population began to resist the asylum function of Austria. Another political aspect concerning Kreisky's position correlated with the growing conflict situation between the superpowers, after the Soviet Union had exchanged their rockets in Europe against more advanced missiles and NATO decided to close this gap with another new generation of missiles. Especially during the invasion of Afghanistan 1979/80 and the establishment of military rule in Poland in 1981 the Austrian Chancellor feared that the Soviet Union might end détente completely due to overreaction by the West against obvious military suppression in Afghanistan by direct Soviet bloody intervention and in Poland by the Communist local regime. Thus the process of stabilization in Europe which resulted from the CSCE-process (including the acceptance of existing border lines) could be reversed with potential options towards all out confrontation in Europe. He did not believe that for example the opposition movement in Poland (Solidarnosc) could transform the Communist government but was convinced that the Soviets would suppress this movement with all means in order to stabilize their sphere of influence.

On the domestic levels Austrian population always resented since 1945 (and already after 1918) immigration of foreigners. The large solidarity in 1956 has been primarily a result of main stream

[30] Briefing Book, Visit Kreisky in the US, 12/13 November 1974, Bruno Kreisky Archives Foundation, Vienna, Country File USA
[31] Bruno Kreisky, Reden. Bd. II (Österreichische Staatsdruckerei: Wien, 1990), 756 (Rede über die Entspannungspolitik, 4. Juli 1978).

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cold war behavior, a broad pro-Hungarian media echo (except the Communist press which used anti-foreigner prejudices) and the political message of the Austrian government that US and Canada will take most of the refugees and only few will stay in Austria. The same happened in 1968. Kreisky very well understood this resentment in Austrian society since he, too, was born into a minority because of his Jewish origin, a minority which had not only experienced various forms of anti-Semitism but also was persecuted on racist grounds by the Nazi regime and fellow Austrians 1938-1945.

On the other hand he tried to strengthen Austria's position vis-à-vis Switzerland and one of the international perceptions of a neutral country had to include asylum competence. This position did not at all always correspond with great power politics. When Kreisky received an award from the "International Rescue Committee", a prominent philanthropic association of Jewish American intellectuals, the State Department and National Security Council opposed to a participation of the President, not because of Kreisky's alleged anti-Jewish policies but they feared that since Austria continued to function as a transit country for Soviet Jewish emigrants even after the Schönau affair – in total since 1968 200.000 Jews left the Soviet Union through Austria – that the Soviets could misunderstood this gesture![32]

Whereas both the Nixon and Ford administration administrations including Henry Kissinger appreciated Austria's active role in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), 1973–1975, a policy shift by the Carter administration on the topic of the "3rd Basket" (exchange of information and culture to increase human contacts between East and West) caused major differences of opinion. Especially Bruno Kreisky himself opposed to Carter's all out human-rights foreign policy with regard to confidential communication with Eastern European countries.[33] He obviously feared that Austria's unique position of an East-West-meeting place might be destroyed (the Carter policy already forecasted the early Cold War tension of the Reagan administration). The Austrian government even hosted the MBFR /Mutual and balanced force reductions negotiations since October 1973. Nevertheless US observers described the Austrian active neutrality policy of the 1970s not at all as "appeasement", even if Austrian foreign policy officials "interpreted the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as 'defensive' in character" and "that the West should be wary of not 'losing its cool' over the invasion".[34]

Many Austrian observers still interpret the active Middle East policy in the Kreisky era as the basis of the Waldheim-Debate and as an overexpansion of neutrality policy. A close look to the US perception, however shows a quite different reaction. The Ford administration concurred with Austria's – from the international media not always accepted – crisis' management after the terror attack against the OPEC in December 1975.[35] The same corresponds to the Carter administration – despite considerable differences of opinion on the question of human rights and détente (especially after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan) or the integration of the PLO in the Camp David agreement. Never before in international affairs have there been such intensive exchanges of communication on top level between the Austrian Chancellor and top White House people as during these years, although I do not want to minimize the differences of

[32] Rathkolb, "Kreisky", 139.
[33] Rathkolb, "Kreisky," 134.
[34] NATO and Western Security in the 1980's: The European Perception. Report of a Staff Study Mission to Seven NATO Countries and Austria to the Committee on Foreign Affairs. U.S. House of Representatives (US Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C, 1980), 48. The Austrian counterpart was Ambassador Franz Ceska.
[35] For a specific analysis of the terror – and partly different views concerning Kreisky`s conflict management see John Bunzl, Gewalt ohne Grenzen. Nahost-Terror und Österreich, Wien 1991.

Quelle Print: Bischof, Günter / Pelinka, Anton / Wodak, Ruth (Ed.): Neutrality in Austria (Contemporary Austria Studies, Volume 9). Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick/New Jersey 2001, 69-91.

opinion. Carter was not prepared – due to massive lobbying by Jewish lobbies (which were traditionally pro-democratic party oriented) – to accept the PLO as a negotiating party.

The Soviet leadership did fully accept Austria's efforts to become a (permanent) meeting place of East-West negotiations on all levels. Especially in the late 70s, however, the continuing political debates about human rights in Communist countries and the open support of dissidents' movements in the CSR and the USSR lead to major bilateral tension. Once even the Soviets called the organized elite back, invited to participate in a "public" lecture by Kreisky in Moscow and canceled the event. As far as the Middle Eastern policies of Kreisky were concerned he tried to get the Soviets more deeply involved asking for UN missions and UN conflict solving efforts.

Side Riding in the 1980s? Back to "unmorality" in the final Cold War

Whereas the US-Administrations from Carter to Reagan were very skeptical as far as Austria's and Kreisky's Middle East policies were concerned, Western European countries followed the political direction trying to integrate the PLO by direct or indirect recognition of the political leadership under Arafat. France, Great Britain and Germany reversed their Anti-PLO policies and became in the late seventies and early eighties much more concerned of the Arab position in the Middle East conflict. This policy change had a strong economic background after the two oil crises 1973/74 and 1978 since Western Europe was depending in the Arab oil, too. But starting in the late seventies, and especially in 1980, it became clear that the European Union (a s indicated by the mission led by EC Commission President Gaston Thorn had become interested in joining Kreisky's views). EC-Europe now sought to back Palestinian interests, even though Western European states were still dragging their feet, but in the long run were heading towards step-by-step recognition of the PLO. But Kreisky always was "ahead" the European positions, recognizing the PLO as early as March 1980 and made an important contribution to the political and later diplomatic acceptance of Arafat as "the" representative of the Palestinian People. At that time Kreisky became – from the Israeli perception – definitely a one-sided, pro-Palestinian politician – even from the point of view of the then head of the Israeli Labor Party, Shimon, who cut all contacts immediately.

It should be noted, however, that in the early seventies Chancellor Kreisky tried to act – like in the Détente process – more as a neutral politician trying to establish good relations with all partners in the Middle east conflict. During a visit of Foreign Minister Rudolf Kirchschläger the "Jerusalem Post's" headline ran therefore "Austria-Israel. Relations best ever" (25 June 1972). This transfer of policies lasted until the 28 September 1973 when during a terrorist attack by Palestinians against the transit camp of Schoenau (which hosted mostly Jewish emigrants from the Soviet Union under the administration of the Jewish Agency) Kreisky promised to shut down this camp in order to safe the lives of the hostages taken in Schoenau.

During this "Schoenau incident", which developed into an international debate in the US and Israel it became obvious, that Kreisky was prepared to close the camp, too, because of the nearly exterritorial supervision by the Jewish Agency which was aiming at direct transfer of the emigrants to Israel. Kreisky, who was fiercely attacked – for the first time – by international media and politicians like US President Richard Nixon (in a mild manner) and by the Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir in a very personal and aggressive way. The Austrian authority over the transit of Jewish emigrants was restored and they could now independently choose the country of exile. In 1974 Golda Meir confirmed that the humanitarian role of Austria as the most important transit country for Russian Jews had not stopped. Between 1968 and 1986 270.199 could leave the Soviet Union via Vienna; only a small percentage chose to emigrate to other

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countries than Israel (e.g. in 1988 7,1 % went to the US). Austria continued to act as a neutral asylum country in the cold war – especially for Russian Jews (post 1973 even more persons left through Austria than before the incident).

Despite his very unconventional and personal style of acting in the international arena Kreisky worked on the permanent international recognition and acceptance of Austria as a neutral country. Since he very well knew as a result of his negative interwar experiences that a small country like Austria, whose Neutrality was not at all guaranteed by the Allies in 1955 nor – as far as eastern Austria and Vienna was concerned – was Austria a secret NATO area under the nuclear umbrella which many politicians and diplomats still today believe.[36] He continued and intensified the international trend, which started with the Allied Administration in 1945 and was confirmed by the Austrian State Treaty indirectly. Even during the People's Party Government without the Socialists after 1966 this trend (including a very active UN policy) was continued and led to the principle decision to build an international center for the United Nations. Against broad domestic opposition he carried out the establishment of the Vienna International Center and in 1979 Vienna became the Third Headquarters of the United Nations. Kreisky kept his large and costly original building plans going – against the broadest[37] public referendum in post war history – since he thought, that if the US continued their anti-UN policies Vienna could be able to also host the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Already in the late fifties Kreisky as Minister of Foreign Affairs realized that Austria would never follow the strong military build up of the Swiss model since after 1945 for 10 years Austria was completely demilitarized. The Austrian budget was already well established towards economic recovery and a slowly growing social network with marginal military spending 1955-1959 due to strong US military assistance, which was cut in 1960. In an interview with the Financial Times (21 August 1979) he thought that "International Organizations based in Austria are more important from a security and political point of view. They are as valuable as big stores of arms which might never be used".[38] Concerning military doctrine the Austrian army began to reorganize on the basis of guerrilla warfare combined with overall defense of the Austrian society and Austrian social partners in order to "lengthen" an attack. It would cost the aggressor too much time and too many dead soldiers to break through Austrian territory. (doctrine of deterrence). But the main component in the 70s should be an active foreign policy to reduce tensions between the super powers and in the region as well as placing Austria (like Switzerland) as an undisputed entity into the international diplomatic arena.

With regard to the Reagan administration the relationship on "Cold War" matters became much more tense and for the first time after 1955 US officials criticized Austria's neutrality position and policy. Till today research on the US-Austrian relationship proclaims that the bilateral relations have declined to the lowest point since 1955 during a speech for the political academy of the ÖVP, the Austrian People's Party (May 24, 1982) by Ambassador H. Eugene Douglas (responsible for Refugee Cooperation).[39] He very much criticized the recognition of the PLO and

[36] E.g. former ambassador Herbert Grubmayr in Die Presse, 13 May 1995, 3 with the misperception thatin 1956 US Secretary John Foster Dulles had informed the Sowjets that crosssing the Austrian border would mean World War III.
[37] Information by Mr. Michael Auracher which in 1979 was in charge of the UN center in the cabinet of the then Finance Minister Hannes Androsch.
[38] Cited after Helmut Kramer, ", ed. Kurt Richard Luther et al. Austrian Foreign Policy from the State Treaty to European Union membership (1955-1955)", in Austria 1945-95.Fifty Years of the Second Republic. (Aldershot: Ashgate 1998), 168
[39] John Michael Luchak, Amerikanisch-Österreichische Beziehungen von 1955 bis 1985. Neutralität und der Ost-West Konflikt, phil. Diss.Wien 1987, p.426.

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the reception of Ghadafi and came to the conclusion that Austria has changed her foreign policy course considerably and violated the basis of her neutrality position (H. Eugene Douglas' critiques included Kreisky's attacks against US Latin American policies and especially the Eastern Trade policies of Austria). Certainly Ambassador Douglas overcritizised the change of the US official perception in the Austrian neutrality position, which especially was used by the Peoples Party, the majority opposition party, to ask for a pro transatlantic reversal of neutrality policies which existed in the late fifties. This pro western status was – from their point of view – the correct "neutrality" position. This "transatlantic" reversal of neutrality policy was part of the general neo-liberal reorganisation of conservative ideologies trying to copy the examples of Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain and Ronald Reagan in the US. When the leader of the opposition party, Alois Mock, became Vice-Chancellor and Foreign Minister he even was prepared in the long run to give up Austrian neutrality. It should be noted that the ongoing debate about NATO-membership and neutrality are still very much influenced by this policy shift of the ÖVP in the early 1980s who in my view is an effort to completely adapt to the neoliberal trend of the eighties.

The conflict between Austria and the US developed on different levels and it took some time to explode in early 1982, because despite the general critique of the Reagan administration of the different policies of the Socialist International concerning Latin America and the Cold War, Kreisky was seen as "one of the leaders of the Socialist International, who has been evidencing his anti-communism more loudly than anyone else".[40] As a consequence of the obvious refusal of President Reagan to meet Willy Brandt as President of the Socialist International and the US hard line policies after the establishment of military dictatorship in Poland, Kreisky started a serious of attacks since January 1982 asking for military balance, a more flexible policy towards the Jaruszelski government, and arguing against US support for dictatorships in Turkey and Latin American states.

Since the geopolitical framework has changed under President Reagan the US Embassy in Vienna received orders to close the security risks of technology transfer in Austria and asked to change the agreement of 1957, when Austria just "guaranteed the security of US equipment, materials, or service furnished" by the US Government.[41] At that time the US embassy asked for "security surveys" by US experts in order to prevent any transfer of US technology to the "East" by the Austrian army. This technology debate was not only limited to secret negotiations but led to public debates about the Austrian technology leaks in 1982/1983.[42] Considerable US pressure on Austria transferred by the press into the domestic political debate (especially supported by the most important opposition party to the Kreisky-Government, the ÖVP) and the fear of major US technology blockades resulted in the change of the Austrian Law for Foreign Trade to take into account the US security limitations. This procedure certainly was a clear set back in deregulation of Austria's eastern trade and just copied a procedure of the fifties, but in the early eighties not only alleged technology transfer, but Austrian machinery exports into the East in general were considered to be a contribution to the strategic strength of the Warsaw

[40] Arnold M. Silver, The New Face of the Socialist International (Paper of the Heritage Foundation, October 1981), research materials, Socialist International, Stiftung Bruno Kreisky Archiv, Wien.
[41] Stiftung Bruno Kreisky Archiv, Wien, Country File USA, Copy from United Nations Treaty Series, Vol. 288 (1958) and Enclosures from 1982.
[42] Newspaper clippings (1982/1983/1984) – especially from the daily "Die Presse" in possession of the author. Compare also Linda Melvern, David Hebditch & Nick Anning, Techno-Bandits. How the Soviets are stealing America`s high-tech future, Boston 1984, pp.142-157, unfortunately a book which seems to contain more fiction and phantasy than facts.

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Pact (an accusation also directed against Switzerland)! [43] Certainly Austria's interpretation of Neutrality as an active status did not correspond with the general global aims of the Reagan administration and resulted on a more concrete level in a serious of bilateral disputes along the lines of technology transfer into the "Communist orbit".

Despite these deep ideological confrontations, Kreisky was impressed by the Reagan administration's early Middle east approach in 1982, although nowadays we now that this plan was not very deeply established in an overall Middle East strategy. Reagan's "hand-picked" Ambassador earmarked for Vienna, Bruce Cummings (by the way born in Vienna) had worked on the "Jews for Reagan" committee during the election campaign and fully agreed with Kreisky's views that peace in the Middle East required a solution of the Palestinian solution and a Palestinian state. Kreisky continued to back both the Reagan and Fez plan of the Arab League, and after two years of relative tension (especially in 1982) especially National Security Adviser Bill Clark paved the way for a meeting of President Reagan with Kreisky in early 1983. Even in 1984, after Kreisky had left office, he continued to keep the Reagan plan alive in the Middle East discussion.

Changes in the Magna Charter of Austria in the Eighties and Nineties.
After Kreisky left the government and had formed a small coalition government between the Socialists and the Freedoms Party (at that time under liberal leadership) it took only a few months that the neutrality policy became much more restraint again and got a slightly pro Western bias (e.g. giving in on the issue of joining the economic war against the Communist block by applying for export licenses in the US for exports into this area first).

At the same time the trend towards adjusting to the new round of economic integration in Europe increased in Austria, too, intensified by major economic structural problems within the nationalized industry and banking sector as well as social changes which increased social movements (especially the Greens focusing on environment issues). The change of generations both in the US, in Western Europe and in Austria also led to an increased debate about the "victim's theory" with regard to the Nazi past of Austrians during 1938-1945. At the same time European integration was tightening and reacting to the large growth rates in Asia. The European Community decided to establish a Single Market by the early 1990s and at the same time arrange for much closer political and military integration. Here Austria's global approach (Kreisky being Co-Chair of the first North-South summit in Cancun in 1981) and active foreign policy was soon reduced to European matters – with some efforts for continuity.

Especially after 1986, when Franz Vranitzky, who succeeded Chancellor Fred Sinowatz, had taken over the chancellorship, it became obvious that not only the European basis of Austria's position began to completely change but another strict component of post-war existence: the victim's theory. Since the first months of the Provisional Government of State Chancellor Karl Renner all Austrian governments continued to stress the fact that Austria was not responsible for World War II and the Holocaust but was a victim of German Nazi aggression. This certainly is correct as far as the state and institutions are concerned – parliament and political parties already have even been dissolved earlier under the authoritarian Dollfuß-Regime 1933/1934. At the same time the responsibility of participating in the Nazi terror regime and those making profits from the expropriation and destruction of Austrian Jewry were omitted.

[43] J. Michael Montia, "Aktuelle Tendenzen im Ost-West- Handel," in: Europäische Rundschau 1983/4, p.47.

This important component for Austrian domestic as well as international position even indirectly supported the neutrality status and fitted in the growing establishment of national identity (excluding historical memories concerning the Nazi past). Therefore already in 1985 when Minister of Defense Friedhelm Frischenschlager greeted the released war criminal Walter Reeder officially it ended in a first wave of international and domestic debate. When the People's Party candidate for Austrian presidency of 1986 Kurt Waldheim was confronted with his war-time past and his knowledge about war atrocities in Greece which he had altogether omitted from his various biographies, the international debate made quite clear that Austrian population could not stay "neutral" in this rediscussion about Nazi past and the Holocaust. The international image was (on elite level) damaged in the US and in Western Europe (not in the Middle East and the Arab World as well as the "East", which, however, tried to stay "neutral" in this conflict).

Nevertheless the general outline that "Austrian Neutrality" might be a fix status in Europe was asserted by the Soviet Union – even under Michael Gorbachev. The most experienced Soviet Foreign Policy expert and long time Foreign Minister Andrej Gromyko stated in his memoirs that Austria was "the" pillar of neutrality in Europe.[44] In meetings between 1987 and 1988 Chancellor Vranitzky tried to convince the Soviet leader that despite the efforts of Austria to join the European Community this would neither be a revival of the "Anschluß" nor an end of Austrian neutrality.[45] In January 1987 the Soviet Ambassador in Vienna could not see a full membership of Austria acceptable for the Soviet Union; on May 5, 1987 the press spokesman of President Gorbachev backed this position – the Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock backed the Austrian interpretation and the right for different opinions. After a top level meeting of Vranitzky with Ruschkov in Moscow in October 1988 the Soviets accepted the Austrian interpretation that neutrality will be kept despite EU-membership. This certainly constituted a major change in Soviet perception of Austrian neutrality since 1955 and is primarily a result of the "new look" of Soviet Foreign Policy in Europe. In retrospect this change forecasted the "unbelievable" events of 1989 with a new Soviet leadership convinced that Germany, even if united, would not leave the Western integration and turn again "eastwards".

It is interesting to see that the same fear existed in France as far as Austria joining the European Union to strengthen Germany and change the invisible power balance between the "two". President Mitterrand hesitated for three years to back the Austrian application fully both because of the Austrian neutrality reservation (Austria applied – different from Sweden and Finland – with a clear neutrality reservation formula in July 1989) and the old "German" fears.[46]

In the long run neither the old Soviet reservations nor the French purist interpretation of European unity (repeated by Jacques Delors, the EU Commission president and many others during the diplomatic negotiations and in public events) were decisive in the final decisions. After the transformation of Europe in 1989 and the German unification the original policy perceptions soon became more concerned with the next round of integration of Eastern European countries and a large European concept (including opposition and prejudices against such a move). Austrian neutrality became more and more an internal policy object – with no real short-term interest in international debates and perceptions since Austria turned her concept of integral neutrality into a concept of "differential" neutrality.[47] Austria accepted solidarity in UN-

[44] Andrej Gromyko, Erinnerungen (Düsseldorf 1989), 317
[45] Ludmilla Lobova, "Österreich in der Außenpolitik der UdSSR und Rußlands. Die Rolle der Neutralität Ende der 80iger Jahre" in: Europäische Rundschau (27) 3/1999,
[46] Interview with Dr. Franz Vranitzky, 30 Sept. 1998.
[47] Kramer, Foreign Policy, 173.

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Sanctions, and Austrian neutrality rule was several times overruled by UN-Law (starting with the sanctions against the Iraque and transport of war material over Austrian territory); Austria has obtained observer status in the WEU and participates in the NATO's Partnership for Peace as well as in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council.[48].

Conclusion:
The international perception with regard of Austria's neutrality today has widened – accepting not only the firm political, economic and cultural integration in the "Western European bloc" system (to use Cold War categorizations) but also active military solidarity (short of joining NATO or another pro-Western European security and defense system). The ground for this different perception was already firmly structured before 1955 (e.g. Austrian having been able to join the Marshall-Plan) and in 1955 (Austrian joining the United Nations, and since the mid 1960s participating in Peacekeeping Missions). The most important perception changes took place in the 1960s, when the US accepted Austria's efforts towards "bridge-building", and were expanded in the 1970s under Chancellor Bruno Kreisky with a global oriented active foreign policy – not withholding political critics (both towards the US and the Soviet Union). The next historic perception change was on the side of the Soviet Union which in late 1988 – before the transformation of the Communist bloc and the unification of Germany – accepted that Austria joining the European Community would not automatically mean joining Germany and changing the post 1945 power system in Europe in favor of German superiority. This change of perception did not only effect the Soviet leadership, but also the French one (comparable to the situation in the later 1960s). The Austrian domestic perception of neutrality has not been analyzed here, but it is quite obvious that especially the 1970s have broadened the "feeling" of being neutral meaning at the same time being socially and economically secure. Especially in the 1970s the active neutrality policy and the active economic policy fostered these views, which certainly have nothing to do with military security. Neutrality has become part of a small state identity, which is even more important then military security: 51% think that in 1999 Neutrality does not offer military security against outside aggression, but still 40% vote against joining NATO, 54% vote against joining any military alliance. 68% interpret neutrality as integral part of Austrian state identity.[49]

[48] Hanspeter Neuhold, "Austria in Search of ist Place in a Changing World: From Between the Blocs to Full Western Integration," in Austria 1945-95, ed. Luther, 217.
[49] Österreichische Gesellschaft für Europapolitik, Pressekonferenz, 18 August 1999 (results of public opinion poll from 31 July 1998).