

Austria

Introduction

From 1955 onwards the status of a (permanently) neutral country had served Austria well as an instrument of its foreign and security policies and as a symbol for the developing Austrian identity. However, since the end of the 1980s the substantial legal and political aspects of neutrality have been altered. Austria became a member of the EU in 1995, and above that, a partner of NATO through its partnership for peace-membership; in the same year it took on the status of an observer to the WEU. In the view of some outside and inside experts, Austria was then characterized as a “post-neutral“ state. The obvious change of neutrality in the 1990s was cushioned by a consensus policy of the then coalition government of the Social Democrats (SPÖ) and the People’s Party (ÖVP), because for a majority of Austrians neutrality had been perceived as the basic identification element of the whole political fabric of the Second Republic until date. The fundamental changes brought about by the October elections of 1999 and the late upcoming of a new coalition government of ÖVP and the “Freedom Party” (FPÖ) may prove to be a turning point for the whole Austrian political system of the post-World War II era.

The Past of Neutrality

Politically, the adoption of a permanently neutral status was the price Austria had to pay the Soviet Union for the latter’s agreement to restore full Austrian independence in the Austrian State Treaty of 1955. In the Moscow Memorandum of April 15, 1955, the USSR agreed to sign the State Treaty in exchange for the declaration of permanent neutrality by Austria. The Memorandum was legally non-binding, however. Even though neutrality was not really a free choice, it was the best deal Austria could get at that point.

On the legal level, however, Austria tried to avoid the image of a neutralized state. It was felt that permanent neutrality imposed on the country in a treaty, especially in an agreement with the great powers, would make this status less respectable. Hence, the Austrian Parliament adopted the Federal Constitutional Law not before it regained full independence (it waited until the last soldier of the occupation forces had left its territory).¹ Art. I (1) emphasizes, therefore, that:

For the purpose of the permanent maintenance of its external independence and for the purpose of the inviolability of its territory, Austria, of *its own free will*, declares herewith its permanent neutrality which it is resolved to maintain and defend with all the means at its disposal.

The neutrality law in Art. I (2) only prohibits Austria from joining a military alliance and prohibits the deployment of foreign troops on its soil:

¹ Hanspeter Neuhold, „Austria’s security policies in a Changing Europe“, (Paper presented at the Conference on Small States and Security, Vancouver, Can., 1994).

In order to secure these purposes Austria will never in the future accede to any military alliances nor permit the establishment of military bases by foreign States on its territory.²

According to the Hague Convention of 1907 on sea and land war, neutral states are required to refrain from all direct or indirect participation in wars. For Europe after 1990, however, this legal tradition is fairly outdated. Within the borders of the EU and among the OECD countries war is no longer an issue. Furthermore, wars between states have become increasingly rare. Wars within states, however, are not covered by this trend.

Austria's concept of neutrality is historically and globally unique. This form of neutrality cannot be put on a level with other concepts of neutrality. Certainly, it followed the legal structure of the Swiss example, but it was born in the East-West conflict. Finland's neutrality has similar Cold War historical roots, but a different legal basis. Presumably, Austria's understanding of neutrality belongs to a model of the past. The question remains whether the idea of neutrality will survive in a different form. This does not mean a return to the "policy of active neutrality" of the Kreisky era (Chancellor between 1970 and 1983), which was less neutrality than an active foreign policy. The privileged role of mediation associated mainly with neutral states has become a remnant of the East-West Conflict. This does not mean that neutral states will henceforth be avoided as meeting and mediating places. Austrian territory is home to one of the seats of the UN and the headquarters of IAEA, UNIDO, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Preparatory Commission (CTBTO), and also OPEC. The OSCE is also based in Vienna.

At the beginning of the 21st century Europe is grappling with complex and traumatic challenges. Contrary to initial optimistic expectations, the end of bipolarity has not enhanced stability and security in the whole of Europe. But, as most experts agree, the overall security environment in Europe has improved, the Euro-Atlantic system has been strengthened and an increased number of states, including Russia, is tied into security cooperation schemes. Taking this new framework under consideration, a great clash in Europe is highly improbable. During the last decade Europe has been the region in the world that has gone through the deepest changes. In Eastern Europe, centralized political systems have collapsed, in the Western parts political regulation has been changing heavily. Whereas in the Eastern parts stability and security are still not granted, but challenged by fragmentation and nationalistic tendencies along ethnic lines, the Western part has been striving for more political integration.

During the last decade, the Austrian international environment has been transforming far more deeply than during the whole Cold War-period. Therefore, it should be of little surprise that Austria's foreign policy, well known for its continuity for many decades, has obviously changed dramatically. Austria, after 1945, has transformed itself from a country struggling with the aftermath of war and great economic scarcity, social unrest and deep political cleavages, and has managed to turn itself into an economically well-advanced Western European country, a country which belongs to the group of the socially and economically most stable states in Europe today. It is fair to say that Austrian foreign policy contributed significantly to its success after the end of World War II. And its status as a neutral country has contributed positively to the European security system of the Cold War. Considering the far-reaching changes in the international environment and the overall positive Austrian socio-economic and political record, it may sound paradoxical that public support for the Austrian government's EU-course and its foreign policy has fallen to a historical minimum. Although

2 English translation in Alfred Verdross, *The Permanent Neutrality of Austria* (Verlag für Geschichte und Politik: Vienna 1978), p. 28.

two thirds of the Austrian electorate voted in favor of accession to the EU in 1994, only approximately 40 percent still support the EU accession policy.

The reason for that paradox status might be that during the Cold War era the status of a neutral country for the Austrian population became a synonym, some say a myth, for an overall very successful record. On the one hand, Austria became a highly accepted entity in the international system, on the other hand, it enjoyed a long period of peace, democracy and economic welfare. All that was and still is highly identified with the status as a neutral country.³ Compared to the record of the old monarchy that passed away after the end of World War I and the interwar period, the Second Republic (after 1945) has been a great success story. The social basis for this success was the renewed partnership of the two great political camps (“Lager“, the Christian social democrats, or the People’s Party (ÖVP), and the Social Democrats (SPÖ), and a close cooperation between the representatives of employees and employers – “social partnership”). In contrary to the class struggle of the First Republic the political system of the Second Republic adopted class cooperation.⁴ Furthermore, it had become a highly praised tradition during the whole of the Second Republic that foreign policy issues had become a “consensus matter“, and included, wherever possible, all political parties and “social partners“ in the decision making process. However, since the second half of the 1980s, fundamental revisions and changes (at the beginning of this period only slight, and later on significant) were made to Austria’s foreign policy. The Kreisky era had come to an end in 1983, the international environment had become more and more complex, and old instruments (like the free trade agreement of 1972/73 with the EC) did not work sufficiently well any more. Increasing tendencies of economic internationalization and globalisation weakened the social partnership system from the end of the 1970s onwards. After Kreisky’s defeat in the 1983 elections and his following withdrawal from politics, foreign policy priorities gradually began to change.

Changes of Neutrality

Permanent neutrality between East and West was a more or less effective means to protect Austria from the military blocs during the Cold War. Yet the concept of neutrality has to change along with the concept of alliances. This does not necessarily mean the converse, however. – that neutral states will now have to join an alliance. It means that the status of neutrality must take on a new meaning. Austria’s neutrality has already de facto adapted several times to changing situations: membership in the UN was a move away from the Swiss model; the permission for the aircraft of the anti-Iraq coalition to overfly Austrian airspace in the second Gulf War (1990/91) was compatible only with a broad interpretation of the legal concept of neutrality; membership in the EU with its CFSP and Amsterdam Treaty (that includes peacemaking) has little to do with traditional understandings of neutrality. Neutrality has become a function that does not extend beyond the negative definition of non-membership in NATO. This is not to say that little remains of neutrality, but that these changes demonstrate the flexibility of the concept even within its existing legal framework.

At the core of Austria’s specific kind of permanent neutrality were military obligations. Austria should not join any military alliance and should not permit foreign troops on its

3 One has to take into consideration that until the end of the 1970s the only political education given in school was to inform all Austrian pupils about the functions of neutrality.

4 But it is often forgotten that under the surface of long lasting political cooperation and consensus policy between SPÖ and ÖVP distrust between politicians and their electorate of the two parties still remained. Alfred Payrleitner (in: *Kurier*, January 2000) rightly pointed out that “ÖVP and FPÖ are embracing each other in order not to hit each other“.

territory. Besides that, there was a set of duties in advance ("Vorwirkungspflichten"), binding Austria even in times of peace to carry out a policy of neutrality, in order to guarantee that it would take any measure possible to be able to stick to its neutrality commitments in times of war. In fact, Austria's status as a neutral country became an integral part of Europe's security order in the Cold War period. But much was changed in the 1990s.

Austria has been a member of the European Union since 1995 and became a member of NATO's "Partnership for Peace" Agreement in February 1995 and PfP "plus" in November 1996. Due to changes in the international environment in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and because of domestic pressure on the economic, military and political aspects of Austria's political élite, and considering Austria's application for membership in the EC, the political meaning of Austrian neutrality has been restricted to its core. When the Austrian government delivered the application letter for membership to the EC on 17 July 1989, the language specified that Austria would remain neutral as a member of the Community as well. As a candidate country in 1993, Austria (together with Finland and Sweden) declared that as an EU member it would be prepared "to participate fully and actively in the Common Foreign and Security Policy" of the EU. In the accession Treaty of 1994 Austrian neutrality was not mentioned any more. Furthermore, during the second Gulf War, the Austrian government, after some hesitance, allowed the passage of (unarmed) US-led allied forces airplanes over Austrian territory and later gave permission for the transit of tanks on the ground.

During the Yugoslav Conflict, Austria took a strong position in favor of Slovenia and Croatia and against the Serbian aggression forces, and later gave NATO AWACS aircraft permission to cross the Austrian border. The CFSP provisions of the Amsterdam Treaty – ambiguous as they were – did not bring about any major progress in the Second Pillar. But new instruments were introduced (e.g. "Common strategies"⁵) and expectations for a more coherent CFSP in the future are high. After the forming of the new government in February 2000, there seems to be minimal consensus reached between the two parties of the former so-called grand coalition of Social Democrats (SPÖ) and the People's Party (ÖVP), which means that as long as the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is not really working Austria will remain neutral, and will reconsider (SPÖ) or give up its neutral position (ÖVP) only if it becomes part of a new European security system. Since SPÖ and ÖVP had not succeeded in publishing the "Option Report" with a common position in respect to NATO membership at the end of March 1998, expectations for a common Austrian position had diminished dramatically and it became clear that it would undoubtedly take quite some time to arrive at a consensus position. It was not only the fact that consensus could not be achieved but the way in which SPÖ and ÖVP representatives failed, that was remarkable.

The outcome of the security debate of the last years (more precisely since March 1996, the signing of the coalition agreement between SPÖ and ÖVP) can be summarized as follows: Although most contributions of experts, journalists and even scientific analyses tend to argue in favor of NATO-membership, a clear majority of the Austrian population favors neutrality, at least is against membership in any military alliance. There is still and foremost rather strong opposition coming from parts of the ordinary members of the Social Democrat party as well as from some high ranking politicians in the SPÖ; the Green Party strictly pleads for non-membership; there is quite some opposition in the People's Party from center-left groups and from the catholic wing (including some of the provincial governors of the People's Party) who are at least not in favor of immediate membership; leading politicians of the ÖVP, the former Vice-Chancellor and Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schüssel, now Chancellor, as well as the Freedom Party of Jörg Haider had strongly pushed for accession in the wake of the NATO Madrid summit in summer 1997, but have obviously downgraded their engagement since

5 Treaty of Amsterdam, Art. J.3.2.

then. The coalition government of ÖVP and FPÖ since its start in February 2000 will have to negotiate with the Social Democrats, because they need a two thirds majority for substantial further changes of the constitutional law.

Austria's Solidarity

Presently Austria concentrates on the new elements that are mainly covered by the formula "Petersberg plus PfP". It participates in IFOR and SFOR in Bosnia. In 1999 there were more than 1,000 Austrian troops active in 13 peacekeeping operations. Since 1960 about 40,000 Austrian troops participated in more than 30 peacekeeping operations. This demonstrates that Austria, while maintaining a form of neutrality, is not a "free rider". Austria does not need security guarantees because there is no big threat to Austria. No major attack on Austrian territory is likely. Therefore, membership in a collective defense system is not necessary. Even though the concept of neutrality is changing it does not entail formal membership in NATO or WEU. Austria could participate in crisis management, peacekeeping, humanitarian action and even peace-enforcement operations in the framework of the Partnership for Peace (PfP). The new Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) provides the opportunity for Austria, as a non-member, to take part in NATO's consultative and decision-making processes. Austria takes an observer status in the WEU. The Austrian International Peace Support Command – successor to the former Austrian Training Centre for peacekeeping specializes in training civil and military personnel and units for peace support operations.

Only Art. V security commitments are incompatible with Austria's neutrality law. Austria does not need security guarantees along the lines of Art. V because no major attack on Austrian territory is likely. Therefore, membership in a collective defense system does not automatically increase Austria's security. The concept of neutrality is flexible enough to allow Austria's participation in the "Petersberg" Tasks or PfP without necessitating formal membership in NATO or the WEU.

Public Opinion

Still a sound majority of the Austrian electorate believes that neutrality should remain, and NATO membership, within due time, – so opinion polls tell – seems no serious option. For outsiders this may be difficult to understand. But given Austria's fractioned history of the past century, the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire, Austria's role in two world wars, the poor political record of the First Republic, the annexation with the German Reich in 1938 and the following 17 years of occupation (from 1945 on by the Allies) were experiences that have had a great impact on the self-understanding of its citizens. Under the auspices of the Moscow Declaration of 1943, the State Treaty of 1955, and following permanent neutrality, the Austrians – at least a slight majority – by and by were able to consider themselves as independent and as a "nation", discernible from the Germans.⁶ When the Cold War period came to an end, Austria had already started to reassess its political position in Europe. The European integration process proved to be an ideal opportunity to serve the Austrian interests to have a say in Europe's most capable socio-economic project, European integration.

6 The Germans (exactly: the West-Germans), who as a nation were taken responsible for World War II and the holocaust did not receive a "peace treaty", but under US-pressure had to consider their role and responsibility for the "Third Reich" by democratic re-education programs, while Austrian entanglement remained almost untouched until the end of the 1980s.

Considering statistics from opinion polls during the period of 1996 until 1999, some interesting facts can be found: Although in October 1997 54% of the sample believed that finally Austria would become a member of NATO (only 13% did not believe that), at no time a majority for NATO membership existed, and neutrality has always been preferred, when preferences for one of two alternatives – NATO membership or retention of neutrality – were asked for (cf. Giller 1999, p. 13). Asked only for NATO membership, an increase of pro-votes can be found between October 1997 (22%) and March 1998 (40%) with a decline afterwards (November 1998: 27%). Interrogations on both alternatives brought the following results:

TABLE 1: Public Opinion on Neutrality in Austria

| Time | pro-NATO (in %) | pro neutrality (in %) | not decided (in %) |
|------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Febr. 1995 | 18 | 70 | 12 |
| July 1996 | 16 | 63 | 21 |
| Febr. 1999 | 13 | 77 | 10 |

Source: Data for 1995 and 1996: IMAS (cf. Tiroler Tageszeitung from July 17, 1996), Data for 1999: News No. 14/1999 (p.33).

A policy which combines remaining outside of a military alliance with participation in international peacekeeping missions is consistent with public opinion polls conducted in neutral states. When asked whether they would favor or oppose NATO membership, a comfortable majority of Austrians (57%) but less than half of Finns (42%) and Swedes (39%) oppose it.⁷ When the mutual obligation of collective defense among NATO members is emphasized, opposition increases in all countries (Austria 60%, Finland 49%, Sweden 45%).⁸

When asked about specific responsibilities which would be required as a potential NATO member, support decreases.

TABLE 2: Public Opinion on Neutrality in Austria, Sweden and Finland

| | Austria | Finland | Sweden |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Send our troops to defend other NATO members | 31:66 | 46:50 | 53:44 |
| Regular, routine exercises in our country | 33:63 | 47:49 | 51:46 |
| Regular, routine overflights of our country | 30:64 | 36:61 | 45:52 |
| NATO troops stationed in our country | 25:71 | 21:76 | 34:63 |
| Increase share of budget for defense (% Favor : Oppose) | 16:81 | 14:82 | 12:83 |

Virtually all Austrians (94%) oppose the presence of nuclear weapons in their country.

According to a more recent opinion poll, 69 percent of Austrians support neutrality and 73 percent oppose Austria's membership in NATO.⁹ Even though NATO membership is

7 Swedes hold this view very strongly, however.

8 Survey commissioned by U.S. Information Agency (USIA), Washington, based on telephone interviews with nationwide representative samples of adults age 18 and older in Austria (1016), Finland (1003) and Sweden (1000) from 31 August - 18 September 1998. USIA commissioned Spectra Linz for Austria.

9 Survey of the Linz Market Institute, 18 October 1998, and Gallup, April 2000.

opposed or receives limited support, solid majorities in all three countries express willingness to have their country's troops participate in NATO peacekeeping operations.

One could argue, that NATO membership has been at no time a real option for the Austrian population. A differing majority of Austrians on the other hand still regards neutrality as an appropriate means of Austria's foreign and security policy. Suffice it to say that these figures do not tell us that the Austrian population, when confronted with an actual referendum on keeping neutrality or becoming a member of NATO would show the above mentioned results: other dynamics could result in different outcomes. But one can draw an intermediate balance, concluding that according to given data, a majority of the Austrian electorate is in favor of keeping neutrality and is against membership in NATO. This is even true for the majority of the ÖVP and FPÖ electorate, the two parties which stand for a necessary change of Austria's security identity.

The ÖVP-FPÖ Government

Despite widespread popular resistance there exists domestic pressure to abandon neutrality and replace it with NATO membership. With variations, the conservative People's Party (ÖVP) and large parts of the foreign and the defense ministry support this view. The Austrian Social Democrats (SPÖ), unlike the People's Party (ÖVP), do not want to give up neutrality immediately and join NATO. The right wing "Freedom Party" (FPÖ) supports Austria's immediate NATO membership. The coalition government of ÖVP and FPÖ, that has been formed in February 2000, wants security commitments included into European law which, of course, would be incompatible with Austria's status of neutrality. This is unlikely to happen, however, because this is not the policy of the EU (see above). If the European Union will not include security commitments, the coalition government would support Austria's membership in NATO. For that, the ÖVP-FPÖ government would need a two thirds majority in the parliament to change the neutrality law; so it would need the support of the SPÖ which does not support Austria's membership in NATO.

The new governmental agreement of February 2000 between the People's Party (ÖVP) and the FPÖ proposes and demands inter alia:

"...that a guarantee of mutual assistance between the EU countries become part of the EU body of law ... in the event of an armed attack on one member state the other EU states will afford it all the military and other aid and assistance in their power, in accordance with the provisions of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

"...that, in the event of a further development of Austria's foreign and security policy ... the federal constitutional law on neutrality will be redrafted to make it clear that it does not apply to Austria's active participation ... in the development of the European Union's common security and defence policy and to participation in a European peace, security and defence community ... including a guarantee of mutual assistance.

"... Austria will be enabled to support peace operations of other international organizations that are carried out without a pertinent UN Security Council resolution but in compliance with the principles of the UN Charter in order to prevent humanitarian disasters or to put an end to severe and systematic human rights violations."

After what has been said, why should the EU incorporate in its body of law a mutual military assistance guarantee between EU countries which already exists within WEU and NATO?¹⁰

Supporters of Austria's full fledged membership in NATO put forward three arguments: First, NATO needs a territorial link to the new East-Central European NATO members. Apart from Slovenia this would be Austria. Second, as a full-fledged member, Austria could have an impact on the decision-making process within NATO and WEU. Third, this would protect Austria from potential or increased instability in former communist neighboring states.

These arguments focus primarily on NATO's old role as a military alliance. Even though NATO's reforms are generally acknowledged, this viewpoint remains premised on out-of-date threat perceptions: the key assumption of this perspective is NATO's role as a defense organization with its old core of collective and territorial defense (as enshrined in Art. V of the Washington Treaty). This fails to take into account the point stressed earlier that collective defense, while a very useful concept during the Cold War, is becoming less and less useful for emerging tasks.¹¹ Austria, for example, does not need security guarantees. The Austrian army would be responsible for the country's defense against any so-called spill-over from neighboring local conflicts. Neither NATO nor the WEU would likely be willing to get involved in such type of conflict. Territorial bridges were a requirement of 1914. If NATO needed territorial links it would have included Slovenia in the first round.¹² The Amsterdam Treaty and the European Council's decisions of Cologne and Helsinki as well as the EAPC already provide non-members of WEU and NATO with the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process for those operations in which they are involved. Major decisions such as whether NATO should stay in Bosnia or get involved in Kosovo are hardly influenced by smaller members of the alliance.

Besides the discussions on neutrality and/or NATO, another most important political topic has been the enlargement process of the EU. The accession of probably 12 new members might lead to a European Union of 27 members. The center of the EU will thereby shift from the West – more towards central Europe. Although during the last years of SPÖ-ÖVP coalition Austria regarded itself as an advocate of the accession countries, the then opposition party FPÖ, the Eastern "Länder" (provinces), their representatives of small-sized business, and the trade unions had unanimously argued that "too quick an enlargement" could have severe negative repercussions on Austria's economic situation. The ÖVP and the FPÖ (then still in opposition) had strongly pushed for an early NATO membership. It is part of the present paradox situation that came up after ÖVP and FPÖ together formed a new government at the beginning of the year 2000 that not only had this government to face diplomatic sanctions from the 14 other EU member countries, but also to accept that NATO membership seems to be out of reach at present, as long as the FPÖ is part of the coalition government.

In summary, the public discussion on EU membership in the late 1980s and early 1990s, combined with the still ongoing security debate, are examples of Austria's immanent legacy as a traditional, backward-looking political culture: policy makers, mass media, and political and social experts did not (or did not want to) succeed in bringing about a more transparent

10 Georg Schöfbänker, Austria's New Security Concept. The Break Away of a Former Non-Aligned and Neutral Country in the Light of the Developing CESDP, schoefbaenker@magnet.at.

11 There is no major threat that would make collective defense necessary. America and its long-term allies account for 72 percent of world military spending. In contrast, current and potential adversary states – including Russia and China – account for 18 percent. Carl Conetta, Charles Knight, "Inventing threats", *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* (March/April 1998), pp. 32-39, here p. 33.

12 Turkey and Greece also do not have land bridges.

and public debate on these complex issues. On the one hand, it is necessary to understand that neutrality – which served Austria extremely well during the Cold War period – was no more than a mere instrument, a means for Austria to become and remain politically independent, which should, however, not be overloaded with ideological illusions of yesterday. Neutrality in present-day Europe might already be inappropriate. Yet on the other hand, the consequences of full NATO membership, including the possible and probable entanglement of Austrian soldiers in future conflicts, must eventually be discussed openly. Advantages and disadvantages, costs and benefits of NATO membership should be submitted to the political public for clear opinion-building and decision-making. However, there is no evidence that the only alternatives would be neutrality or NATO membership. Some more alternatives are within reach. Since Austria took over the Presidency of the EU in the second half of 1998, it made sense that the government (the two parties then in power) decided to postpone discussion on this issue to a later date. Despite different expectations, an all-encompassing and open debate was not resumed at the beginning of 1999, and was more or less suspended under the auspices of NATO airstrikes in Kosovo and on Serbian core territory. Among the Austrian population the status of neutrality has become even more appreciated than before and the ÖVP and FPÖ – the two parties that pushed strongest for NATO membership – obviously hesitated to openly resume the membership debate since then. Under present auspices – with the FPÖ in government – NATO membership seems not probable.

The Prospects for Neutrality

Military alliances, as defined above, have lost their meaning after the end of the East-West conflict. Therefore, there is no immanent need for a neutral state to join a military alliance. But could it hurt? Memberships, of course, do cost money that could arguably be better spent elsewhere.¹³ A more fundamental anxiety, however, is that small states would be drawn unwillingly into the wars of big states. To some extent these anxieties are reasonable. Empirical research shows that the magnitude, duration, and severity of war are substantively connected to alliance configuration, for the reason that war spreads through alliances. Alliances turn small wars into big wars.¹⁴ Small states are thus always caught in the trap of being "entrapped" or "abandoned".¹⁵ The greater one's dependence on the alliance and the stronger one's commitment to the ally, the higher the risk of entrapment. The looser the ties, the larger the risk of being abandoned in the case of war. One strategy to escape this trap has been to adopt "neutrality" or "hide".¹⁶

Looking at the experiences of the two World Wars, the strategy of neutrality produced mixed results. It was, however, more successful than opponents of neutrality would admit. In World War I the neutrality of Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland was successful. It was Germany's invasion of neutral Belgium, after all, that made Britain enter the war. In World War II, Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland and Spain managed to remain neutral. Hitler ignored the neutral status of Belgium, Denmark, the

13 Austria's membership in NATO would cost about 6-7 billion Austrian Schilling a year. The current annual budget amounts to 22 billion Schilling. Heinz Gärtner, Johann Pucher, „Kostenschätzung für Österreichs NATO-Mitgliedschaft“, in *Die Debatte über die Kosten der NATO-Osterweiterung*, ed. August Pradetto, Fouzieh Melanie (Baden-Baden: Nomos 1998), pp. 207-226.

14 Daniel S. Geller, „Explaining War: Empirical Patterns and Theoretical Mechanisms“, in *Handbook of War Studies II*, ed. Manus Midlarsky (forthcoming).

15 Michael Mandelbaum, *The Nuclear Revolution: International Politics Before and After Hiroshima* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

16 Paul Schroeder, „Historical Reality vs. Neo-realist Theory“, *International Security* 19, no. 1 (Summer 1994), pp. 108-148.

Netherlands, Norway, Luxembourg and Yugoslavia. But not only neutral states were victims of Hitler's aggression: Poland and Czechoslovakia, conversely, experienced the failure of England's and France's security guarantees.¹⁷

The argument that neutrality has lost its meaning after the end of the East-West confrontation is historically only partly true. Neutrality in the East-West context was a very special form of neutrality that applied fully only to Austria and Finland. Neutrality, however, existed long before the East-West-conflict came into existence. For example, the Archbishop of Salzburg, Paris Lodron, pursued a policy of neutrality already during the Thirty Year War. Before the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 most of the small German states sought to remain neutral. Switzerland's neutrality harks back to 1815 and even earlier. After 1945 there was strong pressure on Switzerland to abandon its neutrality because it was said to have become meaningless; then the East-West conflict erupted. Neutrality as a political principle of behavior will remain in place as long as there are conflicts.

The security system in Europe is changing dramatically. The new challenges are diverse and any adequate response must be flexible. Membership in an alliance is only one answer among others. Non-membership is another. A non-member of an alliance can only be considered isolated if it has enemies, and a state without enemies is not dependent upon allies. Security has expanded from a military to a comprehensive concept, and as alliances are changing so must the concept of neutrality. Both the nature of neutrality and its attendant expectations can no longer remain what they were during the East-West conflict. Neutral states today must be willing to participate in international peace operations. They cannot remain aloof from every conflict, for neutrality is neither eternal nor does it require an identical response to different situations. The fact that Austria's neutrality no longer looks the same as in its early days does not mean that it has ceased to exist so far. Today's electric locomotives do not resemble Stephenson's steam locomotive of 1829 either, yet they are still locomotives. Even if Austria were to eventually abandon neutrality and join NATO, neutrality as an option would not thereby be negated. Neutrality retains its validity as a concept even as it adjusts to changing times.

17 Dan Reiter puts forward the argument that states make alliance policy in accordance with lessons drawn from formative historical experiences. He points to the various individual experiences of neutral states in the two world wars as decisive influences on each state's alliance preferences. Belgium, which was invaded in 1914, joined an alliance after the war. In contrast, the Netherlands and Switzerland, which emerged unscathed, reinforced their neutral orientations after the war. All three again attempted neutrality in World War II, and the two that were invaded, Belgium and the Netherlands, joined NATO after the war, while Switzerland remained neutral. Similarly, Denmark, Sweden and Norway remained neutral during and after World War I. Denmark and Norway, which were invaded by German troops in World War II, abandoned neutrality to join NATO after the war. Conversely, Sweden, which escaped involvement in the war, reinforced its commitment to neutrality after 1945. Finland, which experienced the failure of its alliance policy during the war, opted for neutrality. Despite exceptions (e.g. Belgium in the late 1930's) Reiter claims that only individual experiences successfully explain the variety of individual national decisions. Dan Reiter, *Crucible of Beliefs: Learning, Alliances, and World Wars* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996).