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**THE NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS OF AUSTRIA IN A  
CHANGING STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT**

**BY**

**COLONEL GERALD KARNER  
Austrian Army**

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**The National Security Interests of Austria in a  
Changing Strategic Environment**

by

COL Gerald Karner

COL Jeffrey D. McCausland  
Project Advisor

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## ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Gerald Karner, COL, Austrian Armed Forces

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National interests have never been a topic of broad discussion in Austria. Austrian statehood after the Second World War was shaped externally and she had to declare permanent neutrality to regain sovereignty in 1955. The resulting restrictions by international law and the stable situation of the Cold War established a narrow framework for Austrian foreign and security policy.

The end of the Cold War and the resulting fundamental changes of the European strategic environment, including new threats to international security, are questioning the traditional Austrian position to its roots. Austria now is challenged to play a more active role in shaping her security environment and to contribute to regional stability. In particular the status of a permanently neutral country has lost its value for the community of nations and limits the Austrian freedom of action to pursue her national interests.

In this situation the lack of awareness of these interests leads to hesitation and uncertainty in the political decision-making process which could lead to severe disadvantages.

The paper uses the concept of national interests provided by Donald E. Nuechterlein in his book, America Overcommitted, and applies it to Austria. The resulting framework of Austrian national interests provides a proposal to stimulate the necessary discussion in the public, the government and among experts.



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## THE NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS OF AUSTRIA IN A CHANGING STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

National interests, in particular security interests, have never been a topic of broad public discussion in Austria. Even in circles of the political elites these interests remain somewhat nebulous. Foreign policy seems to be a sanctuary of the government and to take place on an ad hoc basis. In the preparation of major decisions the government nevertheless usually takes a close look at public opinion polls. This shows the influence of the public even though it is barely prepared to play such a role in the decision-making process.

For more than 40 years this problem was hidden in the stable framework of the bipolar system of the Cold War and Austria's status of a permanently neutral country. The dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union as well as the split-up of Yugoslavia, division of Czechoslovakia, and the reunification of Germany created a completely new situation in Central Europe. Austria now is challenged to play a more active role in shaping her strategic environment, in the interests of her neighbors, the whole community of nations and, last not least, in determining her own national interests.



Despite thorough research by the author of this paper there is no evidence of work on Austrian national interests, neither inside the executive level of government, nor in the external scientific world. The current and painful discussion of future options of Austrian foreign and security policy shows clearly the signs and consequences of this lack of awareness of national interests.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the value of a public discussion and a statement of national interests as a foundation of a coherent foreign and security policy. In addition, the paper will recommend reasonable national interests for Austria in accordance with the current strategic environment and its evolution in the foreseeable future.

### **HISTORICAL FOUNDATION AND BACKGROUND**

Austria has no tradition of defining national interests. After the First World War she found herself as a completely new nation. She lost the main industrial and agricultural areas of the Habsburg Empire to the newly emerged nation states as successors of Austro-Hungary. Survival as the first national interest was not a question of conscious definition but of urgent necessity. Austria's national identity was weak, so was the

prospect for its survivability as a nation. It is an interesting fact that in the early years of the First Austrian Republic particularly the Social Democratic Party was strongly in support of an "Anschluss" to Germany, because of doubts in the survivability of Austria. The political disunity and the severe social situation as a consequence of the crisis of the world economy in the twenties and thirties led finally to the annihilation of Austria by Nazi Germany.<sup>1</sup>

The restoration of Austria after the Second World War marked its beginning as a sovereign nation-state under different circumstances. On the one hand, there was a clear interest of the allied powers in Austria's existence as an independent and survivable nation and, therefore, they provided initial economic aid. On the other hand, the Austrians had learned the lesson that a lack of national political unity and national will may lead to disaster - to the loss of freedom and independence.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE STATUS OF PERMANENT NEUTRALITY

The conditions of the rebirth of Austria as a nation after the Second World War were shaped externally, mainly driven by the Soviet Union. Austria had to choose the status of a permanently neutral country as a precondition for the State Treaty of 1955,

which marked Austria's regaining of sovereignty after the Second World War and the departure of Soviet forces. The Soviet desire was that a sovereign Austria should not be allowed to join the Western defense alliance founded in 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and to weaken NATO by creating a neutral barrier between its central and southern members.

The State Treaty and the status of permanent neutrality placed severe restrictions on Austrian foreign and defense policy. Under international law a permanently neutral country has certain rights and obligations. The most important obligations in peacetime are not to join a defense alliance, not to allow a permanent deployment of foreign troops on her territory and to have adequate defense forces to reassure the community of states of its ability to defend neutrality. In wartime, her obligations are to provide no support to any of the warring parties. The most important right is that in case of war the parties ought to respect neutrality, although history shows that this frequently has been ignored.<sup>3</sup>

To understand permanent neutrality in its political and strategic dimension and, therefore, in the context of national interests, it is important to understand that neutrality is a tool and not an interest. Its justification is mainly to provide

the necessary predictability of a non-aligned country in the interests of others.<sup>4</sup> During the Cold War Austrian neutrality was in the interests of the two blocs, because it provided mutual assurance that the Austrian territory could not be used by one to the disadvantage of the other. In 1955, the adoption of neutrality supported the major Austrian interest, to regain independence and sovereignty. Although not being an inherent interest, a neutrality policy remained an effective tool of Austrian foreign policy, because it reassured the community of states that Austria observed her legal obligations. This provided the necessary predictability and therefore contributed to European stability.

This narrow framework of legal regulations established the foundation for Austrian foreign and defense policy since 1955. Austria found a new national identity as a part of the "Western Democracies" with a prospering market economy and, unlike Switzerland, a way to show international solidarity by contributing troops to UN-peacekeeping-missions. In addition to this, Austria established herself in the traditional role of neutral countries during the Cold War, as a meeting point for negotiations, the headquarters for international organizations and a provider of "good offices" to interested powers.

## CONSEQUENCES

Austrians became used to these limitations, and more than two generations grew up believing that peace and prosperity are linked to this political concept. For the governments, the people and the political parties of Austria, foreign and security policy remained inside this narrow framework and became of secondary interest even to the political elites. Austria was reluctant to play an active role in international politics after the experience of two World Wars and enjoyed external stability provided by the efforts of other nations and the strategic situation of the Cold War. As a result, Austria became a mediator in the interests of other nations rather than an actor in her own interests.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE CURRENT STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT ON AUSTRIA

### THE NEW SECURITY POLICY ENVIRONMENT

The major events and aspects determining the current strategic situation of Austria are:

1. The dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union.

2.The partition of Czechoslovakia.

3.The forcible partition of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

4.The interests of the U.S. and European powers, including the Russian Federation.

5.The reunification of Germany.

6.Membership in the European Union(EU) and EU-enlargement.

7.NATO-enlargement.

No other European country is, on behalf of her geography, as strongly affected by the current processes of reorientation in Europe as Austria. But her geographic position results furthermore in the fact that Austria herself has a great impact on future constellations in Europe, not having been the case since the end of the monarchy.<sup>5</sup>

Subsequently not all aspects of the changing strategic environment in Europe shall be analyzed in detail, because the literature on this topic is numerous. The focus shall be put on the most important ones and their impact on Austria.

The starting point of the reorientation of the European strategic environment was marked by the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union. Austria's northern and eastern neighbor states were then free to decide their future security policies. This process was and is accompanied by instability, mainly caused by fierce problems of the weak and less competitive economies of these countries.

In addition to this, Austria has to deal with four new neighbors, including the reunified Germany. Looking beyond her northeastern, eastern and southeastern borders, Austria is now surrounded by countries in transition. They are looking for orientation marks, each of them having slightly the same or even smaller overall potential in comparison to Austria, and a weaker economy.<sup>6</sup>

Starting in 1991, the forcible partition of Yugoslavia proved that instability could lead to the use of military force to reach a favorable solution for one party in the process of reorientation even in the immediate neighborhood of Austria. Since then the Balkans have remained a subregion of permanent unrest where the possibility of new hostilities is prevented mainly by the permanent presence of foreign troops.

Austrian entry into the EU in 1995 was mainly motivated by economic considerations and the realization that a small country in particular needs a voice in the community of nations shaping its political and economic environment. The EU is currently focused on developing a common currency and will remain occupied mainly focussed on economic goals. For the foreseeable future an enlarged EU should only be able to contribute indirectly to the security of Europe by providing favorable economic conditions to

her member states and projecting the resulting economic and social stability to new member states and beyond.

In the field of military security NATO remains the major tool for fostering stability in Europe not only for the U.S. but also for her European allies.

NATO remains the anchor of American engagement in Europe and the linchpin of transatlantic security. As a guarantor of European democracy and a force for European stability, NATO must play the leading role in promoting a more integrated, secure Europe prepared to respond to new challenges...Enlarging the Alliance will promote our interests by reducing the risks of instability or conflict in Europe's eastern half...<sup>7</sup>

#### THE "NEW" THREATS

With the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union the threat to western democracies in Europe has changed fundamentally. Most security policy analysts and governments of the "western democracies" agree in principle on an assessment of threats in the post-Cold-War world.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore the current threats are in principle:

1. **Regional conflicts:** Regional stability could still be threatened by national or transnational conflicts in Europe and its periphery. These conflicts can be caused by the desire of nation-states to change the international political order by



force as well as by a spill-over of internal conflicts in failed states.

**2. Use and proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction**

**(WMD):** WMD in the hands of outlaw states, terrorist, or international crime organizations poses perhaps the greatest threat to western civilization at the moment. To stop the proliferation of these weapons and to control the spread of technology to produce such weapons and their delivery systems is therefore a vital interest to the community of states.

**3. Organized crime:** Organized crime has reached a new level of quality and quantity. In some countries it has the potential to destabilize the internal order and, therefore, adversely affects their external relations. In addition, modern organized crime, making use of all available techniques, often works transnationally. National forces of internal security in many cases are not sufficiently prepared to deal successfully with these new threats to the security of nations.

**4. International terrorism:** Again the possible use of available technology gives international terrorism an enhanced threat to modern societies. Especially in combination with lack of control over WMD or their proliferation, international terrorism reaches a new dimension of potential threat to the international community.

5. **Uncontrolled refugee migration:** In some regions, including Europe, the quantity and the speed of migration, including but not limited to refugees, has reached a level which could potentially destabilize nations.

To describe actual threats to the community of nations, a sheer listing is not sufficient. If one of these listed threats of a certain quality or/and quantity is able to destabilize nations and even whole regions, a "synergy of threats" is possibly the biggest danger. Therefore the real threat is not only the "danger of escalation"<sup>9</sup> of one of the listed but the coincidence of more than one. All of the above listed threats to the security of the international community are somehow tied together. Each of them could "boost" the other. The simultaneous occurrence of more than one in the same region at a certain intensity could lead to escalating "synergistic" effects. This could confront any nation to the full spectrum of security challenges including war.

Finally, responsible security policy cannot rule out the possibility of larger scale wars completely. Looking back into history there are many examples of incorrect judgments of the probability of war by politicians and experts. In 1938, upon returning home from the Munich Conference, British Prime Minister

Sir Neville Chamberlain assured the British public that the signed document would mean "peace in our time".

Looking at the western "strategic" literature of the seventies and the early eighties it becomes very clear that even the "experts" confirmed a "long-term" dynamic force and a high military efficiency of the Soviet Union. The apparent weak spots in the macroeconomic data were not interpreted as they came finally to effect in a relative short term.<sup>10</sup>

Small nations in particular are affected by even slight changes of their security environment. In addition to this even small-scale regional conflicts can challenge small countries over the full spectrum of their national resources and even threaten their national survival.

#### CONSEQUENCES FOR AUSTRIA

Some authors, as the quotation by Erich Reiter shows, are of the opinion that no other European country is as strongly affected by these fundamental changes (including the "new" threats) as Austria. Others believe Austria could benefit most from the end of the Cold War:

Austria could escape the danger of a possible return to the past by integrating herself in Western European security and military structures. This is because the Austrians are potentially more affected by any threats in the East than for example the Norwegians or the Scots. This could provide a basis for optimism for their future.<sup>11</sup>

Nearly all of them agree that Austria was freed from her locked position between the two blocs by the end of the Cold War, and has gained new freedom of action in the field of foreign and security policy. But freedom of action in these terms has to be used, otherwise it could become limited by other powers again. In this situation the lack of clearly defined or redefined national interests in combination with "the lack of a real understanding of the role of (military) power in international politics"<sup>12</sup> leads to a self-restriction that hampers freedom of action severely.

In particular the status of permanent neutrality hinders the political decision-making process, although, as previously stated, it is primarily a tool for a non-aligned country to assure others of its predictability in security and defense policy. As a result it contributes to stability and is a means rather than an end. It has to serve less the interests of the neutral country than the interests of the community of nations. This main function was lost with the end of the Cold War. During recent years only the Russian Federation has expressed an interest in continued Austrian neutrality. No official statement of Western countries in favor of maintaining the status of neutrality is known.<sup>13</sup> If this is true that "a security and defense policy, which meets the risks and opportunities of the

environment cannot be accomplished by one country alone anymore,"<sup>14</sup> and international solidarity is of crucial importance to deal successfully with new challenges, than neutrality has lost its Cold War role for Austria.

In addition to this, Austria herself is qualifying neutrality in her political decisions. Some political choices in recent years have reduced the interpretation of Austrian neutrality to the core obligations of international law and the neutrality law, not to join a defense alliance and not to allow a permanent deployment of foreign troops on her territory.

Most important was the decision to join the EU as a full member, supported by a strong public vote.<sup>15</sup> As previously mentioned, this step was mainly motivated by economic interests and the realization of the crucial importance of a voice in the organization of states which shapes the future economic environment of Austria. But membership in the EU questions Austrian neutrality deeply. It is hardly conceivable for Austria to stay neutral if another EU memberstate would be object of aggression.

In theory all this stands in contradiction to the *raison d'être* of permanent neutrality: to provide the necessary calculability of a non-aligned country. Finally, this behavior

had no obvious, direct negative consequences on international trust in Austrian policy because most of the recent political decisions were as much in the interests of the community of nations as it was for the EU that Austria became a full member state. The pursuit of her (economic) interests through joining the EU in fact stands in contradiction to neutrality, so would be a similar decision in pursuit of her security interests.

This shows the present dilemma of Austrian foreign and security policy. Geographically Austria is part of Central Europe, a rapidly changing security environment. Politically she is located in the eastern area of the Western European democracies with stable market economies. Austria will remain close to areas of potential instability and ongoing conflicts even after EU and NATO enlargement. In terms of security policy neutrality has lost the interest of the community of nations and its confidence-building role, and is limiting the Austrian options to make use of the new freedom of action and to practice full solidarity in projecting stability over the full spectrum of political measures.

So perhaps the most important consequence of the changing strategic environment and its subsequent "new" threats for Austria is that a change of paradigm in her foreign and security policy seems to be necessary. This would support the shaping of

her environment in terms of stability, in the interests of the community of nations and, last not least, in her own interests.

### THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL INTERESTS

The concept of national interests is questioned by some authors when the nation-state seems to lose its importance in defining the living conditions of peoples and the shaping of their "external" relationships.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless it remains a reasonable framework to explain the external behavior of nation-states and to provide a foundation for the analysis of their national objectives as well as for the development of strategies. Finally, it seems justified to say that "the behavior of a nation-state is rooted in the pursuit, protection, and promotion of its interests."<sup>17</sup>

Looking for a conceptual framework of national interests, the most conclusive is presented by Donald E. Nuechterlein in the opening chapter, "National Interests as a Basis of Foreign Policy formulation", of his book, America Overcommitted.<sup>18</sup>

Nuechterlein first makes a distinction between national interests and public interests, defining *national interests* as: "The country's perceived needs and aspirations in relation to other sovereign states constituting its external environment."<sup>19</sup>

National interests therefore are obviously related to foreign affairs, whereas *public interests* derive from the goals of well-being of the people and the enterprise within the territorial boundaries of the nation. Nuechterlein further describes *strategic interests* as second-order interests, derived from a clear perception of national interests, being "concerned with the political, economic, and military means of protecting the nation against military threats..."<sup>20</sup> *Private interests* are activities of groups and companies operating abroad whose business is not of major concern to the entire nation.

Then a distinction is made between unchanging interests, some of which a nation pursues consistently over long periods of time although with varying degrees of intensity, and changing interests, pursued only for short periods because of changing world conditions or domestic political considerations. For the U.S., Nuechterlein identifies four long-term, basic and relatively unchanging national interests:

1. Defense of Homeland
2. Economic Well-being
3. Favorable World Order (international security)
4. Promotion of Values (ideology)<sup>21</sup>



With certain adaptations and specifications these interests apply to every nation state with a similar system of values and principles, including Austria.

According to Nuechterlein, the problem of correctly defining national interests lies not primarily in identifying these basic ones but in the assessment of the intensity at different moments: "It is the intensity of concern about any basic interest at a given period of time that forms the basis of policy-making in foreign affairs."<sup>22</sup>

For this category of interests, Nuechterlein uses the term "transitory" and a scale of priorities:

- (1) *survival interests*, where the very existence of the nation is in peril;
- (2) *vital interests*, where probable harm to the security and well-being of the nation will result if strong measures, including military ones, are not taken by the government within a short period of time;
- (3) *major interests*, where potential serious harm could come to the nation if no action is taken to counter an unfavorable trend abroad; and
- (4) *peripheral (minor) interests*, where little if any harm to the entire nation will result if a "wait and see" policy is adopted.<sup>23</sup>

Nuechterlein describes a *survival interest* as threatened when there is an imminent, credible threat of massive destruction to the homeland if another state's demands are not quickly met.

*Vital Interests* differ from survival principally in the amount of time that a country has to decide how it will respond to an external threat. They involve economic, world-order, and ideological issues as well as defense of the homeland and may ultimately be as crucial to a country as direct threats to its independence.

*Major interests* are considered by a country to be important but not crucial to its well-being, issues or trends that can be negotiated with an adversary - whether they are economic, political, or ideological.

Finally, *peripheral interests* are those which do not seriously affect the well-being of the whole nation, even though it may be detrimental to the private interests of its citizens conducting business abroad.

#### THE VALUE OF A CONCEPT OF NATIONAL INTERESTS

There are two principle and common views of the making of foreign and defense policy. The so-called elitist view is represented by George F. Kennan. He argued that the general public neither appreciated nor cared about the intricacies of foreign affairs and that skilled statesman and diplomats should be given wide latitude in determining U.S. national interests and

the policies most likely to advance them.<sup>24</sup> The more idealistic opinion takes the view that the public should or even has to become involved in at least the major decisions in the field of foreign and security policy. As the Austrian example shows, the political practice mostly is a mixture of both opinions.

The concept of national interests can meet the requirements of both perspectives. Even high-ranking government officials often are caught in the preparation of ad hoc decisions on certain political measures on a daily basis. The challenge of a discussion of national interests could enrich their work and start a necessary review process. The same is true for elected political representatives. In their case a discussion of national interests could provide an additional public control mechanism.

It cannot be questioned that in today's modern societies there is a constant interaction and a dependency between the government, its political decisions, and public opinion. This dependency will constantly increase in the future. Even if the assumption is justified that only a small minority of the people is interested in foreign and security policy, at least the sheer fact of a public discussion of national interests could add to the political awareness of the general public and finally lead to political change through democratic institutions.

Therefore the basic value of discussing national interests is perhaps less to have a binding concept of an underlying foundation for political decisions in foreign and security policy on the shelf, but to provide a framework for the thinking process and a tool for a permanent refinement and the control of political measures. A certain value lies finally in a more serious discussion of foreign and security policy matters in a democratic society itself.

#### **OPTIONS FOR NATIONAL INTERESTS OF AUSTRIA**

The political discussion in Austria is focusing completely on what Nuechterlein describes as policies which derive from a clear perception of national interests. This clear perception seems to be lacking in Austria, because there never has been a discussion or a systematic evaluation of national interests in Austria, even among political scientists. The declarations of the last three federal governments to the parliament at the beginning of a legislation period do not even contain the word "interest".<sup>25</sup>

In this stage of the development of the Austrian security environment this lack of awareness of national interests is perhaps not the only one, but an important reason for the reluctance to make clear decisions. As recent events show,

Austria can no longer play the role of a mediator in international relations, but is challenged to take a more active part in the shaping of her Central European environment. To prepare herself for this task a discussion and an evaluation of national interests seems to be appropriate.

In doing this it is clear that these interests have to reflect the possibilities of the nation, derived from her political and economic potential. A small nation has fewer options in shaping her environment than a powerful one, especially in the field of security policy. Consequently, it is more important to coordinate the pursuit of her interests with others having similar interests and objectives in the region. Nevertheless it would be wrong to draw the conclusion that a small nation does not have the need to develop and pursue national interests in a similar way as big ones. This would mean a failure to fulfill its responsibilities to its peoples and its partners.

#### A PROPOSAL FOR AUSTRIAN NATIONAL INTERESTS

The following proposal for Austrian national interests is based on the system of national interests developed by Donald E. Nuechterlein and takes into consideration a possible evolution of the "objectives" stated in the "Landesverteidigungsplan" of 1985

as well as the fundamental changes of the Austrian security environment since then, previously discussed.

### **Unchanging Long-term Interests**

1. *Defense of Homeland*: Protection of the people, territory, and institutions of Austria against potential foreign dangers. The new strategic situation in Europe demands that neutrality cannot longer be in the national interest, even in a long-term view. The new transnational threats cannot be overcome by a small nation-state alone, even with extremely high defense efforts. The necessary mutual solidarity cannot be provided sufficiently through neutrality.

2. *Economic Well-being*: A maximum quality life and living standard for the whole people. This again can in the case of Austria in the foreseeable future only be accomplished through multinational cooperation and has economic and security policy implications.

3. *Favorable World Order*: Fostering a peaceful environment in the regional and in the global framework. Again neutrality can no longer be a proper tool to pursue this objective, because there is neither a need nor interest by others in neutrality anymore in fostering peace and stability. For a small country, this can best be achieved by integrating itself in multinational bodies, where

national interests can be promoted through an equal vote and strengthened through a multinational voice.

4. *Promotion of Values*: Preservation of the pluralistic-democratic order in state and society and the promotion of these and other values abroad. For a small country both directions are linked closely. The achievement or the failure in achieving this objective can be crucial to the national security, economic well-being and a favorable world order. Again this can only be reached by close multinational cooperation.

#### **Transitory Interests**

1. *Survival interests*: There are no current threats to the survival of Austria as a nation at the moment.

2. *Vital interests*: The term "vital interest" often is used carelessly. Staying with Nuechterlein's definition that "threats to vital interests are potential rather than imminent dangers to a countries well-being, and they therefore provide policy-makers with time" and "a vital interest is at stake when an issue becomes so important to a nation's well-being that its leadership will refuse to compromise beyond the point that it considers to be tolerable"<sup>26</sup>, we must concede that there is only one short-term vital interest for Austria at the moment: The shaping of her economy to foster her position in the Common European Market and

beyond. In a long-term view, vital interests of Austria are, to prevent or end regional conflicts and to defend the homeland in case prevention fails. The prevention or the defense in a regional conflict could even become a survival interest. Here in particular exists a problem in the perception of the general public and the political leadership. In their opinion such a threat to Austria is unlikely. In addition, the ways and means to meet this interest are perceived controversially because of the time perception and probability estimations. Again, responsible political leadership has to lay the foundation for the future by taking action in the present. In case of staying non-aligned, the necessary build-up of proper armed forces needs time and resources, a seamless integration in a defense alliance would need at least time. If no nation, especially a smaller one, is able to defend itself independently against the possible threats of the new environment, it cannot be a question, that the only reasonable decision would be to join a defense alliance. In the national interests of Austria this would be not only a question of effectiveness but of necessity. Overall the last example of vital interests seems to be a good one to illustrate Nuechterlein's term "transitory". Sometimes the pursuit of long-term interests needs short-term decisions, so interests can



change their level of hierarchy through the perceived urgency of their pursuit.

3. Major interests: Major interests of Austria are a settlement of ongoing conflicts in southeastern Europe, the control of WMD and the prevention of their proliferation, and political stability in her neighborhood. A settlement of ongoing conflicts in southeastern Europe is important to Austria because not only possible escalation but even a long-lasting perpetuation could seriously harm the nation by a permanent flow of refugees affecting the Austrian economy negatively and limiting the chances of Austrian enterprise in this region. There is no question that WMD in the hands of terrorists or outlaw regimes poses a serious threat to every nation. Austria as a non-aligned country in particular has to face this problem, because its possible political and military countermeasures are limited. As the U.S. (as the remaining superpower and a symbol of western civilization) is threatened primarily by terrorist use of these weapons, small non-aligned countries could be a less dangerous target to show the power of those groups or regimes. Finally, for a small nation stability in its neighborhood is of importance, more than for a big one. Political order and stability in its neighborhood provides most of the conditions needed to prevent the outbreak of conflict and the spill-over of organized crime

and terrorism. Furthermore, it provides the best opportunities for free trade and transnational enterprise.

Although the purpose of this paper is not to give policy recommendations, it seems to be clear that in this context the enlargement of EU and NATO both are of major interest to Austria. She benefits now from the NATO effort to settle the conflict in the Balkans as a contributing non-member state. She would likely benefit from a future alliance missile defense system against the possible use of WMD by rogue regimes even as a non-member state. In addition, a promotion of the interests of a country that is not willing to contribute to the reduction of threats in a calculable and systematic way cannot be expected every time and in any case.

4. Peripheral interests: Although the world economy proves itself increasingly interdependent, a favorable world order in regions outside Europe and its periphery constitutes a peripheral national interest for Austria at the present. This view may be limited in time. If the EU becomes a global player in the economic field, this could become a major national interest.

## CONCLUSION

In the field of national security and strategy, Austria today is a classical example of a country, where "idealist" thinking dominates real policy making in a way that is not appropriate to the promotion of her national interests and suitable to the current strategic environment. This may be explainable through history, but it cannot serve as an excuse for political irrationality. Analyzing the Austrian political scene and looking for some reasons for her present dilemma, it becomes obvious that a serious discussion of national interests never occurred. This may not be the main and only reason for the lack of reality in Austrian security policy, but it seems to the author of this paper, that it is an important one. The time of being neutralized between the two blocs for Austria is over, and she is challenged to find new orientation marks in foreign and security policy. A useful tool to accomplish this could be a fundamental discussion of national interests. As in most countries, the political discussion in Austria is dominated by a controversy on policies and strategies. This may be a minor problem in countries with a basic awareness of national interests. In Austria this causes a disorientation in the political decision-making process that is threatening her prosperity in a changing environment.

Although being not the central purpose of this paper, two major recommendations can be made, because they are the result of the research on every aspect of Austrian national interests:

- Austria should lead a fundamental discussion of national interests. This would be the best way to consciously find a role for Austria in foreign and security policy, and

- An equal voice, defined as membership in all relevant institutions for the shaping of European foreign and security policy, is of crucial importance especially for small countries with limited power and resources.

The above stated national interests of Austria cannot be seen as an ultimate solution. The development of Austrian national interests needs a process of research and discussion among scholars, other experts, government officials, politicians and, last but not least, the Austrian people. If this paper could contribute to a stimulation of such a process, its main purpose would be fulfilled.

6.483 words



## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Stephan Vajda, Felix Austria, Eine Geschichte Oesterreichs. Wien-Heidelberg: Carl Ueberreuter, 1980.

<sup>2</sup> Melanie A. Sully, A Contemporary History of Austria. London-New York: Routledge, 1990.

<sup>3</sup> Landesverteidigungsakademie Wien. Die sicherheitspolitische Bedeutung der Neutralitaet im neuen Europa, Info-Aktuell Nr.2/1995. Wien: LVAK/BMLV, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>5</sup> Erich Reiter, Neutralitaet oder NATO: Die sicherheitspolitischen Konsequenzen aus der europaeischen Aufgabe Oesterreichs. Graz-Wien-Koeln: Styria, 1996, 10.

<sup>6</sup> Mario v. Baratta, ed., Der Fischer Weltalmanach. Frankfurt a. Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1996.

<sup>7</sup> A National Security Strategy for a New Century, The White House, May 1997, 21.

<sup>8</sup> A National Security Strategy for a New Century, 5, 10 and Wissenschaftskommission beim Bundesminister fuer Landesverteidigung, ed., Sicherheitspolitisches Umfeld und Streitkraefteentwicklung II, Schriftenreihe der Landesverteidigungsakademie (Wien: Landesverteidigungsakademie, 1996), 9.

<sup>9</sup> Reiter, 153.

<sup>10</sup> Horst Pleiner, "Die militaerstrategische Lage Oesterreichs und ihre Konsequenzen," Oesterreichische Militaerische Zeitschrift (OEMZ) 1 (January/February 1998): 10.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Kennedy, "Die Welt, Europa und Oesterreich," Europaeische Rundschau 94/2.

<sup>12</sup> Reiter, 37.

<sup>13</sup> At the occasion of the state visit of the Austrian Federal Chancellor Victor Klima in Moscow in October 1997, Prime Minister Chernomyrdin praised the importance of neutrality for the future European security architecture, Austrian Press Agency (APA) 497, 29 Oct 97. Immediately after a speech by the SACEUR, GEN John W. Clark, in Vienna on the 13 Feb 1998, in which he expressed, that in military perspective Austria would be very welcome as a NATO-member, he was heavily criticized by the press-spokesman of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, APA 691, 18 Feb 98.

<sup>14</sup> Wissenschaftskommission beim Bundesminister fuer Landesverteidigung, 68.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>16</sup> Martin van Creveld, The Transformation of War (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 149.

<sup>17</sup> Robert H. Dorff, "Some Basic Concepts and Approaches in the Study of International Politics," in "War, National Policy & Strategy, Readings: Volume 1, Academic Year 1998," (U.S. Army War College, Department of National Security and Strategy, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1997), 42.

<sup>18</sup> Donald E. Nuechterlein, America Overcommitted (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1985).

<sup>19</sup> Nuechterlein, 153.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 155, 156.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>25</sup> Bundeskanzleramt, Bundespressdienst (ed.); Erklaerung der Bundesregierung vor dem Nationalrat von Bundeskanzler Dr. Franz Vranitzky - 30. November 1994 (Wien: Oesterreichische Staatsdruckerei, 1994), Bundeskanzler Dr. Franz Vranitzky - Erklarung der Bundesregierung vor dem Nationalrat - 13. Maerz 1996 (Wien: Oesterreichische Staatsdruckerei, 1996), Bundeskanzler Mag. Viktor Klima - Erklarung der Bundesregierung vor dem Nationalrat - 29. Jaenner 1997 (Wien: Oesterreichische Staatsdruckerei, 1997)

<sup>26</sup> Nuechterlein, 157.

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