INTRODUCTION
GENESIS OF THE STATE TREATY

Geographical and Historical Background

The Republic of Austria situated approximately between 9° to 17° longitudes to the east and 46° to 49° latitudes to the north, wider to the east and extremely narrow to the west, occupies a position at the centre of the European subcontinent and the crossroads of the main east-west and north-south traffic highways in central Europe. The strategic Arlberg pass connects Vienna with Paris through Switzerland without crossing the territories either of Germany or Italy. The Brenner pass locates an equally important north-south railway without which, it is said, the Rome-Berlin axis would have remained simply a pair of wheels. The recently constructed Tauern railway crosses the high Alps, besides a series of mountain passes in the Alpine ranges. Geographically Austria comprises parts of the Bohemian plateau, the Alpine foreland, a part of the Alps and a share of the Hungarian plain. Vienna with its surrounding region is a basin in itself.

Vorarlberg, the western most province, with well defined sections of river valleys in the Alps is Austria's natural door on the Rhine. The Klagenfurt area to the south-east lying in the basin of river Drava is a focus of railways to the south, the east and the west, and had been a bone of
contention between Austria and Yugoslavia due to the existence of the Slav minority south of the river. The Bohemian plateau divides the two great waterways of Europe, the Danube and the Elbe. The city of Salzburg, aptly called the "Home of North", and the surrounding province contain the salt mines which are still worked and which since the early ages had attracted invaders from different directions. The Vienna basin, the most fertile area, is situated between the Alps and the Carpathians. It had been Europe's bulwark against the east and the gate to western Europe. It epitomises centuries of resistance to non-German advances from the lower Danube Valley and also the modern 'Drang nach Osten' of Greater Germany. This basin also lies on the great route running from the north European plain via the Moravian gate into the basin itself and downwards through the Semmering pass into the Po Valley and the Adriatic, thus linking it with the Baltic. This explains the Habsburg bid to secure the control of Bohemia and the Moravian gate. The merger of the Hungarian plains was a clear recognition of the fact that this whole area, the juncture of the Danubian and the Moravian route, constituted a geographical unit and was essential for the political military and economic safety of the entire area. Geography encourages a natural merging point here, but that very location made it a zone of contention.
The Alps to the northwest, the Carawanken to south-east and the Carpathian girdle to the northeast all lower down towards the Austrian territory forming a natural bastion. It occupies a distinctive position among the Danubian states.

Originating in the Black forest in Bavaria, the Danube flows on through Austria to form the boundary between Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Cutting across the Hungarian plains southwards into Yugoslavia, the river flows again along the boundary line of Bulgaria and Roumania and further north its delta goes on to form the frontier between Roumania and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The Danube has always been "a major route way in central Europe over which conflicting ideas, peoples and armies, have moved since time immemorial." (1)

The plains on the Danube start from Krems, situated a few kilometers west of Vienna. These are widened from Vienna downwards to Hungary and upwards through lower Carpathian ranges to the northwest. Most of the Danubian states to the east of Austria were the territories of the erstwhile Austro-Hungarian Monarchy till it was Balkanized after the First World War, by the Treaty of Saint Germain. The ruling House of this dual monarchy, the Habsburgs were Germans, racially

linked to the ruling House of the erstwhile Prussian Empire, the Hohenzollerns. Austria, thus, formed a natural meeting place of Germans from the west and the Magyars and Slavs from the southeast. The Brenner and the Semmering had brought the Romans into the enclave as early as fifteenth century B.C. This geographical location at the crossroads of Europe made it a contact point of three great European civilizations - the Roman, the Germanic and the Slav. (2)

Since the early iron age the territory that constitutes the present day northwest Austria was an important trading centre which made it a place of contact and conflict between the ancient civilizations. The "Hallstatt" relics in Upper Austria reveal a prosperous civilization based on salt trading in the area. The Celt invaders about 279 B.C. exploited the salt mines very efficiently and by 150 B.C. had established the kingdom of Noricum which spread over Upper Austria south of the Danube, Salzburg, West-Styria and Carinthia. The Romans who had established the province of Raetia in 15 B.C. which included North Tyrol and Vorarlberg, gradually routed out the Celts from Noricum and

stretched further east by establishing the Province of Pannonia comprising the territory between Passau and Budapest. Further consolidation of authority followed to stop barbarian invasions from the north. Two important military camps were established at Passau (Castra Moiorum) and Vienna (Vindobona) and much emphasis was laid on military strategy rather than on trade and navigation on the Danube. Despite this, the Great migrations of the nomadic hordes of Vandals, Goths, Huns, Teutons, Slavs and Franks forced the Romans to withdraw from the Danube. The Huns overran the Roman province of Pannonia but withdrew within two decades after the death of their king Attila. This was followed by the infiltration of Slavs, Avars and Magyars from the east, Teutons from the north and Bajuvars from the west which was ultimately wiped out by the Roman Emperor, Charlemagne, towards the end of the eighth century. As an eastern bulwark against these invaders, he set up the "Ostmark" - Eastern March - in the region surrounded by the rivers Inn, Haab and Drava. This Ostmark collapsed when the western forces were defeated at the battle of Pressburg - Bratislava - in 907. Nearly half a century later, it was reconstituted by Otto the Great in 955, who was later crowned by the Pope at Rome, which marked the beginning of the Holy Roman Empire.

In 976, the Holy Roman Emperor, Otto II presented the southeastern territories of his Empire to Margrave Leopold
of Babenberg for his help in crushing a Bavarian revolt. A period of nearly two and three quarter centuries of prosperous Babenberg rule was based on firm policy and dynastic marriages. This was followed by Bohemian intervention which was pushed back in 1273 by Rudolf of Habsburg, "an elected German king". At the Diet of Augsburg, Rudolf was awarded the southeastern Empire of the Babenbergs which he transformed into a dynastic heritage to be ruled by the Habsburgs till the disintegration of the Empire in 1919.

The policy of conquests and dynastic marriages aptly continued by the Habsburgs had added vast domains to the Empire towards the end of an energetic and diplomatic reign of Maximilian I in 1519. (3) With the Holy Roman crown in its firm possession, it had really become an Empire "on which the sun never set". (4) Charles V, Maximilian's successor partitioned his vast inheritance and handed over the Austrian lands from Alsace to Hungary to his brother Ferdinand I and retained the Spanish ones.

(3) It is said of the Habsburgs, "Let others wage wars for a throne - you, happy Austria marry"; and "the lands that others are given by Mars, you receive from Venus."

(4) The Spanish acquisition of Mexico and Peru had extended the Empire beyond Europe to Latin America.
It was during the reign of Ferdinand I that Austria for the first time had to fulfil her mission of a bulwark against the westward drive of the Ottomans. In 1629 the first Turkish siege was laid on Vienna by Suleiman the Magnificent, who had actually reached the gates of Vienna. The siege was eventually raised, but not followed up. As a result the Turks occupied the entire Hungarian plains including Budapest by 1541.

Besides this Islamic danger from the east, Ferdinand had to face the menace of Protestantism in the form of Lutheranism which was rapidly infecting the Bohemian and Austrian Aristocracy. With the religious peace of Augsburg in 1555, he started the crusade for Counter Reformation sternly followed by Ferdinand II resulting in thirty years' war. It was left for Ferdinand III to negotiate the peace of Westphalia in 1648 to end the war at a political loss to the Habsburgs. (5)

The Turks, who had been silent all these years laid a second siege on Vienna in 1683 under the Grand Vaziar Kara Mustafa. The resolute population of Vienna held out against the siege once again, and was promptly helped by the Polish

(5) By the terms of the Treaty Austria had to cede Alsace to France and had to abandon the idea of Catholic domain under the Habsburgs.
King John III Sobieski. The King was determined to "hurl back the barbarian into deserts to exterminate...to raise upon his ruins the Empire of Byzantium." (6) The Turks caught between the two fronts were forced to flee and once again Austria effectively played the role of a southeastern bulwark of Latin civilization against the Ottomans. For Leopold I, there was no other alternative in 1683, if Austria was to survive. However, it was left for the great campaigns of Prince Eugene of Savoy, Austria's great military Commander, to recapture Budapest and acquire Belgrade, Serbia and Roumania in 1718 at the peace of Passarowitz. This had appeared a difficult task in 1683 as the Magyars of Hungary seemed to prefer religious toleration of the Ottomans to the Austrian religious intolerance symbolized by Counter Reformation.

The general feeling of relief at the expulsion of the Turks from the Danube basin led to an era of creative activity in Europe in literature, music and architecture. Vienna, at the crossroads of Europe became the great melting pot in which art and culture of the Roman south, the Slav east and the Germanic north crystalized into Austrian Baroque. It symbolized a way of life based on compromise, a principle

(6) For the Turkish sieges of Vienna see, William J. J. Spry, Life on the Bosphorus: Doings in the City of Sultan: Turkey Past and Present (London, 1896), pp. 60-64 and pp. 113-119.
effectively exploited by Austrian diplomacy in its dealings with the multinational Empire and its foreign relations.

Thus, the small Duchy to the southeast of western Europe, originally formed as an "Ostmark" of Latin civilization - roughly comprising the Russian zone of occupation after 1945 - was transformed into a vast Empire from North Sea to the Mediterranean and far down into the Balkans. The reign of Maria Theresia who inherited it in 1740 and her son Josef II was marked with widespread administrative reforms with a firm structure based on "consent" and numerous religious reforms in which the crime of heresy was done away with and religion became a personal affair of the individual. During this period the landmarks in foreign policy were the alliance with France brought about by Chancellor Kaunitz and a share in the first partition of Poland agreed to by Josef II. The latter was thought to be a matter of expedience for preserving the balance of power vis-a-vis Russia and Prussia.

The eastward advance of Napoleon towards Moscow at the turn of the nineteenth century had its impact on Vienna which was twice occupied by France. By 1812, however, Napoleon was forced to retreat from Moscow. The brilliant diplomacy of the Austrian Chancellor Prince Metternich culminating in Napoleon's defeat in the battle of Leipzig in 1813, forced him to abdicate the throne in 1814. This
was followed by a call to all the powers for the Congress of Vienna for a European settlement at a conference table rather than on the battle fields.

The Congress of Vienna between 1814-16, conducted its diplomacy behind the scenes and ratified already agreed settlements in its plenary sessions. Though it cost the Austrian treasury dear, it proved to be the supreme hour of Austrian prestige in Europe. A European settlement was ultimately agreed upon after a few difficulties and the "Holy Alliance" was formed. It gave Europe nearly a century of peace, which though marked with small battles, remained undisturbed by any major war till the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. Metternich, the force behind the Congress, based his strategy on peace, stability and the preservation of the status quo by maintaining balance of power in Europe. "A very great diplomat but not a great statesman" as Franz Grillparzer assessed him, Metternich's anti-liberal system at home betrayed him, and Austria had to suffer her share of misery resulting from the 1848 revolutions. (7) The middle of the nineteenth century witnessed the rising Prussian power under the able guidance of the iron Chancellor Prince Bismarck. After defeating

Austria-Hungary at the battle of Sadova in 1866, Prussia moved on to strike the Dual Alliance with Austria in 1879. The Congress of Berlin a year earlier had allocated Bosnia and Herzegovina as mandates to Austria. Italy joined the Alliance in 1882 making it a Triple Alliance against France and Russia.

In 1908 Franz Josef I annexed the mandates in his anxiety to contain pan-Slavism in the Balkans of which Serbia was the hot-bed. By 1913, after the two Balkan wars Serbia emerged much more powerful assured of support from Russia in an eventuality of war with Austria and Prussia. A year later, the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Habsburg throne, and his wife at Sarajevo triggered off the war which the Austrian monarch had throughout his life striven to prevent. (8) Thus till the beginning of the twentieth century, "the Danubian Empire, was the perfect buffer state of Europe, as its existence prevented a gigantic Russia and a gigantic Germany from engaging in a mighty struggle in the heart of Europe. If, therefore, Austria did not exist, Europe would have had to invent it. And since Austria does exist Europe would do everything to preserve it." (9)

(9) Irwin Abrams, "The Austrian question at the turn of the Twentieth Century", Journal of Central European Affairs (Colorado), vol. 4, pp. 186-201.
The end of the war witnessed the disintegration of the two great empires to the East - the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman. The Treaty of Saint Germain in 1919 formed the successor states on Wilson's principle of self-determination of nationalities. The German speaking territories of the Habsburgs with 32,376 square miles of area and a population of 6.5 million emerged as the Republic of Austria carved out of the hitherto great Monarchy on the Danube which had for so long been a landmark of central Europe. With its capital still the cosmopolitan city of Vienna, the Republic inherited the region of the "Ostmark" and the territories lying to its west. Geographically and politically it still remained the contact point between east and west, indeed the confluence of Europe's religious cultural and political streams. (10)

The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian economic unit left the new republic facing a very serious economic situation completely cut off from her former trade partners. Loans from the League could not restore her economic viability. Political stability was also endangered when two totalitarian regimes emerged in the neighbouring states of Italy and Germany in addition to the powerful Soviet State which had replaced the imperial Russia of the Czars during the course of the First World War. The age long empirical traditions of compromise and shrewd diplomacy seemed to be of no avail in the Republic and no one could save the state from Hitler when in March 1938 he made Austria the stepping stone towards his grand strategy for world hegemony of the superior Nordic race. The carefully prepared bulwark of western civilization, thus became a vantage point in the hands of Hitler. (11) When the Second World War broke out a year later, there was no such country as Austria on the political map of Europe. The necessity to maintain the independence of this strategically located area at the heart of Mackinder's

"Heartland" was clearly recognized, when the Allies during the progress of the war agreed to re-establish it as a democratic and independent state. Thus Austria's key location in Europe forced her to suffer continued occupation since 1938 to the signing of the State Treaty in 1955 and deprived her of the right to determine her own future. (12) It strongly affected the course of the State Treaty negotiations but also drew the ultimate signatures on the Treaty.


Harold and Margaret Sprout hold that revolutionary advances in modern engineering and technology have considerably robbed the substance off Mackinder's "Heartland" theory. Nonetheless, they accept that geographical locations have assumed new dimensions in the interactions in modern international system. Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout, "Geography and International Relations in an era of Revolutionary change", Journal of Conflict Resolution (Michigan), vol. IV, pp. 145-61. Also see W. Gordon East, "How Strong is the Heartland", Foreign Affairs, vol. 29, pp. 78-93. In case of Austria its location at the "politico-military divide" in Europe gave it an added importance in the interaction among the Big Povers. For a theoretical analysis concerning geography and international conflict see Howard E. Koch Jr., Robert C. North and Dina A. Zinnes, "Some Theoretical Notes on Geography and International Conflict", Journal of Conflict Resolution, vol. IV, pp. 4-14.
The so-called "self neutralisation" was the price Austria paid for the restoration of her sovereignty. In fact, this was the basis for the conclusion of the State Treaty. It was considered a device for some sort of "power management" in central Europe by removing a significant geographical area from the rivalries of power blocs that emerged in mid fifties, and a sort of possible solution to "local problems of international order." (13) A forward step was thus retreated by the big four by disengaging themselves from a specific location and circumventing a probable cause of future military confrontation. In a way the practicability of creating "grayzones" was also explored as a means to peaceful coexistence after a decade of intense cold war.