I. Berlin Conference of Foreign Ministers: 25 January to 18 February 1954

The onset of the atomic era with its accompanying paradox of arms for security resulted in the Big Four being forced to adopt a more conciliatory tone towards one another at the commencement of the year 1954. Premier Malenkov foresaw "no objective obstacles" to an improvement of East-West relations in the new year and President Eisenhower also agreed to proceed toward "a lasting peace in a free and prosperous world". Simultaneously, Dulles hoped for successful resolution of the problem of German reunification and Austrian independence in the forthcoming Berlin Conference. (1)

The Austrian government picked up the tune and sent a note to the occupying powers requesting them to finalize the State Treaty. The Western Powers assured Austria that they would undertake all efforts for separating the German and the Austrian problems and would press

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for Austrian representation at the conference to facilitate the conclusion of the State Treaty. The Soviet Union also announced its readiness to do all in its power for "a final settlement of the Austrian question" and accepted Austrian participation in the conference. This, however, was immediately followed by a reference to the double assault of the Bonn government against Austria; one exerted through the West German financial penetration in Austria endangering her economic independence, and the other exerted through the ideological pressure by the German fifth column, the WDU (The League of Independents) which aimed at the inclusion of Austria in the aggressive Atlantic bloc. It was warned that these "revanchist" policies of West Germany supported by the Americans were a danger not only to Austria's neighbours but to the peace of Europe. Chancellor Raab came forward and refuted the Soviet campaigns on the menace of a new "Anschluss" - Anschlussgefahr - and on the remilitarization of Austria.


(3) Pravda, 17 January 1954.
He emphasized that the treaty itself would be the best guarantee against any such menace because Article 4 of the draft treaty forbade Austria's political and economic reunion with Germany. He also drew attention to Article 17, limiting the Austrian army and Article 19, limiting military build up to specified levels and appealed to the Big Powers to maintain a realistic outlook and give Austria her right to be sovereign in her own land. (4)

Meanwhile the Austrian delegation led by Josef Schoener had reached Berlin. A note was immediately submitted to the four Foreign Ministers asking for direct Austrian participation in the Conference and contacts were established with the four Foreign Ministers. (5) Later, Austrian Foreign Minister, Figl, and State Secretary Kreisky along with their staff joined the Austrian delegation at Berlin. It was speculated that the real difficulty this time would be the question of troops withdrawal. The Austrian Government demanded a clear 'yes' or 'no' in an answer and advocated that a conference exclusively for

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Austria might be more beneficial for the solution of the problem than the forthcoming Berlin venture. Still, Figl thought that a settlement on Austria might be possible in view of the fact that Austria would be an equal negotiating partner at the conference table.

The coalition partners had already evolved a consolidated policy for sponsorship by the Austrian Government. One of the significant decisions concerned their striving for the reduction of the Soviet demand of the lump sum of 150 million dollars as the Austrian economy had been exploited for a further period of more than four years after the sum was agreed upon. Another issue of still greater concern was to define a policy of non-entanglement for a free Austria to follow, which would satisfy both the alleged fears of the East and the minimum expectations of the West. This was thought essential in view of the tremendous increase in the Anschluss campaign by the Soviet Union showing inevitable signs that the "Anschluss bogey" was going to figure prominently at the conference. (6) Austrian delegation was, instructed to negotiate without compromising with the sovereignty of their land.

At Berlin the High Commissioners of the four powers in the city were struggling hard over the meeting place for the Conference. At their fifth session they decided that the meetings in the first week should be held in the building formerly used as Headquarters of the Allied Control Council and during the second week in the residence of the USSR High Commissioner in Berlin. During the third week, the venue was to be shifted again to the former Allied Control Council headquarters. The further venue was to be decided later. This was only a prelude to the existence of still wider differences and created grave doubts as to the possibility of resolving any conflict. (7)

With the preliminaries completed, the Conference began on 25 January 1954 as scheduled. At the outset the four Foreign Ministers reiterated their desires for peace. Bidault warned against the "starting on a world level a type of bargaining" by way of coupling totally unrelated issues and appealed to all concerned "to deal with concrete problems susceptible of a rapid solution." Austria, he thought, was one such problem. Nevertheless,

in his proposal for an agenda, Molotov placed the "Austrian Treaty" as the last item. Although, Dulles preferred to put the "Austrian Treaty" earlier on the agenda, he accepted the Soviet proposals to avoid "the battle of the agenda" and start concrete negotiations. (8) Nonetheless, the Conference would be doomed to failure were the Soviet Union to insist on the participation of the People's Republic of China on a discussion of European problems as was implied in its agenda item No. 1. If this was to happen, informed observers were candid enough to declare that the delegations might as well pack their things and leave Berlin that very day. (9)

The first two items - convening a five power conference for measures to be decided to reduce international tension, and reunification of Germany - consumed the energies of the four Foreign Ministers for a fortnight. Although item No. 1 yielded positive result, the negative outcome on item No. 2 led to doubts as regards the success of the Austrian question. Some hopes for a satisfactory


settlement on Austria still existed because the main ground for disagreement on Germany - the issue of holding free elections throughout the state - did not arise in the case of Austria. Moreover, it was the only issue on which the Big Four could prove their genuine desire for peace. Thus, mixed feelings of hope and doubt prevailed over the Conference when the Austrian question was taken up on 12 February 1954.

The Austrian Foreign Minister, Figl, while representing his Government's viewpoint drew attention to the continuation of Allied occupation for ten years which had been thought to be only a temporary measure. He declared Austrian preparedness "to make sacrifices and to take burdens upon ourselves for our liberty and sovereignty", but pointed out that the economic terms laid down in Article 35 were particularly harsh to the Austrian economy and needed a sympathetic reconsideration. He appealed to the Big Four to:

give Austria the State Treaty and you will thereby not only give seven million Austrians the freedom long due to them, but you will, over and above that, contribute to the strengthening of peace, to a genuine relaxation of tensions in international relations and to the preservation of security in Europe. (10)

(10) Command Paper 9080, n. 8, pp. 131-3.
Anthony Eden asked for immediate discussion on the five still unagreed Articles of the draft treaty. He also appealed for the reconsideration of the economic clauses of Article 35 agreed upon in 1949 in view of the continuous exploitation of Austrian economy for five more years since then. Dulles supported Eden's views and emphasized that the Austrian problem "cries aloud for immediate solution". Bidault thought that Austria with her sovereignty restored would be "a pledge of stability for Europe". (11) Molotov in his exposition brought in the question of Trieste and asked the Western Powers not to use the free port as a Western military base. He proposed that the deputies should be instructed to finalize the treaty within three months on the basis that Austria should be forbidden to join any military alliance, and she should not "permit the establishment on its territory of foreign military bases". In response to the Austrian desire, he agreed to accept the lumpsum payment of 150 million dollars in "deliveries of goods" instead of cash and also agreed to accept yearly instalments instead of quarterly. But an interesting clause added by Molotov asked for a postponement of the troops withdrawal from Austria, pending

conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany. These troops, however, were not to perform "the functions of occupation" and the city of Vienna was to be relieved of all foreign troops along with the dissolution of the Allied Commission. (12) Figl was quick to refuse the Soviet proposal. He considered that it would "put off indefinitely the real prospects of an effective liberation of Austria from foreign occupation." The Austrian Government stated that the Soviet Union was trying to secure the economic advantages of a State Treaty with the occupation of a politically and strategically significant outpost in Europe. Home Minister Helmer stressed that "as there is no divided or half peace, so is there no half independence". The Mayor of Vienna emphatically declined to accept any special concessions for Vienna so long as the rest of the country was occupied. (13) Dulles extended his wholehearted support to the Austrian point of view and declared that in between the top and bottom of "a peculiar sandwich" Molotov had inserted "some poisonous proposals", which,


instead of reestablishing "a free and independent Austria" would establish "an Austria without freedom and independence". Regarding Soviet demand for Austria's military neutrality, Dulles considered it a forcible imposition and hence, a contradiction of the concept of a sovereign state. He, however, declared that were Austria to make that choice on her own, she would be assured of United States support. Postponement of troops withdrawal, Dulles thought, was only a new excuse turned over by the Soviet Union in order to avoid signing the State Treaty. (14)

Both these Articles - imposition of military neutrality and postponement of troops withdrawal - were against Austrian interests. Bidault described the Soviet proposals as "less a matter of proposals on the Treaty than of proposals against the conclusion of the Treaty", and warned that the Western eagerness to sign the State Treaty at Berlin would not mean the acceptance of unjust claims of the Soviet Union. Dulles offered to accept certain Articles of the draft in the form proposed by the Soviet Union on the condition that the four Foreign

Ministers would confirm their past acceptance of Article 4 and Article 33, among others. (16) He also put forth draft proposals for these and requested all to sign the Treaty "on Thursday, February 18, at 3 p.m." (16)

Figl recounted Austrian sacrifices in accepting the economic burdens beyond her capacity and once again appealed to Molotov to withdraw the newly inserted clauses in the draft treaty as these visualized an indefinite subjection of Austria instead of a guarantee of her sovereignty and independence. He informed the Conference about the decision of the Austrian Government to do everything to keep herself free from foreign military influence. An imposition by Four Powers to that effect, he held, would be unnecessary and need not delay the signing of the State Treaty. (17)

Molotov, appreciated the clear declaration of the Austrian Government on the military clauses of the

(15) Ibid., pp. 146-51.
(16) Text of the U.S. proposals Annex C and D to the Conference speeches. Ibid., pp. 166-70.
(17) Ibid., pp. 159-60. Also see Department of State Publication 5399, n. 12, p. 206.
Treaty but specified that he had proposed; first, to station a limited number of troops in Austria after the conclusion of the State Treaty; second, to keep these troops there for a limited period of time, viz., till the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany; and third, that these troops would not have occupation functions. Molotov also suggested that a final settlement as to the exact date of complete withdrawal of occupation troops should be decided by Big Four not later than 1955. Molotov did not foresee any justifiable objection to his proposal. (18) Figl, however, considered it as an empty concession, acceptance of which, he thought, would create an "intolerable anomaly" in the land. (19)

Renewed persuasions by the British and the French Foreign Ministers asking Molotov to remove the newly inserted roadblocks, did not yield any result. Molotov, however, suggested including the Austrian question in the agenda of the last meeting which aroused some optimism. When the question was taken up for discussion on the last day of the Conference, Figl made vigorous efforts

(18) Command Paper 9080, n. 8, p. 172.
to achieve a compromise on the conflicting positions.

He emphasized that for Austria, "the assurance of the withdrawal of the occupation forces represents the essential and capital value of the Treaty...". Nevertheless, he made it clear that his government -

would be willing ... if this should prove the means of ensuring the conclusion of the State Treaty at this conference, to accept an extension of the time-limit within which the occupation troops, in accordance with the Treaty, must quit Austrian soil.

He suggested fixing the exact date of the complete withdrawal of the occupation troops which might extend to 30 June 1955 instead of the 90 days envisaged in Article 33. (20)

The suggestion was unacceptable to Molotov. This was evident because a day before the final meetings at Berlin, the Soviet press had posed its recurring question "Who is hindering a settlement of the Austrian Question?" Defending the Soviet proposals as motivated by a desire to safeguard peace in Europe, it chastised the Western

Powers for their reluctance to agree on the steps necessary for "preventing Austria from being used as a partner in any coalition or military bloc, or being used as a foreign military base or as a target for the imperialist schemes of the German revenge-seekers who dream of another Anschluss". (21) The responsibility for the failure to sign the Treaty in the immediate future was thus laid at the doors of the Western Powers who rejected the Soviet proposals.

In the closing hours of the Conference, Figl made a last desperate bid to rescue the situation when he offered to the Soviet Union along with the three Western Powers, continuous post-treaty supervisory rights concerning the execution and interpretation of the State Treaty by striking out the period of eighteen months provided for in Articles 56 and 57 though Article 33 was to remain unchanged. It was hoped that "Russia would find in such a quasi-permanent guardianship the

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(21) D. Kraminov, "Who is Hindering a Settlement of the Austrian Question", Soviet News, 1 March 1954, pp. 1-2, reproduced from Pravda, 17 February 1954. In this connexion see Kainer Kaindl Pirchegger, Geschichte und Kulturleben Oesterreichs (Wien, 1965), p. 449; the author holds that the Western Allies were not very enthusiastic about the neutralization of Austria at Berlin Conference of Foreign Ministers in 1954 due to their NATO interests.
guarantees she demanded against 'the Anschluss menace'." (22) The acceptance of the offer might have proved detrimental to Austrian independence in the long run if the Four Powers decided to interfere in her affairs at any point of time. Nevertheless, it was a bold but well calculated offer to secure the withdrawal of all occupation troops as the guarantee was extended not to any single power individually, but to "the heads of the diplomatic missions of the Four Powers in Vienna", who "by joint action", were to "represent the Allied and Associated Powers vis-a-vis the Austrian Government in all questions concerning the execution and interpretation of the present treaty." (23) In view of the existing divergencies among the Big Powers, it was difficult to imagine the possibility of "joint action" to assault Austrian independence. Experience till then, particularly, in case of Austria, also ruled out any such eventuality. The risk involved was, thus, very insignificant, though it indicated a pay off in terms of the speedy conclusion of the State Treaty with favourable foreign policy consequences to Austria. Molotov,

(22) Figl's Second speech on 18 February 1954 and the revised text of the two Articles, Command Paper 9080, n. 8, Document 18, p. 164.

(23) Ibid.
however, could not be induced to agree to this Austrian offer and expressed his conviction that there still existed "a possibility of settling this question in the near future". He suggested that the four High Commissioners in Vienna with the participation of an Austrian representative should further negotiate on the draft treaty. Dulles, however, made it clear that the negotiations could be resumed at the level suggested by Molotov only after an exact date of withdrawal of the occupation troops was decided. Both Bidault and Eden supported him in his contention. (24)

The failure to conclude an Austrian Treaty, Dulles thought, was mainly due to the lingering Soviet fear that Austria if left alone, would not for long be able to avoid absorption by Germany. This he said, "could not have been avoided by mere diplomatic or negotiating skills" as there was a fundamental difference between the views of the East and the West. In Bidault's opinion, this very fact resulted in "differences in our evaluation of existing facts". (25) Consequently, the

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four Foreign Ministers admitted their failure to resolve the questions of Germany, Austria and European security. The only agreement reached was to convene a conference of the representatives of Big Five and all the other interested governments at Geneva on 26 April 1954 to discuss the problems of restoring peace in Korea and Indo-China. (26)

The routine practice of mutual accusations followed Berlin also. Dulles had earlier compared the Four Power efforts for the Austrian Treaty to those of Sisyphus, symbolizing tragic futility in Greek mythology. Every time the treaty was brought to the brink of completion, it was pushed back. Even the post-Stalin "New look" he said, admitted of no real negotiations and still he pledged to continue the efforts for peaceful settlement of international disputes. Eden admitted that the Conference was "frustrating, disappointing and at times near tragedy" and that the Big Four had reached a certain rigidity in their European affairs because of the Soviet unwillingness "to relax their heavy hand at any one point". He was, however, convinced that "if the gaps at

Berlin were not closed, they have certainly not been widened". (27)

The Soviet Union on her part blamed the Western Powers and the American delegation, in particular, for the failure of the Conference which was considered a natural corollary of the notorious U.S. "Policy of Strength". It was, however, emphasized that "the problems which have not been settled at this Conference are still on the order of the day", and efforts would be continued "with still greater persistence for their solution." (28)

Prime Minister Churchill, however, considered that the failure was due to the basic flaw of restricting a conference by the formalities of agenda, press and communiques which involved absence of "full and frank talks"


because the negotiators had to undergo the ordeal "of
playing on the world stage with every word studied,
weighed and analysed" and liable to be misinterpreted
by "highly-organized machinery for propaganda purposes".
The most obvious disappointment at Berlin, he held, was
"the failure to secure the liberation of Austria by
signing of a treaty", but did "not feel inclined to take
'No' for an answer in this matter". (29)

Chancellor Haas realistically appraised the
situation when he pointed out that the calculations of
power politics of the Big Four were obstructing the signing
of the treaty. The Soviet conditions, he declared, were
unacceptable to Austria but that would not deter her from

(29) UK, House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series
5, vol. 524, session 1953-54, cols. 583-6. Rela-
tive advantages and disadvantages of the develop-
ment of modern communications and of the acceptance
of democracy in the conduct of diplomacy have been
discussed at length by Livingston Merchant, "New
Techniques of Diplomacy", in S.A.J. Johnson, ed.
The Dimensions of Diplomacy (Baltimore, 1964),
pp. 117-35. Nicolson, n. 7, Chapter IV, "Democratic
Diplomacy". Their observations, though refer to
diplomacy in general, are valid with regard to
diplomacy through negotiations as well. In fact
Nicolson perceives the function of diplomacy as
"the management of relations between independent
states by processes of negotiations." H. Nicolson,
The Evolution of Diplomatic Method (London, 1964),
pp. 11-13; pp. 80-84.
further efforts for acceptable terms. Vice Chancellor, Schärf resented the tactic of continued coupling of the Austrian question with that of Germany and brought out the dangerous implications of the Soviet offer of partial troops withdrawal. This would push the Western troops far away from Vienna while the Soviet troops would be in the vicinity of the capital city. He further clarified that the dissolution of the Inter-Allied Komandatura would leave the troops uncontrolled by any joint authority, which would be worse than the full-fledged occupation that Austria was undergoing. Foreign Minister Figl declared Austrian resolve to be more active and courageous to end all exploitation of her political, economic and strategic situation by the gamblers of power politics.

State Secretary Kreisky felt that perhaps the Soviet Union used "Public negotiations" as a sounding board for propaganda, being at the same time in no mood to alter the status-quo by eliminating a situation of conflict. Federal President Koerner came forward to brush aside Austrian disappointment and encouraged the Government to undertake renewed and united efforts to restore its right to be sovereign in the land. (30)

II. Big Power Diversion to Asia and its Implications for Austria

After the Berlin conference, the attention of the world was diverted for the time being from Europe to Asia when the Big Five and the other interested powers started discussing Korea and Indochina at Geneva on 26 April 1954. Negotiations on Korea ran on without a settlement on the issue. Towards the end of July, however, an agreement evolved on the problem of restoring peace in Indochina by ending hostilities in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. The wider ramifications of the conflicting interests were discussed at the Eisenhower-Churchill meeting at Washington and the two powers decided to go along with the trend which foresaw neutralization of Laos and Cambodia and partition of Vietnam bringing it in line with divided Korea. (31) The Geneva Conference was significant for Austria in the sense that the neutral Laos and Cambodia strongly revived the possibility of a similar solution for

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Austria as the Soviet Union had since long been emphasizing it. On the other hand, the Big Four practice of adopting partition to stabilize the status quo in the areas of their strategic interests served a warning to Austria. There was a danger that the search for modus vivendi might inspire the Big Four for a further experiment of "Partition". The only redeeming feature in case of Austria was that this seemed prima facie implausible as a solution as a central government based on free elections had been steadily existing in the state since the time of its liberation.

Inspite of the obviously frustrating experience and the attention demanded by Asian developments, the Big Powers could not completely brush aside the European problems. Correspondence diplomacy was once more resorted to chart the course, past what each side regarded as the other's obstructiveness. In response to a Soviet note of 31 March 1954 concerning collective security in Europe, the Western Powers clarified that it would be best ensured if the Soviet Union could give concrete evidence towards eliminating sources of international tension. The most prominent situation referred to, as a basis for such a reassessment was the restoration of Austria's full sovereignty. (32) The Austrian Government on its part

was trying its best to remove the impression of an Anschluss movement in the state. The Austrian Parliament stressed that none in Austria thought of a reunion with Germany, and Chancellor Haus clearly specified that Austria had neither fascist nor nazi nor pan-German intentions because the experience of the last decade had well taught her the importance of sovereignty and independence for a small state. (33)

III. European Security and the Austrian Question

The Soviet note of 24 July, however, suggested convening a Conference of all European states and the United States with observers from the People's Republic of China to discuss the question of collective security in Europe. This, the note stated, among other things, would also contribute to the solution of the Austrian question. The West was resentful of the Soviet plan of excluding the United States from direct concern with Europe. Their slightly positive inclination to agree to the suggested conference was because of the possibility of concluding State Treaty with Austria. (34)


Meanwhile, the Austrian Government had requested a meeting with the Occupying Powers to discuss further measures of alleviating the burdens of occupation. The Western Powers suggested that the ambassadors of the Four Powers at Vienna should discuss these matters with the representatives of Austria. The Soviet response was that instead of discussing the alleviation of occupation burdens, the ambassadors should negotiate with the Austrian representatives, the still disputed clauses of the draft treaty with a view to complete it. (35)

This created a curious situation. The Soviet Union and the West agreed to convene a committee of the ambassadors and Austrian representatives at Vienna, but disagreed as to the subject of negotiations. While Soviet Union suggested discussion on the treaty itself, the West considered that only alleviation of occupation burdens could be discussed by it. The credibility of the Soviet offer could fairly be accepted in view of the Soviet talk of the possibility of coexistence between the differing political and economic systems, a theme which had pervaded

Soviet writings persistently for a considerable period of time. (36) A test could occur only at the conference table.

The Western note of 10 September 1954 considered it meaningless to discuss collective security system in Europe without the solution of concrete problems like Germany and Austria. It, therefore, offered to accept the Soviet text of the still disputed Articles in the draft treaty for Austria, thus, enabling the restoration of her sovereignty. If progress could be made in this direction, the note conveyed Western willingness for a foreign Ministers' Conference to discuss European security. (37) Simultaneously, the Western policy of regional security system led to the signing of the "Southeast Asian Collective Defense Treaty" at Manila on 8 September 1954. This envisaged a chain of military bases encircling Soviet territory, and the Manila Treaty drew bitter Soviet attacks. (38)


Against the background of this East-West tussle, Chancellor Raab came forward to highlight the peculiar position of Austria where the two halves of the world, he pointed out continued to maintain friendly contacts, while cannons thundered across the other demarcation lines. He, therefore, suggested that Austria provided the best place where the Big Four could prove their desire for relaxation of international tension. Nevertheless, it was categorically stated that withdrawal of all troops from the Austrian territory would be the prerequisite for any such step. Harping on a similar tune, the Austrian note of 12 October 1954 accepted the Soviet call for a conference to discuss the treaty. (39)

The Soviet note of 23 October, however, was more conciliatory than the previous ones. It suggested convening a Foreign Ministers' Conference on Germany and an all-European conference for a system of Collective Security in Europe. Regarding Austria, the note, repeated the Soviet proposal for an Ambassadors' Conference at Vienna together with the representatives of the Austrian

Government for considering the remaining unsettled questions connected with the Austrian treaty. (40)

Quite ironically the same day agreements were being signed at Paris for the termination of occupation regime in the Federal Republic of Germany and its incorporation in NATO, the event, the Soviet Government had been trying to prevent at all costs, as it would rather have had a disarmed Germany since German unification was not possible under a communist aegis. It expressed its resentment in its note of 13 November 1954, in which it renewed the call for an all-European conference to be held on 29 November for considering a system of collective security in Europe. (41)

A Western note drafted in mutual consultations with the NATO governments declined the Soviet call for the Conference stating that "the essential basis for a useful conference... does not in their view, at present exist".


The note proposed first to sign the Austrian State Treaty and asked for a clarification of Soviet position on the basis of German reunification. The other aspects of European security, it stated, could be dealt with later. (42) The Austrian Government, however, intimated to the Soviet Union that it was prepared to participate in the All-European Conference provided the participation of at least the Big Four could be ensured. (43) Since the three Western Powers refused their participation, Austria too did not send her representative to Moscow.

The Soviet call was, however, responded to by seven Communist countries of Eastern Europe and a conference of the eight nations with observers from the People's Republic of China was held at Moscow from 29 November to 2 December 1954. The Declaration issued at the end of the Conference criticized the aggressive nature of the organization visualized under the Paris


Agreements and their disturbing effect on the Peace of Europe. Should the Paris Agreements be ratified, it expressed the resolve of the participating states for "joint undertakings with respect to the organization of armed forces and their command, and also their frontiers and territories, and to ensure defence against possible aggression." (44) These actions and reactions led to the mounting of international tension rather than relaxing it at any point of conflict.

IV. The Renewed Austrian Efforts

The failure of the Berlin Conference in early 1964 and the subsequent events which indicated no possibility of an early resumption of direct contacts of the Big Four had led the Austrian Government to think of other measures to procure the State Treaty. The correspondence that followed the Berlin Conference clearly reflected the negative mood of the Big Four towards a settlement of Austrian question. Initially, it was mainly due to the Soviet insistence on the continued

occupation of Austria till the German Treaty was signed, that the treaty was delayed. At a later stage it was postponed due to the Western hesitation to agree to any conference till the Paris Agreements were ratified and Western position consolidated. It remained the task of Austria's astute diplomacy to somehow bring the occupation powers in direct contact solely to discuss the Austrian question. Since Austrian words found sympathetic and earnest understanding in the West, Federal Chancellor Raab undertook a tour of the Western Capitals, as was done previously in the year 1952 by the then Chancellor Figl. The main effort during these diplomatic contacts was focused on evolving an alternative on the basis of which the State Treaty could be brought to the foreground of international negotiations.

The first step in this direction was Chancellor Raab's visit to London as early as the middle of June 1954. At the outset, he protested against the pushing aside of the issue after Berlin and appealed for trying out new alternatives to reach agreements. Turning to the United States towards the end of November 1954, he put forth the minimum Austrian demand of a clear declaration from the Big Four renouncing any further coupling of the Austrian question with other international problems and an assurance
to evacuate Austrian territory as a first step towards the establishment of world peace. He expressed the Austrian belief in continuing negotiations so long as there was the slightest hope for success. The US Government supported the Austrian view and agreed to work together towards that goal. (45)

On his way back from the United States, Chancellor Haas visited the French Prime Minister, Mendes-France at Paris. Appreciating the French role in sounding the Soviet Union about the possibility of a Four Power Conference in May in which Austria was to figure prominently, he assured the French that the efforts would be continued by Austria through normal diplomatic channels to break the deadlock. He further informed of his intention to pursue the matter with Moscow. (46) The United States Secretary of State, Dulles, however, made it clear that any such conference could be held "once the


(46) *Wiener Zeitung*, 17 December 1954. The French government had taken this step through its ambassador at Moscow with the knowledge of the British and the United States governments. Ibid., 8 December 1954. The French had suggested a compromising solution that the foreign garrisons should remain in Austria up to two years after the signature on a treaty. Shepherd, n. 6, p. 258.
plans for the consolidation of the defences of western Europe are completed..." (47)

Nevertheless, Austrian statesmen continued to emphasize their acceptance of the idea of military neutrality after independence though at no time did they fail to stress an inseparable link between the State Treaty and the withdrawal of occupation forces. Figl in his note to the UN Secretary General for considering Austria's application for membership to that body stated her preparedness to accept her responsibilities for maintaining peace. (48) Chancellor


(48) Wiener Zeitung, 28 September 1954. It is interesting to note that the coalition partners were advocating the cause of military neutrality for Austria since the days when serious negotiations on the State Treaty were started. Ibid., 19 January 1947; 11 November 1951; 16 August 1953. Also see Protokoll des dritten Parteitages der SPÖe Oktober 23-26, 1947 (Wien, 1947), p. 134. Alfred Kasman, Program Österreiche : Die Grundsätze und Ziele der Österreichischen Volkspartei (Wien, 1949), p. 106. Bruno Kreisky, Die Österreichische Neutralität (Wien, 1950); Far more surprising is the revelation made by Gordon Shepherd. He has pointed out that the idea was seriously pursued only after the Soviet Government added impetus to it. Shepherd, no. 6, pp. 270-1.
Raab had also made it clear that there had been no negotiations with any of the occupation powers for providing military bases on Austrian territory as the Soviet Government wrongly suspected. He further stated that withdrawal of all foreign troops from the entire federal territory was the sine-qua-non of Austrian independence and sovereignty. Chancellor Raab reminded the Four Powers that the Austrian Treaty was one of the burning problems of international politics and though Austria was prepared to fulfil her obligations in this connexion, by herself she was helpless till the Four Powers resumed direct contact. The Austrian Parliament also resolved to arouse world conscience against the injustice meted out to Austria for sixteen continuous years though Hitler's occupation followed by the Allied "liberation". State Secretary Kreisky, further clarified the position when he asked for complete political and economic independence of the land, which, he emphasized could not be ensured while foreign troops continued to parade her territory. (49)

Soviet resistance to pull out troops from Austria at this juncture was understandable to some extent.

(49) Wiener Zeitung, 6 and 31 October, 6 and 21 November and 4 December 1954.
This would have called for troops withdrawal from Romania and Hungary as stipulated earlier. The arguments that might have weighed heavily against such a withdrawal in 1946 and 1949 were no longer relevant in 1954. Indeed the stationing of Soviet troops in Austria in the era of atomic and hydrogen bombs was no longer of a high military priority. The encounter now was with a politically and militarily consolidated West. Communist Yugoslavia having proved the ability to survive without Soviet support introduced a new factor into the traditional Soviet control of the International Communist Movement and provided an incentive for rejection of Soviet authority. An Austria under the Western consolidated system would have been an added danger, especially in view of the termination of occupation in the Federal Republic of Germany and plans for its inclusion in NATO. Austria would have been an important connecting link in the expanded NATO flank and, thus, would have posed a serious challenge to the Communist control of Prague and Budapest. The Communist control of Vienna was obviously ruled out after the events of 1949 and 1950. The only alternative was to keep it outside the western military sphere, and hence, the persistent demand for the military neutrality of the land. So long as the Soviets did not get a reliable guarantee to that effect, they were bound to delay a conclusive settlement on Austria.
Although, these calculations did not concern "urgent security reasons involving the satellites", it would, nevertheless, have had an adverse impact on the long term Soviet strategic interests in the "satellite area", in case Austria were to be sucked into the Western military sphere. If it is agreed, as Blair pointed out, that the Soviet Union was holding on to Austria as "a valuable asset in the diplomatic bargaining game", the fact must also be given due recognition that the Soviet Union's reluctance to leave Austria in early 1954 was also influenced by long term strategic, economic and political interests. (50)

Neither was the Soviet fear of "Anschlussgefahr" entirely baseless. The emergence of the "League of Independents", where most of the former Nazis had taken refuge, was in a relatively better position than even the Communist Party of Austria. The Soviet needed to be convinced that there was opposition to the pro-Anschluss group even within the party. Though this did

(50) E. Blair, Peace through Negotiations : The Austrian Experience (Washington, 1966), p. 60. The Polish and Hungarian revolts in the year following Austrian independence, were partially interpreted as the aftermath of Austrian settlement.
not mean an anti-German attitude, most people thought, "the Anschluss solution outdated" and craved for "new solutions of a more European character". (51)

An indefinite continuation of Allied occupation, however, could have created a dangerous situation. As Janko Musulin pointed out, that though "the Russians could not march into the West of Austria or make a change in the position of Vienna without grave risks", there was no limit to "the amount of pressure they could bring to bear on the Russian zone apart from Vienna...". There was, nonetheless, a grain of truth in the contention that Austria had been "carefully prepared as a bargaining point" and could be "evacuated without loss of face." (52) Thus, much depended on the role and character Austria would assume in the future, and this had to be guaranteed before any pressure could be brought on the Big Four to achieve the required results.


(52) Musulin, n. 51, pp. 430-1.
V. The Soviet Peace Offensive

Within the Soviet Union, however, the continuing succession struggle resulted in the replacement of Soviet Premier Malenkov by Nikolai A. Bulganin. The same day, Foreign Minister Molotov launched a severe attack on the Paris Agreements and warned the West about the corresponding steps which the eastern countries would be forced to take in the event of their ratification. His statement on Austria, however, came as a pleasant surprise. He declared "any further delay in the conclusion of a State Treaty with Austria unjustified", despite the dangers for Austria from the plans to remilitarize West Germany which excluded "the possibility of separating the Austrian and the German problems." He, however, suggested a way out by finding a solution "as would preclude the possibility of Germany carrying out a new Anschluss", and in that event, he specified that all troops could be withdrawn from Austria without waiting for a settlement on Germany. He demanded an undertaking from Austria to maintain strict military neutrality. The Four Powers, he said, should also undertake to carry out these provisions. Molotov went further and suggested convening a Four Power conference "to examine the German problem, as well as the question of concluding a State Treaty with Austria". Austrian
participation in discussions on the Austrian question was also presupposed. (53)

Austrian State Secretary, Bruno Kreisky, welcomed Molotov's announcement but categorically declined the existence of "Anschlussgefahr" and stressed the Austrian decision to keep aloof from military alliances and from foreign military establishments on her territory. Figl, the Foreign Minister, was, however, sceptical about the sensational Soviet offer. At the same time, he declared Austria's policy to form a friendly coalition with her neighbours and the entire world, under the system of the UN. He, therefore, appealed to the occupying powers to take further steps on the basis of the Soviet offer but warned against misusing the Conference for propaganda purposes. (54)

The Western Foreign Offices did not make any secret of their suspicions about the Soviet offer and pointed out that it remained to be proved whether the


(54) Wiener Zeitung, 13 and 19 February, 9 and 10 March 1954.
Soviet attitude had seriously undergone a change. The British Government suggested that if an exchange of opinion was needed in this connexion, that could take place among the four ambassadors at Vienna. As regards the inclusion of military neutrality in the treaty, it was emphasized that this would be a limitation on Austrian sovereignty and hence unacceptable. The U.S. Department of State declined to assess the impact of the Soviet offer till it officially knew about it. In Paris, the Soviet move was considered to be a manoeuvre to convene a four Power Conference before the ratification of Paris Agreements and to push Western politics to a blind alley by diverting the discussion to Germany at the earliest possible moment. (55)

Meanwhile, the Soviet Union had proceeded with further steps. On 25 February Molotov called over the Austrian Ambassador at Moscow, N. Bischoff, and officially conveyed the Soviet offer made on 8 February 1955. Bischoff was further informed that "preliminary talks between Austria and the U.S.S.R. could contribute towards the attainment of this aim", and suggested "personal contact

(55) Ibid., 10 and 13 March 1955.
with leaders of the Austrian Government" for this. Further, clarifying Bischoff's queries, Molotov stated, "the Soviet side did not make the settlement of the Austrian question dependent on the settlement of the German question but only pointed to the connexion which naturally existed between the two questions." Particular importance was attached to prior agreement on measures to prevent a new Anschluss. He further suggested convening a Four Power Conference "before ratification of Paris Agreements".

Bischoff-Molotov meeting took place again on 2 March, in which Bischoff conveyed that "the Austrian Government attached great importance" to Soviet proposals and added that "talks with all the occupation powers were necessary for the settlement of the Austrian question." (56)

On 14 March 1955, Bischoff handed over the Austrian Aide-Memoir to Molotov. In this the Federal Government of Austria specified its intention of "not entering into any military alliances or of permitting any military bases upon her territory." It further stated that a final solution of the Austrian question could be reached only through a conference of all the

powers involved, with Austria also taking part. For speedy and successful results, it suggested dealing with the Austrian Treaty "as a separate problem". (57)

Bischoff was again received by Molotov on 24 March and was tendered the Soviet reply to the Austrian note. It declared the Soviet desire to decide the date of withdrawal of the troops and also measures to be taken in the future should the direct threat of an Anschluss arise. Accepting the Austrian proposal for a separate conference on Austria, Molotov extended an invitation to the Federal Chancellor Raab and "any other representative whom the Austrian Government would consider it necessary to send to Moscow to discuss the question of the conclusion of the State Treaty with Austria." (58)

The West did not consider these Soviet-Austrian parleys binding on the Western Powers. The Soviet insistence on convening a conference before the ratification


of Paris Agreements was interpreted as a clear indication of Soviet aim to torpedo Western defence plans rather than sign the Austrian Treaty. Nonetheless, Moscow's sincerity to solve a long overdue problem could be taken seriously in view of its demand for Austrian neutrality which might have been considered as an experimental step for assessing the possibility of creating "gray zones" on the periphery of the East-West divide and further extending it as a means towards peaceful coexistence. (59)

The Austrian Government called its ambassadors accredited to the four occupying powers for considering the situation arising out of the Soviet moves. After consultations with Ambassadors Johann Schwarzenberg, Norbert Bischoff, Alois Vollgruber and Karl Gruber, the Austrian Government evolved a policy to be adopted in dealing with the new initiative for the State Treaty. Accordingly, it was decided that Chancellor Raab, Vice-Chancellor Schaerf, Foreign Minister Figl, State Secretary Kreisky and the Head of the Political Division in the

Foreign Ministry, Josef Schoener should constitute the Austrian delegation to Moscow. Simultaneously, an appeal was issued to the Soviet Union to return to Austria all German assets claimed by her in order to ensure the economic stability and consequently political independence and military neutrality of the State. (60)

VI. Western Reaction and the Austro-Soviet talks at Moscow: 12 to 15 April 1955

The three Western Powers informed the Austrian Government about the possibility of an Austrian settlement on the basis of the Soviet proposals. They suggested further discussion on these among the Ambassadors of the Four Powers at Vienna and the Austrian representatives provided the Austro-Soviet talks brought a "clear promise of the restoration of freedom and independence to Austria." It was also emphasized that the State Treaty was "of concern to the governments of all four responsible powers, as well as to the Austrian Government." (61) The Austrian Government, on its part, announced its intention to inform


(61) Text of the Tripartite Declaration on Austria dated 5 April 1955, DOE, 18 April 1955, pp. 547-8.
all the occupying Powers about the Austro-Soviet talks and bring them together in a conference. (62) The Western doubts, however, needed further clarification in view of the fact that the negotiations on the draft treaty had very often been brought to the concluding point and left there under some pretext. Hence the energetic Soviet initiative received hesitant Western response.

Chancellor Raab, therefore, tried to clear Western doubts before he left for Moscow. He characterized his visit as 'a flight for peace' and tried to convince them that the new Soviet attitude was only a realistic appraisal of the distinct position of Austria in the divided world. On her part Austria, he assured would strive to play her traditional role of a uniting bond for a Four Power understanding. Austro-Soviet talks, he clarified, would only be in the nature of an exploratory survey with no aim for separate negotiations with Moscow. (63)

The Austro-Soviet negotiations held from 12 to 15 April 1955 were conducted in a friendly atmosphere and

(63) Ibid., 10 and 13 April 1955.
led to further clarification of significant issues concerning the State Treaty. The participation of I.A. Mikoyan, the Soviet Minister for Commerce and Trade and an expert on Austrian economy, hinted at the significance of the economic aspect of the treaty. The Austrian delegation at the outset reaffirmed its government's earnest intentions to adopt military neutrality after independence. The Soviet delegation on its part agreed to withdraw the occupation troops "after the State Treaty with Austria comes into force, and not later than 31 December 1955." It also stood by its offer made at Berlin to accept the equivalent of 160 million dollars entirely in Austrian goods. The more significant economic concessions were the return of the DDSO assets with appropriate compensation and of the oil assets "in exchange for deliveries of crude oil in amount agreed on by the sides". The Soviets were prepared to waive the claims for the "Stalin Gift" in return for Austria renouncing the civil occupation costs. The Soviet Union also agreed to repatriate all Austrian prisoners of war and detained Austrian civilians before the occupation troops withdrew from the Austrian territory. Molotov, however, made it clear time and again "not all depends on us" but hoped for a speedy conclusion of the State Treaty. (64)

The Austro-Soviet negotiations were carried on in such an informal and friendly atmosphere that these were characterized as "Diplomatie in Gemuetlichen" which could roughly be translated as diplomacy in a homely and comfortable atmosphere with perfect understanding for each other's point of view. (65) Perhaps the Soviet behaviour pattern exhibited at the talks, besides other things, was also intended to be a lesson to other neutral nations and to Germany in particular, that much could be obtained through direct negotiations with the Soviet Union.

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(65) Wiener Zeitung, 13 April 1955. For a vivid description of the informal Austro-Soviet talks at Moscow, Walter Kinderman, Flug nach Moskau (Vienna, 1955). The use of informal conversations, receptions, diplomatic cocktails, sports and cultural programmes for solving serious issues of dispute had been a fruitful practice in diplomatic negotiations since earlier times. De Callieres talks of "craft at the card-table" and Thompson and Padover refer to the dances and hunting parties during the Congress of Vienna. De Callieres, On the Manner of Negotiating with Princes (Paris, 1716; Indiana, 1963), p. 106. Thompson and Padover, Secret Diplomacy (New York, 1963), chapter XIII. Effectiveness of these tools for the routine functions of regular diplomatic missions has been emphasized by Michael H. Cordozo, "Diplomatic Immunities, Protocol and the Public", Journal of International Affairs (Columbia), vol. XVII, pp. 61-69. Also revealing is the concept of "hotel diplomacy" as it came to be known during the League era. The more recent concept of "cultural diplomacy" is also based on the proposition that informal talks are more conducive to solutions rather than formalities of a green table.
Throughout the negotiations, however, the Austrian delegation never failed to emphasize that their talks aimed at preparing the ground for four power consultations with the Austrian Government. Foreign Minister Figl was at pains to clarify that Austria would negotiate a final settlement with all the Four Powers. During his stay at Moscow, he had been in continuous contact with the Western Ambassadors there, and kept them informed about the Austro-Soviet talks. The Western Powers, though sceptical because of the time chosen by the Soviet Union for the initiative to finally liberate Austria, welcomed the results of the Moscow talks and hoped that the task if further pursued with sincerity would lead to the conclusion of the State Treaty in the near future. (66)

VII. The Ambassadors' Conference at Vienna: 2 to 12 May 1955

On his return home, the Austrian Foreign Minister, Figl, received the three Western Ambassadors in Vienna for consultations regarding further steps to be taken to conclude the treaty. He expressed the intention of his Government to

issue invitations to the occupying powers for a conference to be held at Vienna. The initiative, however, was again snatched by the Soviet Union, when she issued a call "to convene in the immediate future a conference of foreign ministers of the United States of America, France, Britain and the Soviet Union together with representatives of Austria" for considering a treaty for "the restoration of an independent democratic Austria...." The place suggested was Vienna and a prompt reply was requested. (67)

Visualizing the future international position of Austria, Moscow, further pointed out the example of Switzerland, who "enjoyed the blessings of peaceful development for an entire historical period, preserving the status of a sovereign state not belonging to any military bloc.... Austria too, is now to assume this position" in the interest of "peace and security in Europe". (68)


(68) Ibid., 22 April 1955, p. 4; and Ibid., 23 April 1955, pp. 1-2. It is interesting to note that in every Soviet statement concerning the demand of military neutrality of Austria, an indication was made without fail towards the possibility of a German settlement on a similar basis. Soviet recommendation of the Swiss model for Austria was quite surprising in view of persistent Soviet attacks on Switzerland for its "reactionary" and "unneutral" policies. Völkerrecht (Zurich), 19 April 1955, Neues Zürcher Zeitung, 24 April 1955.
The Western Powers in their statement issued on 19 April 1955 again suggested preparatory talks by the four ambassadors at Vienna with the Austrian representatives. The following Western note stated that as soon as the Ambassadorial Conference completed the ground work at Vienna, it should set an earliest practicable date for a foreign ministers' conference to sign the Treaty. The Soviet response was immediate and affirmative, though it was clarified that the Ambassadors' Conference would only delay the matter. (69)

This was followed by intense diplomatic activity at Vienna where the three Western Ambassadors tried to evolve a consolidated Western policy particularly on the issues of a four-power guarantee of political independence, territorial integrity and military neutrality of Austria and of formulating the new economic concessions made by the Soviet Union. (70) Chancellor Raab, however, drew

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(70) Wiener Zeitung, 22 and 25 April 1955. The economic agreements arrived at Moscow had five aspects.
1. USA concerns to be returned to Austria against the payment of 160 million dollars in six equal instalments over a period of six years in the form conté....
attention to the fact that the final conclusion of the treaty called for special caution and exactitude as it would be a decisive step for the destiny of seven million people in the heart of Europe. (71)

The Ambassadors' Conference began on 2 May 1956 as scheduled and despite long closed door meetings without official communiques, it was hoped that the Foreign Ministers would assemble soon to sign the Treaty. A two line statement issued on 6 May 1955 expressed the hope of an early completion of the work. (72)

of Austrian goods; 2. DUSG assets to be returned to Austria against the payment of 2 million dollars; 3. ceding complete control of Austrian oil fields at Zisterdorf and the Bohr establishments after the delivery of 1 million ton oil to the Soviet Union; 4. a pledge to negotiate an Austro-Soviet trade agreement for regulating future trade between the two states; 5. Soviet renunciation of the dried peas debts in return for Austrian withdrawal of her counter claims for civil occupation costs. Bundesministerium fuer Unterricht, Oesterreich Freies Land, Freies Volk, Dokumente (Vienna, 1957), pp. 24-27.


Initial progress of the conference was, however, followed by few difficulties as the Ambassadors took up the still disputed Articles of the Treaty. The West insisted on dropping Article 16 providing for repatriation of the displaced persons and the refugees and Article 17 limiting the Austrian army to which the Soviets were not agreed. The Soviet proposal to set 31 December 1955 as the date of final departure for Allied troops also encountered Western opposition. Ultimately the Soviet Union conceded to all the points. Article 42 on the restitution of United Nations property in Austria posed the next hurdle when the United States and British representatives insisted upon the restitution of certain American, British and Dutch oil properties in Austria, which their nationals were forced to sell to the Nazi government. France also asked for similar restitution of the property of French nationals. These claims, however, were settled outside the regular sessions of the conference. The Western economic demands were quite surprising in view of their persistent criticism of Soviet economic claims. (73)

The main issues of confrontation were the formulation of Article 35 dealing with the economic clauses of the treaty, and the question of Four Power guarantee of Austrian neutrality. The West proposed to include in the treaty the modifications of Article 35 agreed upon in the Austro-Soviet bilateral talks at Moscow while the Soviet Union considered it a matter between Austria and the Soviet Union with which the West was not concerned and hence disagreed to its inclusion in the treaty. The situation was further aggravated with Dulles and McMillan announcing their decision to delay their flight to Vienna till final agreement on Article 35 was reached. Consultations of the Western Ambassadors were simultaneously going on outside the conference hall which also hinted at a postponement in signing the State Treaty. (74)

Concerning the Four Power guarantee of Austrian neutrality insisted on by the Soviet Union, it was the Soviet Union again who conceded to the Austro-Western

view of reestablishing Austria as a sovereign entity, who in turn should declare her neutral status later. With this roadblock removed the communique announced full unanimity of all Articles in the draft treaty. It further stated that towards the end of the week the four Foreign Ministers would meet their Austrian counterpart at Vienna to examine and sign the State Treaty. (75)

VIII. Council of Foreign Ministers at Vienna: The Signing of the State Treaty 15 May 1955

The arrival of the four Foreign Ministers at Vienna was followed by their close consultations with the Austrian Foreign Minister. The meeting brought spectacular concession for Austria as the Foreign Ministers agreed within incredibly short time to Figl's proposal to strike

off the clause in the preamble reminding Austria of her responsibility for participating in the war on the side of Nazi Germany. Figl's appeal was based on moral grounds and surprisingly enough, was supported at the outset by Molotov, who had been insisting on the inclusion of the clause since the Moscow Declaration of 1943. It was agreed that the question of Austrian neutrality would be handled through normal diplomatic channels, but the signing of the State Treaty was not to be delayed for this reason. Accordingly, the Austrian State Treaty restoring the country its sovereignty and complete independence was signed in the marble chamber of the Belvedere Palace in Vienna on 16 May 1955. (76)

Despite continuous Soviet criticism against the ratification of Paris Agreements and the alleged aggressive designs of the West, the Soviets took unexpectedly rapid steps to sign the State Treaty on the basis of complete withdrawal from the strategically significant outpost in central Europe. A day before the State Treaty was signed

(76) Department of State Publication 6437, The Austrian State Treaty (Washington, 1957). The Treaty was ratified by Austria on 14 July, by the United States on 10 July, by the Soviet Union on 15 July, and by France on 27 July, the day on which it came into force. The Allied Commission for Austria was also dissolved with it. Bundesministerium fuer Unterricht, Osterreich Frei : Dokumente (Wien, 1956), pp. 52-53.
the Soviet Union had succeeded in organizing a Communist counterpart of NATO through the "Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance" which substantially strengthened her power position in the area. This also maintained the legal right of the Soviet troops to stay in Hungary and Roumania which would have otherwise lapsed with the signing of the State Treaty with Austria. It can, however, be ascertained that the settlement over Austria was the first overt expression of the non-military role of the military alliances in Europe - NATO and the Warsaw Pact - in the shape of a beginning towards detente. (77)

The militarily neutral Austria could no longer be added to the NATO chain which otherwise would have established an unbroken landlink between the southern and the

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northern states of NATO. Perhaps it was also a calculated
Soviet step to win influence in the third world, on a
clear premise that accommodation with the Soviets was
possible on the basis of neutrality. The conclusion of the
Warsaw Pact, however, left no pretense of the Austrian model
ever being repeated inside the Soviet "satellite" system.
Although it was an experimental model for exploring the possi-
bility of further extending "grayzones" in the east-west
confrontation, the main goal of securing a neutral Germany
was completely shattered. The inclusion of the Federal
Republic of Germany in NATO and of the German Democratic
Republic in Warsaw Pact more or less permanently divided the
country under two different systems. (78)

Thus "Neutral Austria" came into being as "an
artificial laboratory product made to a formula inspired
by the East and completed with the grudging cooperation of
the West." (79) Austria's cultural, religious and political

(78) Soviet News, 22 April 1965, p. 4. Implications of the
east-west detente for central Europe are discussed by
Alfons Dalma, "The Risks of a Detente Policy to
For a theoretical analysis of the phenomenon of
political coalitions see W.H. Ricker, The Theory of

(79) Shepherd, n. 6, p. 266.
traditions throughout history contradicted the principles of neutrality even in the limited military sphere. This divergence was clearly reflected in the formal declaration of the law of neutrality and the policy statement explaining its implications. In a "free" and "voluntary" declaration of Austria's "Perpetual neutrality" the Austrian Government undertook to defend it with all possible means at her disposal and pledged "not to enter into any military alliances nor allow the establishment of any foreign military base on her territory." (80) The following policy statement by Chancellor Raab clarified "Military neutrality brought with it no obligations for ideological neutrality" and no restrictions "in the economic and cultural spheres." "The neutrality", he further stated, "binds the State, but not the citizens." He reaffirmed Austria's desire to be

(80) "Bundesverfassungsgesetz vom 26 Oktober 1955 ueber die Neutralitaet Oesterreich", Bundesgesetzblatt fuer die Republik Oesterreich, Stueck 57, 4 November 1955. It is interesting to note that despite persistent expression of Western keenness for Austrian independence and its projections of the Soviet image as the chief obstructionist, it was the United States who withdrew her troops last from Salzburg.

admitted to the United Nations, where "the principles of her neutrality would be of particular importance". (81) Accordingly, Austria was admitted to the United Nations on 15 December 1955, though membership of the United Nations was considered a violation of neutrality by Switzerland which was supposed to be the model for Austria.

The Austrian State Treaty is significant in yet another way as a landmark in Big Power understanding and their disengagement from a potentially explosive spot in international conflict situations, thus setting a stage for the first peace time summit at Geneva in July 1955 after the Second World War. Boulding has pointed out that the "essence of the drama of conflict: is ... its resolution" and that essence was extracted from the Austrian conflict situation. (82) From this point of view the State Treaty was certainly a beginning of the end of the cold war in Europe.

(81) Bundesministerium fuer Unterricht, Dokumente, n. 76, pp. 110-20.

Nonetheless it is presumptuous to claim that permanently neutral Austria can play the role of a neutral balancer between the East and the West. In the nuclear setting international relations can no longer be effectively spelt by the formula of balance of power and the final decisions to embark on a major war or to conclude a peace settlement altering the basic international system depend almost entirely on the Big Powers themselves. And still, the signing of the State Treaty clearly deserves the reward of being called "resolution" because of its history of persistent and multiple moves.

The "nuclearization" of international politics and the resulting change in the Big Power attitudes in seeking some sort of international conciliation led to their disengagement from this area. The emerging pattern of international settlements revealed in the neutralization of Laos and Cambodia suggested guidelines for an Austrian solution as well. Partition of Vietnam, however, served a warning to Austrian statesmen who had been included as equal negotiating partners only since the Berlin Conference of 1954. A change in Soviet "Weltanschauung" was decisively felt at this time. This was partly due to the Soviet military calculations in the area and partly due to the change in Soviet leadership after the death of Stalin which
was exerting its growing influence on the decision making centre within the Soviet Union. As to the Western Allies they were forced into cooperation so that their image of peace makers might not be tarnished.

The role of the Austrian negotiators to exploit these contextual factors was equally significant at this point of time. They promptly responded to the Soviet call for bilateral talks, at the same time assured the Western Allies that the State Treaty would be signed only with the unanimous consent of all the parties concerned. This was a skilful display of Austrian diplomacy in so far as it maintained balanced relations with all the Occupying Powers at a critical moment; indeed a reminder of the age old traditions of the Metternich era. Had the conflict remained unresolved at this time there was every possibility of its lingering on till the present day because the continuation of the status quo under the circumstances was least harmful to any of the occupying Powers. The success in the Austrian case cannot be measured quantitatively but if we dwell upon the stringency of the limits imposed on the Austrian Government by the crucial political and military choices of the Big Powers, it becomes obvious that the Austrian representatives rendered a great service towards the success of the negotiations by advancing proposals appropriate to the international political
terrain rather than yielding to the temptation of gaining short term political advantage.