

Foundations of Swiss foreign policy

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FOUNDATIONS OF SWISS FOREIGN POLICY

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(Continuation)

Main problems of Swiss foreign policy

6) The pursuit of the **policy of neutrality** can give rise to particular difficulties in individual cases and thus lead to delicate decisions.

The pursuit of the policy of neutrality lies solely within the discretion of the neutral State. Permanent neutrality — as seen from the aspect of international law — simply implies doing everything in order to avoid being drawn into a conflict and abstaining from everything which could lead to such a result. It is not for foreign powers to decide how this principle is to be carried out in detail.

On the one hand, the duties of ordinary neutrality and those of permanent neutrality are to be interpreted restrictively, as restrictions in the freedom of the State. Neutrality should not be allowed to become too unbearable a burden. As international law is based on a society of sovereign States, conjecture is against restrictions of the independence of the State. On the other hand, the permanently neutral State will be prepared to do a multiple of the duties required of permanent or ordinary neutrality. The State does this, however, not with the intention of fulfilling its duties towards neutrality but of political considerations in order to strengthen the confidence of the other powers in the maintenance of neutrality. It is in the interest of the neutral State to avoid greater than necessary restrictions of its freedom of action and not to construe any new legal duties as well as to undertake more than the legally stipulated minimum in order to strengthen confidence in neutrality as much as possible.⁸⁾ This apparent contradiction reveals the difficulties of the policy of neutrality; in a concrete case emphasis will have to be placed on the one or other principle.

The permanently neutral State should stress the uniqueness of its neutrality. A special case is more likely to be respected than an abstract principle for it does not involve creating a precedent. This is especially true for the centuries-old Swiss neutrality.

Neutrality should not become a tactical expedient in the policy of a great power. Neutral policy has to avoid such a misuse (e.g. appeals for peace or disarmament with a one-sided effect).

The policy of neutrality is inseparably connected with a corresponding military policy which avoids the creation of a power vacuum and creates the "force de dissuasion", instrumental for the attainment of this aim. Neutrality can only be an armed neutrality.

7) Accession to an offensive or defensive alliance with reciprocity would be in contradiction to permanent neutrality and equivalent to abandoning it. The problematic issue of a policy of alliances for a small country has already been closely examined.

8) At the moment, the main problem is Switzerland's attitude towards **European integration**.

We have to begin by considering the fact that Switzerland is part of Europe and will ultimately share Europe's destiny. This does not only apply in a geographical sense, but also for spiritual and ethical values. European conflicts touch our country directly; a unified and therefore strong Europe protects us indirectly.⁹⁾ In view of this fundamental fact economic discrimination is of secondary importance.

The problematic nature of neutrality is in this context most obvious and most acute. Our future attitude could be determined more easily if the accession to or the foundation of a European Confederate State were at stake, a State with independent federal organs, not touched by the interests of power policy of its individual members. It is not merely by accident that the small member States of European Communities defend with particular zeal the principle of supranational authorities and it is odd to note that there is so little understanding for this fact in Switzerland. In spite of the successes achieved so far, European integration is only at the beginning of its development. In the Communities of the Six, political emphasis rests as before with the individual States. Their sovereignty in the legal and political sense remains, although certain competences have been transferred to the Communities. Foreign policy and national defence, the basic domains of each State, have not been unified. This gives superiority to large States with their own special interests. The future is encumbered with mortgages of foreign policy (the unsolved German question) and of domestic policy (insufficient stability and strong communist parties in certain States). In both spheres, however, a durable integration would need a certain homogeneity as the history of State associations has always shown. This situation bears in it a special risk for the small country. It cannot influence developments decisively.¹⁰⁾ It becomes once more obvious that there is nothing equivalent in return for abandoning neutrality.

The final consequence is, however, to take up a positive attitude towards the idea of European integration and towards the Communities which we cannot join for reasons of neutrality. We are in no way entitled to petty criticism and to dispense advice freely when we cannot take the risk. We shall extend our relations with the Communities of the Six up to the limits set by neutrality and co-operate in all the European organizations which make this possible without giving up or imperilling neutrality.

With accession to the Council of Europe and the proposed negotiations for association with EEC, a further step in this direction has been taken. These decisions, however, also imply a conscious acceptance of the consequences and of the future development. Association in particular will probably only mark the beginning of a dynamic process. It will be restricted to the economic field, but it will probably entail dropping a number of protectionist measures in favour of certain branches of industry. The structure of Swiss economy would change and lead to greater dependency on conditions abroad. This can also have political repercussions. Institutional arrangements will be particularly difficult as they touch the delicate relationship between the right of participation and the acceptance of legal duties. It will be necessary to give a clear explanation of difference between membership and association at home and abroad. Our experiences with differential neutrality at the time of the League of Nations throw light on the difficulties to be surmounted.

9) Accession of Switzerland to the **United Nations** would seem natural as this organization embodies more or less the universal society of States. World policy and above all international co-operation are concentrated to a

large extent in that organization. Its aims and principles are in general the same as ours and on their realization also depends the security of Switzerland. Our country could perhaps exercise a moderating and mediatory influence on antagonisms. Switzerland's accession would reinforce the Western camp. Finally, it would enjoy the protection of the organization in case of aggression.

Considering the development of UNO since 1945, it looks as if accession without abandoning neutrality would seem possible. However, an explicit recognition of neutrality would be necessary so as to have a clear situation.

But in spite of such a recognition, it would hardly be possible to follow a policy of neutrality in the long run. If the United Nations took sides in a conflict, this would transform the organization into an alliance. In spite of its juridical personality, the United Nations would not confront the nations as a superior and independent power. Within its framework and by means of UN resolutions Member States are placed on the same level.

In addition, Switzerland would have to define her attitude with regard to numerous problems which have nothing to do with her. Abstention of voting would at length be neither practically possible nor compatible with the dignity and the prestige of a Member State, and would be contradictory to the purpose of the world organization which is entitled to an expression opinion. Besides, Tallyrands's saying: "La non-intervention est aussi une intervention" is also applicable in many cases here. Taking a stand in controversial issues would certainly incur the antagonism of certain States. We would expose ourselves to the pressure of the great powers which would try by all means to gather the necessary votes. As a small State we are too weak to have a decisive influence on world politics to further our own ends. The difference between neutral and neutralist policies would become blurred. Our own security would not be increased by accession either. As experience has shown, because of structural defects the system of collective security is hardly likely to function reliably. UN practice when maintaining peace and quelling aggression can hardly be said to be based on principles. Legally, the prohibition of violence according to Art. 2, § 4 of the UN Charter, is universally applicable, and not only between members. Moreover, Art. 35, § 2, even gives a non-member-State the possibility of appealing to the General Assembly or to the Security Council. But be this as it may, in case of aggression against Switzerland the then prevailing political situation will be decisive, whether we are a member of the Organization or not.

Therefore it seems preferable not to change our present relationship with UN. There is no necessity to join. Our problems are not such that their solution ought to be sought within the framework of the Organization. The position which our country owes to its unequivocal policy of neutrality is respected and acknowledged. Accession to the United Nations as a token of solidarity would hardly carry great weight in its political implications; it would only be of symbolic value. As a non-member-State we are in just as good a position to co-operate with numerous international organizations. In certain cases it is even of advantage not to belong to UNO in order to render "good offices" to the organization. We are as well informed on political developments by our observer as by a delegate entitled to vote. This applies also to the assertion of our points of view with the Secretariat and the delegations. An extension of the Swiss Observer's Office, which is really a diplomatic mission, seems, however, to be indicated.

10) The question of **closer co-operation with other neutral or neutralist States** crops up more frequently with regard to universal international organizations and within the framework of European integration. The opinion is often voiced that the position of smaller States could be strengthened by such closer co-operation and that an influence could thus be exercised which would be beneficial to the promotion of peace.

When considering this point of view, we must be cautious. There is too little common interest in such co-operation beyond the minimum, e.g. to prevent being involved in armed conflicts, and there is not enough power, even if several States combine, to show effective results.¹¹⁾ Besides, there is the risk of blurring the difference between permanent neutrality and neutralism. We are not interested in this. Neutralism does not mean neutrality in every conflict but only in certain conflicts and is not identical with a policy of abstention in the sphere of foreign policy nor with an attitude of renouncing territorial expansion.¹²⁾

The foreign policies of the neutral States — in the proper sense of the word — also differ because their interests are different. This shows up in their attitudes towards the United Nations and in their activity within it and within other international organizations, clashing with the interests of certain powers and thus annoying the latter, can have repercussions on other neutral States. Many States find it difficult to make distinctions between the various types of neutrality. It is, therefore, obvious that there are limits to co-operation.

(To be concluded.)

- 8) See the classical statement of the Federal Council in its message to the Federal Assembly of 4th August 1919, on accession to the League of Nations (author: Max Huber), p. 36/37. On 19th September 1939, National Councillor Th. Gut wrote the following considerations which still hold good: "As a first practical consideration the need of the hour suggests treating the concept of neutrality carefully, i.e. taking care not to overstretch it by applying it to fields which have nothing to do with it according to international law. Switzerland has a prominent share in the shaping of the law of neutrality. We therefore have to practise reserve when treating issues of domestic policy, manifestations or symptoms which have nothing to do with international law, in connection with and on using the concept of neutrality." Quote from the report of the Federal Council to the Federal Assembly of 27th December 1946, on Swiss press policy in connexion with war events from 1939 to 1945, page 117.
- 9) The same applies to this situation what the Federal Council has said in his report on the first atom initiative of 7th July 1961, with regard to the indirect protection given by armaments of other powers. Page 13.
- 10) "L'interdiction du marché suisse des capitaux aux Six a provoqué plus de sourires que d'inquiétudes," R. ARON, op. cit., p. 452.
- 11) H. J. MORGENTHAU: *Neutrality and Neutralism*, in *Dilemmas of Politics*, Chicago 1958, p. 198; R. ARON, op. cit., p. 525/26.
- 12) A. WOLFERS characterizes it pertinently as "neutralistische Unneutralität": *Verbündete, Neutrale und Neutralisten in der Sicht der amerikanischen Wehrpolitik*, Schweizer Monatshefte 42 (No. 8, November 1962), p. 791.

*("Schweizer Monatshefte" April 1963.
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THE SWISS PAPER INDUSTRY

The production of the Swiss paper industry reached a total of 555,000 metric tons in 1963, 395,000 of which was paper and 160,000 tons cardboard. Export of paper and cardboard stood at much the same level as in 1962 (about 9,000 tons), but import increased from 55,000 to 80,000 tons.

Prices have remained stationary for the past seven years.

The use of paper per head of the population amounted to 109 kg. With this figure, Switzerland has become the fourth largest user of paper in the world, behind U.S.A. (195 kg.), Canada (132 kg.) and Sweden (131 kg.).

[A.T.S.]