
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

American policy towards Austria under President Dwight Eisenhower (1953-1960): A study in diplomatic orientations and policies

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| ABSTRACT

The post-World War II evolution of US Austrian policy was analyzed in this study. Although it focused specifically on the Eisenhower Administration (1953-1960) as a case study of the types of conflict management in a Cold War context. The study also demonstrates that the US treated Austria as an independent and neutral state that was a positive stabilizer for Central Europe while it was not fully integrated into the Western military alliance, and the US played an important part in preserving Austria's political independence while consolidating its neutrality, and economically and diplomatically to help establish internal stability within Austria. The result of the research indicates that, in the eyes of the US, Austria was a successful laboratory for Cold War conflict management through non-zero-sum methods, encompassing political reality with diplomatic flexibility. The research also notes that international politics are not based on rigid models or "rigid" concepts but rather on thoughtful assessments of different contexts and different state strategies.

| KEYWORDS

US policy – Austria – Dwight Eisenhower – Neutrality – Treaty

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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Introduction

Austria has been an exceptional case among European Nations, in its post-World War II experience. Austria was occupied by U.S., U.K., France, and USSR (The Four-Power Occupation of Austria). This put Austria directly in between the American and Soviet spheres of influence during the growing "East vs. West" rivalry. However, Austria's political development ultimately went in a different direction than Germany's—Austria gained independence, unification (with the Allied-occupied German zone of Austria), and declared permanent neutrality (in 1955).

This set of outcomes raised fundamental questions regarding the nature of the American viewpoint regarding such a political settlement during the broader Cold War context, especially within the framework of the Eisenhower presidency. The Eisenhower administration coincided with the conclusion of the occupation (by the four powers) and the reconfiguration of the Austrian (and German) political system. The U.S. now faced a strategic policy question regarding how to balance the acceptance of Austria's neutrality as a Central European country and the assurance that the acceptance of Austria's neutrality would not lead to increased Soviet influence.

It follows that Washington adopted a policy which was both careful and adaptable. Adopting such policy for a stabilization strategy in view of using Austrian neutrality as a way of preventing direct confrontation and in line with its wider foreign policy objective of restricting Soviet expansionism and power balance on a wider scale within Europe.

Thus, analyzing U.S. diplomacy with regard to Austrian Neutrality between 1955 and 1960 provides a useful insight into the U.S. foreign policymaking process, a vital period in the history of the Cold War, as well as the degree of compromise the U.S. was prepared to accept.

Research Problem:

Following WWII, the U.S. and the Soviet Union clashed over Austria. After Dwight D. Eisenhower became president in 1953, U.S.-Austria relations escalated again, culminating in Austria's 1955 declaration of neutrality.

Central to this research project's focus is understanding how U.S. policy addressed Austrian neutrality—that is, whether U.S. officials viewed it as providing a strategic opportunity for promoting stability and countering Soviet expansion or as an opportunity lost for integrating an additional state into the Western alliance system.

The assumptions that underlie this research are that U.S. policy viewed Austrian neutrality as a territorial compromise resulting from the existing balance of global power rather than as a preferred ideological policy stance.

Research Questions:

This study seeks to address the following questions:

1. What were the underlying factors shaping the U.S. position on the Austrian issue between 1953 and 1955?
2. How did American diplomacy toward Austrian neutrality evolve after 1955?
3. What role did the United States play in ensuring Austria's political and economic independence up to 1960?
4. To what extent did the Austrian case represent a distinctive experience within Eisenhower's European policy?

Research Objectives:

This study aims to:

1. Analyze the U.S. position on Austrian neutrality within the broader context of the Cold War.
2. Clarify how Washington utilized the Austrian issue as a political instrument in its dealings with the Soviet Union.
3. Assess the impact of this position on the future of U.S.–Austrian relations up to 1960.

Scope of the Study:

Temporal scope: From 1953 (the beginning of Eisenhower's presidency) to 1960 (the end of his second term).

Geographical scope: Austria and the United States, with occasional reference to Soviet and broader European positions.

Thematic scope: Focused on diplomatic and political relations, without extensive treatment of military or economic aspects except where necessary.

Methodology:

1. A historical-analytical approach to trace the chronological development of events.
2. A descriptive-analytical approach to examine official U.S. positions.
3. A comparative approach, where necessary, to contrast U.S. policy with that of other states (such as the Soviet Union or Britain).

Previous Studies:

1) A study by Sharif Mohammed Ahmed Abdel-Gawad (2018), titled "The U.S.–Soviet Conflict over Austria, 1945–1955." This study examines American and Soviet policies toward the Austrian issue during the decade following World War II. It traces the major political positions adopted by both sides regarding Austria, culminating in the signing of the Austrian State Treaty.

2) A study by Najlaa Adnan Hussein (2021), titled "Dwight D. Eisenhower and His Role in U.S. Policy." This study outlines the political rise of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, his election to the presidency, and his role in shaping U.S. domestic and foreign policy during his tenure. It addresses his stance on several international issues, including the Korean War, the Vietnam question, the Tripartite Aggression against Egypt, and relations with the Soviet Union.

The Geopolitical Importance of Austria in U.S. Strategy toward Europe after World War II

Austria's Strategic Location

Due to Austria's geographical location at the Eastern European border, it has been strategically important. Being a landlocked country with eight neighboring European countries means that Austria's borders carry great political significance in shaping its regional relationships, and thus might serve to provide a stabilizing force (or to create the potential for conflict).

Austria has a long land border with Germany (approximately 784 kms) and the shortest land border with Liechtenstein (approximately 35 kms). This, too, suggests that Austria lies at a key point of intersection between Western Europe, Central Europe and Eastern Europe, and this has made Austria an important political, economic and military transit corridor between European trade blocs throughout history.

During the Cold War, the strategic location increased Austria's significance in the calculations of the Superpowers, and Austria became a significant/critical contact zone between the Eastern and Western military alliances. This created a complicated security and political situation for Austria and was a major factor in its decision to adopt neutrality as a means of alleviating tension and promoting regional stability without directly participating in a network of military alliances.¹

Austria as a Contact Zone between the Eastern and Western Blocs

Austrian geography, politics, and partnership with both East and West were significant contributors to making Austria a direct link between East and West blocs during early Cold War. Austria has both strategic interests and considerations of international balance so there is a constant indirect conflict over its future by the two superpowers.

The early Soviet policy toward Austria represented the USSR's willingness to absorb Austria (or at least the part of Austria it occupies) into the USSR's sphere of influence in Central Europe. However, due to events inside Austria and the firm opposition from the collective West, this aspiration was unsuccessful. Therefore, there has been a continued state of bargaining at a standstill over the State Treaty.

Between 1953 and 1955, changes in the Soviet leadership broke the deadlock on issues related to Austria. The death of Stalin resulted in limited policy changes under Malenkov, leading to some improvement in the international environment, but not any substantial change. Khrushchev's rise and the adoption of the policy of peaceful coexistence created a major turning point in the relationship between the Soviet Union and Austria.

According to this new context, leaving Austria has achieved what is a secure definitive strategic goal and now has sufficient justification to be viewed as beneficial from both a military and political perspective because of the stability in Europe on most major issues and both the relative balance of political and military power between the superpowers at that time giving them both the means to reach an agreement where neither party would have violated the basic tenets of Soviet policy. Therefore, one could suggest that the possible end of the occupation was developed through complex interactions of the significant internal changes taking place within Soviet leadership at the same time as the significant external changes affecting the environment of the Soviet Union that occurred throughout the period of the Cold War.²

The Austrian Question in U.S. Policy before 1953: Roots and Accumulations

Austria was defeated after World War II when it was part of the Third Reich's state. In April 1945, the Allies occupied the area and split it into four occupation zones like Germany; these four zones were managed by each of the following nations: The United States, The Soviet Union, France and Great Britain. Consequently, the topic of Austrian sovereignty and its international recognition was among the unresolved problems of Europe after WW II. The issues related to Austrian sovereignty and the German summit grew into a long-standing conflict between the Soviet Union on one side and the rest of the world on the other side (along with

¹ Sanaa Hikmat Hassan Mahmoud and Abdul Amir Abbas Al-Hayali. "Landlocked Geographical Location and its Effects on the Power of the Austrian State (An Analytical Study of Austria as a Model)". *Diyala Journal of Human Research* 2.92 (2022).

² Margarete Schattle, *Soviet Policy and the Austrian State Treaty*, theses, University of Rhode Island, 1965, p6.

Austria's newly established government). These issues existed during a period of increasing international division as a result of the Cold War.

Notwithstanding this drawn-out deadlock, however, the matter finally found an unexpected resolution through the signing of the Austrian State Treaty on May 15, 1955, in the Belvedere Palace in Vienna, between the four occupying powers and Austria. Through this, Austria regained its status as an independent democratic nation in exchange for its pledge to remain permanently neutral, effectively bringing the occupation period to an end.³

Austria is not a central component of a great-power struggle due to its small size, small population and limited natural resources; therefore, the actions of the four occupying nations cannot be described as being limited to the problem of Austria, but rather should be seen as part of a wider range of disputes and conflicts between the Soviet Union and the other three western powers who were in Europe at that time in a Cold War context. Although the resolution of the issue of Austria is not the only instance where an East-West dispute was resolved peacefully after WWII, it is the only instance since the conclusion of hostilities and signing of peace treaties by the Former Axis States (1947-1959) that resulted in a treaty/contract that was jointly supported by both the United States and its European Allies and the Soviet Union. Due to this characteristic of the Austrian situation, it provides an exceptionally useful foundation to study Soviet interests and means of exercising control over International Affairs (especially elements of the relationship that are based more on the ability to balance against other powers, than to uphold strict adherence to an ideological position).⁴

In the early post-World War II period, the United States developed its policy toward Austria with consideration for the larger U.S. strategy for re-structuring Europe after the war. Similar to Germany, Austria was treated as a war loser and subjected to four-power occupation (USSR, UK, France, US) until a peace treaty with Austria would be negotiated. The importance of Austria to the U.S. was determined to be of less strategic value compared to the resolution of the German question. The U.S. had a primary goal to ensure that the USSR would not dominate Austria or create a communist sphere of influence in Central Europe, but simultaneously to ensure that Austria would not be assimilated prematurely into the Western system or to assign Austria a specific military role in support of the containment strategy.⁵ U.S. policy stressed the importance of preserving the unity and independence of Austria as a priority, and ensuring that U.S. policy remained in balance with both the USSR and the greater German issue. Therefore, U.S. policymaking at this time adopted a conservative, incremental policy of development with the intent of not imposing a unilateral solution that might cause an early escalation in Europe, which was consistent with the general thrust of U.S. foreign policy during the early Cold War.⁶

In the final years of President Harry S. Truman's administration, U.S. foreign policy toward the Austrian question focused on strengthening Austrian sovereignty within the framework of four-power control and postwar occupation. State Department documents emphasized the need to gradually reinforce Austria's independence and prevent it from falling under Soviet influence. In a diplomatic memorandum dated February 28, 1950, the U.S. Minister to Austria expressed Washington's agreement with the view that Austrian sovereignty should be strengthened in a manner consistent with both Austria's national interests and U.S. efforts to limit Soviet expansion. He further noted that "if progress in treaty negotiations cannot be achieved, U.S. policy toward Austria must be reassessed, including the feasibility and desirability of continuing the current approach," which aimed at establishing a stable and independent state within Western Europe. This position reflects the U.S. administration's commitment at the time to rebuilding Austria as an independent state as part of its broader policy of containing Soviet expansion in Central Europe.⁷

Throughout its foreign policy during this time, America made it clear that its efforts concerning Austria, in the last years of Truman's presidency, were directed towards reducing the financial burden associated with occupying the country while still allowing for a stable political and economic environment. America rejected any increases in the cost of occupying Austria over its cost in 1951. The State Department directed the U.S. Embassy in Vienna to advise both Britain and France that they would not agree to any new financial arrangements that would create additional burdens on Austria; in fact, they indicated that all occupation costs should be limited to only those necessary for the administration of the occupation. There is a strong tendency for the American government

³ Müller, W. (2024). The genesis and historical transformation of Austria's neutrality. *Austrian Journal of Political Science*, 53(1). <https://doi.org/10.15203/4166.vol53.2024>

⁴ Ferring, Robert L. "The Austrian state treaty of 1955 and the cold war." *Western Political Quarterly* 21.4 (1968), p651.

⁵ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 723 – Department of State Policy Statement on Austria, Washington, September 20, 1948. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v02/d723?utm_source

⁶ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 208 – Directive for the United States High Commissioner for Austria, Washington, October 16, 1950. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950v04/d208?utm_source

⁷ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 287 – Telegram from the Minister in Austria (Erhardt) to the Secretary of State, Vienna, February 28, 1950. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950v04/d187?utm_source

to reduce the cost of occupying Austria while trying to maintain a high level of democratic development in Austria in relation to the overall balance of power during the Cold War.⁸

In early 1952, U.S. management of the Austrian issue revealed another important dimension of its policy: the link between occupation costs and the continuation of political and economic support for Austria. State Department records show concern that any rise in these costs could trigger opposition in Congress and among the American public, thereby threatening aid programs not only for Austria but also for other occupied countries. For this reason, Washington insisted that Britain and France adhere to the 1951 expenditure ceiling and proposed a revised approach that limited funding to expenses directly related to official occupation duties. This demonstrates an early American awareness of the risks posed by excessive economic burdens on Austria's political and democratic stability, as well as a determination to manage the Austrian question in a way that supported containment objectives without harming a financially fragile European partner.⁹

Throughout most of the closing years of the Truman administration, Austria was regarded as an important battleground for containing Soviet influence in Central Europe. Although weakened politically, the Austrian Government was seen by Washington as a possible opportunity for a dependable democratic model able to withstand anti-democratic threats from communism. American documents reveal worries that lack of a definitive Soviet commitment to limiting the costs related to Soviet occupation or to recommencing four-power negotiations would undermine the Austrian economy, giving the local Communist Party an advantage. Therefore, U.S. support (both economic and political) would be explicitly linked to protecting the independence and democratic governance of Austria and the Austrian case would be regarded as a direct test-case for the U.S. ability to contain Soviet expansionism throughout post-World War II Europe without instigating direct confrontation with Moscow.¹⁰

The Shift in U.S. Foreign Policy with the Rise of Dwight D. Eisenhower

The Republican Party nominated Dwight D Eisenhower to be the United States President in 1952. Eisenhower received much support due to his military background and reputation from serving as the Army Chief of Staff and NATO Commander during World War II. Although he did not have near as much political experience as candidate Adlai Stevenson, Governor of Illinois, Eisenhower received 55% of the popular votes and won 39 of the 48 states for a total of approximately 34 million votes to Stevenson's 27 million. Dwight D Eisenhower became United States President during one of the most critical points in the Cold War history.¹¹

At the beginning of 1953, Eisenhower's accession to the presidency coincided with parallel changes in the structure of Soviet leadership. This marked the first significant shift in the leadership of both superpowers since the onset of the Cold War. However, this transformation did not lead to a genuine easing of international tensions; rather, it reproduced them in a more structured and strategic form. As a result, patterns of interaction between the Eastern and Western blocs were reshaped, particularly in sensitive European issues, foremost among them the Austrian question.

In his "Chance for Peace" speech on April 16, 1953, Eisenhower set out a vision of international relations that moved beyond ideological rhetoric and the rigid patterns of the Cold War. Citing his experience working with the Soviet Union during World War II, he stated that even though relationships between the West and the USSR became negative after 1945, there was still potential to work together with the new leadership in Moscow. As long as individuals within the West exhibit strength and prepare for defense, the two sides can co-operate.

He stressed the importance of collective defense in order to counteract the Soviets' strategy using large military formations and their policy of intervening in other countries. He also reiterated the need for political settlements in Europe, especially to finalize an Austrian State Treaty to remove the divisions created by the Cold War, to achieve a neutral and independent Austria, and to contribute to stabilizing the region. Another major concern for him was to protect the independence of both Germany and all of Eastern Europe, which would help reduce tensions and allow for the use of military spending to promote reconstruction efforts within those countries and aid projects around the world. Overall, he was advocating a balanced approach—which would provide

⁸ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 524 – Telegram from the Secretary of State to the Embassy in Austria, Washington, January 2, 1952. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v04p2/d59?utm_source

⁹ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 781 – Telegram from the United States High Commissioner in Austria (Donnelly) to the Department of State, Vienna, January 4, 1952. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v07p2/d781?utm_source

¹⁰ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 781 – Telegram from the United States High Commissioner in Austria (Donnelly) to the Department of State, Vienna, January 4, 1952. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v07p2/d781?utm_source

¹¹ Najla Adnan Hussein, Dwight Eisenhower and his role in American politics until 1961, Journal of the College of Basic Education, Volume 27, Issue 110, 2021, p. 709.

for sufficient defense capabilities and maintain flexibility—before seeking to achieve foreign policy goals outside of outright conflict.¹²

At the same time, the Eisenhower administration—supported by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles—adopted a firmer stance toward the Soviet Union compared to the previous Democratic administration. The 1952 Republican platform sharply criticized the policy of containment, portraying it as a passive and morally and politically ineffective strategy. Neither Stalin's death nor the ambiguous Soviet initiatives that followed altered the entrenched American view that the Soviet Union posed a military, political, and ideological threat that could not be managed through traditional diplomacy alone. This was evident in Eisenhower's rejection of early settlement proposals, including Churchill's suggestion of a summit with Moscow, as strategic confrontation continued to intensify. At the same time, the Soviet response was reflected in tighter control over Eastern Europe, even as events in 1953 in East Germany and the growing independence of Yugoslavia revealed underlying weaknesses in Soviet authority within its sphere of influence.¹³

The beginning of the Eisenhower Administration in 1953 changed U.S. policy towards an independent Austria from that of Truman. The Eisenhower Administration was more pragmatic than the previous Administration. The Eisenhower Administration treated Austria as a distinct case that could result in a settlement with the Soviet Union while maintaining its independence and unity. There was a clear shift to pragmatism in U.S. policy toward Austria during this period, which included a balance between supporting Austria's democratic with the need to avoid antagonizing the Soviet Union.¹⁴

The U.S. Position on the Austrian State Treaty Negotiations.

U.S. State Department documents show that, following the Eisenhower administration's arrival in office, Washington's approach to the Austrian State Treaty negotiations was shaped by a clear determination to break the long-standing deadlock with the Soviet Union, while shielding Austria from external pressures. The issue was increasingly viewed as a diplomatic opportunity to close one of the lingering fronts of tension in Europe rather than leave it as an open source of conflict. At the same time, the documents highlight Washington's effort to consolidate its role as a mediator committed to preserving Austria's stability and democratic system.¹⁵

The records also point out that the government within the United States was aware of the Soviet Union's desire to exploit the internal divisions in Austria for political purposes. In response, the government created a solid policy to preserve democracy in Austria and maintain its stability while observing Soviet-related behavior in order to limit any chance of escalation to an open conflict. The documents illustrate a coordinated and calculated effort of the United States to balance its support of Austrian independence and counteracting communist infiltration.¹⁶

In addition, the records show that Washington was keeping close tabs of Austria's domestic political situations as they transpired; particularly the elections, while creating policy guidance on how to adopt measures that would ensure a stable democratic climate, and at the same time be less provocative to Moscow. In addition, this demonstrates the movement away from President Truman's more cautious approach in responding to these and related foreign policy issues, toward President Eisenhower's increased responsiveness and strategy regarding the use of the Austrian question as a means to create diplomatic channels for the alleviation of tensions in Europe, rather than to continue those tensions. At the same time, the United States was continuing to focus on the progress of the negotiations of the treaties and the more significant international ramifications.¹⁷

¹² Boon, Adam Thomas. *Eisenhower, Presidential Leadership, and Policy Towards the Soviet Union, 1953-1961*. Diss. Queen Mary University of London, 2021, p42.

¹³ Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War*, Hindawi Foundation for Education and Culture, Cairo, 2014, p. 64

¹⁴ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 884 – Despatch from the United States High Commissioner for Austria (Thompson) to the Department of State, Vienna, August 25, 1953. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v07p2/d884?utm_source

¹⁵ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 884 – Despatch from the United States High Commissioner for Austria (Thompson) to the Department of State, Vienna, August 25, 1953. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v07p2/d884?utm_source

¹⁶ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 834 – Telegram from the United States High Commissioner for Austria (Thompson) to the Department of State, Vienna, November 25, 1952. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v07p2/d834?utm_source

¹⁷ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 854 – Telegram from the United States High Commissioner for Austria (Thompson) to the Department of State, Vienna, March 2, 1953. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v07p2/d854?utm_source

Eisenhower's policy therefore evolved from a focus on only encouraging negotiations to providing substantial assistance for concluding their impasse, and completing the treaty negotiations. A National Security Council meeting on July 7, 1955, made clear that the United States could not afford to be seen as the sole obstacle to concluding the treaty. The Council therefore authorized the Secretary of State to proceed with negotiations based on the existing draft treaty, with sufficient flexibility to introduce amendments that would prevent any breakdown in talks. It also recommended consulting with Western allies on how to respond to any requests for guarantees of Austria's independence and territorial integrity. This reflects Washington's commitment to bringing the prolonged negotiations to a close and facilitating a settlement aligned with its broader strategic interests in Europe.¹⁸

The successful conclusion of the treaty negotiation process conducted through the Vienna Diplomatic Conference from May 2-15, 1955, reflects the success of Eisenhower's diplomatic efforts to achieve a final negotiated settlement for Austria. The U.S. government was intimately involved in the day-to-day discussion of each provision of the treaty, and through the examination of the text on an article-by-article basis, established an agreement that would permit Austria to exercise its own sovereign authority and eliminate a source of international tension between the United States and the Soviet Union. Ultimately, this process resulted in the formal conclusion of the four-power occupation of Austria through the signing of the treaty and the full restoration of Austria treaty, while also confirming that Eisenhower's pragmatic and flexible approach to diplomacy was critical in obtaining a successful negotiated resolution for the situation in Austria.¹⁹

In his message to the Senate on June 1, 1955, following the signing of the Austrian State Treaty in Vienna on May 15, Eisenhower further reinforces how Eisenhower's diplomatic approach successfully won the commitment of the Soviet Union over the more than eight-year period of time to grant Austria its rightful status of freedom and independence. The United States has had the goal of re-establishing Austria as an independent and democratic country since the 1943 Moscow Agreement. Also, he noted that the Soviet Union's change in position regarding this proposal, after attempting to prevent it earlier, facilitated the signing of this agreement. This supports the idea that the President's decision to support an end to the negotiation impasse and to maintain discussions until a final agreement was reached was not simply a tactical decision but rather a reflection of the overall philosophy of the Eisenhower administration that obtaining a diplomatic solution to this issue with the Soviet Union would help promote stability in Europe, secure Austria's independence, and not upset the balance of power(s) or threaten the security of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).²⁰

Austrian Neutrality from the U.S. Perspective: Between Pragmatic Acceptance and Strategic Caution

The year 1955 witnessed a noticeable easing of tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union after a period of intense rivalry. A degree of willingness to reduce confrontation began to emerge in U.S.–Soviet relations, particularly as the Soviet Union showed signs of moderating its previously hardline stance toward Washington. With growing convergence on several unresolved post–World War II issues, the Austrian question stood out as one of the most prominent. At the Geneva Conference on May 5, 1955, the four victorious powers agreed on the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Austria and the establishment of Austria as a neutral state—an arrangement that reflected a key Soviet demand.²¹

From the Soviet perspective, Austrian neutrality was understood as the primary political guarantee that enabled Moscow to accept the State Treaty settlement and withdraw its military presence from eastern Austria in 1955. The Soviet Union believed that a status of permanent neutrality was needed in order to stop Austria from joining the western system or becoming an indirect part of NATO. At the April 1955 negotiations in Moscow, the Soviets requested that Austria have an unambiguously defined commitment to neutrality as a prerequisite to the Soviets withdrawing their troops, but also allowed for Austria and the West to create more flexible interpretations of what neutrality would include through wording not included in the treaty, which Austria was to establish as part of their domestic constitutional law in October 1955. While the Mosin Valley accepted the accession to the UN and the Council of Europe, the Mosinvalions still viewed with great concern the impact that might come through enhanced economic ties with the West, on the concept of neutrality as defined by themselves. Thusly, the Soviets placed great importance on Article IV of the State Treaty to be used in preventing any political or economic union with Germany, thereby providing them with an important

¹⁸ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 33 – Memorandum of Discussion at the 254th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, July 7, 1955. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v05/d33?utm_source

¹⁹ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 42 – Telegram from the Delegation at the Vienna Ambassadorial Conference to the Department of State, May 2, 1955. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v05/d42?utm_source

²⁰ Message to the Senate Transmitting the Austrian State Treaty, Dwight D. Eisenhower, June 1, 1955. Available at: <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/message-the-senate-transmitting-the-austrian-state-treaty>

²¹ Iyad Tariq Al-Alwani, *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union 1956-1964*, Sardam Publishing House, Sulaymaniyah, Iraq, 2016, p. 43.

way to protect Austria from any strategic drift from the Soviets. These provisions also had a flexible interpretation, which reflects both the negotiated, delicate nature of the Austrian settlement and the overall impact of the Cold War.²²

Austria chose to adopt a form of permanent neutrality (like that in Switzerland) before it was made as part of the 1955 State Treaty; however, its status of neutrality did materially result from a legally binding framework from the broader scope of agreements implemented with the occupying powers. On October 26, 1955 Austria's Parliament enacted unanimously The Federal Constitutional Law on Neutrality which declared Austria's permanent, freely-chosen, neutral status so as to protect its sovereignty/territorial integrity through the defence of this neutrality by all appropriate means, prohibiting involvement with, or support for military alliances, and prohibiting foreign military forces from establishing bases on Austrian territory. This law was sent to all states with whom Austria maintained diplomatic relations making it clear to them that neutrality was embedded in the political consciousness of Austria as both a defensive obligation, and a non-aligning principle in foreign policy.²³

There is little doubt that Austrian neutrality held greater importance for the Soviet Union than for the United States. The withdrawal of Soviet forces from Austria did not significantly alter the broader deployment of Soviet military power stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. In contrast, for NATO, Austrian neutrality posed a strategic complication by interrupting the geographic continuity of its forces between West Germany and Italy. This suggests that the Soviet decision to withdraw from Austria was closely tied to its neutrality, particularly in the context of West Germany's integration into the Western defense system. It also helps explain Soviet efforts to establish recognized neutral zones between the Eastern and Western blocs. In this sense, the Austrian State Treaty held a distinct place in Soviet policy, especially as the withdrawal from Austria marked the first Soviet retreat from a forward position in the West since the end of World War II.²⁴

In contrast, America's view on Austria's neutrality as an exceptional case in 1955. The Eisenhower Administration did not view Austria's neutrality as a model that could be replicated in other desegregated countries (especially Germany), but as a limited solution based on the strategic limitations of the Austrian predicament. Eisenhower quickly departed from the containment strategy that characterized Truman's foreign policy and believed that by neutralizing only Austria, without extending this option to other de-facto or nonaligned regions of the developing world, it would promote military stability throughout Europe—considering, in particular, the large void in conventional forces along NATO's north-south axis. From this vantage point, and based upon his previous experience as Supreme Commander Allied Forces the Europe, Eisenhower understood that even though Western Forces would be withdrawn from Austria, and even with the limited presence of Soviet forces stationed in the eastern part of Austria, Austria remained a military significant state to NATO.

Austrian national forces, generally oriented toward the West, could slow any potential advance by the Red Army, thereby allowing NATO sufficient time to reinforce its defensive line stretching between West Germany and Italy. This helps explain Washington's acceptance of Austrian neutrality as a functional arrangement that supported strategic stability without setting a broader political precedent.²⁵

The United States State Department files indicate that the Eisenhower administration considered the acceptance of Austrian neutrality not as a concession, but as a means to provide diplomatic stability to Central Europe. The National Security Council report explained that through neutrality, Austria could retain its sovereignty and independence and not participate in military alliances or host foreign bases. At the same time, it provided the United States and its allies with greater ability to organize Central Europe.²⁶ The Operations Coordinating Board report states that Washington was working to promote Austrian neutrality while protecting U.S. interests, yet not endangering the overall strategic balance. This demonstrates the flexible, pragmatic nature of Eisenhower's policy to stabilize Austria and contain Soviet power without creating direct confrontations²⁷.

According to the document analysis, the Eisenhower Administration had established two basic requirements that needed to be fulfilled before the U.S. would recognize Austrian neutrality; that is, the complete withdrawal of all occupying troops irrespective

²² Gehler, Michael, and Wolfram Kaiser. "A study in ambivalence: Austria and European integration 1945–95." *Contemporary European History* 6.1 (1997), p83.

²³ resch, colonel peter. "Austria during the cold war 1955-1991". u.s. army war college carlisle barracks, pennsylvania. 2002. p7.

²⁴ Sharif Muhammad Ahmad, *The American-Soviet Conflict over Austria 1945-1955*, *History and Future Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 63, 2018, p. 555.

²⁵ Rathkolb, Oliver. "International perceptions of Austrian neutrality." *Neutrality in Austria*. Routledge, 2018. P69.

²⁶ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 19 – National Security Council Report (NSC 5603) on U.S. Policy toward Austria, March 23, 1956. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v26/d19?utm_source

²⁷ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 13 – Report Prepared by the Operations Coordinating Board on U.S. Policy toward Austria, December 14, 1955. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v26/d13?utm_source

of nationality, as well as an agreement not to allow any foreign military forces to use any Austrian bases. This indicates that the U.S. was implementing a realistic strategy whereby they would attempt to use both the international situation and domestic changes occurring within the Soviet sphere to create a stable resolution to the issue.²⁸

Due to these developments, Austria serves as a unique model for how to effectively manage conflict in Cold War circumstances (i.e. keep possession of its independence and autonomy, and at the same time be careful not to let the policy applied to Austria be applied as precedent or reference for other far more sensitive locations, such as the case of Germany). The United States's overall diplomatic policy approach toward Austria has been a combination of assertiveness and pragmatism (political), and demonstrates a conscious attempt to maintain an appropriate level of flexibility with an appropriate level of confidence in a situation that called for the need to carefully balance these two factors. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff raised significant concerns about the operational implications of Austrian Neutrality, as they were worried that it would negatively impact Western Europe's ability to defend itself against a potential Soviet threat. In a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff outlines the military's concerns about the Soviet proposal that Austrian neutrality was a precondition for signing the Austrian State Treaty. The memorandum emphasized that, given Austria's strategic geographic position, its neutralization—or worse, its loss to Soviet influence—would require a fundamental reassessment of NATO's existing defense strategy for Western Europe. Accordingly, the Joint Chiefs argued that neutrality should be strongly resisted, as it conflicted with U.S. national security interests and those of NATO. They further maintained that the United States should not, under any circumstances, accept a form of neutrality that would hinder Austria's effective cooperation in Western defense planning or restrict the ability of Western states to assist Austria in establishing adequate internal security forces.²⁹

These issues were addressed at an NSC meeting on January 14, 1954, where President Eisenhower stated that from an American standpoint, neutrality was not equivalent to disarmament; thus, the U.S. would not accept a neutral country without actual disarmament. According to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the State Department would maintain this policy in order to allay some of the military concerns.³⁰ Therefore, this statement was made part of the established American foreign policy and ultimately had a major impact on how military factors impacted the final decision. The Eisenhower Administration viewed Austrian neutrality within the framework of the State Treaty negotiations as an opportunity for diplomatic achievement, rather than total success. Evidence from U.S. State Department memos and National Security Council discussions shows that Washington believed Austria's neutralization could help achieve much of its agenda; namely, securing the full withdrawal of Soviet ground forces from Central Europe and terminating the four powers' occupation of Austria without compromising the existing structure of the Western alliances. Furthermore, the Administration considered Austria to be qualitatively different from Germany with respect to its strategic and symbolic military value and therefore the agreement to accept Austrian neutrality would not create a precedent for future potentially sensitive cases. Thus, neutrality was considered to be a suitable resolution to a potential source of tension in Europe and to alleviate the burden of Cold War competition during a period characterized by a multitude of concurrent concerns. This interpretation is reinforced by the fact that U.S. acceptance of Austrian neutrality remained strictly conditional within a cautious strategic framework. Washington approached neutrality with considerable care, wary that it might become a model invoked in other contexts, particularly in relation to Germany or NATO's front-line regions. According to official documents, neutral status for Austria is connected to its neutrality being assured by guarantees against foreign military bases, not committing to joining defense agreements with other countries that are not directly connected to the Soviet Union, and will include steps to avoid infiltration by the Soviet Union through indirect means. According to U.S. policymakers, neutrality is a temporary form of addressing conflict rather than being used as a substitute for the broader policy of containment. Thus, Washington rejected any attempts to generalize the Austrian case or to view it as an ideology. For Americans, the Austrian neutral position is at best, successful yet unique as it has been established due to specific geo-political circumstances, and Cold War conditions exist but not established as a strategic disadvantage or an example that can be used in other locations.³¹

²⁸ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 19 – National Security Council Report (NSC 5603) on U.S. Policy toward Austria, March 23, 1956. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v26/d19?utm_source

²⁹ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 19 – National Security Council Report (NSC 5603) on U.S. Policy toward Austria, March 23, 1956. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v26/d19?utm_source

³⁰ Farouk Saleh Al-Omar, The Policy of the United States of America towards the Austrian Question during the Eisenhower Era 1953-1955, *Journal of Historical Studies*, University of Basra, College of Education for Girls, Issue 23, 2017, p. 68.

³¹ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 19 – National Security Council Report (NSC 5603) on U.S. Policy toward Austria, March 23, 1956. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v26/d19?utm_source

The Evolution of U.S. Diplomacy toward Austria after the Declaration of Neutrality (1955–1960)

From 1956 - 1960, the United States had a primary policy concern for Austria, which was the consolidation of political independence, as established by the State Treaty, and their importance to central European stability. The United States viewed Austria as a fully independent and sovereign country rather than a sphere of influence that might still be up for negotiations. This was further evidenced by the United States' continued emphasis on supporting Austria's constitutional order, and that the Austrian government be able to effectively govern without external interference. The Austrian government was also viewed as providing one means to achieve some stability and help reduce tensions between the two ideological blocs in the middle of Europe.

The American belief about supporting Austria as a separate nation involved building up both its economy and social structure. Having a good economic performance was seen as necessary for maintaining - i.e.- protecting - a country's sovereignty from outside forces. Therefore, the United States promoted an economic and technical partnership with Austria, while at the same time promoting its integration into larger regional economic systems in Europe. This would improve Austria's ability to independently make political choices without relying on any type of outside or indirect form of dependence.³²

In the late 1950s, the U.S. observed Austrian politics closely, viewing it as an important part of sustaining their independence. Consensus among major political groups and parliamentary stability were particularly important to the U.S. Washington took care to stick to general support of institutional stability without getting directly involved in partisan competition, in order not to violate Austrian sovereignty or be seen as attempting to influence domestic politics.³³

The United States' approach was pragmatic and designed to ensure neutrality would not lead to political isolation and a strategic vacuum. Therefore, Washington attempted to redefine neutrality as an active and balanced framework for an international foreign policy. In doing so, the U.S. supported a definition of neutrality that allowed Austria to engage in political and economic cooperation with Western nations as long as it remained faithful to its commitment to not participate in military alliances or collective security agreements that would create international sensitivities or undermine the interests of the U.S and its allies.³⁴

U.S. policy was also focused on providing assistance in developing national defense capacity, as appropriate under the limitations imposed by Austria's neutrality. The U.S. viewed a state's ability to protect and maintain their own political independence through self-defense as critical to protecting their own political independence. Support was provided in a manner that balanced the requirements for Austria to protect their borders and commit to their international obligations to avoid creating an undesirable focus for military competition between East and West.³⁵

The U.S. sought to enhance Austria's international position through providing assistance for Austria to play a more active role in multilateral organizations. The U.S. viewed Austria's involvement in these types of organizations as an expression of Austrian sovereignty, political independence; it was the U.S. belief that Austria's participation in multilateral organizations would improve their global status and provide them with additional sources of diplomatic maneuver and would therefore decrease the probability that they would be subject to bilateral influence from any of the major powers.³⁶

Overall, Austrian independence remained, in the calculations of U.S. policy under President Eisenhower, an integral part of a broader approach to managing the balance of power in Europe during the crises of the late 1950s, particularly amid rising tensions over the Berlin issue. Austria's stability was regarded as a regional stabilizing factor that could help contain the spread of major crises into Central Europe, without requiring any fundamental adjustment to the structure of Western alliances or limiting U.S. commitments within NATO.

Therefore, throughout the period from 1956 to 1960, the role of the United States became one of complementarity through the provision of political, economic and diplomatic assistance in an attempt to make sure that Austria's independence became more than a legal status derived from an international treaty, but an established reality in Austria. By doing so, this approach led to

³² See: (FRUS), Doc No. 295 – Paper Prepared by the Operations Coordinating Board on Austria (NSC 5603), Washington, January 29, 1958. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v09/d295?utm_source

³³ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 300 – Paper Prepared by the Embassy in Austria (Progress Report on Austria), Vienna, September 12, 1958.

Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v09/d300?utm_source

³⁴ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 332 – Paper Prepared by the NSC Planning Board on Austria, Washington.

Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v09/d332?utm_source

³⁵ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 295 – Paper Prepared by the Operations Coordinating Board on Austria (NSC 5603), Washington, January 29, 1958. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v09/d295?utm_source

³⁶ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 322 – Operations Coordinating Board Report on Austria (NSC 5603), Washington, November 23, 1959. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v09/d322?utm_source

establishing Austria as a neutral, stable state that is able to manage its own affairs by utilizing its experience to lessen Cold War tensions without disrupting the larger balance of power.

U.S. Economic Support for Austria and Its Impact on Consolidating Independence and Stability

Austria's neutrality and establish limits were heavily influenced by the Cold War. The geographical position of Austria, which was located between the communist East bloc and the capitalist Western bloc, greatly affected Austria's approach to the Cold War; due to the importance of Austria's geographical position to the West and East, the Austrian state was forced down an independent path. This path was heavily influenced by international restrictions on Austria associated with membership in a military or economic alliance, which led to Austria being considered a non-signatory party to the post-war treaties that governed the German situation and no possible involvement in any potential conflict involving Germany. In short, Austria's concept of national defense for use in the case of an invasion or attack was largely seen, in the mind of the Austrian military, as a largely symbolic concept; there was an unarticulated agreement among NATO member states that the security of Austria would be provided by a NATO response under an international framework to an attack or invasion of Austria. Austria's international status was also very limited in comparison to that of West Germany; Austria's international strategic significance: was much less than that of West Germany. Because of this contrast in international status, Vienna attempted to enhance its image as an active neutral country while simultaneously conserving the socio-economic model that had been created after the end of World War II.³⁷

Documents from America highlight the interdependence of economic assistance provided by America to Austria after 1955 and Austria's political independence after the conclusion of the occupation regime. The main idea in Washington was that the economy of a country is what determines its sovereignty and prevents foreign intervention. Actions taken in an attempt to reconstruct Austria and establish its economic balance were designed to remove any need for Austria to depend on big nations in the handling of domestic matters. In this way, Austria could proceed from post-war recovery to sustained economic growth in the late 1950s.³⁸

U.S. assistance to Austria regarding its financial and economic systems was part of a larger strategy to protect Austria from any future economic crises that might threaten its political independence. This assistance included providing loans indirectly by assuring access to borrowings from European Financial institutions, promoting investment from private investors in Austria, and providing the technical expertise needed by the Austrian government to reform its former economic system. These actions gave Austria's government greater control over the development of its financial operations and helped build both public and international confidence in the rapid recovery of Austria's economy.³⁹

Further, there was no distinction made between the conventional economic aid and social aid provided by American foreign policies in regard to Austria. The administration led by President Eisenhower showed its clear approval towards improving the conditions of life in terms of providing better living standards and preventing the emergence of social weakness, which can be utilized through political manipulation. From the above discussion, it is evident that the economic and technical aid provided by the United States was aimed at improving the situation in the labor market, infrastructure, and industry in the country.⁴⁰ Further, through its economic support for Austria, the U.S. sought to promote Austria's eventual integration into the Western European economic community, thus strengthening its independence and diminishing its chances of being isolated from other nations. The U.S. encouraged Austria to participate in regional cooperative economic organizations while respecting its neutrality, creating opportunities for trade with new partners and minimizing reliance on any one international actor.⁴¹

In the early 1960s, U.S. economic support for Austria continued within a more stable framework, with a shift in focus from direct aid to fostering long-term cooperation in development and economic planning. This transition was regarded as an indicator of

³⁷ Ankenman, Kristine Sue. *Austrian Neutrality: Setting the Agenda*. See: (FRUS), Doc No. 13/2006. *Wismarer Diskussions papiere*, 2006. p25.

³⁸ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 295 – Paper Prepared by the Operations Coordinating Board on Austria (NSC 5603), Washington, January 29, 1958.

Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v09/d295?utm_source

³⁹ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 300 – Paper Prepared by the Embassy in Austria (Progress Report on Austria), Vienna, September 12, 1958.

Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v09/d300?utm_source

⁴⁰ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 322 – Operations Coordinating Board Report on Austria (NSC 5603), Washington, November 23, 1959.

Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v09/d322?utm_source

⁴¹ See: (FRUS), Doc No. 332 – Paper Prepared by the NSC Planning Board on Austria, Washington.

Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v09/d332?utm_source

Austria's success in building an economy capable of sustaining itself without exceptional reliance on external assistance, thereby reinforcing its position as both economically and politically independent.

Overall, American economic support between 1956 and 1962 contributed to consolidating Austrian independence as a practical reality grounded in financial and social stability, rather than merely a legal status derived from an international treaty. This support formed part of a broader U.S. approach aimed at reducing tensions in Central Europe by strengthening the economic resilience of smaller states. In this regard, the Austrian experience emerged as a successful example of managing independence within the Cold War context without disrupting the overall balance of power.⁴²

Evaluation of U.S. Policy toward Austrian Neutrality up to 1960

The original text as reflected in documents by FRUS demonstrates how American views regarding Austrian neutrality right after the 1955 agreement were characterized by a mixture of caution and satisfaction. The US felt that the total pullout of Soviet troops and Moscow's compliance with the State Treaty represented a diplomatic victory in a divided Europe; however, they also felt that Austrian neutrality created internal stability for Austria and reduced the chance of Austria serving as a proxy nation, while not limiting any economic or cultural ties to the West. Furthermore, the US official view was that Austria's strict commitment to avoiding military alliances has not prevented or even slowed down its ability to maintain close relationships with the United States and Western Europe; this would support the view of American policy makers that, in this instance, Austrian neutrality did not create a balance of power or parity between two opposing sides, but created a legal arrangement which assured that Austria would never be remilitarized again or that a new occupation crisis in Central Europe would occur again.⁴³

There was no reason for Russia and other communist countries to think of the United States of America as a country worthy of support (contrary to Western nations). In addition, at the period when there were plenty of security threats to the world, the United States of America was considered an outstanding nation by the Eastern bloc countries. Moreover, there were no options within the foreign policy framework other than the ones that had been adopted by the United States of America and its allies. In the same context of growing threats from the Soviet Union to Western Europe (sometimes to its allies), there was no other way out but to get help from the United States of America.⁴⁴ In the end, the American government concluded that its support for Austria, while limited in nature, served as an important step forward in developing a stable and independent Europe. In addition, the American government believed that its efforts to support the ongoing development of the Austrian economy would serve as an effective springboard for future efforts to enhance America's overall security posture in the region. Ultimately, the Austrian experience was not conceived in terms of achieving global or even European security but rather as a means of achieving limited foreign policy objectives. While Austria did manage to maintain its independence after World War II, and to achieve some degree of economic stability, U.S. officials viewed the Austrian experience as more a reflection of the failure of the Soviet Union than as a means for the continued redevelopment of American foreign policy objectives through America's support of the Austrian economy.⁴⁵

U.S. Policy toward the Austrian Question under Eisenhower can be summarized as follows:

- 1) U.S. policy towards Austria under Eisenhower was based on understanding the balance of power internationally during the 1950s. Austrian neutrality stemmed from geographical circumstances, rather than an ideological position supporting neutrality. The U.S. had a different situation when compared with Germany and, thus, would require flexibility to prevent prolongation of its control or create a direct confrontation between Austria and the Soviet Union.
- 2) In theory, the Eisenhower administration remained steadfast in upholding its dedication to the overall concept that saw Western alliances, especially NATO, as a vital element for containing the Soviets. Nevertheless, the acceptance of Austrian neutrality was an exception to this concept and not something that went against it. Austria was seen to be of little military and strategic importance.
- 3) The analysis of Eisenhower's policies illustrates that Austrian neutrality was not portrayed as an exemplary model for others to want to copy. Rather, it was offered as a necessary resolution to conclude the four-power occupation and gain the withdrawal of

⁴² See: (FRUS), Doc No. 96 – Memorandum on U.S. Policy Toward Austria, Washington, May 5, 1961.

Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v16/d96?utm_source

⁴³ Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1955–1957, Vol. XXVI, Central and Western Europe, Reports and policy assessments on post-State Treaty Austria and neutrality implementation.

⁴⁴ Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1958–1960, Vol. IX, Western Europe, State Department evaluations of Austrian neutrality during major Cold War crises.

⁴⁵ Stourzh, G. (2008). *The Austrian State Treaty and the international decision-making process in 1955*. Austrian History Yearbook, 39, 207–220. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0067237808000148>

Soviet troops from Central Europe. Therefore, the central reason for U.S. acceptance was to decrease the potential for strategic risk rather than as a means to promote neutrality as an alternative to integration into the Western system.

4) The American attitude towards Austrian neutrality was also influenced by a cost-benefit analysis. The US administration realized that continuing the controversy about Austria was futile because there were no tangible benefits to be obtained, while acceptance of neutrality would resolve a long-standing dilemma without compromising US interests or making significant concessions to the Soviets on other critical matters, such as the German question.

5) Eisenhower's United States foreign policies showed that Austrian neutrality was part of a larger strategy for managing the Cold War tension rather than solving the Cold War problem. Using Austrian neutrality was a way of easing tensions in one particular area without providing a basis for changing the entire East-West relationship. Along with that, the administration repeatedly stated the Austrian agreement could not be considered a model for other countries.

6) It is evident from the sources that Washington regarded the Austrian policy of neutrality as functional neutrality. There were economic and cultural relations between Austria and Western states, especially the USA, implying that Austria was still indirectly linked to the Western world. This is because Americans believed that even without an official relationship, other elements like influence could work as a substitute for alliances. On the other hand, the European dimension was also significant since Washington needed to convince its Western partners, especially West Germany and Italy, that this would not be a problem on the Atlantic front.

7) By accepting Austrian neutrality, Eisenhower recognized America's limited ability to impose an unilaterally imposed solution on a bi-polarized international order. The existence of a bi-polar international order showed that resolving the 'Austrian issue' needed the United States and the West to work collaboratively with the USSR, which meant that they had to develop a cooperative solution (neutrality) that satisfied both parties' minimum interests, whilst not undermining either party's maximum strategic objectives.

8) In spite of the partial success of this policy in ensuring the independence and stability of Austria, the US appraisal of its own performance was guarded. Neutrality was seen not as a strategic triumph for the long run, but merely as a practical and temporary arrangement, which was still subject to review in the context of changing Cold War realities.

Eisenhower's U.S. policy viewed the neutrality of Austria as a plausible solution forged from the power balance in East-West relations with no noticeable ideological change in U.S. military doctrine. The policy achieved limited goals, i.e., ending the postwar occupation of Austria and limiting potential Soviet expansion into Austria, but was limited in both the degree to which these same goals could also be achieved through an application of the Austrian example to the larger problem of managing the rivalry between the East and West.

Conclusion

The American stance on the Austrian problem during the Eisenhower period was a balanced approach that lay between the refusal of strict neutrality, which was the hallmark of the containment period during the Truman administration, and the pragmatic approach to a partial neutral solution due to prevailing international circumstances. The U.S. did not see Austrian neutrality as a desirable political ideology but as an extraordinary measure needed to handle a perpetual European problem without damaging the fundamental aspects of its Cold War doctrine.

This position represents a change in the instruments used for American policy rather than a change in its basic aims. The basic aim—to prevent any expansion of Soviet influence—remained constant. Yet in the case of Austria, the Eisenhower administration modified the instrument by which to achieve that basic aim, recognizing a conditional legal and military neutrality that would result in the evacuation of Soviet troops and the end of the four-power occupation without taking Austria out of the Western orbit or making it an equilibrium point between the two camps.

Thus, The Austrian model was created from a more selective point of view than was the normal/a traditional American thinking. It did not try to destroy the present way of containment; instead, the Austrian model was intended to adjust it for Austria, and it kept the traditional American idea of containment. The U.S. made an effort to separate the Austrian model from the way West Germany was treated as the key element of the Atlantic Alliance, and it maintained a degree of flexibility in how it managed a less significant geographic point of contact or point of vulnerability.

This strategy also highlights the Eisenhower administration's awareness of the constraints imposed by hard power in certain Cold War situations. The application of the doctrine of containment in its traditional form to Austria may well have resulted in unintended consequences, such as extending the period of occupation or provoking an aggressive response from the Soviet Union. Austrian neutrality became a practical solution that avoided conflict but did not constitute a concession.

In conclusion, U.S. policy under Eisenhower succeeded in developing a distinctive model for addressing the Austrian question—positioned between absolute neutrality and strict containment. This model was grounded in political realism rather than doctrinal commitment, achieving its primary objective of securing Austria's independence and stability, while maintaining clear limits that prevented its generalization or its transformation into an alternative to the alliance system that remained at the core of U.S. policy in Europe during the Cold War.

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