Principles of the Austrian Security and Defense Policy and current results for the structure of the Armed Forces

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Basic remarks

Nineteen of the member states of the EU are taking part in NATO, while Austria belongs to the 6 member states of the EU which are not members of NATO at the same time. The history and the interests of the 6 members (Sweden, Finland, Ireland, Malta, Cyprus and Austria) show very different backgrounds and positions to the question of NATO membership. Austria's policy of neutrality cannot be compared with the Irish or the Finnish one or with the specific situation of Cyprus or Malta. So you can state that there is no common position and no common strategy of the non NATO members in the EU despite some common initiatives and a "common focus" on ESDP.

Very soon after 1955, the year from which the Neutrality Act dates, Austria left the way of the model of modern neutrality – Switzerland   and took part actively in UN peacekeeping operations rather early (e.g. in the early 60th in Congo, in the 70th in Cyprus and the Middle East) Therefore the Austrian neutrality developed much more in the direction of a non-alignment policy instead of a

classical policy of neutrality according to the model of Switzerland.

Particularly after the end of the Cold War the position of neutrality was questioned seriously but because of domestic politics, consensus could not be achieved. Since the Neutrality Act of 1955 has the character of a constitutional act any change of this act requires a majority of 2/3 of the members of parliament which doesn't seem to be realistic at the moment.

Not being a member of NATO which is the traditional and by many decision makers considered as the most efficient regional organization of collective security Austria relates her security and defense policy primarily to the European Union.

One crucial structural aspect in the question NATO – EU cannot be overseen: While NATO is based on the principles of inter-governmentality and consensual decision making by its nature the European Union particularly her "finality" offers the option of a development from inter-governmentality towards integration even for the "core" of national sovereignty - foreign, security and defense policy. Depending on the development of the European Union after an aspired Constitutional Treaty – in the direction of a kind of federal state or a specific kind of confederation – and taking into account that the principle of subsidiarity which is already part of such a possible constitutional framework requires the "unification" of ESDP rather than other fields of politics the European Union is the "more open" institution compared to NATO.

Principles of Austrian security policy

Six years after joining the European Union in 1994 and three years before the ESS 'European Security Structure' (better known as "Solana Paper") the Austrian Parliament (Nationalrat) adopted the actual Security and Defense Doctrine (SVD) in December 2001. On the occasion of the membership negotiations with the EU in the early 90th Austria emphasized already her willingness in "full participation" even in the 2nd pillar of the Treaty of Maastricht. The former reacting and territorial bound approach towards security policy and defense was replaced by a new comprehensive view of a multinational, active and preventive security policy directed to stabilization of the political (not so much geographic) environment.

General Considerations

Security in all its aspects is a prerequisite for continuance and functioning of a constitutional democracy as well the economic well-being of society and its citizens. Therefore security policy is a paramount political duty of the state. Under the current circumstances this duty has to be designed and realized as a "comprehensive security policy". Austria's effort is aimed at the prevention of violent conflicts. Therefore its security policy is directed at the prevention of war and peaceful coexistence of nations – based on the Charter of the United Nations, on international conventions for the protection of basic- and liberty rights, on the Convention for Protection of Human

Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. The purpose of security policy is to guarantee the security for preferably all fields of a community. The security and defense doctrine represents the guideline of the Austrian security policy. Protection of the state structures as well of its citizens against all kinds of threats is the nucleus of the security and defense doctrine. The security situation of an European country cannot be examined isolated. Instabilities and perils in Europe or its periphery affect the security situation of all European countries. The new threats and risks can not be dealt alone but only through international cooperation and solidarity. On a national basis it is imperative to develop a public understanding for security policy issues.

Paradigm Shift in Europe

In Europe a paradigm shift took place. The process which started with the end of the Cold War in 1989 led over from a concept of deterrence to an understanding of a comprehensive and cooperative security. The bipolar order with a relative stable and therefore manageable constellation of powers and threats was replaced by a new complexity of the world order and new security challenges. Geographical distance of conflicts is no longer a satisfactory protection. At the time there are no aggressive political intentions as well enough military potential for strategic-offensive operations in Europe. A responsible security policy has to be prepared for any changes of political intentions and constellations.

A modern and forward-looking security policy rests upon prevention of the becoming of risks and threats. There is a new emphasis of the instruments of security policy. "New" instruments of cooperation and configuration are used today: political, military, police, intelligence, economic, social, education, culture, information, communication and ecological instruments as well such of internal security. For the future of Europe the development of security policy of EU and NATO will be decisive.

New Risks and Threats are replacing clear Security & Threat Perceptions

The old threat scenarios from the Cold War times are replaced by a new and complex mixture of risks and menaces with a wide variety of reasons. In unstable European regions and its periphery there is still the menace of war and conflict. In case political and economic measures of stabilization are failing we must expect possible escalation of political disputes to the point of armed conflicts. In case of a fundamental change of political intentions in Europe we must admit that an element of military risk remains. At the time this risk is very low due to the presence of a political intact NATO.

The most important challenges of a global security policy are the proliferation of WMD, international terrorism – supported & guided by states or political lobbies, organized crime, destabilizing armament efforts, totalitarian ideologies, fundamentalist religions, population development and migration, energy and

resource shortages, famine and ecological disasters. Particularly international terrorism in all its characteristics is a main security problem for western civilizations.

A comprehensive understanding of security includes the following basic strategies:

- affirmative action
- securing and restoration of peace and stability
- individual/collective self-defense

The basic principle says: "As much peace encouragement as possible and only so much arbitrary measures respectively sanctions as necessary." The deployment of military means of coercion is a tool with the character of "ultima ratio" and should be used only in respect with the Charter of the United Nations. (Nevertheless one should see the relativism of the term "ultima ratio": in common understanding it means the last measure but the Romans understood it also as ultimate or extreme measure.)

Conclusions

Although the Austrian Security- and Defense Doctrine had been elaborated before the European Security Structure (ESS), objectives and means are rather identically. To a large amount this is due to the fact that the SVD is formulated in a very generalizing manner and on the other hand Austria doesn't have to obey other international obligations like the NATO Treaty. Austria is interested to be a kind of a "Musterknabe" (model

child) in NATO's PfP, UN and OSCE and of course in ESDP. Two items of the document have to be mentioned:

- the strong commitment for Human Rights and Public International Law, and
- the central role of the UN which is a clear commitment to multilateralism and that corresponds to the European Security Structure (ESS).

Consequences for the structure of the Armed Forces

Following new tasks the structure of the Armed Forces had to be adapted. The so called "Bundesheer Reformkommission" elaborated the cornerstones for the restructuring process.

Phase I   (2005) reduction and consolidation
Phase II   (2006) establishment of the new strategic and operational level
Phase III   (2007) attainment of the new structure

According to the result of the reform or transformation process the Army Organization AAF 2010 will look like the following structure:

Army Organization AAF 2010

- **Directly subordinated units:**
    - 1 unit military police
    - 2 command and control support battalions
    - 1 unit special operation forces
    - 1 International Operations Basis (incl. CIMIC)

- **4 Brigades:**
    - 4 Headquarters battalions
    - 4 Infantry battalions
    - 3 Mountain Infantry battalions
    - 1 Airborne Infantry battalion
    - 2 Mechanized infantry battalions
    - 2 Tank battalions
    - 3 Reconnaissance & artillery battalions
    - 3 Sapper battalions

- **Aviation & Air Defense units: aerial surveillance & aerial support command**
    - 1 Radar battalion
    - 1 Surveillance squadron
    - 1 Aerial support squadron
    - 2 Air defense battalions
    - Radar & Maintenance units
    - Imminent units