

Statement by John Foster Dulles (10 June 1955)

Caption: On 10 June 1955, John Foster Dulles, US Secretary of State, outlines to the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations the process that led to the signing of the Austrian State Treaty in Vienna on 15 May 1955.

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Statement by the Secretary of State (Dulles) on the Austrian State Treaty, Made before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, June 10, 1955.

It is with gratification that I appear before this Committee in support of the President's request that the Senate advise and consent to the ratification of the Austrian State Treaty. This treaty, signed on May 15, 1955, marks the ending of a long, hard trail. Austria's independence was lost in 1938, 17 years ago. The restoration of that independence was one of the objectives for which United States forces fought in the Second World War. In 1943, 11 years ago, the Soviet Union pledged itself, with the United Kingdom and the United States, to make Austria free and independent. France joined in that pledge. Since 1947, 8 years ago, negotiations for an independence treaty have been carried on.

The freedom of Austria has had to be won twice over — first on the battlefield and then through long years of diplomatic struggle in the "cold war."

In the 10 years that have elapsed since the conclusion of World War II, the Austrian Government and people have fully demonstrated their ability to practice democracy as we know it. They have rejected the manifold lures of communism. They have displayed remarkable patience and steadfastness under a lengthy and onerous military occupation. The courage and determination of the Austrian people have been the indispensable basic circumstance which finally enabled the United Kingdom, France, and the United States to bring about this treaty.

My report of May 27 to the President, which he in turn has transmitted to the Senate, gives in some detail an analysis of the treaty. Therefore, I shall today touch only briefly on the high points I believe to be of significance to your deliberations.

It may be well first to recall the tortuous history of the treaty. The four occupying powers noted in 1943 that Austria was the first victim of Hitler's imperialism and agreed that she should be reestablished as a free and independent nation. There was no reason why that intention should not have been carried out promptly, and indeed by the time of the 1947 Moscow meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers it appeared that early agreement on a liberating treaty was possible. As in so many other fields, however, it soon became apparent that the Soviet Union had other intentions. The hopes of the Austrians and the three Western Powers were raised and dashed in 1947 and again in 1949. Throughout 8 years, approximately 400 four-power meetings were held at various levels. The Western Powers made every effort to conclude the treaty, but the Soviets, time after time, found new and irrelevant excuses for refusing agreement.

In the meantime the Soviet armed forces remained in strength in Eastern Austria, and there was intensive Soviet exploitation of the East Austrian economy. All of this was a severe burden for the Austrian people throughout the period to which I refer. Removals of capital equipment were particularly heavy in the early years, and the Austrians were denied the benefits of their oil and Danube shipping properties as well as some 300 business and industrial enterprises.

In 1952 the United Nations took cognizance of the situation and adopted a resolution calling upon the four powers to terminate the occupation and restore Austria's independence as the four powers had agreed to do in the Moscow Declaration of 1943. But the Soviet Union ignored that resolution.

Berlin Conference

At the Berlin Conference in February 1954 the Austrian Government and the three Western Powers dramatized Soviet perversity when they went to the length of offering to accept the Soviet versions of the only five articles that then remained unagreed in the draft treaty. The Soviet Foreign Minister, however, insisted upon his new demand that Soviet military occupation should continue indefinitely. That would have made a mockery of the treaty. These new Soviet conditions were refused by Austria.

In April of this year the Soviet Government suddenly altered its policy toward an Austrian treaty. That reversal coincided with the Western European parliamentary actions which assured the coming into force of

the Paris Accords for restoring sovereignty to the Federal Republic of Germany, creating Western European Union, and bringing the Federal Republic into NATO. At that juncture the Soviet Government invited the Austrian Government to send representatives to Moscow. After exchanges of views with the three Western Powers the invitation was accepted.

It led to an understanding embodied in a memorandum of agreement dated April 15, 1955, which you have before you as an attachment to the President's message to the Senate, dated June 1, 1955. The Moscow agreement was the first positive indication that the Soviet attitude toward the treaty had changed and that it would be possible to realize a treaty which would bring about the withdrawal of Soviet armed forces to the East, their first retreat in Europe since 1945.

Final negotiations held at Vienna during the first half of May made it possible to obtain a treaty which, in major respects, is a more just and satisfactory document than the draft treaty as it stood from 1949 until the recent negotiations in Vienna. These Vienna negotiations were a model of Western unity in action, and the results are notable. Special recognition is due to Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson and his associates who comprised the United States delegation at Vienna during the concluding negotiations.

The Western Powers and the Austrian Government negotiated with the Soviet representatives on the basis of the principle that provisions that were either obsolete or that might in any serious way qualify Austria's sovereignty should be removed from the treaty. Also, account was taken of the Austrian Government's announced intention of assuming voluntarily a neutral status after her sovereignty was restored. It was thus important that the treaty should neither provide special opportunities for other nations to interfere in Austrian affairs nor render Austria incapable of defending and maintaining its independence and neutrality.

Briefly, here are some of the important ways in which the treaty was changed during 2 weeks of intensive negotiation:

The so-called "war guilt" clause in the preamble was removed.

The draft article concerning displaced persons and refugees formerly known as article 16 was deleted. Much concern had been voiced about it here and abroad, and it contained provision for Soviet activities inconsistent with Austria's status of independence.

The Austrian intention to adopt a neutral status also made inappropriate several of the military clauses as they had stood in prior years. Those clauses would have limited Austrian military forces so as to have made difficult an effective defense of a neutral Austria.

The terms of the draft treaty provided in former article 35, now 22, that the Soviet Government would retain for up to 30 years most of the valuable Austrian oil properties and would own in perpetuity Austrian Danube shipping with its docks. At Moscow in April the Soviets offered to restore these properties to Austria for payments of 10 million tons of oil over a period of 10 years and \$2 million, respectively. However, the Soviet representative at the Vienna negotiations refused to modify article 35 correspondingly. Thus, so far as the treaty was concerned, the Soviet Government would have been free to assert a legal right to undertake an economic reoccupation of Austria on the basis of the treaty provisions after the treaty had entered into force. That danger seemed to me so great that, on May 10, 1955, I informed Ambassador Thompson that I would not come to Vienna to sign the treaty unless some way could be found to eliminate the risk. At the last the Soviet Government agreed to incorporate by reference in the treaty (article 22) the Moscow economic accord. This reference also covers the Moscow provision that Austria's payment to the Soviet Union of \$150 million over 6 years for German assets other than the oil and shipping properties may be discharged in terms of Austrian goods.

With these and other changes, it is possible for me to say with complete assurance that the treaty that the President has submitted will, when ratified, make good its title, which reads "The State Treaty for the Reestablishment of an Independent and Democratic Austria." The treaty provides for the ending of the occupation within 90 days after the treaty comes into force and the reestablishment of Austria within its

borders as they existed on January 1, 1938. The signatories declare their intention to respect Austria's independence and territorial integrity, and *Anschluss* with Germany is prohibited. The treaty also contains provision for the restoration of legal rights and interests in Austria of the United Nations and their nationals and for return of the property as it now exists. National treatment is provided for in case of war damage. Another article provides that Austria will make restoration or provide compensation to victims of nazism, who were largely those of Jewish faith.

Neutrality

As I reported to the President, the Austrian Government has indicated its intention to declare its perpetual neutrality and not to join any military alliances or permit any foreign military bases on its territory. The Austrian Parliament has by unanimous vote passed a resolution to that effect, calling upon the Government to submit a constitutional law, which I am informed will be acted on by the Parliament after the treaty has entered into force and the occupation troops have been withdrawn, so that the act will be that of a fully sovereign nation.

At that time the Austrian Government will call upon the governments with which it has diplomatic relations to signify that they will respect that neutrality. The Soviet Government has suggested that the four former occupying powers make a joint declaration that they will respect and observe the neutrality which Austria will have chosen for herself. The executive branch sees no objection in principle, as such action would in essence be merely a concrete application of the general undertakings which the United States has already given by the United Nations Charter to respect the principle of equal rights and self-determination of other peoples (article 1 (2)) and to refrain from the threat or use of force against the political independence of any state (article 2 (4)). It would also be consistent with the traditional attitude of the United States toward other neutral nations. The exact form in which the United States would make its intention known is, I believe, best left to a later date, that is, until after the Austrian request has actually been made.

It is important, I believe, to note that the Austrian Government has indicated its intention to raise a substantial armed force and its resolve to defend its independence and neutrality with all the resources at its command. The steadfast and courageous behavior of the Austrian people during the years of occupation gives every reason for confidence that the Austrian people and Government will hold to that intention.

The Soviet-Austrian memorandum of understanding agreed at Moscow on April 15 includes a statement that for its part Austria will request a guaranty by the United States, United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union of the inviolability and integrity of Austria's territory, and the Soviet Union has in the same memorandum expressed its willingness to grant such a guaranty. No proposal of this nature has been put forward as yet. When and if it is, the administration, aware of our constitutional provisions, would of course consult the Senate on any action that would seem appropriate for the United States to take. I should add that none of the parties to the treaty has made the ratification or implementation of the treaty dependent on a guaranty of Austria's territorial integrity.

Both houses of the Austrian Parliament have this week voted unanimously to ratify the State Treaty, and it has been signed by the President of the Austrian Republic.

I wish to associate myself with the President in urging that the Senate take early and favorable action with respect to the Austrian State Treaty, which, when it comes into force, will fulfill at last the Moscow Declaration of 1943. This result has been one for which the United States Government has long labored and toward which my predecessors in office, Secretaries Marshall and Acheson, made contributions which deserve to be recognized. President Eisenhower stated in his speech of April 16, 1953, and the United States Government has repeated on numerous occasions since, that Soviet agreement to the Austrian treaty, fulfilling the Moscow Declaration of 1943, would be considered a significant deed, as distinct from words. It may open the way to further cooperation to fulfill other wartime pledges. It is the hope of the President and myself that the United States will complete its ratification processes promptly and prior to the forthcoming meeting of the Heads of Government of the "Big Four." We hope that this will be done by a Senate vote which will evidence anew our own Nation's dedication to the lofty goals which were proclaimed during

World War II and our determination to do all that peacefully lies within our power to achieve those goals.