

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 37 (1973)
Heft: [7]

Artikel: The dogma of neutrality
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-942166>

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I should also like to remind you that the Federal Government has been trying to work out a practical and favourable solution to the problem of voting rights for Swiss abroad. This step should strengthen the ties linking you to our country.

I can also assure you that the Federal Government is constantly concerned to develop Swiss schools abroad, which are a link between the fatherland and our Swiss communities all over the world.

We are also aware that the constant improvement and intensification of our foreign relations do not rest solely with the Federal Government. We also need your help, perhaps even more now than in the past. Today, more than ever, Switzerland must try to make its contribution to mutual understanding throughout the world. We are convinced that this evolution can be guided only partially by political factors and that it undoubtedly depends largely on the attitude of each one of us, particularly those living abroad. Each Swiss abroad is a representative of Switzerland, and his personal reputation reflects on our country. So I am grateful for the part you play personally in upholding Switzerland's reputation and in contributing to the preservation of peace in the world.

I am happy to take the opportunity of our National Day to thank you all, my dear compatriots, for your work. I firmly rely on your collaboration; your support enables us to fulfil the tasks we must assume with respect to other countries.

So, on this National Day, I send you best wishes from the Federal Government and the Swiss people.

Roger Bonvin,
President of the Swiss Confederation.

THE DOGMA OF NEUTRALITY

THE TALKS presently taking place in Helsinki with a view to an international conference on European security attracts little attention in Britain. As the Swiss have no Common Market, no Commonwealth and no Uganda, no Atlantic Alliance and no hostile Arab countries to cope with, this conference obviously receives more coverage there. There is another important reason: It is the first time that the neutral Swiss are represented at an international — and non-academic platform.

The Swiss delegate has presented a scheme, copied from medieval agreements between the old cantons, for settling differences between European states. He is still hopeful that the idea will gain acceptance.

Mr Pierre Graber, Switzerland's foreign minister, recently put his views on the Conference to the Swiss News Agency.

In a two-column interview, he uttered the two synonymous words "caution" and "reserve" respectively three and two times. Indeed, there is no doubt that these words characterise Switzer-

land's foreign policy. Only by exercising "caution" is it possible to respect the non-involvement which neutrality requires.

Speaking of the mutual and balanced forces reduction in Europe, which western and Communist delegates are laboriously discussing in Vienna, Mr Graber said that Switzerland had not yet decided to join in the talks. She may decide to do so in order to know what is going on, and eventually to defend her interests. In any event, it will be impossible to table any proposal or support resolutions from either side as this would necessarily conflict with neutrality.

Thus Mr Graber implicitly admitted that Switzerland could not join in any political initiative abroad. Our foreign policy rests on the "principle of neutrality coupled with solidarity and universality," he said. The latter term appears to compensate for the passivity inherent in the former.

Although "solidarity and universality" are ideals claimed by every country, it is true that Switzerland is in a better position to defend them, thanks to her neutrality.

Mr Graber recalled that India and Pakistan, the United States and Cuba had all asked for Berne's good offices. This is a proof that neutrality has played and built a "capital of confidence in Switzerland" among the countries of the world.

But this capital should not be destroyed by inconsiderate statements, he warned. Hence the indispensable caution.

The policy of permanent neutrality is thus geared to defend the trust of others in Switzerland, or, in other words, our political image in the world. One could argue that striving to defend a country's image through considered caution does not represent an active principle of diplomacy. Yet it has helped to bring warring parties closer together (unfortunately after harm had been done).

Swiss foreign policy consists essentially in promoting and defending a national image in the eyes of the world. This can't do any harm to peace, in contrast with the kind of national **self-image** which has led to a decade of fighting for an elusive "peace with honour" in Indo-China.—P.M.B., "The Swiss Observer"

SWISS PLANT FOR TRAIN OF THE FUTURE

The magnetic air-cushion train, a new high speed means of transport, will help to solve traffic problems in the years to come. This train of the future will run at cruising speeds of 200 to 300 m.p.h. and be able to reach top speeds of 350 m.p.h.; consequently over short distances it will be faster even than travelling by air.

Japan is at present working on plans for a magnetic air-cushion train; the Swiss firm Sulzer Bros. (Winterthur, Zurich) is taking part in the development of this project with the supply of a low temperature refrigerating plant. The technical side of planning this new train should be completed by the end of 1975, and it is expected to be ready to go into operation during the year 1980.