

Neutrality or NATO?

## Turning point in Austria – even closer ties with NATO

by Thomas Oysmüller\*



Thomas Oysmüller  
(Photo ma)

*Austria will come even closer to NATO, that is the plan in the new “security strategy”. This will give Austria a different role than in the first Cold War. The ÖVP-Green government – the most authoritarian government in the founding of the Second Republic of Austria – will*

*soon be history. However, attempts are still being made to set the course on the last legs of the legislative period. Werner Kogler and Karl Nehammer have now presented a “security strategy” on which they have agreed. There was no parliamentary or even public debate on this. The course: move even closer to NATO.*

### Neutrality?

On paper, Austria will remain “neutral”, and this is unlikely to change in the next government (behind the scenes of the political theatre, the ÖVP-SPÖ-NEOS constellation is seen as the most likely next government). However, Austria is de facto a NATO country: It produces for the German armed forces, allows NATO/US troop transports to pass through the country, participates in the *SkyShield missile programme* and is involved in the economic war against Russia.

The paper speaks of “cooperation” between NATO and Austria. However, it is questionable whether this really happens on an equal footing: “It is essential that we maximise the opportunities for cooperation with NATO in the areas of

conflict prevention, crisis management and cooperative security as well as in the interest of strengthening the interoperability of our military capacities,” states the paper. Reading between the lines, it is also about expanding war capacities.

In Austria’s previous security doctrine, Russia – also as a successor state to the Soviet Union – was still considered a “strategic partner”. Russia is now an adversary waging a “hybrid” war against Austria, according to the paper. Austria will therefore take on a different role in the new Cold War than it did in the Cold War up to 1990. This time, Austria will have de facto integrated itself into the Western bloc – partly due to its EU membership, which was only implemented after the Soviet Union lost the war. China and “man-made climate change” will also be addressed – which is why more climate protection is needed.

When asked by the blog for science & politics TKP, the Russian embassy did not comment on the new security paper, referring to previous statements. According to this, Vienna has long ceased to be a neutral, impartial mediator – as it was during the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the USA. Instead, the country has integrated itself into the “collective West” – so far with no way out in sight.

Russian energy, until now the lifeline for Austrian and German industry to be competitive, is no longer to come to Austria. This was also stated in the security paper. The aim is to exit by 2027, but whether and how this can realistically be achieved – without significantly deindustrialising the country – remains to be seen.

The opposition has criticised the new security strategy. The *Madeleine Petrovic* list speaks of an “insecurity strategy” that “jeopardises Austria”.

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