

# In dire straits

## Federal Bern is sacrificing Swiss neutrality. The country must get back on track

by Thomas Scherr\*

*Hardly noticed by the public, the Swiss government has brought the country dangerously close to the EU and NATO. The foreign policy situation concerning Switzerland has been coming to a head for several months now. As if by magic, the country is being drawn directly into a major geopolitical conflict, but hardly anyone is talking about it. Switzerland side by side with NATO and the EU in the next world war – how can the country regain its independence?*

*We hear from Bern that our country is maintaining its neutrality and at the same time it can participate in the measures against Russia (coercive measures, expropriation of Russian assets, etc.). The law of neutrality allows this. But the reality is different. Our neutrality is being carelessly sacrificed in Bern, and it will take an enormous effort to repair the damage that has been done.*

### Anticipatory obedience

At the end of February 2022, the Federal Council could have easily invoked the country's historical neutrality without losing face. Instead, the councillors in Bern unquestioningly adopted all EU sanctions – not UN sanctions(!).<sup>1</sup> Worse still, measures that do not even apply in the EU itself are being submissively applied in anticipatory obedience.<sup>2</sup>

This shift away from a neutral position is noted with headshakes worldwide. At home, it is sold as a necessary adjustment to the political situation. However, the reality is different. Switzerland is no longer considered neutral. The country can no longer be considered a neutral negotiating venue. Ukraine and Russia negotiated in Istanbul in April 2022 – but not in Geneva.

### Bern is gambling away its neutrality

Federal Councillor *Ignazio Cassis'* planned peace negotiations in Switzerland with Ukrainian President *Zelensky* are evidence of a confusion in the

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA's neutrality policy. One can only marvel at the extent of this. Switzerland is no longer a negotiating venue for other states either. It will take years, if not decades, to make up for this damage with a prudent neutral realpolitik – and not just with words!

### FDFA jeopardises economic and financial centre

By rushing ahead with the implementation of EU sanctions and an official debate on the possible confiscation of Russian assets, Bern is also gambling away Switzerland's role as a globally stable, trustworthy banking centre. Who would want to invest their assets in Zurich or Geneva if the Federal Council gives in to any external political pressure?

The country is thus becoming a pawn in international politics. Instead of seeking an independent international balance and pointing out its neutrality to the powers that be, Bern gives the impression that it is only serving one power. The country is thus surrendering itself and can no longer act neutrally. A look at recent history shows that a policy of neutrality does not come for free.

### A look back

Neutrality has protected the country throughout two world wars. As a neutral location with its "good offices" and the headquarters of the *International Red Cross*, our country was able to provide international assistance even in the most difficult times.

But neutrality was not a given. The country's diplomats had to fight for the country's very survival in sometimes hair-raising negotiations with representatives of dictators, greedy bankers, and blackmailing governments. As soon as one side demanded something, the other wanted it too... Surrounded by the German Reich and Mussolini's Italy, the negotiators nevertheless tried to find a compromise for the country with the Allies. In these difficult times, the Federal Council found support among the population, who could rely on

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the government to do everything in its power to keep Switzerland out of the conflict and secure the country's supplies.

With the election of *Henri Guisan* from Vaud as General on 30 August 1939, a mature, independent personality emerged. With foresight and skill, he managed to keep the country out of the warmongering aggression of *Hitler's* Thousand-Year Reich for six years.

### **"The malice of the times"**

For decades, the experiences of the two world wars served as a guideline for an independent, stable but co-operative foreign policy. But the malice of the times lies in forgetting our own strengths. Four misguided developments point to the serious and momentous course set by the *classe politique* over the past three decades, which led the country into dire straits:

- The creeping rapprochement with the EU and thus the slow abandonment of direct democratic rights.
- Participation in the NATO sub-organisation "Partnership for Peace" (PfP).
- Striving for a seat on the UN Security Council.
- And finally, the de facto abandonment of the realpolitik of neutrality.

### **The consequences of Bern's "solo endeavours"**

Without a correction, the consequences will be serious:

- By joining the EU/NATO bloc, the country will become a party to the looming military conflict between NATO and Russia, with all the possible consequences of war.
- The creeping integration into the EU will considerably restrict the rights of self-determination. It will no longer be the people themselves or the Confederation and cantons, but an undemocratic EU centre in Brussels that will determine daily life in Switzerland through its regulations.
- A seat on the UN Security Council did not come for free. The *classe politique* has and will have to show its gratitude to its "patrons". The rights of the people still apply, and the country is still independent. With several popular initiatives, voters can exert influence on a more peaceful development (neutrality initiative,<sup>3</sup> sovereignty initiative<sup>4</sup> etc.).

Switzerland, as an independent and neutral small state can still become a key to a more peaceful development for Europe if it finds its way back to itself.

(Translation "Swiss Standpoint")

<sup>1</sup> Alfred de Zayas, "The only legal sanctions are those imposed by the Security Council"

<sup>2</sup> Carl Baudenbacher, "Switzerland and the EU have gone astray with their sanctions policy against Russia"

<sup>3</sup> Neutralitätsinitiative, <https://neutralitaet-ja.ch/>

<sup>4</sup> Souveränitätsinitiative, <https://grundrechte-ja.ch/>