



FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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EDITOR

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JAMES CHACE
MANAGING EDITOR

His Excellency Albert Weitnauer
Der Generalsekretar des Eidgenossischen
Politischen Departements
Berne, Switzerland

Dear Mr. Secretary-General:

I owe you a profound apology for not having written to you at the end of July, which I promised to do, without fail. I just don't know how I came to overlook this -- I was under considerable pressure on my return from Europe, having to write a lead article rather unexpectedly, but this is no real excuse, and I extend my profound apologies.

I have now discussed the manuscript thoroughly with my colleagues and considered it again and with some care. I am afraid that this further consideration has only deepened the reservations that I tentatively outlined in my letter of July 11, and that we could not at this point see our way to printing the manuscript at least not without very major alterations.

The main problem, as we see it, is that the manuscript is terribly general and does not give enough specifics on some of the more critical activities that are new in the overall framework of Swiss foreign policy. Lacking such specifics, I am afraid the reader would find difficulty in grasping just why something really new and significant has been going on, as you say so strongly at the outset. (A minor point might be that it would be just as well not to overstate one's claims at the outset, and to let them emerge at the conclusion. But this is a matter of taste.) And my second major point is that there is bound to be a little bit of a feeling of anticlimax when one approaches the question of U.N. membership and then finds that it is in fact stymied politically for the time being. Perhaps let me make my comments a little more specific just going through the text:



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I have no problem with the first three pages which are a sound summary of basic Swiss policy. At page 4, however, I think the meaning of "solidarity" would not be altogether clear to many readers right away. Is there a translation problem here and some other connotation that might be caught by a little explanation of the word? I take it that you mean solidarity with humanity as a whole, which has led to this rather large aspect of Swiss activity. Incidentally, I am not entirely clear whether the ICRC is an official activity -- you refer in the next paragraph to "another example" of "Swiss foreign policy," which would imply to many readers that ICRC is itself a part of Swiss foreign policy. My impression had been that you were at considerable pains to keep that activity separate, and I wonder whether it should not be distinguished rather sharply from the official representation of interests which of course does involve your public officials.

At any rate, along about page 5, I would be inclined to say rather flatly that these traditional Swiss policies had led to a rather firm policy of not joining international organizations of any sort, up to the period after the war. This point is implicit in what the author says on page 5, but I think it might be underscored and that one might have a break at that point.

Next, I think it would help the reader to get a little chronological framework as one goes along. After Switzerland adhered to the OEEC, how long was it before it went into the other organizations listed. In other words, was there a progressive evolution or was there a burst of activity and joining up in economic organizations and in effect a decision in principle that classical Swiss neutrality did not forbid joining economically oriented organizations?

Next, on page 6, it will not be clear to many American readers just why it should have appeared in some way contrary to Swiss neutrality to join the European Community. Granted that that organization had the objective of extending supra-national authorities, but this would not in itself appear contrary to the ideal of neutrality. Indeed, one could argue that the breaking down of national barriers would only further the preservation of peace throughout Europe, which would be greatly in the interest of Swiss neutrality. Thus, I think there is a good deal of explaining to do here. I think it is a case where the author so assumes the result that he finds it hard to suppose that to an outsider there could have been a serious question. My hunch is that the Swiss instinct, in

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1957, was that this was going to be a little too volatile and "political" in the great-power sense, and therefore that it stayed out. But I don't think it was a self-evident proposition by any means, or that most American readers would find it so.

Next, the last sentence of the big paragraph on page 6 wraps a great deal of economic history in a very short sentence. Unless my recollection is quite mistaken, Switzerland had adhered to EFTA considerably before 1972, so that in effect it decided that some kind of a free trade organization was acceptable and within the limits of its neutrality policy. Again, the question arises in the reader's mind whether this was an evolution, or whether the absence of any political objective in EFTA was what made it possible? I think by such specific discussion one could come at the kinds of limits that have been developing to Swiss neutrality and these have been expanding.

Next, at the top of page 7, it would help the reader a great deal if one could give specific examples of proposals that Switzerland made or supported.

Next, in the middle of page 7, the dates on which Switzerland adhered to the various U.N. specialized agencies could be of considerable interest. Was this done gradually, one by one, in a burst in the 1950s, or what?

Next, on pages 7-9, I would have thought that Swiss participation in the CSCE framework was really a very considerable extension of the bounds of Swiss neutrality, in practice. Surely CSCE, on its face, would have seemed at the outset very much more "political" than the European Community may have done as of 1957. Can one not say that there has been a very distinct evolution -- and should not one highlight it -- that led to Switzerland being prepared to accept the invitation to Helsinki whereas it had turned down the European Community. Was it influenced by the fact that other neutrals had by then participated in some international organizations and had shown that neutrality was not compromised? Was it influenced by the desire and possibility of playing the role of mediator? I would have thought, just as a lay reader, that the entry into CSCE was a major step and should be marked as such, and not treated quite as much in a totally low key. . . . Again, if the CSCE participation was as important as I think it was, it would help to explain a little bit more what position Switzerland took on the main matters. And when one comes to the

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proposal for arbitration, it would help to explain a little more clearly why Switzerland regards this as terribly important. The subject is not, after all, a new one. Is there some realistic hope that it can now come to pass in the area of issues covered by the CSCE? (Incidentally, as I look at page 9, not "everybody" in the United States agrees that there is no alternative to detente, although you may well wish to state it in this flat-footed fashion.)

By the same token, I would have thought that Swiss participation in the CIEC was another very significant move, although the North-South set of issues have less potential military or "security" implications than the East-West issues discussed at Helsinki. Here I would only suggest that you highlight it a little bit more and that you perhaps specify some of the positions that Switzerland took.

On pages 10 and 11, I note another point that might hark back. If it is as important as you say to Switzerland to show that Europe is not simply the Nine, surely that suggests that Swiss joining of EFTA was because Europe was a little bit ganging up without her. A lesser point in this paragraph is that it would help to indicate what new bilateral contacts are envisaged. The reader has no idea what the range of Swiss bilateral contacts are, and this sentence as it stands says very little.

Finally, one comes at page 11 to the question of U.N. membership. What I have been suggesting earlier is that you might have painted a more dramatic picture of the degree of change already achieved by Swiss participation in economic organizations, and above all by Swiss participation in Helsinki and Paris. If this were done, the sense of approaching a climax on the U.N. issue, and then being let down, would be substantially less.

But I think, also, there is some additional explaining that needs to be done to understand why, with all the various things that Switzerland was doing between the early 1950s and the present time, including joining the subsidiary agencies of the United Nations, the view persisted that to join the U.N. itself would somehow go against the classical tenets of Swiss neutrality. You come at page 13 to saying that neutrality is no longer a consideration. When and by what process did it cease to be so? Was there for a long time a question of making recognition of Swiss neutrality a condition of

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Swiss accession? One does not get the sense of movement of time, or how the thinking has changed so that, as you say, neutrality is not now the obstacle but rather the feeling that the U.N. is ineffective and expensive. One gets the feeling, frankly, that Switzerland's approach to the United Nations has been extraordinarily conservative, and that for a great many years it would have been no real menace to Swiss neutrality to be a member. Your country has a habit, commendable in many circumstances, of coming very slowly to conclusions.

Perhaps a way to present the U.N. problem would be to say that gradually, over a period of time, Swiss worries on the score of "neutrality" have been eased. Unfortunately, however, the easing of this difficulty coincided with the United Nations becoming more and more politicized and more and more an arena where resolutions were adopted for the sake of their rhetorical and even propaganda effect, rather than to get at the core of problems. Thus, the neutrality drawback was only eased to the point of proposing membership at a time when the other drawbacks had moved to the fore. At any rate, I do think a somewhat more graphic and vivid way of presentation could be adopted. But, to repeat, I would myself say that it was a mistake to look too exclusively to the question of U.N. membership -- Helsinki would seem to me to have been at least as great a step as accession to the U.N. would be at this point.

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I trust that you will forgive the frankness of these comments. [The subject is potentially an interesting one, although the pace and degree of change in Swiss foreign policy are not such that one can make the subject truly dramatic.] Basically, I think that you may suffer from the traditional reserve and low-keyed style typical of your profession (and my former one). I am not suggesting that you jump to the other extreme and try to make a sensational story out of the changes in thinking that have obviously been taking place in Switzerland since the Second World War. But I do think a much more vivid highlighting, a much more vivid chronological framework and picture of evolution, and a considerably more specific discussion of Swiss actions in some instances -- all these would contribute immensely to make the subject really interesting to the American reader. As the manuscript stands,

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I am afraid it would strike most readers as quite bland and stating the fairly obvious for the most part. On reflection, I myself am persuaded that this is not the case, but it would take a rather considerably revised manuscript to put it across.

Again my profound apologies for the delay. Now I am hastening to get these comments off and I trust that they will be clear enough.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

William P. Bundy

c.c. The Honorable Raymond Probst

(Signed in his absence to avoid further delay.)