

CONFIDENTIAL

CCRC



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Sir Antony Acland KCMG KCVO  
Permanent Under-Secretary of State

21 January 1986

C D Powell Esq  
10 Downing Street

ms

Prime Minister  
You may just like  
to note this for  
future reference.

Dear Charles,

AFGHANISTAN AND AUSTRIAN NEUTRALITY

1. We had a word last Friday about the call on me on 10 January by the Austrian Ambassador. I enclose a copy of the Aide-Memoire left by Dr Thomas.

C.D.P.  
23/1/86  
Aide-Memoire  
heavily  
over-stated.

2. As I told you, Dr Thomas expressed concern at the comparison made by the Prime Minister during a TV interview on 27 December between the Austrian model of neutrality and the notion of an externally guaranteed neutrality as a solution to the problem of Afghanistan.

3. I pointed out to Dr Thomas that the Prime Minister's remarks, reflecting a proposal put forward by Lord Carrington in 1980, were made in the context of a free ranging discussion. The Prime Minister was drawing a comparison in broad political terms, and her remarks were not to be taken as a comment on the legal basis of Austria's neutrality. The United Kingdom did not at this stage intend to revive the Carrington proposals, although they still remained on the table as a possible basis for further discussion should the UN initiative founder.

4. The Ambassador's approach illustrates the Austrians' sensitivity about their neutral status, which, as the Aide-Memoire makes clear, does not derive from the Austrian State Treaty, but from a decision of the Austrian Parliament. We shall need to take care to observe this distinction if, in considering the Afghanistan question, what is in many ways an apposite parallel with Austria re-emerges.

Antony Acland

Antony Acland

CONFIDENTIAL

A i d e M e m o i r e

The status of permanent neutrality of the Republic of Austria is based on the Federal Constitutional Law of 26th October 1955 on the Neutrality of Austria which was adopted by a democratically elected parliament after the complete withdrawal of all foreign occupation forces.

Although this law was notified to all states with which Austria had diplomatic relations and the hope was expressed that this permanent neutrality would be accorded recognition, never were third countries requested to guarantee this neutrality, nor was such a guarantee given.

The State Treaty for the Re-establishment of an Independent and Democratic Austria of 15th May 1955 does not contain any reference to the neutrality of the country.

Taking the foregoing into consideration, the status of permanent neutrality was not imposed upon Austria and there are no guarantor powers.

To give publicly the impression that Austria can serve as an example of a neutralised country with a neutrality guaranteed by foreign powers sheds a wrong light on her neutrality and her policy of neutrality, and is bound to weaken her international position. It is therefore not only detrimental to Austria's own interests, but likely to result also in lasting damaging effects for the whole of Europe.

London, 10th January 1986