

Enclosure No. 2, to despatch
No. 452, of Sept. 19, 1935,
from the Legation at Vienna,
Austria.

(Translation)

Source: Vienna CORRESPON-
DENCE POLITICAL,
Sept. 18, 1935.

Speaking from the tribune of the plenary assembly of the League of Nations, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria, Berger-Waldenegg, defined clearly the attitude of his country towards the great principle of international solidarity and of peaceful cooperation, upon which the edifice of the institution of Geneva reposes. Mentioning briefly the recent history of the relations between the Vienna government and Geneva, the Austrian Minister was able to state that Austria had given many proofs of her loyalty and of her attachment to the organ of the League of Nations. As one of the first of the former enemies of the Allied and Associated powers to be admitted to the League of Nations, Austria demonstrated her entire confidence in the work of Geneva, in addressing to the League of Nations her famous appeal for the facilitation of her financial reconstruction. That eminent statesman, Mgr. Scipio, realized the entire importance which close cooperation with the great and lesser powers grouped in the League must have for Austria. Similarly, the spirit of initiative shown by the powers directly interested in the maintenance of Austrian independence in their action through the instrument of the League, has provided for the latter one of the most striking and incontestable successes of its history. It is no exaggeration to say that the financial reconstruction of Austria, which took place in such favorable conditions, constituted a decisive proof of the usefulness and vitality (Lebenskraft) of the Geneva mechanism.

Austria would be wising to forget this. On the other hand, the League of Nations should not spare any effort to complete a work commenced under such favorable auspices. In this respect, the Austrian Foreign Minister was very explicit: the preliminary condition for every sort of stable security is the recognition of the absolute and unconditional equality of rights of all the states called upon to take part in a collective organization. It would in fact be inadmissible to invite Austria on the one hand to unite her efforts with those of other states interested in the maintenance of the stability of Central Europe, while depriving her on the other hand of the ability to take appropriate measures with a view to fulfilling this task. It would be impossible to conceive of a regime of security between an Austria fettered in the exercise of her sovereignty and other states fully and entirely sovereign. Austria desires to remain independent and must remain independent. She has given striking proof of the fact in the course of the last few years. She is entirely determined to abide by this of

conduct . .

conduct, which seems to her to be the only one designed to safeguard simultaneously her own interests and the peace of the country. But she could not admit that the condition of legal inferiority in which she still finds herself and which is a consequence of the scrupulous observation of her obligations, should be indefinitely perpetuated. No agreement stabilizing conditions in Central Europe could be concluded without an Austria placed on an absolutely equal footing with all her neighbors. It is a question of right and of nothing else. The question of what use Austria might make of the liberty of action which she has finally acquired is one which would depend on nothing except the will of that country itself. Furthermore, it is evident that Austria, which is pursuing no territorial ambitions and no aggressive political aim against any power, will make only such usage of this freedom as may be dictated by consideration of "the national security and the fulfillment of her international obligations". To use the terms of the definition given by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom in his great speech on the principal condition for every sort of collective security, Austria refuses to believe that this consideration for the independence and the freedom of the members of the League of Nations, mentioned by the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, would apply to all the countries of the universe, including those most distant and those of which the domestic regime and general conditions seem the most dubious, but that this same consideration would not prevail when it was a matter of granting to one of the oldest countries in the heart of Europe the ability to ensure her internal and external security through her own resources. Austria is able to face the future calmly. She is and will remain convinced of the entire loyalty of the powers and expects that justice will be done in granting to her in its integrity that right which is the primary right of all, namely the right to safeguard her own existence as a sovereign and independent state. In any case, she will always be willing to act in close co-operation with all other countries which show good will.