



AMERICAN
INTERNATIONAL
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Micheline Calmy-Rey - 2014

"The Role of Switzerland in International Relations and Diplomacy"

The former Swiss President argues for Swiss entry into the EU and that the international order is now multi-polarised and a re-shuffling of economic power has taken place. In less than a century, she stated that we have moved from a world dominated by Europe, to a multi-polar world. American influence has declined since the Iraq war, meanwhile international organizations and financial markets enjoy greater power. It is impossible to ignore that multinational companies exercise their influence on a global scale.

Calmy-Rey noted the important disconnect between the EU's economic power and its ability to influence international events because of its weak central governance.

How does Switzerland respond to this integrated Europe? For nearly 500 years, "it has demonstrated its ability to create a niche for its continued existence in the shadow of great powers." The country's neutrality has served as a great advantage. Through this "active neutrality" it has kept a distance from great powers, which enables it to act as mediator and encourage dialogue between countries at odds with each other.

In recent years, Switzerland has been involved as an "honest broker" in mediating 20 peace processes without taking sides. But Switzerland, she said, now faces a situation similar to Geneva at the time of Napoleon. After being ruled by the French, Geneva in 1815, decided to join the Swiss Confederation, because as a small independent republic, it was difficult to defend itself. Similarly she said Switzerland should join the EU, believing that it can still retain its unique neutrality whilst being a member.

Micheline Calmy-Rey studied at the Graduate Institute in Geneva, where she obtained a Master's degree in Political Science. Following 20 years, as an entrepreneur, she began her political life as Deputy of the Social Democratic Party and was a Member of Parliament, Canton of Geneva, 1981-1997. In 1997, she was elected to the Geneva Cantonal Government and took over as Head of the Department of Finance. She assumed the Office of President of the Cantonal Government from 2001-2002. She was then elected to the Federal Council on December 4th, 2002, serving as Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) from 2003-2011, during which she pursued an

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active foreign policy marked by a commitment to broadening and developing relations between Switzerland and the European Union (EU).

Madame Calmy-Rey has promoted equally a stronger presence of Switzerland beyond the European continent, in particular in Asia and Africa, and has pursued a policy of active neutrality, promoting peace, fostering respect for human rights and advancing the fight against poverty. Amongst the highlights of this policy, it is worth mentioning the launch of Geneva Initiative, the decisive contribution to the creation of the Human Rights Council, the independence of Kosovo, the mediations between Armenia and Turkey, Georgia and Russia, as well as the adoption of the Third Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions which allowed the "Magen David Adom" to enter the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

In 2010, she took up the Presidency of the Council of Europe and Chaired the Ministerial Conference of the Francophonie in 2010 and 2011. In 2011, Micheline Calmy-Rey became the President of the Swiss Confederation for a one year term.

In May 2012, she was nominated visiting professor at the University of Geneva and is a Member of the Board of Governors of the "International Crisis Group", "Geneva Call" and President of the "Martin Ennals Awards" Foundation.

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