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## **I. Introduction**

Switzerland has maintained the policy of neutrality in the world affairs and as such it has stood out in the international political stage. For a long time now, the policy of neutrality has been an identity of the country. Switzerland has avoided making any alliances with foreign government, internal governmental bodies and international organization that might involve military, political or direct interference. As such it has chosen to remain non committal in some of the most pressing matters of political concern.

When it has been called to action, the country has opted to play the mediator or peacemaker. Its affiliation with international peers has remained under strict scrutiny at home with stringent laws prohibiting the country towards opening up to alliances with international bodies. However the very speed at which globalization is growing has brought the county's philosophy on foreign policy under great peril, at time leading to near mass action. The effects of globalization and the need for the country to take a more active role has seen the country explore the possibility of relaxing it s strict laws that govern its international relations. In the recent past the country has agreed albeit grudgingly to send its armed troops under the UN programs as peace keepers. Other activities that show the perils of the Swiss foreign policy include the debate on its EU membership, the minaret issue plus the pressure by some of the European country asking her to relax her banking secrecy laws.

Therefore these latest happenings at the global arena have brought the country's international policy under question, thus drifting the country

towards isolation as its snails pace in embracing active international ties is seen as anti globalization.

## **II. The country's foreign policy and philosophy**

Recent activities involving the country's foreign policy suggest that the country is more prone to conflict than peace, as they have generated much condemnation from international quarters.

A recent referendum in the country to allow for construction of minarets returned negative results. This brought a lot of international rebuke from her European neighbors as well as the Arab world. The country has also imposed restrictions on her inter border migration. This has affected the number of foreigners who can work in Switzerland.

Because this is a strict violation of EU migration rules, it has also brought condemnation. Furthermore the country has also dragging its feet towards joining EU much to the chagrin of Europe. Some of the European countries have threatened to take action and force Switzerland to relax its banking secrecy. As such, the country is increasingly experiencing “ un splendid isolation “ and rebuke international (Charlemagne Para 1 -7). These activities tend to be more supportive of the skeptics of Switzerland relaxation of its foreign policy interaction who argue that the country stands to loose its unique identify (Para 9). Winning and loosing seems to be an inherent quality of change. As such the issue of globalization is bound to produce both losers and winners from the economic perspective in this country.

The country's winners and losers are socially and politically generated as the country fathers are vehemently opposed to the idea of globalization.

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Switzerland inherent demographic inequalities in terms of labor demand and supply creates a need for imported labor. The growth liberalization and globalization is putting her neutral stance in peril. As such the country sees herself as the permanent loser in terms of her national identity should she open her borders for human immigration and relax her neutrality in world affairs (O'Brien and Leichenko 94, 95).

The recent isolationism has lead to the Swiss government to get involved and attempt damage control. Some of these interventions include the Swiss president flying to Libya to ease the tension between the two countries, which had seen Libya freeze oil exports to Switzerland. Furthermore the Swiss interior minister is at the front line driving an agenda that is intends to make the country tighten ties with international bodies such as Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as well as cooperating with other countries in scientific research (Miserez para 1, 17).

### **III. Switzerland and the competitive advantage of nations.**

Traditionally Switzerland is not n industrial nation. Up to the late nineteenth century the country has depended on exporting human labor.

it is a late bloomer when it comes to industrial growth. From the late nineteenth century, up to the early 21st century the country has seen its industry grow tremendously to become a global force. Some of its firms such as Novartis, Nestle and many more are now a force to reckon with globally.

The country has a very small population and as such most of its production is for export, thus becoming a very competitive force in the global market. The country's competitiveness has also been supported by reliable human

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resource, infrastructure and availability of capital and vibrant local supporting industries (Flury para 1-3). However Switzerland is not as strong as it used to be in the late twentieth century. It has been noted with concern that she is the country with the slowest growing rate of the OECD members. Its once vibrant industry is now threatened by sanctions. This is because of the increasing non polarity of and emergence of many centers of power in the world. As such the country is finding that its philosophy of neutrality increasingly threatened. As such the country is seeking to consolidate itself in the world politics by signing extensive and multiple agreements with international bodies and governments (Charlemagne para 8).

Furthermore to reinstate its clout in the international financial markets the country is also deliberately depreciating the Swiss Franc so as the currency can have a competitive edge over other world major currencies (Buttonwood para 7). Switzerland is a relatively stable country and one of the countries that boldly practices direct democracy. As such the relationship between the governments and the Swiss firms is cordial. Swiss industries largely depend on the international market for it's highly reputable manufactured goods. Thus the market is controlled by market forces such as demand and supply, instead of the government. Because of its small population, she has one of the highest GDP's in the world. Therefore she is one of the most stable market eceonmoies in the world (Garcia para 13, 14).

#### **IV. The Swiss, geopolitics of energy and the politics of identity and economic development**

Switzerland is a land locked country and to make it even more complicated for her, she is not endowed with natural resources such as oil, natural gas

among others. Even though she is among the countries that consume the smallest amount of natural gas and oil in Europe she has been drawn into the murky world on energy politics.

She has to collaborate with other EU members to get oil from Russia, the main supplier to the region (Pascual and Zambetakis 9-12). . To avoid over reliance of oil from Russia, Switzerland has sourced for oil from other countries such as Libya, a source that has been recently threatened as a result of the latest row between the two countries (Charlemagne para 8). Switzerland is one of the most consistent country in establishing a national identify of neutrality, mediator. This means that she is a non active participant in most of the international affairs.

National identity involves closely guarding the Swiss borders not to allow foreigners, whom she argues would dissolve her national identity. The country has had three periods that have been considered crucial in her economic development. Before the First World War she encouraged foreigners as part of economic development.

Between the First and the Second World War, she saw foreigners as a threat to her national identity. After the Second World War foreigners were seen as a temporary measure to her economic development needs. In the late twentieth and early twenty first century, the country is re debating the issue of foreign involvement more specifically her inclusion into the European Union, with strong opposition against her EU membership. The argument from far right activists is that opening her borders to foreigners and such associations as EU will be unculturation of the unique Swiss identity.

This is despite the fact that the Swiss largely on foreigner labor for its economic development as her small population cannot offer the labor required by her industries (Riano and Wastl-Walter 16). Now that the Swiss economy is not as strong as it once was the Swiss government is trying all it can to strengthen it, while maintaining the Swiss identify. The Swiss parliament is looking to deal with the issue of the rising unemployment without tampering with its immigration policy while the Swiss central bank has opted for explicit depreciation of the Swiss currency to keep it as competitive as possible against major world currencies (Charlemagne para 1; Buttonwood para 3).

## **V. Conclusion**

Switzerland is ac country at cross roads. It is torn between tearing its foreign policy that supports its unique national identity of neutrality and tearing its economic development apart. Recent times have seen globalization grow and influence world politics.

Because the country is reluctance to be actively involved in active globalization efforts it thus faces massive condemnation and possible isolation. The effects can only be negative to a country that is seeing its once vibrant economy grow at snails pace.

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