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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

MISS NEVILLE-JONES

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CABINET OFFICE

DEFENCE IMPLICATIONS OF COMMUNITY ENLARGEMENT

Thank you for your minute of 27 October.

I have not shown your minute to the Prime Minister but I am sure he would agree with your conclusion that there is no need for Ministers to resume discussion of this subject in the near future and that we should not plan a meeting of OPD(SE).

I am copying this minute to Richard Gozney (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and John Pitt-Brooke (Ministry of Defence).

J. S. WALL  
6 November 1992

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Ref: B.01202

MR WALL

cc Sir Robin Butler  
Sir Rodric Braithwaite

DEFENCE IMPLICATIONS OF COMMUNITY ENLARGEMENT

*minutes attached*  
At the meeting of OPDSE on 14 July (OPDSE(92) 2nd Meeting) Ministers agreed that it was essential that new member states of the Community which wished to become full members of the WEU should simultaneously join NATO. At the same time the risks of an adverse Russian reaction to the enlargement of NATO were acknowledged. It was decided that before firm conclusions could be reached about the direction of policy, we should seek to learn more about the views of the other principal players. In particular, discussions should be held with the United States Government; the intentions of the EFTA nations should be established and an assessment of the likely Russian reaction should be prepared. The Committee agreed to return to the issues in the autumn.

2. Two rounds of discussions have taken place with the Americans. They share our view about the importance of the WEU/NATO membership link and have supported our strategy of quietly creating a climate in which this is generally accepted.
3. The Russian dimension has been looked at in greater depth. The conclusion is that the prospect of NATO enlargement to the East will be thoroughly unpalatable to them and potentially destabilising for Yeltsin and that no amount of explanation will do much to mitigate this, at any rate in the short term. Sir Brian Fall continues to argue strongly that the risk of early action in this area greatly outweigh the benefits.
4. There are a number of uncertain factors in all this at present:

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- the likely delay in the entry into force of the Union Treaty could affect the timetable for EC enlargement, for both the EFTAns and the CEEs;
- none of the EFTAns seems likely to want more than observer status in the WEU, at least initially: the question of whether the new members of the Union need to join NATO in parallel with the WEU is therefore unlikely to become actual until 1996 at the earliest;
- the V3 seem tacitly to accept that NATO membership is not an early prospect; and
- the division of Czechoslovakia, and doubts, on political and economic grounds, over Slovakia's claim to be in the first rank of CEE candidates for EC membership and hence of whether the V3/4 will necessarily stick together as a group.

5. Officials have therefore concluded that our present policy - of opposing divergence between NATO and the WEU, but not actively seeking the endorsement of our allies for convergence or for early enlargement - is both necessary and sufficient for the time being.

6. Against this background I see no requirement for Ministers to resume early discussion of this subject and recommend that the planned meeting of OPDSE is postponed sine die.

7. I am copying this minute to Richard Gozney and John Pitt-Brooke.



Miss L P Neville-Jones

27 October 1992

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