



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

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21 June 1991

London SW1A 2AH

Rune Master

Worth reading before Mudge

Sean Stephens,

ANGLO FRENCH SUMMIT: FRENCH VIEWS ON EUROPEAN DEFENCE

X 24/6..

In advance of the Anglo French Summit, you might like a summary of comments in two recent secret reports (91/19064 and 91/38491) which shed some light on French thinking on European defence issues.

The key points are that French officials who are close to French Ministers:

- interpret the Copenhagen NATO Communiqué as the U.S. giving a green light for EC members to develop a defence policy (this is not borne out by a careful reading of the Copenhagen Communiqué which refers to the Twelve only in the context of a common foreign and security policy and political union);
- regard the UK as more opposed to European defence than the U.S., and are particularly irritated with the Dutch whose position they see as inconsistent, federalist on most European issues, but inconveniently pro-Atlantic on defence;
- see no great urgency in building up a European defence capability;
- want a single article on defence in the IGC Treaty which would emphasise the long term competence of the Union in defence matters, define the nature of the WEU/EC link, and set a date for a further move forward to the creation of new European defence structures.

There was some collateral for this broad approach in a report from the Dutch on the talks between President Mitterrand and Lubbers on 18 June in The Hague at the Eureka Anniversary. According to the Dutch, Mitterrand launched into a tirade on the NATO decision to create a Rapid Reaction Force and on military integration more generally. But he later added that France would be ready to renounce sovereignty in the military sphere in favour of Europe. This appears to mean that France would insist on WEU becoming a part of the Union before assigning

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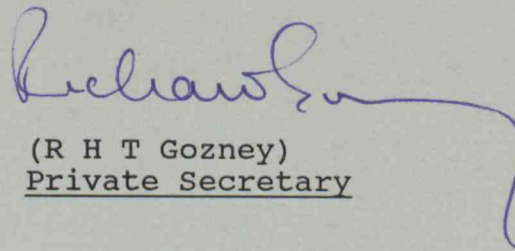


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French forces to a European Reaction Force; but then Mitterrand sees any real moves towards European defence as a long term matter rather than something to be decided this year.

I am copying this letter to Simon Webb (MOD) and Sonia Phippard (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,



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Private Secretary

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