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**THE EUROPEAN UNION WILL NOT BE NEUTRAL IN
THE TRADITIONAL SENSE**

**Summary of the talk given by Mr Bangemann,
Vice-President of the Commission
to the Vienna International Club**

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A European union cannot and will not be neutral in the traditional sense.

This concept does not jell with the European federal state, which represents the final objective of the process of European integration.

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe appear to have fewer problems regarding neutrality than, say, Austria.

Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia in varying degrees all reject neutrality as a vestige of the cold war. This is understandable since traditional neutrality has lost much of its former significance.

While the nascent young democracies of Eastern Europe obviously have a place in the European Community of the future, it will take time for them to find it. Any country wishing to join the Community must accept all the Community's existing rules and procedures in the same way as the current Member States. Entry implies a considerable surrender of national sovereignty. Personally, I wonder whether the young democracies of Eastern Europe, which have just regained their national sovereignty, are willing to surrender it to Brussels.

The countries applying for accession must also consider that the current Community will be far more integrated by the time they join. The single market will be a reality and by the year 2000 we might well have a single European currency.

The Community will also need a common foreign and security policy if it is to speak more forcefully with one voice at international level.

There is no sense in neutrality other than in the event of armed conflict between nation states. However, wars of this type have become virtually unthinkable, at least in Europe. Today, it is only cynical aggressors who wage wars and they must then be stopped by the whole of the international community, through diplomatic channels if possible but also by force of arms if necessary.

Can a neutral state refuse to take part in collective measures to enforce international law?

Some neutral states appear prepared as a rule to engage in military force under the banner of the United Nations to ensure that peace is maintained.

We, as the European Community, must, however, already develop our ideas further.

The question is not whether various individual Member States are able to provide evidence of greater unity but whether the Community as such can close ranks in future as part of a common security policy.

We want political union, and this, at least in the long term, implies a common army.

Cooperation on security policy cannot, in the long run, be conducted outside the Community's political bodies.

The countries applying for membership of the Community must also prepare themselves realistically for this eventuality.

Neutrality must be gauged against the European Community of the year 2000, not today's Community.

And the Community of the year 2000 will certainly have a defence policy component even if opinions currently differ on the form this will take. It is inconceivable that bloody wars of aggression should again start in Europe.

However, we must work on the basic assumption that the Community will in future assume greater responsibility as regards security policy.

This responsibility is not divisible.

That is why I consider neutrality as irreconcilable with the objective of political union.

The Community and the countries applying for membership must clarify this issue before entry and not afterwards.

The very concept of "an enemy" no longer exists in Europe. However, the old order based on the "balance of terror" has not yet been replaced by a new European peace order.

Even though we still used the concept of two major military blocs to speed up disarmament in Europe, this has not led to a system of collective security for the whole of Europe, far from it.

The Warsaw Pact has been virtually dismantled, but NATO does not lend itself as a platform for a concept of Pan-European security embracing the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

I do not share Gorbachev's vision of a "common European house".

It would be difficult to integrate the Soviet Union in its current form in the European Community.

This would be an insurmountable challenge both for us and for the Soviet Union.

Before thinking of a "European house", the President of the USSR must restore order in his own house, not with an iron rod, but in compliance with the principles of human rights and the right of self-determination for nations.

While the European Community is developing into a federation, the Soviet Union is becoming more like a confederation.

In other words, with us frontiers are being eliminated; there, they are first having to be redefined.

It would be difficult for a confederation to be a member of the European Union.

This makes the question of the accession of Yugoslavia more complicated.

I must also disappoint those who see Europe as a vague collection of nation states.

Enlargement of the Community cannot hold up the process of rapid integration.

Enlargement and deepening are the two sides of the same coin. We must achieve the one without abandoning the other. This is a task in which I would ask Austria and the countries of Eastern Europe to participate.