

October 24, 2000

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Meserve  
Commissioner Dicus  
Commissioner Diaz  
Commissioner McGaffigan  
Commissioner Merrifield

FROM: Janice Dunn Lee, Director */RA/*  
Office of International Programs

SUBJECT: REPORT OF THE OECD/NEA STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING -  
OCTOBER 12 AND 13, 2000

Purpose:

This memorandum provides a brief summary of discussions held during the 101<sup>st</sup> Session of the Steering Committee for Nuclear Energy of the OECD/NEA. Mr. William Magwood, Department of Energy (DOE) Director of the Office of Nuclear Energy, and U.S. representative to the NEA Steering Committee, was unable to attend, and asked that I take the lead for the U.S. in the Steering Committee meeting, as well as the Bureau meeting held the day before. A copy of the meeting agenda is at Attachment 1.

Three topics of particular interest include: (1) the accession of the Republic of Poland to the Nuclear Energy Agency; (2) the final report on the review of the NEA committee structure, and; (3) the background document on nuclear energy in a sustainable development perspective.

Discussion:

1. Poland Membership

The application of Poland for membership in the NEA and its Data Bank was considered in the context of a policy debate which took place during the May 2000 Steering Committee meeting, and as the result of a recent NEA team visit to Poland. The politically sensitive subject looms large in the backdrop of European Union accession issues, making it difficult for European countries to stand firm on the recommendations laid out in the "Birkhofer Report" limiting membership to those countries that are "major players" in the nuclear field or that provide added value to the agency's activities.

I led the discussion against Poland membership, emphasizing the uniqueness of the NEA in terms of its size and competence, strength in depth, and quality of technical work. Particularly in a time of scarce resources, I noted that the U.S. looks especially to efficiency and relevance to

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budgets and programs, and does not want to dilute its efforts. The U.S. is interested in preserving the integrity of the NEA and supports the organization in large part because of its unique qualities. A copy of my statement is at Attachment 2.

Japan and the Republic of Korea strongly agreed with the U.S. position, and the United Kingdom expressed support. In the end, the Steering Committee found that it was not possible to reach consensus on the application of Poland to become a member of the NEA, noting at the same time that neither was there a consensus not to recommend Poland as a member. The steering committee noted further that this position does not exclude a future reevaluation of the issue based on the circumstances prevailing at that time, but welcomed the active participation of Poland as an observer in specific activities of the Agency.

## 2. NEA Committee Structure

The final report on the review of the NEA Committee Structure was reviewed, and the report endorsed, including mandates of the standing technical committees. The standing committees were commended in their efforts to find efficiencies and meet reduction targets set by the Secretariat. The U.S. endorsed the streamlined structure (which did not eliminate any standing committees) and encouraged the implementation of an approach to review and develop mechanisms for “cross-cutting” activities within the NEA, from a rational, comprehensive and multi-faceted perspective. The U.S. suggested that certain refinements still can be achieved in the committee structure, and submitted this information in writing to the Secretariat.

## 3. Nuclear Energy in a Sustainable Development

A document was prepared by the NEA Secretariat as a contribution to the OECD three-year project on sustainable development. The objectives of the report are to help governments to assess the extent to which nuclear energy is compatible with the goals of sustainable development and to identify areas in which nuclear energy could contribute. The document is a compilation of useful information for each country to have when reviewing its policies for energy development, and does not prejudice the policies of individual member countries towards nuclear power. The U.S., along with the majority of member countries supported the publication of the document. Although several countries, including Denmark, Austria and Germany, raised concerns, they agreed to publication with appropriate caveats, noting that this was not an endorsement of nuclear power. The topic of nuclear energy in a sustainable development will be the subject of OECD Secretary General Donald Johnston’s speech to the American Nuclear Society Meeting in November in Washington, D.C.

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Conclusions:

The meeting was successful in achieving U.S. objectives. Additional details of discussions held during the Steering Committee meeting will be included in an upcoming reporting cable to be prepared by the Department of State.

Attachments: As stated

cc:    SECY  
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**U.S. STATEMENT ON ACCESSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND  
TO THE NUCLEAR ENERGY AGENCY**

**OCTOBER 13, 2000**

**JANICE DUNN LEE  
HEAD U.S. DELEGATE**

- Thank you Mr. Chairman, and especially for the opportunity to open this discussion.
- The membership expansion issue, and the decision on whether or not to allow Poland to become a member of the NEA is without doubt one of the most challenging issues facing the NEA today.
- Let me say at the outset that the U.S. position remains unchanged, as stated during the Steering Committee meeting last May.
- As expressed so eloquently by Mr. Dick Stratford, from the U.S. Department of State, for a variety of reasons, including issues related to both the NEA organization itself, and issues pertaining to qualifications of potential new members, the U.S. holds firm to the view that the time is not right for Poland to become a member of the NEA.
- Our views are not specific to Poland, but relate more to the issue of the NEA itself, and the consequence of membership expansion.
- The decision reached today can set an important precedent for future decisions about NEA membership.
- While there may be no practical problem today to allow a country such as Poland to join the NEA, we could create a problem for tomorrow.
- The issue is not really about Poland, but about the NEA. Who are we....and what are we about?
- The U.S. attaches great importance to the NEA's uniqueness, in its size, competence, strength in depth, and quality of technical work.
- In a time of scarce resources, we look especially to efficiency and relevance to our budgets and programs. We do not want to dilute our efforts.
- The U.S. government, along with other NEA member countries supported the conclusions of the Birkhofer Report that new membership should be offered to very few countries. Furthermore, the Strategic Plan states that the NEA should "seek to limit new membership to those countries that are major players in the nuclear field or that provide added value to the agency's activities and carefully analyze the credentials of non-members.

The truth is that admittance of Poland to the NEA points to inconsistencies with the principles laid out in the Strategic Plan, and begs the question as to who are we and what are we about.

- Let me summarize and say that the U.S. position reflects a strong desire to preserve the integrity of the NEA. The U.S. supports this organization in large part because of its unique qualities.
- If we allow purely political reasons to drive us to decisions about membership, we will in the end become identical to the IAEA.
- My government would have great difficulty with that. As Mr. Stratford described last May, we went through a near death experience with the NEA several years ago. We certainly want to avoid that experience again.
- The U.S. position about membership expansion is not a policy of exclusiveness, but one of value added. It is in our mutual interests to focus on a policy that will not lead to diminishing the importance of the NEA program or its value to member states, but will accommodate the participation interests of non-member countries. In this regard, we would welcome participation by Poland as observers in specific NEA activities.
- The U.S. encourages looking constructively at alternatives to membership status and to explore participation mechanisms supportive of maintaining an effective organization.