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**ADDRESS DELIVERED BY M. MAURICE COUVE DE MURVILLE**

**FRENCH MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE BUDGETARY DEBATES IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1965**

It has already become a tradition of the Fifth Republic, it seems, to hold a foreign policy debate on the occasion of the examination of my department's budget. No one is more pleased with this than the Foreign Affairs Minister, who can thus, for the second time this year--since with the new tradition there is also a debate during Parliament's spring session--set forth the Government's policy, learn the views and criticisms of the members of the National Assembly and reply with the necessary explanations. I am all the more pleased since a number of oral questions have been posed during the summer on the subject of the Common Market crisis and since we therefore can--as, it seems to me, was the general desire--open a broad discussion on one question of major importance, presently at the center of many concerns. Moreover, after the past three months, such confusion, emotion and lack of realism have been shown that the need is being felt to specify the responsibilities, to define the problems raised and to seek the perspectives.

The crisis of the European Economic Community will be the topic of the second part of my address. In the first part I will discuss the international situation. The Assembly will be able to note what is obvious a priori, namely, that the two parts are closely connected. It is impossible to disassociate the Common Market's affairs from the general context into which they inevitably fall, in particular the political affairs of Europe in general, which dictate, from near or far, the positions of all our partners.

The international situation is obviously dominated at this time by events in Asia, the Vietnam war, the conflict between Indonesia and Malaysia, the confrontation of India and Pakistan over Kashmir. In one case, that of Vietnam and Laos, decolonization has not put an end to outside intervention, and those two unfortunate countries have become the arena for external rivalries, not including the former colonial power. In the other case, accession to independence has not brought a solution to the vital territorial disputes. France's position on all these problems is well-known. A solution cannot,

in our view, be found except through the path of real independence, of the self-determination of peoples, of neutrality and of noninterference in the internal affairs of States.

In Vietnam, nothing at this time permits us to discern the slightest sign of a slowing-down in the war, that war which means for the Vietnamese people an unbelievable amount of human suffering and material destruction. France has for years indicated the road that seems to her indispensable to take if there is a desire to put an end to this. She hopes and she believes that in the end, reason will prevail: then she will not spare her efforts, to the extent they could be useful, to assist in re-establishing peace and raising the ruins.

The Security Council has intervened between India and Pakistan since the beginning, and France has been closely associated with its action. The essential for the time being is to achieve a complete cease-fire and to regulate the withdrawal of the forces of both sides to their countries of origin. Then will come the discussion on the substance of the problem--the fate of Kashmir. Here again, as with former Indochina, it is impossible to resist that feeling of uneasiness that arises from a situation in which there is a persistent intention to continue the talks, without that major power that happens to be the closest to the scenes of conflict and consequently can be the most interested in the decisions to be taken.

China's exclusion from the United Nations Organization and, in reality, from all international negotiations, particularly in Asia, is creating an unreal situation, which doubtless explains the disturbing reactions on its part that we witness periodically and that, in actual fact, prevent any progress toward a settlement. In Asia as elsewhere, and especially in Europe, there are specific questions for which solutions should be found. At the same time, there is reason to seek an overall balance of forces and positions, which actually is the problem of peace. The point is to ascertain how this balance can be established all around the huge Chinese empire, in those regions concerned today that are called the Pacific, Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent. A unilateral policy of containment does not seem to be the right answer. What is needed is solutions reached through agreement, or at least resulting from some modus vivendi, solutions based on the essential principles that I mentioned a moment ago. No one realizes more fully than we the years of bitter discussions, of incidents of all kinds and even of violent crises that will be necessary to achieve this with the help of China. The sooner it is possible to begin, however, the better it will be for everyone.

That is what I had the honor of stating not long ago to the United Nations General Assembly. It did not seem to me that the Assembly was insensitive to this view. I also tried to explain to it the Government's views on the role and the functioning of the United Nations Organization in the present world situation.

After the trials of recent years, after the crisis that arose in 1964 over the subject of financing, in other words after the experience certainly gained, in our opinion proof has been established that in the first place it is essential to respect and to apply the Charter and to do so on two fundamental points in particular. The first point is the prescription under which the Organization cannot intervene in the domestic affairs of the States. The second point is the balance established between the various organs, particularly between the General Assembly and the Security Council. To the first falls the role of expressing international public opinion through its deliberations and its recommendations. To the second belong the responsibility, when necessary, for taking decisions. There is, in fact, no risk that those decisions could ever contradict public opinion, as it is expressed in the Assembly. Nevertheless, these decisions must obtain the approval in the Security Council of all the major powers, those that have the means for war and peace, failing which they would be inoperative and would give rise to the most serious dangers.

In the second place, the Charter must be applied with discretion. The texts authorize the Security Council to decide upon action. But in this area, everything is not possible. The Organization's obvious lack of resources and the present state of the international community would alone show--if the unfortunate venture in the Congo had not already sadly illustrated it--that actions of force are to be ruled out, and for quite a long time. The bounds of political action must be observed, by strictly limiting all on-the-spot interventions to supervision or to observation.

This seems now to be generally recognized, if not accepted. In any event, this is how the Government, for its part, interpreted the return to normal constituted by the resumption of the General Assembly according to the fixed rules. It is in these conditions that the French Delegation is willingly taking an active part in this session, with the desire to make the most constructive contribution to the deliberations.

The United Nations Organization is playing its role once it abides by its Charter and does not presume to undertake what is outside its means. That role is useful and can be played by it alone. Nothing illustrates this more strikingly than the visit made by the Pope to New York this October 4th, on which occasion the sovereign Pontiff delivered a message that remains in our memories. Nor does anything better testify to a vast and ardent hope for peace than that meeting, how symbolic, between the highest authority of Christendom and an Assembly in which we would like to see gathered together the delegates of all the world's peoples and which is even now eminently representative of world opinion.

Besides the problems in Asia, there is no specific major crisis on the United Nations' agenda. It can be hoped that the matter of the Dominican Republic is on the way to being settled. In the Middle East, nothing at present seems capable of endangering peace. In the past few days, we have had conversations with the Vice President of the United Arab Republic which marked the resumption of definitively improved relations between France and the Arab world.

Europe and its problems have never entered into the United Nations debates and that is normal, since the settlement of problems raised by the last war is not within its competence. The fact remains, however--and we frequently say this--that peace in Europe, and consequently in the world, will not be truly secured until it has been possible to reach an overall European settlement, including a German settlement. France's ideas on this subject, particularly as they were expressed in General de Gaulle's press conference last February 4th, are well known. The point of departure is naturally that a European and German settlement is conceivable only through peaceful channels, that is, excluding force or threat. We must therefore reach agreement, and first of all with the Soviet Union.

Such a procedure was inconceivable so long as the cold war lasted and kept the iron curtain lowered across Europe, and therefore across Germany. The first step was consequently a détente.

This was discussed in 1960 and some hope appeared. Events took another turn when the Summit Conference was not held. Then there was Cuba. With the Cuban affair settled, the Vietnam crisis developed into war. As long as it continues in this way, it makes any real improvement of relations between Russia and the United States highly problematical. And I am not mentioning the problem of China which is becoming obsessing as the situation deteriorates throughout the continent of Asia.

Such general conditions are hardly favorable. At least, in the meanwhile, is progress possible in Europe? It is in this direction that the Government has deliberately guided its action. The point is to establish relations with Eastern Europe so that gradually, regardless of political systems, a normal situation might prevail in the long run. The point is to multiply political, economic and cultural ties, so as to introduce an element of détente, if not of confidence. With Russia, frequent contacts have now been established, as evidenced by the visit which the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs paid to Paris in May and the one which I myself will pay to Moscow in a week. Similarly, we are beginning to re-establish contact with other Eastern European countries, in conditions that are obviously facilitated by old friendships and enduring affinities. After the trips of many officials from these countries, and especially of Mr. Maurer, Chairman of the Presidium of Rumania, this is what was once again demonstrated most satisfactorily, and very recently, by the Polish Prime Minister's visit to France. As far as France is concerned, a good start has already been made.

There exists, however, another aspect of the picture. It is the question of knowing how, in a Europe that would be open to itself, to establish a balance that would ensure the conditions of durable peace. We have always felt that an important factor in this balance could be constituted in the West by an economic organization, then a political one, based from the very beginning on the reconciliation of France and Germany, and which would become a far from negligible factor of prosperity and power by gaining strength gradually. This was one of the reasons why, once the Treaty of Rome became effective, we did not spare any effort in implementing it and ensuring its success. This was the reason why, as early as 1960, France sought to organize among the members of this Community a form of political cooperation capable of broad development. Finally, this was the scope of the January 1963 French-Germany Treaty of Cooperation.

A combination of policies and efforts is the condition for the success of such an undertaking. It has most obviously not yet been achieved, either because only moderate concern is shown for our political goals, or because more value is placed on the other ties, justified ones, of course, we do not deny, but ones that should not predominate to the point of becoming exclusive.

Be that as it may, political Europe is still pending. Only time, which always brings experiences and consequently lessons, will make it possible to determine whether it is a matter of a mere delay. In the meantime, and doubtless to a large extent because the political aspect did not follow, economic Europe is now experiencing a crisis.

I repeat, because the political aspect did not follow. If the political climate had been different among the Six of the Common Market, it would have been difficult to imagine that the discussion of problems which had to be settled before July 1, 1965 would lead to a general disagreement in such conditions that no discussion on the substance of the matter could at any time be seriously begun.

What does this actually involve? Something that is very simple and agreed upon long ago. It involved--as I explained very precisely to the Assembly in June--completing the financial regulation for the common agricultural policy for the period of July 1, 1965 to January 1, 1970, that is, determining for that period the rate both of progressive assumption of expenses by the agricultural fund and of the amount of the States' contributions to the expenses of this fund. Once again the matter was very simple, but of major importance for France, for, without a financial regulation, the common agricultural policy no longer has any meaning, inasmuch as this policy is based on the establishment of European prices. In particular, it was an inevitable consequence of the decisions of December 1964 on grain prices which, considering the progressive elimination of quotas, were to stimulate the production of wheat and barley in France and consequently bring about growing surpluses which would have to be sold at world rates on foreign markets.

Actually, no one had foreseen that there would be serious difficulties, as demonstrated by the fact that the formal and repeated commitments to finish in due time had been taken without discussion, first in January 1962 when we moved on to the second stage of the Common Market, then in December 1964 when we reached the agreements that I have mentioned, and finally in the beginning of 1965 when the work schedule for this year was adopted. After all the ups and downs that marked the drafting of the agricultural policy, it did not occur to anyone that after the most difficult part had been attained, failure would be met during this almost final phase.

As is customary, it was the Commission's job to present proposals in preparation for the decisions of the Council of Ministers. It did so last March 30th. We already knew of them, not that the six Government had been first discretely informed and forewarned as was customary, but because these proposals had been publicly and minutely presented before the Strasbourg Assembly on March 24th. From that moment on it became clear that, if things remained as they were, there would be a crisis.

Far from limiting itself to the mandate that we had given it, and armed with the right conferred on it by the Treaty of Rome to present proposals ranging up to modification of this text--a right which we do not question, but which we believe should be used only after careful deliberation--the Commission in fact suggested a body of political measures, whose aim was to transform the character of the Community profoundly, in the way, it would seem, the Commission had always wanted, that is, by making itself a truly political authority, less and less controlled by the responsible Governments. This was the meaning of allocating permanent resources going well beyond foreseeable expenses. This was also the meaning of the apparent granting to the Assembly of powers which, in reality, would tend to make the Commission the arbitrator between this Assembly and the Council of Ministers.

Right from the first discussion, it appeared unquestionably possible that no Government was in agreement. All rejected the idea of allocating resources above and beyond needs. Some were quite willing to give budgetary powers to the Assembly, but no one approved the mechanism proposed, because those powers belonged, in fact, to the Commission alone.

At the same time, the very subject of the discussion, that is, the completion of a financial regulation for the immediate present, was lost from sight. Actually, as soon as the eternal debate over supranationality was reopened, and as soon as the very procedures that had been used made certain Governments subject to all kinds of political and parliamentary pressures, Pandora's box was open: it was tempting to seek no longer to express anything but one's own claims, if not to pass to the higher bid.

The French delegation stubbornly tried to put the debate back on its real grounds. It had paved the way for the discussions through contacts and, in one case, even through agreements with its partners. It presented formulas for sharing the burdens that made the greatest allowance for its partners' concerns where they were legitimate, and particularly for the concerns of Italy, whose situation had been deeply altered since 1962. It was to no avail. The Belgian delegation alone showed some understanding. But no real discussion could be started, and at the end of the day of June 30th when our Finance Minister made a final offer, the very one that was subsequently taken up again under conditions which I shall discuss later, the same general silence was the only answer we received. In fact, the Commission also stubbornly kept the silence, thereby giving the delegations a pretext for persisting in a purely negative attitude.

Those are the conditions in which I, as Chairman of the meeting, was led to acknowledge that agreement could not be reached. There was no question of continuing a discussion which, once again, had not even really begun, and which had no basis, since the Commission's proposals were acceptable to no one and since France's proposals were not even taken into consideration at that time. The situation was quite different, in other circumstances, on December 31, 1961 and subsequently received ample mention. At that time, we continued for nearly two weeks after the deadline, for there was a general and obvious desire to succeed, considering a unanimous vote was needed to pass to the second stage.

Thus, for the first time, a formal commitment repeated by the six Governments was not honored. No one should have been mistaken, as they were, however, about the seriousness of the situation thus created and about the consequences that the French Government was compelled to draw from it. The very next day our Council of Ministers, upon noting the break that had occurred, took a formal position.

The first consequence was obvious: we could only acknowledge that the Community's advancement was halted. Once such an essential measure as financing the agricultural policy was not adopted, how was any new development in any area whatever conceivable? The Government took official note of this, announcing that, so long as the crisis was not settled, all that could be done would be done to ensure the management of current business on the basis of what had previously been agreed on in the various areas. Any new discussions would be fruitless, and France would not participate in them. We had let it be known before July 1st that that would be our line of conduct. We adhered to it.

But because of the crisis and the conditions in which it occurred, the whole picture had changed. Up until July 1st, we asked one thing, namely, the completion of the financial regulation as agreed on. We had made many efforts to achieve it. If the debate would truly have been held, if the Commission had agreed to renounce its passive attitude in order to aid our partners, and, lastly, if we had succeeded, we would not have asked anything more. But now, an entirely new situation had been created.

Formerly, in similar circumstances, we had been able to come to a conclusion, either because another goal, namely passage to the second stage, was simultaneously at issue and as a result our partners desired to conclude, or because we had exerted maximum political pressure in advance so that the consequences of a failure would be weighed. This was proof that, in the state of minds and habits, it was impossible to ensure the Common Market's development in suitable conditions, that is, failing threats and crises. How could we agree to continue in this way? An overall revision was required, one that would make it possible to define the normal conditions for cooperation between the Six, with, of course, due respect, as far as France was concerned, for its vital interests, and first of all its agricultural interests.

Quite obviously, what was at issue was the very functioning of the institutions in Brussels, and therewith the so-called supranational concept. What then was to be done? Certainly not to contest that for France the Treaty of Rome, like any international agreement, and the arrangements made afterward for its implementation, entailed a limitation of its sovereignty. Any obligation, just because it obligates, is a restriction on the right of free decision. But it is a restriction freely and consciously agreed to. Supranationality, in European jargon, is a very different notion. Essentially, it is to make it possible for decisions that concern a country to be taken by authorities other than the authorities of that country. Such is the case when this sort of decision can be the act of an international organization or of foreign Governments. Such is the case, in other terms, as far as France is concerned, if we leave a verdict up to a Commission in Brussels or a majority of Governments to which France is not a party. The serious question raised by

the June 30th failure is whether such a situation is conceivable, and whether it is compatible with a normal management of France's affairs. I say right away that in our view, the conclusion which follows, after the deplorable experience we have just undergone, is that French interests have no defender other than the French Government, and that our agriculture, in particular, can no longer entertain the illusion that it will somewhere discover a knight to whom it can entrust its future.

The fact is that the Commission received from the Rome Treaty no mandate to take decisions, except for modest executory measures pertaining to management of current affairs. Its status is basically, and purposely, different from that of the High Authority of the Coal and Steel Community. The latter, conceived at a romantic period, was an organ theoretically independent of the Governments. Practice has shown the speciousness of such a system. The fathers of the Common Market have been careful not to repeat that experiment. But this has not put an end to human temptations, and this is what we have just witnessed.

The Brussels Commission is responsible for presenting to the six Governments proposals for the decisions they have to take. And commentators have always stressed the vital interest of a system in which such an organ, qualified as independent, is called on to present the European viewpoint against the narrow national viewpoints of each Government--which, let it be said in passing, is a definition that it would be good for our farmers to meditate on. We have never disputed the fact that it can be useful to present an objective view of the problems and their solutions. But what is needed above all--and what is in no way contradictory in order to arrive at a solution--is to achieve general agreement, in other words to find compromises. This is the select area in which the Commission can and must display its talents. In other words, it is above all its duty to seek formulas that bring the viewpoints closer together. Each time it has done so, we have congratulated it on it and we have been able to reach a conclusion.

This was the case many times in the past. But it is not the Commission's duty to try to advance opposing views, especially when they are political and when the Commission's initiatives exceed the framework that belongs to it. This is what it tried to do through its proposals of March 30th, and what it has obstinately continued to do after those proposals were rejected.

The other essential institution of the Economic Community is the Council. Up to now, and except for specific measures of a managerial nature, the Six must decide by general agreement, that is, unanimously. This is the case especially when it concerns accepting or modifying the Commission's proposals. Starting on January 1st, 1966, this will no longer be the case: these proposals could no longer be amended except unanimously, but they could be accepted by a majority. This is something that, in the present state of relations between the Six, and taking into account what has just happened, seems inconceivable. To demonstrate this, must I recall that if today there are the beginnings of an agricultural policy in the Common Market, it is not exclusively, but essentially due to the work of the French Government. Let the Assembly remember what happened in Brussels during the night of December 31st, 1961-January 1st, 1962. The point was to ascertain if the

Council was going to decide--it had to do so unanimously--on passing to the second stage at a time when there was no agreement on the agricultural regulations, or on the financial regulation. The Commission, I will underscore in passing, had proposed overlooking these matters and answering affirmatively, and the majority of our partners had declared themselves in agreement. If France then, followed by the Netherlands, had not opposed this, passage [to the next stage] would then have been decided on without an agreement on agriculture, and I think I may assert, without fear of being contradicted, that then there would never have been a Common Market agricultural policy. If we succeeded fourteen days later, it was because unanimity was the rule.

I myself said two years later, at this rostrum, that it would be quite difficult to imagine that the Council could in the future, on a vital economic question like grain prices, pronounce a decision against one of its partners. At the time this statement was widely welcomed. The German Government used it, however, on its own account in December 1964, when an agreement had just been reached on prices, by requesting that the result it had obtained could not be jeopardized in the future by a majority vote. No one had, or could have had, grounds for complaint against Germany for this. In the same way, how could we accept seeing a majority decision jeopardize the decisions taken up to now unanimously, particularly in the agricultural domain?

Perhaps the situation would have been different if, as France has suggested for five years, it had been possible to institute the beginnings of regular political cooperation between the Six. Then the climate of relations would doubtless have been quite different. Then frequent meetings, including meetings at the highest Government levels, would have made it possible to discuss everything in trust; to try, on a political basis, to bring the viewpoints closer together; in short, to avoid conflicts, to reach agreement and to see that the clause permitting escape from the unanimity rule would remain in the realm of theory.

Events have unfortunately taken a different turn, and that is why we are today forced to raise the issue. I should add that, among the lessons that France draws from the crisis, that conclusion is the one that meets with the least opposition among our partners, and some even allow that it is well justified.

Those are the two cardinal points on which the Six must above all come to agreement. It would then still remain to dispose of the matter of agriculture, and first the financial regulation.

This is not the way serious matters are being dealt with. On July 1st nothing, owing to the event itself, could prevent questions other than the financial regulation from being imposed, and an answer from being necessary. One would have to be very blind or very naive not to see this.

These are the conditions in which the crisis of the European Economic Community was born and grew. These are the conclusions that the Government has drawn from them. These are the positions that it has taken and this is the way in which it believes a solution could be found. In other words, it is first on political grounds that it is led to take a stand. It is up to the responsible Governments, to all the Governments and to them alone, to debate this and to seek agreement among themselves. France has already made it known publicly that she would certainly not refuse the contacts that would be suggested. Nor would she refuse discussions, once they were carefully prepared and would be held at a time, in a place and within a context that would be appropriate. In her view, political accord is necessary before the debates on the concrete and technical problems can be resumed.

Common sense dictates this, and only the lack of goodwill could put an obstacle in its path. It is certainly in the general interest to succeed at this. It is, no one denies, in the interest of France. But it is also, and just as much, in the interest of her partners. It is also, perhaps, in the interest of all the other European countries, starting with the nearest, if one judges the matter by the growing attraction that, since it has encountered grave difficulties, the European Economic Community seems to create for them.

Here our adversaries---and even our partners---stop us and say: since France is so interested in agriculture and its financing, why does she refuse to resume negotiations on the basis of the new proposals that the Commission presented on July 22nd and that are precisely along the lines of the former French suggestions?

Allow me to say that this would be too easy. Oh, if such proposals had been made on the 28th, 29th or the 30th of June--as nothing stood in the way and even as we thought--then we would have been happy to start the discussion, and nothing says that we would not have succeeded. But everything happened differently. It is because, once the failure was established, the French Government drew the conclusions from it, noted that the crisis was grave, refused to participate in new debates and requested that the indispensable political measures be taken in order to prevent a recurrence of this at every new opportunity--it is for these reasons that there was a great shudder and that everyone hurried to appropriate the reasonable proposals that we had made and that included, moreover, substantial concessions on our part. Following which it was hoped that everything would be resumed just as if nothing had happened.

In this great and difficult matter, the Government's first concern is the policy and interests of the nation. It in no way thinks that they conflict with the interests of Europe, but this Government is indeed obliged to note that it is inevitably their only defender, when agriculture is concerned, of course, and also in other areas. If one takes into consideration everything that has been done, up to now, to implement the Common Market, then it would take a great deal of bad faith to dare to assert that the awareness of our duties toward our country and our determination to fulfill them will constitute in the future, any more than in the past, an obstacle to the agreements that are necessary.