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SOAMES ADDRESSES EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ON THE FUTURE OF EC-US RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC -- May 8, 1973 -- Sir Christopher Soames, Vice President of the Commission of the European Communities, today addressed a European Parliament meeting in Strasbourg, France, on the future of US-European relations following a debate on the same subject by the Parliament. The session was attended by a delegation of visiting members of the US House of Representatives who were in Strasbourg at the time for an exchange visit with European parliamentarians.

Following is the text of the Commission Vice President's speech:

"I am delighted at the initiative which the house [European Parliament] has taken this afternoon to discuss the future of the relationship between the United States on the one hand and Europe -- the Economic Community and its Member States -- on the other. It is doing so in the presence of a delegation from the US House of Representatives whom President [Francois-Xavier] Ortoli, a number of our colleagues and I had the pleasure of meeting for a day's discussion in Brussels last week.

"Your timing could hardly have been more opportune for a wide-ranging and thorough debate on the development of this historic relationship -- which is and will remain of primordial importance to both sides -- in that it has provided the opportunity for the European Parliament to contribute to that constructive dialogue for which the Heads of State and Government called in Paris last October when they charted the course before us.

"President [Georges] Pompidou, at the time, seemed to me to express most admirably that spirit in which we should now approach our dealing with the United States, when he said: 'Our links with this great country, the world's foremost economic power, with which eight of our countries are united within the Atlantic Alliance, are so close that it would be absurd to conceive of a Europe constructed in opposition to it. But the very closeness of these links requires that Europe affirm its individual personality with regard to the United States. Western Europe, liberated from armies thanks to the essential contribution of American soldiers, reconstructed with American aid, having looked for its security in alliance with America, having hitherto accepted American currency as the main element of its monetary reserves, must not and cannot sever its links with the United States. But neither must it refrain from affirming its existence as a new reality.'

"This keynote which was struck at the Summit has been taken up by President [Richard M.] Nixon as an invitation to begin that constructive reappraisal on which we are now, together, engaged.

Toward a Constructive Reappraisal

"This keynote which was struck at the Summit has been taken up by President Nixon as an invitation to begin that constructive

reappraisal on which we are now, together, engaged. We have recently had two salient contributions to our dialogue from the other side of the Atlantic -- one from President Nixon, in last week's Foreign Policy Report, the other from his advisor Dr. [Henry A.] Kissinger in his speech the week before, to which the resolution now before the house specifically refers.

'No doubt it is inevitable, when the United States has had to concentrate on events in the Pacific area for so long, that the first comprehensive policy statements on Atlantic relations should be analyzed carefully -- perhaps too cautiously, perhaps too subtly. Some critics may feel that too much was being handed down on tablets from the mountain; others on the contrary may want more specific details here and now, but what matters at this stage is the overall tone, the strategy, the global approach to this relationship. We in the Commission welcome that the dialogue is engaged at the highest level.

'We share the Americans' feeling that the very successes of our policies in the past -- the reduction of tension, the very real prosperity and the emergent economic and commercial muscle of our European Community -- have created their own problems. These problems must be frankly faced: for if they were allowed to fester, they could damage the very foundations on which we build. America's position in the world, too, has not stood still, and other changes in the kaleidoscope of world relations have also contributed to the need to reappraise our relationship. For what is the Community relationship with the United States? It cannot simply be an extension or a projection of the Franco-American, the Anglo-American, the German-American or any other national relationship with the United States in the past. The European Community must evolve its own identity, it must find its own place in the world and develop its own relationships in its own interests with others both great and small.

"It was after all not merely the desire to become richer, or to prevent future civil wars, that inspired the creation of this Community. It was far more than that. It was so that Europe in an age of bigness could rise to the responsibilities of greatness. Therefore, to redefine our relations with the rest of the world, to clarify our contribution to it, is one of the essential challenges to which Europe has to rise.

Europe Still Lacks Cohesion in Some Policy Areas

"But as a Community we are, I fear, hobbled so far -- and will be, while there are vital areas of policy on which, for instance, America and Russia can each act as a unit, with Europe still lacking the capacity to speak, to decide, and to act as a single whole. In trade, in monetary relations, in the crucial field of energy supplies, in various other aspects of economic life, we recognize that Europe is already destined to act as one and is succeeding in doing so in varying degrees. We have our firm plans for developing this further, and nothing must be allowed to stand in the way of that. Do not let us underestimate the effort that has been required to achieve this, or its value for Europe, or its importance in world terms, for these are the very subjects which are the top priorities on the international agenda.

"But we must acknowledge that for matters which come under the generic heading of foreign policy we can as yet boast but little European cohesion. Let there be no doubt abroad that this is among the main objectives of that European union at which Member Governments pledged themselves to arrive by 1980. The hard fact is that the Community's influence in the world will be directly related to our success here. We cannot expect to be considered a single political force unless and until we are ready to act as one. Nor will we achieve that relationship of equals to which Europe as a whole rightly aspires and which it has in its power to achieve. It must therefore surely be our constant endeavor to widen the areas in which Europe as such can engage in

a dialogue with its partners and reduce those in which Member States each have to react with individual and often disparate responses.

"The lack, as yet, of common policies in important fields is a handicap to Europe. It is also seen as such by our American friends who regard the various aspects of our overall relationship as integral parts of an interconnected whole. I think it is well understood, even in the United States, that trade, money, energy supplies, foreign policy, and defense are all simultaneously vital factors that enter into our overall relationship. It would be a poor relationship indeed that existed in only one dimension. We in the Commission have long argued that the trade negotiations can only succeed if we bear in mind at the same time that they form part of this great complex relationship in which many other wider political considerations are equally involved, and that these negotiations, technical though they may be, are of prime political importance and will require positive overall political control.

"On the other hand, it would be mistaken to argue because these problems are interrelated, that they should therefore all be lumped into one big basket and dealt with together in a single negotiation, that all issues, regardless of their intrinsic timescales, have to be tied up by a single deadline, that every solution for any one must be conditional on solutions for them all, and that the difficulties in any one should block progress in the others. Certainly all these problems call for overall political direction and management. But to force into a single forum all the diverse questions we confront, far from simplifying their solution could complicate and exacerbate them.

"I must also say here that I would regard it as a misunderstanding if our American friends thought that the Community was increasingly stressing its regional interests. This does not seem to me an adequate description of the situation. We are establishing in Europe a continental market without tariffs which the United States already has. Beyond the borders of Western Europe the Community of "Six" contributed notably to the expansion of world trade. It was the existence of the European Community that made possible the success of the Kennedy Round [of negotiations within the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade]. The Community was the first to introduce and implement a generalized preference plan to encourage the exports of the developing world. Let there be no doubt that the enlarged Community, representing as it does such a large proportion of world trade and world monetary reserves, has even greater worldwide responsibilities and intends to live up to them.

EC-US Common Interests Outweigh Differences

"It is in this perspective that we should now turn to what we can do together in the future. President Nixon's visit in the autumn will provide a most welcome opportunity for meetings at the highest level, where our interrelated problems can be treated in political perspective and our ways of approaching them coordinated. That is the sort of overarching political control which is so essential in the face of the many and abrupt changes which have played on our relationship. How often has it been said that our common interests are so much greater than the differences that divide us. In the new situation of today, this is being questioned by some on both sides of the Atlantic. But the cardinal objectives which we share are surely as numerous and important today as ever they were. Let me suggest a few which are perhaps worth considering.

"We are determined each to uphold our common democratic political tradition: that our public actions must serve -- not transient regimes, racialist prejudice or abstract doctrines of ideology -- but living families of men, women, and children, with individual human rights and with a rich diversity of cultural traditions.

"We share a common resolve to make the world as safe as it can be made against injustice, violence, and aggression. That will be a never-ending task. Each of us will benefit from the efforts of the rest. Each therefore must play a fair and honorable part, each sharing the risks, the costs, and the burdens.

"We must together continue to seek out ways of living peaceably and cooperating where we can with those whose collective aspirations differ from our own. The management and coordination of diplomacy in a period of detente will in many ways prove more exacting and more delicate a task than when dangers loomed large. We must approach it with at least as much cool reason, at least as great an effort of mutual comprehension within our alliances as we devoted and must continue to devote to the search for common strategic responses.

"We acknowledge together our joint responsibilities towards the poorest parts of the world. In our actions on money and on trade, by outflows of capital and by technical assistance, we are resolved to help them reach levels where they can more effectively help themselves to realize their full potential. We see this both as a political and as a human obligation, and there are certain areas of the world for which, for historic, human, and geographical reasons, each of us can make our special contribution.

"We have to gear the forthcoming multilateral trade negotiations to the double aim of further liberalizing trade between developed nations and at the same time opening up wider trading opportunities for the developing countries. In promoting a more open trading order in the world, we want to work for the benefit of the consumers, in defense against inflation, to secure soundly based improvement in living standards and employment opportunities -- the material bases of human life and human dignity.

"We recognize that, both in our own interests and to achieve a better equilibrium between the developed and the developing world, we need to build a sounder monetary order. It must serve to expand world trade in goods and services. It must allow productive international flows of capital to the areas of greatest need and greatest productivity. Yet it must also be capable of warding off or absorbing those disruptive strains to which any monetary system is likely to be increasingly subjected in the future.

"We recognize that rising populations and rising living standards will put increasing demands on the world's natural resources -- particularly of energy -- and on the recuperative powers of our natural environment. Growth may have no absolute limits, but we recognize its sharply rising difficulties and its explosive inherent imbalances. They will require joint action between resource consumers and resource suppliers, between those controlling the sources of pollution and those whose quality of life is threatened, both within and across national frontiers and continental shores.

"These seem to me to be the kind of broad objectives that must not be lost sight of in our dialogue. It is against this background that the specific problems between us will have to be tackled. Some may see the need for new institutions. Others may wish to draw inspiration from some new common document. However that may be and whatever may be decided by those

in authority, what we most need now are real practical efforts together in vital and far-reaching domains.

"So we welcome President Nixon's intention to visit Europe before the end of the year to meet both with our Member States and with our Community as such. The Commission within its own fields of responsibility will in the months ahead do all it can to press on with this dialogue.

"We welcome the American President's recognition that the free world now moves from American predominance to more mature and balanced partnerships including both the European Community and Japan.

"We welcome his reaffirmation that 'shaping a peaceful world requires first of all an America that stays strong, an America that stays committed.' We profoundly believe that it requires, equally, a European Community that is strong, that is coherent, and that is committed to the aspirations which we share."