

EUROPEAN BACKGROUND INFORMATION COMMUNITY

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BACKGROUND NOTE

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EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND JAPAN END HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATIONS

*The following press release was issued in Brussels
Wednesday at the close of consultations with Japan:*

The ninth meeting in the series of regular European Community/Japan high-level consultations took place in Brussels on November 15 and 16. The Japanese delegation was led by Bunkroku Yoshino, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, who had talks with F. O. Gundelach (in Sir Christopher Soames' absence, Commissioner responsible for External Relations), R. de Kergorlay (acting Director General for External Relations), M. Caspari (Deputy Director General for External Relations), and other senior Commission officials.

The meeting took place against a background of urgent concern in the Community about future developments of bilateral trade between the Community and Japan, and growing awareness by Japan of certain problems identified on the Community side.

Both multilateral and bilateral issues were discussed, including the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) trade negotiations, the North/South Dialogue, and the world economic situation. A close similarity both of analysis and of common interest was revealed in the talks.

Much of the discussion was devoted to bilateral issues. In this connection note was taken of the recent visit to Europe of a major Japanese industrial mission led by Toshiro Doko, the president of the Kaidanren (the Japanese Federation of Industries).

It was clear that the visit of this mission has contributed to a greater understanding in Japan of the need to find means for avoiding particular sectoral problems on the Community market and to redress the growing imbalance of bilateral trade by the expansion of Community exports.

The European Commission side took note of certain information recently provided regarding forecasts showing a reduction of Japanese exports of steel to the Community in 1977 compared with 1976. The European Commission side welcomed this. It was, however, stressed that the Commission remains deeply preoccupied about a number of specific trade problems to which solutions still need to be found.

Among the specific sectors discussed, the grave situation facing the Community shipbuilding industry was particularly stressed. Discussion on this will continue.

As regards the Community's exports to Japan, a review was undertaken of possible areas where greater Japanese imports could provide contributions towards rectifying the present imbalance of trade. These included cars, pharmaceuticals, footwear, tobacco, and Community agricultural products (including, in particular, canned pork luncheon meat).

The Japanese delegation showed a clear understanding of the social and political as well as the economic aspects of the issues raised on the Community side. They undertook to consider urgently what more could be done to improve bilateral trade relations.