

ASSEMBLY OF WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

PROCEEDINGS

COMMEMORATIVE SITTING

TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

May 1975

WEU

BONN

ASSEMBLY OF WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

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Monday, 26th May 1975

ORDERS OF THE DAY

1. Messages.
2. Addresses by Ministers of member States.
3. Address by the President of the Assembly.

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

The Commemorative Sitting was opened at 11.05 a.m. with Mr. Nessler, President of the Assembly, in the Chair.

1. Messages

Mr. Amrehn read a message from Mr. Helmut Schmidt, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The President read messages from Mr. Aldo Moro, Italian Prime Minister, the Earl of Avon, Mr. Pierre Mendès-France and Mr. Kahn-Ackermann, Secretary-General of the Council of Europe.

2. Addresses by Ministers of member States

Mr. Georg Leber, Minister of Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany, addressed the Assembly.

Mr. Paul Vanden Boeynants, Minister of Defence and Brussels Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium, addressed the Assembly.

Mr. Bernard Destremau, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the French Republic, addressed the Assembly.

Mr. Adolfo Battaglia, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic, addressed the Assembly.

Mr. Emile Krieps, Minister of Public Health, the Environment, Civil Service and Armed Forces of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, addressed the Assembly.

Mr. P.H. Kooijmans, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, addressed the Assembly.

Mr. Frederick Mulley, Minister for Transport of the United Kingdom, addressed the Assembly.

3. Address by the President of the Assembly

The President addressed the Assembly.

The Sitting was closed at 12.35 p.m.

COMMEMORATIVE SITTING

Monday, 26th May 1975

The Commemorative Sitting was opened at 11.05 a.m. with Mr. Nessler, President of the Assembly, in the Chair.

The PRESIDENT (Translation). — I declare open the Commemorative Sitting for the Twentieth Anniversary of the Assembly of Western European Union.

1. Messages

The PRESIDENT (Translation). — I have received a number of messages from eminent personalities, which will be read out.

I call upon Mr. Amrehn to read the message sent by the Federal Chancellor.

Mr. AMREHN (*Federal Republic of Germany*) (Translation). — The message of welcome from the Federal Chancellor reads as follows :

“The Assembly of Western European Union is meeting for the first time in Bonn, on a date which is very significant for the Federal Republic of Germany. Twenty years ago the modified Brussels Treaty came into force, and it is to this that we owe our membership of the Western Alliance. The treaty incorporates the two aims to which every Federal Government gives political priority — namely, the strengthening of the Atlantic Alliance and the unification of Europe.

Over the years the Assembly of Western European Union has built up a political identity of its own. It is, within the Atlantic Alliance, a European forum for the parliamentary discussion of questions of security and defence affecting a Western Europe which is in process of unification. Governments, parliaments and the public are indebted to it for the important political proposals and ideas it has put forward.

I wish the Assembly all success for its meeting in Bonn.

Helmut Schmidt”

(*Applause*)

The PRESIDENT (Translation). — I have also received a message from Mr. Aldo Moro, Italian Prime Minister :

“I have learnt with great pleasure of the celebrations to mark the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Assembly of Western European Union, whose work the Italian Government has always followed with great interest. On many occasions, as recently during the visit of the Assembly's President, Mr. Edmond Nessler, to Rome, this government has shown its full appreciation of what it has achieved. This, the only European parliamentary body competent for defence problems, has for many years inspired a whole range of important activities and has had a highly stimulating effect on the pursuit of the union's objectives, thanks in part to the useful contacts it has maintained between the organisation, the parliaments and public opinion in the member countries. Its representative character has allowed it to play a pre-eminent rôle in WEU and guarantees the truly democratic nature of the activities of the union's executive bodies.

I therefore convey my warmest and most sincere hope that the activities of the Assembly will contribute more and more effectively to the defence of the principles which inspired the Brussels Treaty.”

I have also received a message from the Earl of Avon. I shall read it in English ; please excuse any pronunciation mistakes.

(*The President continued in English*)

“In these turbulent days we must hold on to everything we have in the form of European co-operation and better it where we can. We must on no account let go of Western European Union, an organisation of which we might hopefully make more use. There are directions in which its activities would cer-

tainly not conflict with, and could usefully supplement, the efforts of others. For example, one of the topics which were, I think, originally consigned to WEU twenty years ago was that it should try to organise progress with the standardisation of our armaments for the defence of Europe. That is something which still needs to be done; failure to do so has been very costly.

The democracies of Western Europe must seek to work together in every sphere available to them and to extend their co-operation across the Atlantic. It is dangerous to forget that there are countries which have neither sympathy nor understanding for the freedoms which mean life to us, and that those countries are militarily very strong. The closer we stand together, plan together, work together, the better for us all and for the wider world without.

Nearly forty years ago I said in the House of Commons that I was not prepared to be the first Foreign Secretary to go back on a British signature. Nor can we contemplate any turning back today. We must go forward together, all of us, members of WEU, NATO and EEC, *la main dans la main*. Our security, our very survival, demands no less.

When presiding over our nine-power conference in London in 1954 I became confident that there was scope and opportunity for Western European Union. I am more than ever convinced of this today. I am sure that you will be wise to persevere, and I wish you all success."

(The President continued in French)

(Translation). — I would particularly like to thank the Earl of Avon, who had hoped to be with us today, but whose state of health prevents him from travelling. I am sure you will wish me to express our best wishes for his speedy recovery. *(Applause)*

I have also received a telegram from Mr. Pierre Mendès-France, who was one of those who signed the treaty :

"Your letter of 16th received today. Regret cannot attend commemoration Monday. Best wishes for twentieth anniversary. Sincerely."

Lastly, I have received the following message from Mr. Kahn-Ackermann, Secretary-General of the Council of Europe :

(The President continued in English)

"My warmest congratulations on twenty years of tenacious and enterprising work for European unity. I offer you and all my friends in Western European Union my best wishes for the future prosperity and success of the Assembly."

2. Addresses by Ministers of member States

The PRESIDENT (Translation). — I call Mr. Leber, Minister of Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr. LEBER (*Minister of Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany*) (Translation). — Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a great pleasure and also a great honour for me to be able to convey to you and to the Assembly the best wishes of the Federal Government and of the Chancellor. The Federal Republic looks upon it as a particular honour that you are celebrating the twentieth anniversary of Western European Union and its Assembly here.

WEU has played a decisive part in integrating the Federal Republic into the western community and particularly into the defence organisation of the West. Just over twenty years ago, on 5th May 1955, the Paris Agreements came into force. The Federal Republic of Germany became a sovereign partner with equal rights in the North Atlantic defence alliance and in Western European Union.

Since 5th May 1955 the Federal Republic, shielded by the Alliance, has developed into a State which has striven for and has achieved freedom, the rule of law, and social justice for its citizens in a way in which no other State in German history has ever done. That we were able to do this is due in no small measure to the support we received from all our allies in the Atlantic Alliance and particularly from Western European Union.

Today it is difficult to imagine the situation which, in the autumn of 1954, led to the Brussels Treaty being modified and completed, and to Western European Union being set up in its present form. In his memoirs the former Chancellor Konrad Adenauer gives a dry and factual

account of events after the breakdown of the European Defence Community. He rightly points out that the preliminary consultations were dominated by the will to bring about a reconciliation between France and Germany. This reconciliation could be achieved only in conjunction with other partners and as part of the policy of European unification.

Western European Union was intended, as part of the advance towards Western European unity, not only to make it possible for the Federal Republic to join NATO but also to bring its member States closer together than did the North Atlantic Treaty. As a result of this the member States agreed that they would automatically afford each other assistance.

At the same time the treaty made it easier for all the political forces in the Federal Republic to accept today the contribution which their country is making to joint defence within the Western Alliance and which is not a matter of controversy in our country. This is an important development to which I am glad to draw attention on this occasion.

The aims of WEU have been achieved even though, for various reasons, this has often been done under the lee of other organisations and in the wake of other events. WEU has always seen its rôle as a subsidiary one, and has tried to avoid duplication of effort. On the other hand, a number of other tasks have subsequently been assigned to it. The WEU treaty has accomplished the tasks set for it in 1954. In view however of the tasks facing us today in the field of security and defence, our aims must also be adapted to what is happening today and what is likely to happen tomorrow, provided we can see tomorrow today.

I had the honour of speaking to the Assembly of Western European Union about these matters on 22nd November 1973. I pointed out then that WEU had always taken an active part in safeguarding our common security interests "whenever critical stages in European co-operation have had to be overcome". The flexible nature of the Brussels Treaty enables WEU to be brought into play in many areas, particularly when such critical moments lie ahead.

This meeting is taking place at a time which is politically particularly important for the West. Important decisions have to be taken. In a few days Heads of State from countries in the

Atlantic Alliance will be meeting in Brussels to discuss both the state of the Alliance and its position on the major world issues — and, as far as possible, to attain clarity on how they should act in the days ahead.

This is happening at a time when the United States of America is making a reappraisal of the policy it has been following. We know that the attitude of the United States towards Europe will be one of the areas where its policy will remain unchanged. It must be made just as clear and just as certain to our American friends that their European allies remain as firmly committed to them as before and that we still have faith in the leading rôle played by the United States. Good relations with the Americans must not however be an obstacle but rather an encouragement for us in our endeavour to make Europe a real partner for the United States.

The weight which such a European partner will carry depends to a large extent on the outcome of the imminent British referendum on membership of the European Communities. A Europe which includes Great Britain and is able to speak with one voice will be much more convincing when it claims to play an important part in world affairs. We hope that the outcome of the referendum will set the seal on Britain's accession, which was as decisive a step as the undertaking given by the United Kingdom in Article VI, Protocol No. II, of the Brussels Treaty to keep, for the first time in its history, land and air forces on the continent of Europe and not to withdraw them from the European mainland against the wishes of the majority of its treaty partners.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Federal Government always follows the debates of your Assembly with the greatest interest. At this time, when our current European and defence policy is in a difficult phase, your Assembly provides an excellent forum where European parliamentarians can adopt a position on the questions facing Europe today, particularly those concerned with foreign policy, security and defence. The progress made on European policy at executive level has made it possible for certain important functions in the foreign policy field to be transferred from the Council of WEU to the European Community.

I hope that these meetings in Bonn and the thought of WEU's twenty years of success will spur us on and make us realise that it is our

duty to press ahead with the execution of the tasks now before Western European Union.

On behalf of the Federal Government, I would like to wish you and your work every success. (*Applause*)

The PRESIDENT (Translation). — Thank you, Mr. Minister.

I call Mr. Paul Vanden Boeynants, Minister of Defence and Brussels Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium.

Mr. VANDEN BOEYNANTS (*Minister of Defence and Brussels Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium*) (Translation). — Mr. President, Your Excellencies, fellow members, the honour which devolves upon me of addressing you at this ceremony which marks the twentieth anniversary of the Assembly of Western European Union is far more than just a pleasure, just a privilege.

I speak both as the representative of Belgium, one of the signatory powers of the modified Brussels Treaty, and also as the representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the WEU Council. As we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of your Assembly in this forum today, it seems to me that we should remember that it was also the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the modified Brussels Treaty a few days ago.

Thus, the ceremony which brings us together today concerns the entire organisation.

I too should like to say that we deeply appreciate the hospitable gesture made by the Federal Republic of Germany in inviting us to its capital to celebrate this anniversary. In our eyes, this gesture assumes a symbolic importance, since the entry into force of the Paris Agreements modifying the Brussels Treaty also marked the entry of Germany and Italy into the Atlantic Alliance. Above all, it was sign of the solemn return of those two countries into what people used to call the concert of Europe.

Historians will not fail to see in this circumstance one of the most important events of the postwar period. The year 1945 witnessed the end of a "civil war" which had lasted for thirty years and which had, ever since 1914, torn Europe apart as never before, bathing it in blood and leading to ruin. The ten years which followed saw the slow and difficult struggle of reason and humanism trying to overcome the

passions unleashed by so much violence, cruelty and injustice.

The year 1955 was one of reconciliation. We can never pay a sufficiently fervent tribute to those statesmen who, in our several countries, had the clarity of vision and especially the courage to master the demons which had possessed our peoples.

We remember the names of Adenauer, de Gasperi, Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, Paul-Henri Spaak and many more, among whom it would be unfair not to mention President Truman and General Marshall, whose generosity and clear-sightedness enabled them to understand the vital importance that a strong, united and prosperous Europe could have for America as well.

I sincerely and deeply believe that the judgment of the future on these men will be exceptionally favourable and generous.

The entry of two democratic and friendly countries, Germany and Italy, into WEU and the Atlantic Alliance gave Western Europe its true dimension and its present image. It made a reality of this solidarity of Western Europe and the United States, especially in face of the various dangers of the era which can be summed up in the term cold war.

(The speaker continued in Dutch)

As the President, Mr. Nessler, has said in his postscript to the booklet published on the occasion of this twentieth anniversary, the immediate aims of WEU have been reached because it has been possible, at least in part, to solve the thorny and vexing problems that persisted after the end of the last war.

Can the same be said of the long-term prospects? The preamble to the revised Brussels Treaty mentions, among other things, the resolve of the contracting parties to promote the unity and to encourage the progressive integration of Europe, and to associate progressively in the pursuance of these aims other States with the same ideals and a like determination. What has come of these aims, twenty years on?

Naturally, progress has been made in the building of Europe, in a number of sectors. The Common Market has become a reality, even though the reality may still be incomplete and is at the present time faced with a number of centrifugal tendencies, tendencies in which it would be irresponsible not to see dangers. This building of Europe would have been impossible

had not all suspicion been swept away by the reconciliation that has taken place within this union, through the incorporation of Germany into NATO and by the daily working side-by-side of the members of that great treaty organisation.

And yet in this time of crisis we are seeing, in some countries, a fresh tendency towards national egotism. This is first of all the case in the economic sphere ; currency parities are moving out-of-step, and politico-economic aims are being pursued that are often irreconcilable, sometimes even contradictory. Other factors, including the problems thrown up by the energy crisis, bid fair to persuade a number of our governments to dispense with what has been achieved or at least to avoid some of the obligations they have taken on within the context of the European treaties.

This is not something I intend to expand upon here, but it does seem wrong to me to celebrate our successes without emphasising how fragile they are, and without stressing the urgent need for a continuing examination of conscience. Governments made impatient by the failures and the slow pace at which community solutions operate are all too often tempted to take the easiest way out of problems, or to turn back within themselves and take measures they feel to be necessary at national level.

(The speaker continued in French)

Does this danger likewise exist in the realm of defence ? Perhaps it does.

Undoubtedly there is a keener awareness in this field than elsewhere of the awkward demands of solidarity — keener because it is face to face with realities. The size of the majority of European countries makes this need an absolutely essential condition of their security. Representing as I do one of the small countries, I feel this conviction with special force every day; and the nuclear arm does nothing to alter these realities.

The détente which was established several years ago in our relations with the communist world is for us a source of genuine satisfaction. Moreover — and let us never forget it — it constitutes the justification for our military co-operation. Yet by its very nature it gives rise to problems that are more delicate, more intricate and more puzzling than those which were born of the cold war in former times. I should like to hope that all our governments are fully aware

of this. Clearness of judgment is not everything, however, for we must also be fully prepared to take the political action for which it calls. If our judgment and our determination were no longer to coincide, we should be returning to the bad old ways of the thirties which, as we abandoned one position after another and stumbled from one act of weakness to another, led us directly to the cataclysm of 1939.

We must, then, constantly search our consciences and remain faithful to the tradition of the great men who have gone before us, and we must strive to overcome our disagreements. These disagreements are all of minor importance when compared with the magnitude of what is at stake. I am profoundly convinced that what is at stake is the preservation of a political and economic order — I should say of an outstanding form of civilisation — which guarantees to every one of the citizens in our countries a dimension of freedom and well-being which has perhaps never before been attained, in any era in history or in any part of the world.

As Europeans, we have come to take this highly developed civilisation as a normal state of affairs, which is there for good and can be taken for granted, and we feel that it is after all — in view of the qualities possessed by our peoples — right and proper that this should be so. That may perhaps be true ; yet the words of Valéry when he said that civilisations are mortal never rang so true as today.

Your Assembly, Ladies and Gentlemen, has played and is still playing a considerable rôle in building up this humanist European conscience. The dialogue which you maintain with the governments through the medium of the Council bears eloquent testimony to your vigilance, to your awareness of the destinies of our continent, and often to your legitimate impatience at the delays or difficulties experienced in the task that we have undertaken.

Your action and your judgment — even when it is severe, and I would say particularly when it is severe — is essential in order to encourage our governments and sometimes to push them into applying themselves with greater strength and greater energy to moving forward along the path on which fate placed us twenty-five years ago.

When we are confronted with the difficulties and vicissitudes of our times, despite our disappointments and even our feelings of bitter-

ness, and in spite of our doubts and our discouragements, we should remember the wise words, clear-sighted and courageous, spoken by a stoic prince who ruled over my country: "It is not necessary for enterprise to be founded on hope or perseverance on success".

We need not share in his pessimism, but we must share firmly and unequivocally in his resolve. (*Applause*)

The PRESIDENT (Translation). — Thank you, Mr. Minister.

I call Mr. Destremau, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the French Republic.

Mr. DESTREMAU (*Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the French Republic*) (Translation). — Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, the anniversary we are celebrating is particularly significant for all those who are interested in the task of building Europe. Never has homage been so justified as that which we are rendering today to the Assembly of Western European Union. I would even say it is more than an act of homage: we are acknowledging afresh our indebtedness to this Assembly, whose drive and perspicacity have for twenty years helped to provide the idea of Europe with its dynamism.

The founders of WEU entrusted it with a specific and important task which is evoked in the preamble to the modified Brussels Treaty: "to promote the unity and to encourage the progressive integration of Europe". This was equivalent to saying that WEU was definitely part of the movement towards European unity.

From this point of view it seems to me that we ought to remember the patient efforts made by this organisation, one of whose features is its flexibility and sometimes its versatility, in dealing with certain problems which arose in the aftermath of the last world conflict.

There is no need for me to point out that the Assembly of Western European Union has long been the forum of meaningful discussions on the chief subjects related to the future of Europe and a place where the member countries have regularly met to examine the situation.

On a number of occasions, indeed, the countries of Western Europe have been glad to find in WEU a privileged framework within which to concert their action, a mediator and a catalyst for their relations. The WEU Assembly can be proud of the contribution it has long been making

to the blueprint of a Europe whose final form is still undecided.

So true is it that the successes of WEU should sometimes be judged on their external repercussions that historians will one day be telling us how much this Assembly has contributed to the progress achieved in other European organisations.

While the European situation is such that WEU activities tend to become more specific than in the past, this does not mean that its wider field of competence is being called in question or that the part it still has to play in the unification of Europe has been in any way diminished.

The circumstances which caused WEU to be set up have, it is true, changed, but the road leading to European union is still strewn everywhere with obstacles. It is therefore most encouraging to think that Europe can, as in the past, count on the valuable assistance of this organisation in surmounting them.

In seeking to define a destiny worthy of its stature, Europe has not the slightest intention of impeding the activities of the Atlantic Alliance. It merely wants to be true to itself. Europe ought to be able to assert its presence on the international stage, to make its voice heard in all circumstances affecting its security in any way and to be in a position to assume its share of responsibility in the settlement of crises.

The more united Europe is, the more effective will be its contribution to the joint defence effort and the more decisive its efforts to achieve a real détente.

With this end in view we must seek to maintain our dialogue and to reflect further on our problems. And is this not, after all, the lesson we must draw when we look back on the twenty years of work devoted by this Assembly to the cause of Europe?

The Assembly's work is an illustration of its vitality and justifies the faith we have in its future. It also constitutes a sort of permanent call for the solidarity to be found in the spirit and the letter of the modified Brussels Treaty, to which France, for its part, intends to remain faithful.

To paraphrase the words of a former President of the WEU Assembly, its twenty years of

activity are not so much a milestone as a time for reminding ourselves of the progress made and the importance of the part still to be played on behalf of Europe. (*Applause*)

The PRESIDENT (Translation). — Thank you, Mr. Destremau.

I call Mr. Battaglia, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic.

Mr. BATTAGLIA (*Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic*) (Translation). — Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, the celebration of the first twenty years of this Assembly inevitably carries our minds back to the intellectually most stimulating and politically most rewarding years of the reconstruction and reorganisation of Europe and of the western world as a whole — the two being, as the German Minister pointed out a few moments ago, synonymous terms.

NATO was already in being, the ECSC in operation and the European Defence Community had just gone down like a stone. The new European union which then first saw the light of day marked the determination of Europeans not to knuckle under to passing difficulties. This very Assembly, in which we are now gathered, presented, in respect of the legal doctrines that had prevailed on the subject for the preceding quarter of a century, one essential innovation. This lay in its having, as an integrated and built-in part of the new union, a parliamentary body able to act as a direct link between governments and parliaments, and through the latter, between governments and the man in the street. What we are seeing for the first time was a European parliamentary assembly having institutional powers in the field of joint defence. This was enough in itself to indicate that intra-European relations were leaving behind the stage of unions between States, and entering upon a phase in which citizens and their elected representatives spoke directly to one another.

I believe that, looking back over the work of these last twenty years, the general verdict is that this Assembly has successfully accomplished its difficult task, in a context of international happenings of great, in some cases vital, importance, following thick and fast upon one another, often bewilderingly so, and in a situation in which was also going on a process of European integration I think we all hope will be irreversible and will eventually bring about common organisations.

The Assembly has breathed life into a complex structure within which the goal of full European union could be pursued. Falling into place between the European Parliament, whose purview is wider but does not encompass defence, and the North Atlantic Assembly, which does not have its own true and proper institutional characteristics, the Assembly of WEU has fulfilled an exceedingly vital function by its debates upon matters of direct moment to the union and by the great sensitivity it has shown towards the major topics of international political activity, such as those which, if I am not mistaken, are to be discussed at this meeting here in Bonn.

The Italian Government, which I have the honour to represent before you, has always followed with keen interest the proceedings of your Assembly, and is conscious of the great contribution this is making to the cause of Europe. It therefore associates itself with the celebration of the Assembly's first twenty years, and expresses the hope that it will go on from strength to strength in pursuit of its activities. (*Applause*)

The PRESIDENT (Translation). — Thank you, Mr. Battaglia.

I call Mr. Emile Krieps, Minister of Public Health, the Environment, Civil Service and Armed Forces of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

Mr. KRIEPS (*Minister of Public Health, the Environment, Civil Service and Armed Forces of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg*) (Translation). — I want to begin by thanking you very sincerely, Mr. President, for the warm tribute paid to our late statesman, Mr. Joseph Bech.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Assembly of Western European Union is today celebrating the twentieth anniversary of its existence.

On behalf of the Luxembourg Government, I should like to associate myself with the tributes paid to the Assembly, to its present members and to the eminent political figures who have belonged to it since its establishment.

The untiring efforts, backed with clear-sightedness and authority, which the Assembly has been making in its endeavour to attain the objectives laid down by the Paris Agreements of 23rd October 1954, have had a profound influ-

ence on the joint action undertaken by the seven governments in the two decades that have just come to a close.

The celebration of this anniversary affords us a favourable opportunity of casting a glance backwards and reminding ourselves of the circumstances which at that time warranted the setting up of this new international institution, of considering whether the hopes we entertained a short time ago have been fulfilled, and finally of asking ourselves whether the organisation of which this Assembly constitutes one of the twin pillars is still really needed today.

Western European Union was brought into being after a setback — that of the European Defence Community.

It proved impossible for the six original partners in the Community to draw progressively closer together in the realm of defence through integration. Wiser for this experience, the governments concerned then sought to achieve the desired result — that is, organising a defence for Western Europe which would be worthy of the name — by using a formula that was both more flexible and more comprehensive.

It is more flexible, in that it respects the essential consideration of the independent power of decision exercised by each of the partners over the ways and means used to raise its forces. It is more comprehensive, in that it embraces the United Kingdom, in particular, thanks to a solemn commitment given by that country to station military forces on the continent permanently in peacetime.

This direct participation in European responsibilities encouraged reconciliation between countries whose antagonisms had for centuries torn Europe apart. The organic balance and internal cohesion of the undertaking were the stronger because of this circumstance.

It is not without interest to remember this at the present juncture, when the British people will shortly be taking a decision which will be of decisive importance both for their own future and for that of Europe.

To begin with, the areas of competence of your Assembly were defined in somewhat summary fashion in the treaty. Defining them in this way offered the advantage of facilitating a process of development and of rendering possible a progressive adaptation to the real needs of the political situation as the years passed by. The

Assembly has been able to extend its field of activity little by little, having come to realise that, of the European parliamentary institutions, it alone had responsibilities in respect of defence.

This realisation enabled it to prepare and forward to the Council directives on the line to be adopted by the governments when taking action in the political sphere.

It would be vain to deny the shortcomings which have sometimes characterised such action. There is general agreement about the need for a specifically European effort in the field of defence. The task that falls to Europe itself in this respect in no way weakens — quite the reverse, in fact — the need for a close association with the other partners in the Atlantic Alliance, for it was this very alliance which, more than twenty-five years ago, restored hope to a Europe in disarray. Yet general agreement on such a line of conduct does not alter the fact — to take just one example — that for the last twenty years the standardisation and joint production of arms have in practice been marking time, although as early as 1954, everyone had recognised their overriding importance.

This lack of progress is undoubtedly bad enough in itself. More serious, however, is the fact that in both organs — in the Assembly as well as in the Council — we are fully aware of the situation without being able to find an effective remedy.

It will accordingly be up to the Assembly to show in future the same energy and perseverance as it has so often shown in the past.

It will be the Assembly's responsibility to remind the governments of the aims they have set themselves and of the means by which these aims can be attained.

Within WEU, the Assembly reflects the awareness of the peoples; after experiencing the vicissitudes of our times, they have clearly expressed their will to preserve the independence and autonomy of Europe through an effective system of defence.

To limit the rôle of our parliamentarians strictly to defence matters, important though they are, would amount to a failure to appreciate the real extent of the influence which the Assembly has exerted on the general development of relations among the countries of Western Europe.

It is in the nature of things that military problems always develop against a political backcloth. At the same time, genuine European unification is in the long run inconceivable if joint defence is not part of it. Defence is and will remain indissociable from the general policy of the countries concerned. So the Assembly of Western European Union has not stood aside while others made the efforts which have gone into the implementation of the Community idea. It is in this respect that the Assembly's activities have proved to be the most fruitful.

It was WEU which first gave Great Britain an opportunity to participate, with the same rights and the same duties, in a specifically European venture, and so it was natural that the Assembly should be one of the first to affirm the vital importance of British participation in the endeavours of the Community.

The events of the past twenty years are sufficiently familiar, especially to those who were the leading players, for a review of the historical background to be superfluous. Suffice it to recall that the Assembly, despite a series of mortifying setbacks, has never failed in its duty. It made itself the champion of strengthening relations between the United Kingdom and the Six at a time when success was not forthcoming. It pressed unremittingly for resumption of the dialogue whenever a temporary setback interrupted it.

If in the end it has proved possible to reconcile — and, let us hope, to reconcile once and for all — the tentative approaches made by Great Britain and by the Six, which were for too long divergent, not to say conflicting, and if today we can discern on the horizon the first uncertain strokes in the outline of what we have agreed to call a political Europe speaking with one voice and capable of taking concerted action in its dealings with the outside world, the credit belongs largely to this Assembly. Indeed, it has consistently worked on the idea of a Europe defined in these terms and has raised the subject at each of its sessions.

The Assembly has made it very clear that all our joint achievements, however great — and on this point my government shares fully the feelings of the Assembly — will of necessity remain fragmentary until such time as they are crowned by a political union.

We can but encourage the Assembly, therefore, to continue the dialogue with its opposite

number, the Council. Its task — like that of the national parliaments — is to supervise and stimulate government action.

Despite the risk that there may be overlapping or duplication of effort, it is important that this dialogue should be maintained and the task of supervision be carried through without interfering in the areas of competence already allotted to various bodies concerned with the construction of Europe.

By facing up to its responsibilities with the conscientiousness it has always shown in the past, the Assembly will avert the risk that our common endeavours may founder on the general indifference of public opinion. The Assembly will thus serve as a catalyst for ensuring that the Council respects the commitments undertaken a while back in terms that were clear and precise but whose true meaning is too often obscured by momentary interests and contingencies. (*Applause*)

The PRESIDENT (Translation). — Thank you, Mr. Minister.

I call Mr. Kooijmans, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Mr. KOOLJMAN (Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands) (Translation). — Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, members of this Assembly, I would like first of all, on behalf of the Dutch Government, to compliment you, as you meet to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of this Assembly, on the important work you have done over the past twenty years. The development of the Assembly of Western European Union is of special interest to the Netherlands, because of the fact that, seen historically, there is a parallel between your Assembly and what happened in my own country in the past. I should remind you that up to the end of the 18th century the Netherlands was not a kingdom but a republic, the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands. Each of the seven provinces which together made up this republic had their own sovereignty and their own parliament, known as the "States". These "Provincial States" sent delegates to The Hague, where they met several times a year as the States-General. The main responsibilities of the States-General included discussion of the foreign policy and defence of the Republic as a whole. You might say, there-

fore, that the States-General were the WEU Assembly in microcosm.

Here I would like to quote from the book "Ten Years of Seven-Power Europe", in which one of your previous Presidents, Mr. Pezet, wrote about a congress on the United States of Europe held in Paris in the year 1900. The quotation from this book, dealing with the outcome of that congress, reads :

"A (geographically) restricted union would not constitute united States of Europe, but united States in Europe, which is not the same thing. Such a union can only come about with time, as a result of the new requirements and sentiments of contemporary peoples. Then it can only come about slowly, gradually, under the twofold pressure of ideas and interests pulling simultaneously in the same direction. European congresses and conferences would naturally be the framework for these initial test agreements in which diplomacy would have the main rôle. No doubt a federation as such could only come about later, after the main States of Europe have learnt to act jointly."

That was in 1900. WEU began in 1954, and we have moved further along the road to unity. As Mr. Pezet said in his article, the Paris congress was a forerunner of WEU. He described its rôle in the gradual development of European union.

Yet there is another aspect. Just as the task of the States-General of the Dutch Republic came to an end when the provinces became really integrated, the kingdom was called into being and a fully-fledged parliament was set up, so the quotation from the congress in Paris also leads us to the conclusion that the tasks of the institutions of WEU are not only limited geographically but will be limited in time as well, and that these tasks will, to a greater or lesser extent, be ended — or rather, will be taken over — once European union is a fact, for only then will "the main States of Europe have learnt to act jointly".

I think it is only realistic to accept this conclusion. I will, however, recall what the British Foreign Minister, Mr. Callaghan, said during the informal meeting he had with the General Affairs Committee last Tuesday, namely that the treaty would remain in force and that its provisions would keep their value and importance. We are, for example, not intending to give up Article V, an essential guarantee of our

security. As more and more progress is made towards European unity, the implementation of this treaty will take place rather more in other fora or, as Mr. Callaghan said, other instruments will be created. Already, at this moment, consultations are going on within the context of political co-operation among the Nine.

I would point out that the Nine are already playing an important part in East-West détente, for example in the conference on security and co-operation in Europe. The rôle of the Nine in this connection is a very important one. My government welcomes the fact that the Nine are able to play this rôle, one that has a major influence on the quality of the détente achieved. The Dutch Government is firmly convinced that a united Europe must not be an inward-looking entity that shields itself from outside influences ; on the contrary, Western Europe must accept full responsibility for setting up a system, in this part of the world and in the world as a whole, that will be more in keeping with the intrinsic values of our shared civilisation.

This calls for an imaginative policy in our relations with the rest of Europe, and it calls for a frank and understanding approach to the needs and wants of that part of the world that is much less blessed than we are with wealth and technical skills. Only then will a European union be more than the sum of its constituent parts, and more than a cause of fear to others because of its growing strength. The dimension of quality will, rather, be added.

The final form European union may take is still unclear. We are looking forward with great interest to the report by the Belgian Premier, Mr. Tindemans, on the prospects for European union. The Dutch Government is devoting a lot of attention to this, and a special committee, chaired by ex-Ambassador Spierenburg, has recently published a report on the subject. But whatever form a European union may finally take, parliamentary control will have to be an important feature of it — an essential part, because without parliamentary control there can be no democracy, either in an individual nation or in a community of nations. This is not just theory ; it matches practical experience, as shown by twenty years of your activity.

Here I want specially to draw attention to the outstanding work the Assembly has done, work that has taken concrete form in a great many valuable and interesting reports. I am certain that one of the important and positive

features of WEU, and by the same token one of the great merits of those who founded it, is that parliamentary control is enshrined in the treaty as one of its essential components. I believe that you have made full use of the possibilities open to you. You have exerted an influence on the governments in their moves towards security and détente. You have taught the States of Europe how "to act jointly", and by doing so have made a specially important contribution to the building of Europe.

My hope is that you will continue with this work with the same intensity and with the same singleness of purpose. (*Applause*)

The PRESIDENT (Translation). — Thank you, Mr. Kooijmans.

I call Mr. Frederick Mulley, Minister for Transport of the United Kingdom.

Mr. MULLEY (*Minister for Transport of the United Kingdom*). — I am grateful, Mr. President, for the privilege of addressing this commemorative session to convey to you the congratulations and good wishes of the United Kingdom Government. I am also delighted to be present on this historic occasion in my personal capacity as a former member and Vice-President of the Assembly.

My Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary are sorry that, owing to their commitments in our referendum campaign, they cannot attend in person and have asked me to convey their greetings.

My government stand by the commitments we undertook in the modified Brussels Treaty as firmly today as when we ratified the treaty in 1955. Indeed, these essentially European commitments have remained the corner-stones of our defence policy and our primary contribution to the Western Alliance. The same is true of NATO, to which WEU has delegated its defence functions, apart from the valuable work it has done in the field of standardisation and arms control. And we see NATO as having a vital rôle, not only in defence but in achieving détente, arms control and disarmament as well. As a former Minister for Disarmament who participated in the negotiations leading to the non-proliferation treaty and was able to take the initiative which led to the treaty outlawing biological warfare, I could wish for faster progress and greater European involvement in this field.

While the undeniable achievement of European integration in the last twenty years has been to banish the possibility of war in Western Europe of the kind we suffered in 1914 and 1939, we must equally play our full part in avoiding the cataclysmic consequences of global war.

And while, regrettably, the United Kingdom, to our cost, has been slow, hesitant and uncertain in its commitment to European political and economic integration — regrets I have expressed more than once in this Assembly — there has been no such uncertainty in our commitment to Western European defence. Whenever Europe has been put to the test, Britain has shown by her actions that she regarded her future as being inextricably bound up with her continental neighbours. This was so in both the great wars. As our war poet, Wilfred Owen, who was himself killed in action a few days before the Armistice in 1918, expressed it simply :

"Red lips are not so red
As the stained stones kissed by the
English dead."

It was so again in 1945.

But today, Mr. President, we particularly wish to pay tribute to the work of this Assembly, whose creation was a novel and most valuable feature of the modified Brussels Treaty.

It has consistently been ahead of governments in its thinking on defence matters and in urging more effective co-operation. I well recall the leading rôle it played in the late 1950s and early 1960s in the debate which led to a complete revision of NATO strategy and defence philosophy, and that the then Secretary-General of NATO came regularly to our sessions to denounce our heresies with bell, book and candle. At that time, when the United Kingdom was the only Western European nuclear power, I proposed, as Rapporteur of the Defence Committee, that we should make our nuclear strike-force available as the basis of a European nuclear force within WEU. I sometimes wonder what might have happened in the development of Europe if governments had followed this Assembly in supporting it, instead of responding with deafening silence.

In the long time that we were outside the European Communities, WEU, both Council and Assembly, served us well as a meeting-place be-

tween ourselves and our friends of the original Six. We are also most grateful for all the help and understanding we received from them in the recent difficult period of renegotiations. But, Mr. President, I have spoken too much of the past. What of the future?

He would, of course, be a brave man who would predict the next twenty years.

In my own country our European destiny will be determined in a brief ten days — on 5th June — when our membership of the Community is put to the vote of the British people. My government's recommendation and wish is that we should remain a member — to say "yes" to Europe. I hope and believe this view will be decisively endorsed, thus ending argument, and enabling us to play a full part in developing the Community in the best interests of ourselves, of Europe and of the rest of the world.

Inevitably at this time, there is much talk of trade and tariffs, taxes and directives, food and agriculture, and all too little, perhaps, of that intangible but real concept of the European idea which inspired and encouraged the founding fathers of our European institutions.

As rich nations we have quite clear economic obligations to help the poorer peoples in the third world. But we can and must do more than that. As nation States, none of us counts for a great deal in the world of 1975 but if we can learn to speak with one voice we can have a great influence — an influence for good. From the rich background of European culture and history we have much to contribute and not least the most prized jewels in our heritage — our experience of and dedication to the principles of democracy and the practice of political freedom.

As an English socialist, Robert Blatchford, said many years ago: "We need bread but we need roses too." This we must never forget. Or, as the poet said:

"Or dull routine will of our love dispose,
As greenfly sucks the sweetness of the rose."

I suggest that this Assembly, freed from the chores of detail and routine decision, is uniquely placed to be the custodian of the European idea.

Mr. President, I am confident that the Assembly will carry this torch as bravely in the future as it has done in the last twenty years. (*Applause*)

The PRESIDENT (Translation). — Thank you, Mr. Mulley.

3. Address by the President of the Assembly

The PRESIDENT (Translation). — Twenty years ago the Western European nations were eliminating the last traces of the conflict which had led them into so cruel a confrontation.

This was a decisive stage in postwar developments.

The Federal Republic was at last to take its full place in the concert of democratic States. It regained the right to assume responsibility for its own defence, which is an essential part of sovereignty, and although the treaty still contains a few restrictive provisions, this is undoubtedly to avoid aggravating the differences of opinion which still cut across the continent and jeopardising the prospects of détente.

But this demonstration of confidence is still the outstanding proof that, to safeguard against any threat to freedom, the solidarity of free peoples would take full effect, without hesitation or restriction.

On the occasion of this commemorative sitting, it is worth recalling that the aim of the negotiators of the Paris Agreements in creating a parliamentary assembly was to provide, in view of the lesson of history, an additional precaution.

In line with our democratic principles, they confirmed that the only policy that would stand the test of time is one which has the backing of public opinion. At their regular meetings, the parliamentarians are responsible for supervising the application of the treaty and also, even more, for supplying the drive needed for the construction of Europe.

They have grasped the full importance of this task and have pursued it methodically and stubbornly. The reports they have prepared, and the recommendations and resolutions they have adopted, prove how seriously they take their duties. Has the Council of Ministers, acting in the spirit of the treaties, taken account of these recommendations, these resolutions? Has it, as would be normal, given the parliamentarians

something in return? The answer is unfortunately too often "No".

But this cannot prevent me, on behalf of all my fellow members, from focusing my attention on the political and military rôle to be played by Western Europe.

This problem, around which the Assembly's debates have turned from the outset, is still a source of controversy. We shall ensure that it is not forgotten, for a resolution has never been so urgently required. The difficulties besetting the world economy, the arms race and the conditions in which the United States has withdrawn from South-East Asia show more than ever that European cohesion is essential.

A European identity implies the will to power. But Europe still seems to be a large body in search of a soul. Although it is the world's foremost trading power and the level of its industrial production allows it to compete in technological progress, it in many cases fails to make the most of its advantages, to develop its advanced industries and to produce on its own territory the arms which are essential to it.

All our countries belong to the Atlantic Alliance. For the Alliance to be loyal and balanced, it is the duty of each member to make every effort compatible with its resources. They cannot continue to impose upon American generosity which, for the common defence, has made sacrifices which it can no longer bear. The United States has lost 55,000 dead and 92,000 wounded or disabled in Indo-China and spent thousands of millions of dollars. It is entitled to ask what President Kennedy called "the second pillar of the Alliance" to make a contribution which, if not comparable, is at least effective.

But Europe must have the will to do so, and so far this will has made itself felt in a manner that has been over-discreet. Its dignity and its interest will suffer unless there is a shift towards a real reappraisal of our own policy.

Western European Union could have provided the framework within which to organise the structure of European security in a rational manner. For a long time it was the privileged meeting-place of the six countries of the European Community and Britain, which was not yet a member of the Community. Today it provides a place in which six members of NATO and France, which does not belong to the integ-

rated structure, can concert their action. This is no minor point, but is today coming to be a matter of prime importance.

Despite all these considerations, we must not shut our eyes to the fact that our governments are not unanimous about the purpose of building Europe. Let us nonetheless seek out the points on which agreement is already conceivable. I believe we should first agree on the *de facto* solidarity between the Western European countries in face of any threat from without and the need to express this solidarity in terms of real political co-operation. Despite appearances, a wide measure of agreement could be obtained in defence matters. The member countries of WEU should therefore agree on the means of implementing the aims of the modified Brussels Treaty at the present juncture.

In this connection, I feel that closer attention should have been paid to the proposals made at our last session by Mr. Van Elslande and Mr. Vredeling with a view to safeguarding the European arms industries. The suggestions made for promoting agreements on specialisation and co-operation in armaments research and production and elaborating procedures for joint financing follow the same lines as the Assembly's oft-repeated recommendations to the Council. Whether these suggestions came originally from governments or parliaments, little action has been taken on them.

Fair words alone are not enough. A Europe of realities must replace the Europe of intentions. It is the Assembly's duty to give our governments a solemn warning and to voice the concern of the public at their ditherings. For our appeal to be heard, we must eschew theoretical debate and political theology and try to adopt practical goals which exactly fit the requirements of the situation.

We must reach agreement amongst ourselves in order to submit firm, realistic and imaginative proposals to our governments, and in this way we will be all the more convincing when we urge them to deploy the necessary political will to carry our proposals into effect.

The Assembly must continue its dialogue with the WEU Council, however paralysed the latter may be by the inability of Europeans to take a common view of the facts of defence policy. Conscious of the task before it, the Assembly will pursue its work. Its recommenda-

tions, written questions and requests for joint meetings will be no less numerous than in the past, quite the contrary. The Council will not be able to ignore them even if for some of us European defence matters are dealt with in other places.

If Europeans want to decide their destiny in this continent which is the cradle of contemporary civilisation, they will have to stress the points which unite them rather than those which divide them.

Our long and bloodstained history and endemic disagreements had caused a gap which it seemed impossible to bridge ; but the hatchet has fortunately been buried for the last thirty

years, and we are now certain that we are united once and for all, for better or for worse.

Convinced of the responsibilities that rest upon us, we shall not succumb to resignation, we shall not take the lines of least resistance, nor shall we entrust to others the safeguarding of our cultural heritage, our traditions, our freedom.

This is our historic task. We do not intend to shirk our responsibilities.

I declare the Commemorative Sitting for the Twentieth Anniversary of the Assembly of Western European Union closed.

(The Sitting was closed at 12.35 p.m.)

