

SPEECH BY M. WILLY DE CLERCO, COMMISSIONER IN CHARGE OF
EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND OF TRADE POLICY AT THE EC-US
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THE EC AND EASTERN EUROPE : ECONOMIC AND
TRADE RELATIONS

MR CHAIRMAN,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I AM VERY PLEASED TO HAVE BEEN INVITED HERE TODAY TO EXPRESS THE COMMISSION'S POINT OF VIEW ON THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY'S RELATIONS WITH EASTERN EUROPE AND COMECON.

AS I'M SURE YOU MUST HAVE NOTICED, THERE HAS BEEN A FLURRY OF ACTIVITY IN THESE RELATIONS IN THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS. INDEED, WE LIVE IN INTERESTING TIMES, AS AN ANCIENT CHINESE SAYING HAS IT. THIS HAS EARNED US A LOT OF MEDIA ATTENTION, FOR WHICH WE ARE GRATEFUL, ALTHOUGH I MUST ADMIT THAT SOME OF THE THINGS I SEE WRITTEN ABOUT OUR POLICIES ARE NEWS TO ME ! ONE CAN HARDLY BLAME PEOPLE FOR GETTING THE WRONG END OF THE STICK IF THEY COME TO THE STORY LATE IN THE DAY. SO I HOPE YOU WILL BEAR WITH ME WHILE I FILL IN SOME HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, WHICH SHOULD PUT RECENT EVENTS BETTER INTO PERSPECTIVE. I WOULD PARTICULARLY LIKE TO CORRECT THE IMPRESSION IN SOME QUARTERS THAT THE COMMISSION HAS FALLEN FOR A CHARM OFFENSIVE ON THE PART OF THE NEW SOVIET LEADERSHIP, AND IS PREPARING TO THROW THIRTY YEARS OF CAUTION TO THE WINDS AND JUMP INTO BED WITH COMECON.

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THIS, LIKE REPORTS OF MARK TWAIN'S DEATH, IS GREATLY EXAGGERATED. IN FACT, AS I SHALL EXPLAIN, THE COMMISSION - AND THE COMMUNITY - HAVE MAINTAINED A CONSISTENT POLICY TOWARDS THE EAST OVER THE LAST THIRTY YEARS. LET'S PUT IT VERY BLUNTLY: IT IS THE EAST WHICH HAS MOVED TO ACCOMMODATE US, NOT THE OTHER WAY ROUND.

FOR CONVENIENCE, THE HISTORY OF OUR RELATIONS WITH THE EAST CAN BE DIVIDED INTO THREE STAGES. TO BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING: THE CREATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY WAS GREETED WITH HOSTILITY BY THE SOVIET UNION. THIS HOSTILITY WAS EXPRESSED VIRULENTLY, AND AT LENGTH, IN COMMUNIST PARTY PUBLICATIONS IN 1957 AND 1962. THE MOTIVATION FOR THESE ATTACKS SEEMED TO BE IDEOLOGICAL. WE WERE ACCUSED OF BEING A CAPITALIST - IMPERIALIST CREATION, OF WORKING IN THE INTERESTS OF THE MULTINATIONAL MONOPOLIES AND AGAINST THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING CLASSES. WE WERE ALSO SEEN AS THE ECONOMIC ARM OF NATO, AND INDEED AS A KIND OF EUROPEAN SUBSIDIARY OF AMERICA INC. THE GENERAL GIST SEEMED TO BE THAT THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY WAS AS MUCH AS MUCH A THREAT TO THE SOVIET UNION AS THE UNITED STATES, THE OTHER SUPERPOWER. I'M NOT SURE WHETHER WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN FLATTERED, INSULTED, OR MERELY AMUSED BY THIS ATTITUDE, BUT AT ANY RATE IT HAS NOT MADE OUR LIVES EASY.

THROUGHOUT THIS INITIAL STAGE, WHICH LASTED UNTIL 1972, THE USSR AND ITS ALLIES EXPRESSED THEIR HOSTILITY IN SEVERAL PRACTICAL WAYS. THEY ISSUED INTENSIVE PROPAGANDA AGAINST THE CREATION AND EXTENSION OF COMMUNITY POWERS. THEY REFUSED TO HAVE NORMAL DEALINGS WITH COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS. THEY HAVE REFUSED TO ACCREDIT DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS TO THE COMMUNITY. THIS IS SOMETHING WHICH 130 OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD HAVE HAD NO PROBLEM IN DOING.

EVEN TODAY, THEY HAVE NO OFFICIAL RELATIONS WITH US. FINALLY, THEY HAVE DONE THEIR BEST TO PREVENT THE COMMUNITY FROM ACCEDING TO INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND FROM PLAYING ITS FULL ROLE IN MULTILATERAL ORGANISATIONS IN WHICH ITS PRESENCE IS AMPLY JUSTIFIED BY THE COMMUNITY'S COMPETENCE.

HOWEVER, IN 1972 CAME THE FIRST SIGN OF A CHANGE IN THE SOVIET ATTITUDE TO THE COMMUNITY. MR BREZHNEV MADE STATEMENTS REFERRING TO A RECOGNITION OF THE REALITIES IN WESTERN EUROPE AND TO THE POSSIBILITY OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CIIEA AND THE "COMMON MARKET". ONE CAN ONLY SPECULATE AS TO THE REASONS FOR THIS CHANGE. FIRSTLY, THE COMMUNITY WAS ON THE EVE OF ITS FIRST MAJOR ENLARGEMENT; IT WAS BECOMING A REALITY INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO IGNORE. SECONDLY, COMMUNITY POLICIES - AND IN PARTICULAR THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY - WERE HAVING AN EFFECT ON TRADE BETWEEN SOME OF THE EUROPEAN COMECON COUNTRIES AND WESTERN EUROPE. IT WAS THEREFORE IN THEIR INTERESTS TO CONSIDER ENTERING INTO TRADE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE EC. AND FINALLY, THERE WAS CERTAINLY A STRONG DESIRE ON THE PART OF THE SOVIET UNION TO STRENGTHEN COMECON BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY.

THESE STATEMENTS BY MR BREZHNEV MARKED THE BEGINNING OF WHAT I WOULD CALL THE SECOND STAGE IN OUR RELATIONS WITH THE EAST, WHICH LASTED UNTIL ABOUT 1982. THIS PERIOD WAS MARKED, ON THE COMMUNITY'S SIDE, BY EFFORTS TO DEVELOP BILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS WITH EACH OF THE EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, TAKING ACCOUNT OF ITS PARTICULAR ECONOMIC AND LEGAL CIRCUMSTANCES, FOR INSTANCE ITS MEMBERSHIP OR OTHERWISE OF GATT.

IN 1974 THE COMMUNITY WROTE TO ALL THE STATE-TRADING COUNTRIES, OFFERING TO NEGOTIATE BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENTS WITH THEM. THIS OFFER WAS NOT TAKEN UP BY ANY OF THE EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AT THE TIME. HOWEVER, FIVE OF THEM (BULGARIA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HUNGARY, POLAND AND ROMANIA) CONCLUDED BILATERAL SECTORAL AGREEMENTS WITH THE COMMUNITY IN THE FIELDS OF AGRICULTURE, TEXTILES AND STEEL. ONLY ROMANIA WENT FURTHER, AND IN 1980 CONCLUDED AN AGREEMENT ON TRADE IN ALL INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS, SUPERVISED BY A JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING ANNUALLY AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL.

DURING THIS TIME THE SOVIET UNION CONCENTRATED ON PROMOTING COMECON AS A VEHICLE FOR RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY. IN 1976, COMECON PRESENTED US WITH A DRAFT FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO ORGANISATIONS. THIS LAID DOWN BASIC POLICY GUIDELINES FOR TRADE BETWEEN EEC AND COMECON COUNTRIES. IT ALSO PROVIDED THAT COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS WITH INDIVIDUAL EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WOULD BE LIMITED TO TECHNICAL MATTERS AND SUBJECT TO SUPERVISION BY THE CMEA AND ITS MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVELY.

THIS DRAFT WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE COMMUNITY. WE CONSIDERED THAT TRADE QUESTIONS WERE A MATTER FOR NEGOTIATION WITH INDIVIDUAL EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, SINCE THEY, AND NOT COMECON AS AN ORGANISATION, CONTROLLED THEIR OWN TRADE POLICIES. NOR DID WE LIKE THE IDEA OF COMECON HAVING A SUPERVISORY ROLE OVER OUR RELATIONS WITH THE INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES. THE COMMUNITY HAS ALWAYS GIVEN PRIORITY TO ITS RELATIONS WITH COMECON MEMBER COUNTRIES AND REJECTED A BLOC-TO-BLOC APPROACH. WE HAVE NO DESIRE TO ENCOURAGE THE SOVIET UNION'S INFLUENCE OVER ITS ALLIES IN EASTERN EUROPE BY CONTRIBUTING TO A STRENGTHENING OF COMECON'S ROLE AND POWERS.

IN ADDITION, WE ARE CONSCIOUS OF THE INDIVIDUALITY OF EACH OF THE EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND AIM TO DEAL WITH EACH IN THE LIGHT OF ITS OWN SPECIFIC SITUATION.

THE COMMUNITY THEREFORE PROPOSED ONLY WORKING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO ORGANISATIONS. NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUED UNTIL 1980, WHEN THEY WERE SUSPENDED BY MUTUAL CONSENT, SINCE THE POSITIONS OF THE TWO SIDES WERE IRRECONCILABLE.

RECENTLY, AND NOW I COME TO THE THIRD STAGE IN OUR RELATIONS, THERE HAVE BEEN MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ATTITUDE OF THE EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TO THE COMMUNITY. STARTING AROUND 1983, WE NOTICED A GREATER READINESS TO DEAL WITH US AND TO HAVE UNOFFICIAL CONTACTS. THE clearest INDICATION CAME IN 1985, WHEN MR SYCHOV WROTE TO THE COMMISSION TO SUGGEST THE ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO ORGANISATIONS BY MEANS OF A JOINT DECLARATION TO BE ADOPTED AT A HIGH-LEVEL MEETING. THIS SOUNDED AS IF THE CMEA HAD ABANDONED ITS EFFORTS TO OBTAIN AN AGREEMENT CONTAINING SUBSTANTIVE PROVISIONS ON TRADE OR ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND CMEA MEMBER COUNTRIES. THIS WOULD BE GOOD NEWS; BUT WE HAD TO MAKE SURE. IN RESPONSE, THE COMMUNITY DECIDED TO ADOPT A PARALLEL APPROACH, IN OTHER WORDS TO SEEK TO DEVELOP OUR RELATIONS WITH COMECON MEMBER COUNTRIES SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH OUR RELATIONS WITH COMECON AS AN ORGANISATION. I THEREFORE WROTE IN EARLY 1986 BOTH TO THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE EUROPEAN COMECON MEMBERS AND TO MR SYCHOV. THE REPLIES I RECEIVED SHOWED THAT THE CMEA HAD ACCEPTED THAT TRADE MATTERS WERE A SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL CMEA COUNTRIES, WHILE THE COUNTRIES THEMSELVES ALL INDICATED THEIR DESIRE TO NORMALISE THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY, AND NEGOTIATE ON COMMERCIAL MATTERS WHERE APPROPRIATE.

THIS MEANT THAT THE PARALLEL APPROACH HAD BEEN ACCEPTED BY BOTH SIDES, AND WE HAVE SINCE BEEN BUSY PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE.

WITH REGARD TO THE NORMALISATION OF OUR RELATIONS WITH THE INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE, WE HAVE HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH A NUMBER OF THEM ON THIS POINT. THEY HAVE ALL INDICATED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO ESTABLISH MISSIONS TO THE COMMUNITY, BUT NONE HAS SO FAR DONE SO. SOME OF THEM LINK THE TIMING OF THIS MOVE TO THE ADOPTION OF THE JOINT DECLARATION BETWEEN THE EEC AND COMECON. WE CONSIDER THAT A CONTINUANCE OF THE PRESENT SITUATION WOULD NOT SIMPLY BE A QUESTION OF A LACK OF FORMAL RELATIONS. IT WOULD BE A SYMPTOM OF A MUCH MORE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM: THE DENIAL BY THE EAST OF THE REALITY OF THE COMMUNITY. IN THIS RESPECT, I AGREE WITH MR. SYCHOV, THE SECRETARY OF THE CMEA, WHEN HE DESCRIBES THE LACK OF RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR ORGANISATIONS AS AN "ANACHRONISM". I WOULD GO FURTHER AND DESCRIBE THE WHOLE ATTITUDE OF THE EASTERN COUNTRIES TO THE COMMUNITY AS ANACHRONISTIC.

TRADE NEGOTIATIONS ARE ALSO PROCEEDING APACE. THE COMMISSION ALREADY HAS MANDATES FROM THE COUNCIL TO NEGOTIATE A TRADE-AND-COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH ROMANIA, TO REPLACE THE OLD TRADE ONE, AND FOR NEW AGREEMENTS ON TRADE IN INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND ON TRADE AND COOPERATION WITH HUNGARY. EXPLORATORY TALKS ARE ALSO TAKING PLACE WITH POLAND AND BULGARIA. THE USSR AND THE GDR DO NOT SEEM INTERESTED IN TRADE AGREEMENTS, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT.

AS FAR AS THE CMEA IS CONCERNED, EXPERT MEETINGS HAVE TAKEN PLACE WITH THE THE COMMISSION TO DISCUSS THE TEXT OF THE JOINT DECLARATION. PROGRESS ON THIS HAS BEEN HELD UP BY THE CMEA'S REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THE INSERTION OF THE COMMUNITY'S NORMAL TERRITORIAL CLAUSE. THIS IS CODE FOR THE INCLUSION OF WEST BERLIN IN THE COMMUNITY. OBVIOUSLY THE COMMISSION WILL NOT SIGN THE JOINT DECLARATION UNLESS AND UNTIL THE CMEA ACCEPTS THIS FACT, BUT I DO NOT EXCLUDE THAT WE SHALL REACH AGREEMENT BEFORE LONG. OFFICIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO ORGANISATIONS WOULD THEN BE ESTABLISHED.

THE SUM TOTAL OF ALL THIS ACTIVITY LEADS ME TO FORESEE A FOURTH STAGE IN THE COMMUNITY'S RELATIONS WITH EASTERN EUROPE, WHEN WE WILL HAVE NORMAL RELATIONS AND APPROPRIATE AGREEMENTS WITH THESE COUNTRIES. THESE NORMALIZED RELATIONS SHOULD IN PARTICULAR FACILITATE BUSINESS OPERATIONS FOR OUR ENTERPRISES AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE LARGE MARKET OF EASTERN EUROPE. AND THERE IS CERTAINLY A LOT OF UNTAPPED POTENTIAL THERE; OUR TRADE WITH EASTERN EUROPE ACCOUNTS FOR ONLY 7% OF OUR EXTERNAL TRADE AS COMPARED WITH MORE THAN 25% FOR THE EFTA COUNTRIES. AND IF WE WANT TO EXPLOIT THAT MARKET, IT MEANS THAT IT IS IN OUR INTEREST, TOGETHER WITH THEIR OWN REFORM EFFORTS, TO CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR INDUSTRIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT. BUSINESS IS INDEED A TWO WAY STREET, PARTICULARLY WHEN ONE IS TRADING BETWEEN SUCH DIFFERENT ECONOMIC SYSTEMS. IMPROVED TRADE COULD ALSO, IN A MORE GENERAL WAY, IMPROVE THE CLIMATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN EASTERN AND WESTERN EUROPE.

BUT YOU SHOULD NOT THINK THAT I AM GOING STARRY-EYED OVER A BRAVE NEW DAWN. WE IN THE COMMISSION ARE AWARE OF THE RISKS INHERENT IN ANY RAPPROCHEMENT WITH THE EAST. WE REALISE THAT THEY HAVE THEIR OWN MOTIVES FOR SUCH A RADICAL

SHIFT IN POLICY TOWARDS THE COMMUNITY. ONE OF THE MAIN MOTIVES IS LIKELY TO BE ECONOMIC SELF-INTEREST. THE NEED FOR MODERNISATION OF THE EASTERN COUNTRIES' LIMPING ECONOMIES IS NOW ACUTE. THE COLLAPSE OF THE OIL PRICE HAS FORCED THE SOVIET UNION TO FACE UP TO THE NECESSITY OF DIVERSIFYING ITS EXPORTS AWAY FROM RAW MATERIALS TOWARDS MORE MANUFACTURED GOODS. TO DO THIS, THE USSR AND ITS ALLIES NEED ACCESS TO WESTERN TECHNOLOGY AND TO WESTERN KNOWHOW, IN AREAS SUCH AS MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION.

THERE ARE ALSO LIKELY TO BE POLITICAL REASONS FOR THE MORE OPEN ATTITUDE OF THE EAST. THE NEW LEADERSHIP IN THE SOVIET UNION HAS TAKEN A MORE PRAGMATIC AND FLEXIBLE LINE IN FOREIGN POLICY, SEEING THE ADVANTAGES IN CULTIVATING BETTER RELATIONS WITH MANY COUNTRIES AND REGIONS, NOT ONLY WITH THE UNITED STATES. IT HAS ALSO PROBABLY COME TO REALISE THAT WESTERN EUROPE IS A SEPARATE ENTITY FROM THE UNITED STATES, AND THEY MAY SEE AN INTEREST IN TREATING IT ON ITS OWN TERMS. WE SHALL BEAR THESE VARIOUS POSSIBLE MOTIVES IN MIND IN OUR FUTURE DEALINGS WITH THE EAST. OUR COMMERCIAL EXCHANGES WILL BE BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF EFFECTIVE RECIPROCITY - WE ARE NOT IN THE BUSINESS OF HANDING OUT FREE GIFTS. DELIBERATIONS IN OTHER FORA WILL ENSURE THAT WESTERN SECURITY INTERESTS ARE SAFEGUARDED. IN AIMING AT A NORMALISATION OF RELATIONS, WE SHALL LOOK FOR DEEDS, NOT WORDS.

IN PARTICULAR, WE WANT TO SEE AN END, ONCE AND FOR ALL, TO THE SOVIET UNION'S GUERRILLA WARFARE AGAINST THE COMMUNITY IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS. WE ALSO WANT TO SEE IT DEALING WITH THE COMMUNITY AS A COMMUNITY, INSTEAD OF TRYING TO PICK OFF OUR MEMBER STATES ONE BY ONE IN PURSUANCE OF SOME DIVIDE-AND-RULE POLICY. SUCH A SITUATION IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE POSITION AND COMPETENCES OF THE

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY IN THE 1980'S. WE AIM AT THE NORMALISATION OF OUR RELATIONS WITH THE EASTERN COUNTRIES, AS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD, AND THIS HAS BEEN OUR CONSISTENT POLICY FOR THE LAST 30 YEARS. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS HAVE VINDICATED THIS POLICY TOWARDS THE EAST; WE SHALL CERTAINLY NOT ABANDON IT NOW.

AT THE SAME TIME WE ARE AWARE OF THE IMPORTANT CHANGES WHICH ARE CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE IN MANY EASTERN COUNTRIES. WE ARE FOLLOWING WITH INTEREST THE ANNOUNCEMENTS OF INTERNAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REFORMS, AND WELCOME THESE AS INDICATIONS OF A NEW OPENNESS AND A READINESS TO CONFRONT LONG-STANDING PROBLEMS. IT IS A TIME OF EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE AND IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS, AND THE COMMUNITY IS RECEPTIVE TO THESE NEW WINDS OF CHANGE. THEY HOLD OUT PROMISE FOR A MORE STABLE AND COOPERATIVE FUTURE FOR RELATIONS IN EUROPE.

I KNOW THAT MR SONNENFELDT IS GOING TO SPEAK TO US ON THE US ATTITUDE TO EAST-WEST RELATIONS IN EUROPE, AND I DON'T WISH TO PRE-EMPT WHAT HE HAS TO SAY. NEVERTHELESS I WOULD LIKE TO SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE DIFFERENT "NUANCES" WHICH YOU SOMETIMES DISCOVER IN US AND EC ATTITUDES TO THE EAST. THERE ARE GOOD REASONS FOR OUR HAVING DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS IN THIS AREA, AND I FEEL IT IS NO BAD THING. THIS IS QUITE NATURAL. WE ARE PART OF THE SAME CONTINENT AS OUR EASTERN NEIGHBOURS. WE SHARE MUCH COMMON HISTORY, TRADITIONS, AND CULTURE. OUR TRADE WITH THE EAST IS MUCH GREATER THAN THAT OF THE US. FOR INSTANCE THE VOLUME OF THE UNITED STATES' TRADE WITH THE USSR HAS BEEN COMPARED TO ITS TRADE WITH THE IVORY COAST, HARDLY A SUPERPOWER. AND OUR GEOGRAPHICAL PROXIMITY IS ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR.

I SOMETIMES FEEL THAT SOME AMERICANS LOOK AT EASTERN EUROPE FROM SUCH A DISTANCE THAT THEY ARE ONLY ABLE TO DISTINGUISH BLACK AND WHITE. HERE, AT CLOSE QUARTERS, WE CAN SEE ALL THE VARIOUS SHADES OF GREY. THIS, IN MY VIEW, MAKES FOR A MORE BALANCED AND PRAGMATIC ATTITUDE TOWARDS EASTERN EUROPE.

BUT EQUALLY, OF COURSE, THIS DIFFERENCE OF VIEWS DOES NOT REVEAL ANY FUNDAMENTAL DIVISION. WE SHARE WITH THE UNITED STATES IDEALS OF DEMOCRACY, FREEDOM AND HUMAN RIGHTS WHICH ENSURE THAT WESTERN SOLIDARITY WILL NEVER BE SERIOUSLY UNDER THREAT, HOWEVER MUCH WEDGE-DRIVING GOES ON. WESTERN SOLIDARITY IS BEST UPHELD IF A ROBUST AND REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION PREVAILS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC. AFTER ALL, THE RECENT SOVIET DISCOVERY OF "GLASNOST" IS ONLY THE FIRST TIMID STEP TOWARDS WHAT THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE HAVE FOR A VERY LONG TIME CONSIDERED TO BE THE BASIS OF THEIR FREE AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES.

THANK YOU, MR CHAIRMAN.