

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy  
and President-in-Office of the Council of Ministers

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Mr President, Colleagues,

The opportunity I now have, in my capacity as President-in-Office of the Council, to set forth before this Parliament, in which I remember having participated, the outlines of the programme of work for the first six months of 1985 is not intended to be solely a formal act, a ritual performance, however important.

I should like you to know that the frame of mind in which I appear before you is that of someone who, having taken part from the benches of the Italian Parliament since the Constituent Assembly in major political battles, has rooted in him the essence of the Parliamentary function through the democratic development of the institutions. And since the Community desired by the founding fathers, which we still desire, is a Community based on the principles of democracy in which the voice of the people, of whom you are the faithful interpreters, becomes a key fact, I consider I should impress on you, at the beginning of my speech, the need to give the dialogue between the Community institutions and, in particular, the dialogue between the European Parliament and the Council, substance and consistency, qualities which are desirable for, and well-suited to, bringing about real progress in the political and economic integration of our continent.

Allow me to make a brief remark.

If we have succeeded in attaining and, may I add, preserving unity, albeit to a still limited

extent, within a Community which is struggling to make progress but which certainly does not lack a soul, we owe it to the very fact, in my opinion fundamental, that this is a Parliament directly elected by European citizens. We are not therefore dealing with an artificial construction, with the result of summit alchemy, but with an institution which is clearly **new** in nature and which is intended to give the work of the institutions envisaged by the Treaties of Rome a content more in keeping with the needs and aspirations of the peoples of our continent.

I should also like to address to the new Commission and to its President, Jacques Delors, our sincerest wishes for the success of his work. We are all aware of Mr Delors's worth and ability, and last Monday we were able to appreciate the down-to-earth nature of his programme address. The role of the Commission as proposer is a vital one in the life of the Community, one which we must all safeguard and enhance through the development and strengthening of the plan for union. Jacques Delors too had the opportunity and the privilege of being part of your Parliament. It is a coincidence shared by the President-in-Office and the President of the Commission which has a very definite significance.

In setting out for you the guidelines and the priority areas for action in the six-monthly programme, I must first of all refer to the international framework of which the European Community forms part and to the economic and social reality of our ten countries.

We often hear of the "call for Europe" and of the influence which a united Europe could have in helping to

initiate solutions to major international problems. None of us in fact can deny that our continent is in a position, through the culture it represents and also through the great strength of its economy, to exert a trenchant influence on the course of events. But notwithstanding the progress achieved to date, there is a problem of political will, a will which is still too often slow to reveal and establish itself, a will which should be expressed in concrete terms, not indeed through hegemonistic calculation but by giving international events a more balanced course, thereby avoiding extreme positions.

If this political will for European union eventually prevails, as we hope, we shall then be in a position jointly to make a positive contribution to the cause of détente and peace, a cause which seems to have been strengthened, which we can only be pleased about, by the recent meeting in Geneva between the Americans and the Soviets.

In consideration of the economic problems, there are many signs that a general recovery is under way in our countries. This is encouraging, but it must not prompt us to disregard the grounds for concern or to refrain from careful and ordered management of the present delicate phase of industrial transition. In this regard, we must pay special attention to the social aspects stemming from the still necessary reconversion and restructuring of the production systems of our ten countries.

I recall that on several occasions this Parliament has stressed the seriousness of the distortions caused by the failure to co-ordinate, between the Member States, policies to promote and encourage technological innovation, a failure which has led to serious tension on the labour market.

I feel that we also have to learn from these experiences, in order to strengthen the strong and pressing commitment of the Presidency-in-office to continue along the path of the political and economic integration of our continent.

It is certainly not our wish to indulge in vain ambition; instead, we want to move forward with our feet on the ground, i.e. to move forward, not stay still, in the conviction that in the long term a policy of small steps forward is much more productive than certain bombastic initiatives intended more to fire people's imagination than to have a profound and constructive effect on the realities of everyday life.

It seems to be that a concept of the Community as a strong and open entity, in continuous evolution, necessarily leads us to dwell in the first instance on the problems of its present position, as the premise for a subsequent examination of both the questions linked to enlargement and of the relations which the European Community has with the other countries. It is on these three problems that I intend to make my remarks.

The Italian Presidency-in-office intends to commit itself fully with a view to defining a strategy for relaunching the Community's institutions.

You were the first to point out in concrete and constructive form the limits of the Treaty of Rome with regard to the prospects for an organic relaunch of the integration process. You did so in the conviction that reform has now become an essential requirement; a reform which takes us forward, not backwards, unless we want to wipe out all the results obtained up to now and unless we prefer to reject integration and fall back on a minimalist position, such as that represented by the free-trade area.

However, this latter assumption is certainly not what is wanted by the people of Europe, the ten Governments or this Parliament.

In approving the draft Treaty establishing the European Union, the Strasbourg Assembly has clearly indicated the objective to be pursued in order to emerge from the present crisis. The Governments of the Member States, for their part, have understood the significance of this gesture of great political courage.

Would we have succeeded, without the European Parliament, in setting up a Committee with the very task of putting forward suggestions to improve the functioning of European co-operation in the Community sector, in that of political co-operation or in other sectors? I think it highly unlikely, and we must consequently appreciate in all its significance the value of this Parliamentary initiative, which did not merely have the tone of an exhortive gesture, but is much more in that it makes provision in concrete form and, I should add, very realistically, for the solutions to be adopted.

In exercising our Presidency-in-office, we intend to commit ourselves to the full in order to stimulate a wide-ranging debate on the prospects of institutional reform, which takes account of the draft Treaty voted by the European Parliament as well as of the *acquis communautaire* and the Solemn Declaration of Stuttgart.

We are convinced that the commitment, which seems to be emerging clearly from the work of the Committee on Institutional Affairs to achieve significant progress towards the reorganization of the Community, which ought to be characterized by clearer forms of integration, represents a historical opportunity which must not be wasted.

Naturally the comparison with the difficulties we measure up to, so to speak, every day suggests caution to us all: caution which is not, however, fear of what is new, but awareness that the path which we still have to take is long and fraught with difficulties, difficulties which do not frighten us, but which instead strengthen our will to seek patiently but firmly the most suitable methods to bring together little by little different points of view, while creating at the same time conditions for agreement and consequently progress on the path to union.

For our part, no effort will be spared in seeking agreement by June on a date for convening an inter-Governmental Conference with the task of negotiating the Treaty on European Union on the basis of the conclusive suggestions to be provided by the Committee on Institutional Affairs.

We shall work towards the definition of a mandate which avoids any misunderstandings, and which is therefore worded in sufficiently clear terms to subsequent work not to become bogged down, as has unfortunately happened in the past.

We wish to associate the European Parliament with this task of formulation and preparation, welcoming the hope expressed by this Parliament in its Resolution on 14 December.

We are also aware of the fact that the conciliation procedure on the important acts of the Community ought to be reviewed. Although the meeting which took place last November between the Enlarged Bureau of the Presidency of the European Parliament and the Council did not lead to the results hoped for, this must not be a reason for the Presidency-in-office to refrain from making further attempts to overcome the present differences, in due recognition not only of the institutional role of the European Parliament but also of the action it has carried out in order to achieve the objective of union.

Allow me to mention in this context the other Committee also, set up by the European Council of Fontainebleau, the Committee for a "People's Europe".

We intend to give the greatest possible impetus to its work in the next six months, precisely because we are convinced that a hypothesis for relaunching the Community must be accompanied by a strengthening of its identity and of its credibility for European and international public opinion.

The decision to set up this Committee was imposed by the requirement, widely shared, to bring back the European dimension to the level of the citizens who live in Europe; to transfer the realities of the Community from abstract ideas, which all too often characterize our way of debating the problems of Europe, to a reality which is within everybody's reach, and thus to have a positive impact on the image of European solidarity, which particularly just recently has been obscured by excessive and sometimes sterile controversies between the Governments of the Member States.

However, for the Community to be able in the meantime to return to a situation of proper financial management and one in which commitments are planned we must work as quickly as possible towards the approval of the budget for 1985.

In this connection, I must make one thing clear straightaway. We are all aware that, beyond the financial discussions, there are concerns of a different kind. In particular those relating to a more correct position on relations between the Community institutions.

The majority (and it is perhaps more correct to speak of near-unanimity) established within this Parliament budget problem is itself indicative of the current state of affairs, which could degenerate into an institutional crisis with serious consequences for the development of Europe.

The Italian Presidency intends to make every possible effort to find an early solution to the problem of the new budget, which conforms both with the Community spirit as revealed by the discussions in this Parliament and with the agreements reached by the European Council at Fontainebleau.

The facts of the problem are well known and there is therefore no need for me to dwell on them.

For our part, we shall strive to ensure that the principle of an annual budget, as demanded by this Parliament, is observed, possibly by anticipating by a couple of months the entry into force of the decision on the increase in the revenue from value-added tax. This working hypothesis may come up against insurmountable difficulties. In that event, we shall consider alternative temporary measures, Community ones, as

as far as possible. However, I consider it essential, in this search for solutions acceptable to all, to take care, first of all, to improve the political climate and to start a dialogue between the institutions that will genuinely profit the Community.

As to the arrangements for reimbursing the United Kingdom, and given the various positions expressed by the European Parliament and the Governments, I would point out that we are not discussing the principle - and I shall quote here the Final Communiqué at Fontainebleau - that "ultimately, the chief means for resolving the problem of budget imbalances is expenditure policy", in other words, the development of the common policies.

It seems to me, however, that the compromise formula drawn up at Fontainebleau (which allows Member States with an excessive budget burden relative to their prosperity to have their Community budget contribution adjusted) should be applied for the time being.

I should like now, Ladies and Gentlemen, to speak for a moment in my capacity as Italy's Foreign Affairs Minister. My Government fully shares the concern, felt by all political groups in this Parliament, which lies at the root of the decision to reject the draft budget for 1985. I entirely appreciate that in this way the Parliament wanted to express its disapproval of a trend which appears to be establishing itself in the Community and which appears to be aimed at circumscribing and limiting the already restricted powers of this Parliament.

During our Presidency, we shall tackle the complex problem of the budget without confining ourselves to the search for purely technical solutions; we shall endeavour to renew the relationship between the European Parliament and the Council, and begin a profitable and constructive dialogue in accordance with the spirit of the Treaties.

It will be our task to carry out a patient process of persuasion to reconcile the positions of the two institutions and thus achieve that budgetary peace which both institutions have recently declared to be desirable.

The Italian Presidency will also take steps to ensure that this Parliament is associated with the Council in the task of determining the frame of reference for the expenditure to be entered in the Community budget, taking account of the financial resources available. I am sure that the European Parliament and the Council - which, as envisaged by the Treaty of Rome, have authority in budgetary matters - are pursuing the same objective, namely rationalizing expenditure and avoiding any possible wastage, so as to make available, by means of the necessary adjustments as well, the resources to be devoted to developing the new policies.

Still on the question of the Community's internal development, I feel it important to spend some time considering the positive trends in the Member States' economies during 1984.

The results achieved by the Ten were essentially due to the adoption of policies to stabilize and control the money supply, but they were not sufficient to prevent a further worsening in the employment situation. The Commission expects the unemployment rate to continue rising in 1985 as well and to reach a level of about 11,5% of the working population in Europe (a total of some 12 million people); in this context, of course, youth unemployment

and long-term unemployment will figure even more prominently.

In our view, unemployment is the central problem, to be resolved, and it is at this problem that we believe specific analyses and action should be directed on a concerted basis by the Member States of the Community.

I must point out here that between 1973 and 1983 the average annual increase in earnings was about the same in the United States and the European Community (about 2%); but while in the United States this led to the creation of about 15 million new jobs (at a rate of increase of 1.5% per annum), in Europe there was a fall of about three and a half million.

The Italian Presidency therefore intends to ensure that the central importance of the issue of employment is the main criterion guiding the determination and development of Community instruments and of initiatives that are not confined to the social sector but are also - and primarily - of importance to the economic and the industrial-co-operation fields.

We also consider that the underlying requirement for this approach to the problem is a strengthening of the practical and productive dialogue with and between the representatives of employers and workers in Europe, to which we intend to give priority precisely because we are convinced that it is an essential tool for determining and implementing effective courses of action.

There is another priority issue to which the Italian Presidency intends to give its full attention. We must seek to make more economic and competitive a number of activities whose expansion is considerably limited at the present time by the continuing fragmentation of national markets.

Significant progress towards greater integration of the European market is all the more important in the present situation, since the limited resources available will make it very difficult to achieve at Community level all the various types of industrial co-operation that might be desirable.

In March 1984 this Parliament declared itself in favour of a vigorous programme for strengthening the internal market, and in June the Commission itself submitted an ambitious work programme which identified a number of areas of action. I should like to remind you of some of these in particular: the reduction of frontier controls, the removal of technical obstacles to trade, standardization at European level, the establishment of a legal framework for co-operation between undertakings, and the free movement of services and economic operators.

In this context, it is necessary to make choices and to develop further those subjects which are sufficiently advanced to enable practical progress to be made, and thus show the general public that there is a real political desire to move towards a more intensive integration of the economies of the Member States.

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As part of the action aimed at giving Europe a coherent and co-ordinated economic strategy the Italian Presidency will give particular attention to the revival of monetary and financial co-operation.

The primary task is to strengthen the convergence of the Member States' economic policies along the lines indicated in a recent Commission report, inter alia by strengthening mechanisms for surveillance by Community bodies.

It is also necessary to move gradually towards greater liberalization of capital movements with the aim of bringing about greater integration of the European capital market, while being fully aware of the obstacles that still exist in certain Member States.

Finally, public and private use of the ECU must be encouraged.

These three courses of action form part of a broader plan to develop the European Monetary System and the process of financial integration.

We are also aware that in the near future we shall have to confront certain essential problems still impeding the achievement of progress in that direction: inclusion of the pound sterling and later of the drachma in the EMS exchange system, harmonization of

fluctuation margins, elimination of obstacles to the free movement of the ECU on private markets and recognition of the ECU's status as a currency in all Member States.

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We believe it necessary to confirm the long-term commitment to meet the industrial and technological challenge of the future. With this in view, however, the Community must give greater weight and importance to new policies and, in particular, to those forms of collaboration aimed at development of the technologically advanced sectors.

The Commission has already demonstrated on several occasions its own intention of following such a path; we hope it continues on that course and above all we hope that the Member States too will display the necessary willingness to confront a problem which I consider essential to Europe's very credibility, that of the Community's commitment to industrial and technological collaboration.

I have already mentioned the fact that the limit on the budgetary resources available for 1985 will not make it possible in the short term to initiate new programmes in the field of industrial co-operation or the development of new policies. It would therefore be naive or fanciful to believe it possible in the first half of this year to embark upon the definition of an organic Community industrial policy and launch important new sectoral programmes whose costs would have to be borne by the Community budget.



Accordingly, we must develop Community action in the complementary sectors and in sectors which provide support for the industrial co-operation policy. I refer, in fact, to the consolidation of the internal market, to the development of a legal framework which will encourage collaboration between undertakings and to the promotion of research and development.

There are also certain programmes in the field of new technology, already being studied by Community bodies, which it will be necessary to continue studying in detail during the Italian Presidency. Of these I should like to mention in particular the co-operation programme in the telecommunications sector, that in biotechnology and, of course, all activities relating to informatics and their applications.

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As regards the common agricultural policy, the fixing of prices and related market measures for the 1985-1986 farming year will have to be carried out against an extremely difficult financial background. The Italian Presidency is aware of the limitations arising from the present budget situation and it intends to work in close collaboration with the Commission to ensure that Council Decisions are adopted in a manner that is acceptable both politically and socially.

We shall also try to ensure that the examination of the common agricultural policy mechanisms already in progress with a view to

its gradual revision is carried out as part of a fundamental process of rethinking which takes account of the present limits on production entailed by a policy of limiting expenditure, of the economic and social implications of that policy and of the prospects that may be opened up by new measures, bearing in mind technological development, the structural improvements to be carried out, the qualitative improvements to be sought and the changes we hope it will be possible to make to the present commercial policy.

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In the field of environmental protection we will, on the basis of the guidelines issued by the European Council meeting in Dublin, give a special impetus to the continuation of the discussions in progress on subjects of major importance, bearing in mind the need for a joint commitment on the part of the Member States to deal with a problem which has already grown to supra-national proportions and which must be dealt with by means, among other things, of the instruments of international co-operation and also, of course, of common action.

Two problems are of particular urgency: lead in petrol and that of motor-vehicle exhaust gases, on which common rules at European level must be adopted at the earliest opportunity. Those rules must take account of legitimate concern for the protection of the environment from atmospheric pollution, not forgetting the cancer aspect, and the need to prevent the proliferation of different national standards to the detriment of European market unity.

In the field of common transport policy too progress must be made. The transport sector, almost completely deadlocked, must be revitalized; in my opinion, its importance for the integration process has not been appreciated so far in practice.

We also feel that the problem of the increase in drug abuse and its social, economic and above all human implications now deserves greater attention at Community level as well.

We therefore believe it would be useful during our Presidency to convene, possibly in an informal context, a meeting of the Ministers responsible for drug problems in Community countries for a detailed discussion of the matter.

This is an initiative to which the Italian Government attaches particular importance because it aims at bringing about more coherent and effective international collaboration in the battle against the scourge of drug abuse.

We shall attempt to increase the awareness of our partners to this problem, convinced as they are, like us, that the Europe that we want to build must take ever greater account of the human and social aspects of its problems.

I should now like to pass to matters related to the enlargement of the Community and, in particular, to those concerning the conclusion of the negotiations for the accession of Spain and Portugal.

The outcome of the Dublin European Council, particularly as regards adjustment of the wine sector regulations, in which Italy showed great flexibility and a spirit of compromise, has certainly removed the most serious obstacles which could have continued to hold up the negotiations indefinitely.

It could be said that the discussions in Dublin paved the way for balanced solutions to the other problems still outstanding in the negotiations.

The remaining difficulties, which will have to be overcome if the negotiations are to be completed by the deadline, will require from both the Member States and the applicant countries a great effort and a political attitude capable of coming to terms with the essential points and leaving aside secondary and subsidiary matters.

There is no doubt that for some Mediterranean agricultural products the entry of Spain and Portugal could cause surpluses as regards the Community market's capacity for absorption. For our part we will continue to make every effort, particularly while holding the Presidency, to ensure that fair solutions are adopted which will guarantee reasonable incomes for Mediterranean producers.

Our general objective must be to keep a close watch, at least in some sectors, on competing agricultural products, while at the same time trying to make the most sensible use of the possibilities of any new markets in a true spirit of co-operation.

During these six months we shall also have to approach another chapter of the negotiations which is very important to the economic and social circles concerned, both in the Member States and in the applicant countries. This importance is reflected in the distance which still separates the respective negotiating positions. I am referring to the fisheries sector. During our Presidency we will do everything in our power to find solutions which are acceptable to all the parties concerned.

It seems to be that as the negotiations continue, particularly in the agricultural sector, account must be taken, on the one hand, of the economic benefits which North European products (of which there are deficits in Spain and Portugal) will derive from the opening of new markets and, on the other hand, of the economic disadvantages which will inevitably result for Mediterranean products. To alleviate some of these disadvantages, at least partially, it will be necessary to resort to appropriate temporary measures, such as those contained in the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes.

In fact, it seems to us fair that provision should be made under these Programmes, on which the European Parliament has expressed a favourable Opinion, for measures to compensate those regions of the Community which will have to bear the greatest burden of the third enlargement of the Community.

It is certainly to be regretted that no decision has yet been taken on the Commission's proposals on the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes, even though the accession negotiations are now in the final stages. It is therefore the duty of the Presidency to ensure that this problem, the difficulty of which we fully appreciate, does not remain outstanding much longer.

For all these reasons, the Italian Presidency will make every possible effort to provide the right conditions for the successful conclusion of the accession negotiations during the early months of 1985.

We shall make a concerted effort to continue our earlier endeavours of recent years to encourage the enlargement of the Community to include the countries of the Iberian Peninsula, as part of a process to recreate Europe's historic dimensions, on the basis of which the Community can give the necessary impetus for further progress towards more intensive and significant forms of political and economic integration.

I would add that the enlargement of the Community will lead to further consideration of its relations with the Mediterranean countries.

I now wish to turn to the Community's external relations. The Community has now developed with the rest of the world a vast and intricate complex of agreements and arrangements. At the same time it has strengthened its own role as an international economic organization.

Many third countries are seeking co-operation with the Community and this should encourage us to consider more deeply both the political and the economic opportunities involved.

It is in the Community's interest to develop its external relations. We must, however, initiate within the Community a discussion on creating a more positive image for the Community, especially in the areas which most directly concern it.

I am referring in particular to relations with the Mediterranean countries, the ACP States and Latin America and, more generally, to the North-South Dialogue and the common commercial policy.

The Community is currently reconsidering its relations with the Mediterranean countries, which are asking for closer links with the Community. There is, however, some concern that the accession of Spain and Portugal could have negative repercussions.

The Italian Presidency considers that every effort should be made to encourage the development of relations with those countries, by strengthening the dialogue and, above all, by commitments (including financial commitments) to co-operation. Enlargement could provide an appropriate opportunity to make additions to the existing agreements, to reconcile the interests of the Community's present and future Member States with those of the Mediterranean countries, in both the medium and longer term.

As regards relations with the ACP States, which are an essential aspect of the North-South relationship, I must mention that the Italian Government made a decisive contribution to the success of the recent Lomé negotiations. We consider that it is particularly important to launch the new Convention in a climate of mutual trust which will pave the way for its success.

Regarding Latin America, you are aware of the importance which the Community attaches to strengthening its relations with Central America, with a view to contributing to the stability and development of that troubled area. This attitude on the part of the Community has already been demonstrated at the Ministerial meeting in San José, Costa Rica. The Presidency intends to carry out the Community's declared intentions and encourage the launching of negotiations for a framework agreement.

Relations with Latin America have not yet reached the level which should be theirs by right in view of the close historical, cultural and political connections between us. We consider that the time has come to reactivate the dialogue and give it a tangible content, thus paving the way for a more vital relationship.

As regards the ASEAN countries, we shall continue to reflect on ways of intensifying our relationships, possibly by a Ministerial meeting on economic topics.

We believe that the Community should do everything in its power to tackle the famine and the serious problems currently affecting various areas of Africa, in particular, Ethiopia and the Sahel countries.

As the country holding the Presidency, it is our intention, consistent with humanitarian commitment which the Italian Parliament has also called for on several occasions, to do our utmost to give effect to the decisions of the Dublin European Council which, as you are aware, recognized the urgent need for Community action in this field. Over and above the specific emergency aspect, however, we shall need to undertake the more wide-ranging task of ensuring better co-ordination of action between the Community, the Member States and other donors, in order to increase the effectiveness and step up the speed with which the emergency aid measures are put into effect.

Community relations with the Community's major trading partners and other industrialized countries represent a further area of interest to be followed closely during the first half of 1985.

I should like to point out that our relations with the United States are of central importance to the maintenance and development of an open international economic system. We intend to pursue the objective of genuine co-operation in the interests of both sides, with a view to finding a solution to existing trading problems. To this end, it may be useful to intensify both dialogue and consultations so that we may be better aware, and generate a better awareness, of our points of view and their underlying motivation.

Together with the EFTA countries we can view with satisfaction our achievement in establishing a free trade area and we think it desirable that our relations should be extended and deepened.

In the multilateral field there are prospects for a further round of negotiations designed to strengthen the framework of international trade. The Community will, as in the past, support any firm measures which will help to improve the multilateral system.

The Italian Presidency will have to promote discussions to identify the framework in which such negotiations should take place - considerable importance being given to the part which the emerging countries propose playing - and also to define the objectives which it is intended to achieve and, thereby, the issues calling for negotiation.

To sum up, I do not think that I need waste words on affirming the growing importance of Political Co-operation among the Ten, a process on which - it can be said - there is a general consensus and which this Parliament approves and, indeed, rightly seeks to foster.

Italy will strive, therefore, to accomplish this of its presidential responsibilities also, particularly since, at a time of change such as that which appears in many respects to have returned to the international scene as 1985 begins, it is vital that Europe should employ every means possible to make its presence felt, defend its own interests and affirm its own ideals and principles.

For a long time now we have been faced with the problem of ensuring more complete harmonization between the two aspects of our work, the truly Community work and that under Political Co-operation. The Italian Government has always striven in this direction, as is evident from the role played by us in the negotiations leading to the Solemn Declaration of Stuttgart. In our view, as is well known, we ought today to be in a position to proceed well beyond these results.

At this point, I think it timely to set forth, albeit briefly, the essentials of the main topics of international policy.

First of all, I should like to mention East-West relations.

The meeting in Geneva over the last few days between the American Secretary of State and the Soviet Foreign Minister is a complex event which we shall have to assess carefully and the follow-up to which will call for considerable work on the part of

all concerned; however, as regards the overall issue of arms control and disarmament, we must say that this event seems to us as a positive sign. I make this point too following the statement made to us in Rome, in the wake of the Geneva meetings, by the American President's Special Adviser, Mr McFarlane, and further to those convergent impressions which have filtered through to us from the Government in Moscow.

During this new phase, the countries of the Community will be required to play a highly important back-up role, in addition to tabling proposals and examining in depth the fundamental interests which Europe must assert on behalf of the West as a whole, in order that peace and dialogue may be based on as stable a balance as possible.

In this context, the importance of maintaining active contact with both the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Pact countries should be emphasized. In particular, we intend to continue to keep a close and involved watch on internal events in Poland, which remains very much a highly heterogeneous and lively society among the countries of the Eastern bloc.

The CSCE process continues to play a central part in East-West relations, through the promotion of better relations between the participating countries and the full expression of the personalities of those countries' citizens. The Ten will have to continue to press consistently for the full implementation of all the arrangements agreed on in Helsinki and Madrid by all participating States without exception.

At the Stockholm Conference on confidence-and-security-building measures and disarmament in Europe (CDE), after a whole year of procedural shadow-boxing we are at last moving towards a point where the arguments will be tackled in a substantive manner. This is very important, particularly following the Soviet-American meetings in Geneva.

The Ten will be called upon to make a consistent contribution and to adopt common positions and initiatives within this Conference. Our intention is to strive to achieve a simple incisive contribution towards a negotiated agreement on specific measures, in order to increase confidence and security in Europe, as well as the reaffirmation of the pledge not to resort to force or the threat of force, which Italy regards as a significant political fact.

The Ten will, however, also need to work in other debating and negotiating fora on arms control and disarmament if concrete progress is to be achieved.

With regard to the prospects for a negotiated solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, once the total stagnation of peace moves pending the outcome of elections in Israel and the United States have been overcome, pressure on the parties involved can and must stepped up to foster at least the opening of talks and, thereby, to help to relieve the present tension in the region.

In a complex and delicate context such as that of today, the Ten need to act with caution but with perseverance, by proposing realistic targets which do not situate themselves over-ambitiously beyond the capabilities of the European Community.

I had the opportunity in Amman in the last few days to express these viewpoints not only from the Italian angle but also on behalf of the Presidency, on the basis of the Dublin document; I encountered the keen expectation on the part of those with whom I spoke, starting with King Hussein, that Europe would be ready to support any progress in the peace dialogue and to capitalize upon any glimmer of hope which might emerge.

The Ten can, moreover, boast a balanced and effective common platform in the form of the Venice Declaration and its subsequent updatings.

There is a precondition for transition from the present revival, following a long period of stagnation, to a real phase of activity; it is that the assured joining of ranks around Jordan must provide a true platform for negotiations between Jordan and the PLO, enabling Jordan to negotiate effectively on the occupied territories. This obviously presupposes willingness in principle on the Israeli side.

In the position of the new coalition government in Israel we have detected welcome signs of greater attention being paid to the problem of the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

It is clear that any action by the Ten must be linked to that of the United States, whose role is universally acknowledged as being, certainly not exclusive, but of prime importance to a solution of the Middle Eastern dispute.

We also attribute great importance to the role of the United Nations and to the commitment that has traditionally been shown by the Secretary-General. It is well known that we wish to see the United Nations far more involved in peace making or attempts at mediation in the Middle East. On the aegis of the UN such initiatives would be guaranteed to be balanced and should be acceptable all round.

Lastly, we cannot disregard the usefulness of suitable contacts with the Soviet Union which, because of traditional positions and the relationships that have been built up in the Middle East, cannot be excluded from any future overall settlement of the crisis. It is not particularly important to have a referendum for or against the conference mooted. What is important is to find a valid model acceptable to all sides.

Together with the Arab-Israeli conflict, the situation in the Lebanon and the Iran-Iraq war with its repercussions on the Gulf constitute an extremely complex background fraught with dangers and tensions and compounded by the undercurrents linking the three crises.

The Ten have frequently stressed, most recently in Dublin, the need for national reconciliation in Lebanon and the restoration of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the State; in the same way, they have offered their full support for offers by various parties of mediation to bring an end to the war between Iran and Iraq.

Another area to which the Italian Presidency intends to pay attention is Latin America. There are three directions which this action should, if possible, take.

First of all there is the continuation, broadening and development of the political and economic dialogue with the countries of Central America, begun successfully at the San José Conference in Costa Rica last September, at which the Ten reiterated their full support for the peace attempts made in the region along the lines indicated by the initiative of the Contadora Group. We shall give close consideration to the possibility that during the Italian Presidency a second conference will be suggested in Rome, along the lines of the first, subject to establishment of the level at which it will be held.

Secondly, we shall continue our activities to promote respect for human and civil rights: we welcome the present trend towards the restoration of democratic régimes, and towards forms of dialogue between government and opposition, and hope that in this area we shall be acting in a climate of gradual improvement.

Lastly, we must continue to encourage the spread of democracy in Latin America, particularly in Chile, whose people pursue this aspiration so courageously. The resumption of a genuine political dialogue in Chile is vital to the re-establishment of freedom and democracy.

With the forthcoming return of Brazil to a civilian régime and the recent elections in Uruguay, democracy is to be found almost everywhere in South America. However, democracy requires political and economic support, as the history of these regions and present-day events show us that the threats to democratic régimes have not disappeared. Europe must give its own support and assistance.

Another sector of constant concern to the Ten is Africa.

In the case of Southern Africa, the Ten welcomed the outlines of a solution to the serious political problems of the region which emerged in the course of 1984. The Lusaka Agreement between South Africa and Angola on military disengagement in southern Angola should, in particular, help to create a climate of mutual trust, thus facilitating implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435 on the independence of Namibia.

Equally, the Nkomati Agreement between South Africa and Mozambique should bring greater political stability to the region and help to bring about peace within Mozambique's own borders.

This does not mean, with regard to South Africa, that the Ten are softening their firm condemnation of the apartheid system, on which a number of half-hearted reforms have failed to make any significant impact.

There are more vast areas, such as the Horn of Africa, where humanitarian problems are bound up with severe tensions and conflicts that must be borne in mind when bringing pressure to bear on the parties concerned to persevere in the difficult quest for dialogue and political solutions, in accordance with the principles of both the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

On the Asian scene, the situation in Afghanistan continues to be a serious international problem. The Ten have on many occasions deplored the Soviet Union's unwillingness to make a positive contribution to a solution of the Afghanistan problem on the basis of successive UN Resolutions. The Soviet Union has,



on the contrary, stepped up its military activity, causing further suffering and many civilian victims among the Afghan population. The Ten condemn these actions and continue to call for a just and lasting solution, as advocated in the Declaration approved on 27 December last year on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Soviet invasion.

Vietnam's occupation of Kampuchea continues to threaten the stability of South-East Asia.

We believe that any political solution to the problem must be based on the total withdrawal of Vietnamese troops, the right of the Kampuchean people to decide freely on their own future, respect for Kampuchea's independence, neutrality and non-alignment and a commitment by all States not to interfere in its internal affairs. Under these conditions, we believe that a peaceful solution can be found that will coincide with the legitimate security concerns of all the States of the region.

The Italian Presidency is committed to reinforcing the Ten's action in defence of human rights and against terrorism. On the fundamental subject of human rights, in addition to the traditional UN fora, special attention must be paid to the Conference on Human rights to be held in Ottawa in April, which places this aspect high on the agenda for the development of the CSCE process.

With regard to terrorism, especially its new international dimension, the Ten have stepped up exchanges of views on measures to combat it, and have laid the foundations of closer co-operation on the matter, with particular reference to the abuse of diplomatic immunity for terrorist purposes. We hope to step up this form of co-operation further by more effective measures at international level.

In the light of the complexity of the international scene, the role that could usefully be played by a united Europe in the interests of peace and progress emerges clearly.

Because of its historical and cultural values, Europe is called upon to exercise a balancing influence on the international scene. The European Parliament, which forms part of the overall pattern by virtue of the power it derives from the popular vote, must be in a position to play a central role and this must be reflected in its rights of participation and its functions of control. We have as our basis an exceptional wealth of political and cultural experience which renders co-operation between our various political forces productive and which also enables this Parliament to carry on a lively dialogue from differing positions. Experience has shown quite clearly how important it is for differences in outlook not to be levelled out but instead to be examined side by side in the Community context and a middle ground sought that takes account of all values and responsibilities.

me to conclude with the entreaty which Alcide Gasperi made, that we should all cultivate together a feeling of joint responsibility, a feeling which gives life to our hopes for a better future and to our conviction that the path we are on is the right one.

On the day on which he was elected President, De Gasperi said in his speech to the ECSC Assembly that the task awaiting us "is very difficult, because it means renewing and transforming centuries-old habits and traditional interests".

And he concluded "consequently we need the pressure of public opinion, but the most authoritative interpreter of that public opinion is this Assembly: it is therefore clear that the Assembly's parliamentary debates are the means of giving strength, authority and guidelines to the executive body."

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