

EUROPE AND AMERICA: IMAGE AND REALITY

December 17, 1978

R. Jenkins Speech
Ann Arbor,
Michigan

early invited

In 1794 Timothy Dwight told his fellow citizens of the 13 American states to

"Cast around

The eye of searching reason, and declare

What Europe proffers, but a patchwork away

Copy not from others

Shun the lures of Europe."

Michigan

This university of ~~Ann Arbor~~ obviously takes a somewhat different view in so generously honouring me, a British citizen who is President of an institution which serves the European Community as a whole. In responding to this honour I should like to talk to you today from that European perspective, about the way in which American and European views, the one of the other, are ~~becoming~~ more realistic and in my view of mutual benefit for the strengthening of our common political and social values, and their influence in the world.

Mutual comprehension, and a clear perception of common interest are not the hallmarks of the unity of American-European relations. American images of Europe, and European images of America, have often tended in the past to be formed out of an irrational mix of ambiguity and prejudice. Hostility and affection have followed each other like ~~slides at a home movie~~ ^{The funny scenes of a Colonel Robert script.} It was as if, in switching the analogy, you ended up with an impression of the tumbling pieces of a kaleidoscope in which because of some basic fault in the mechanism only one part of the pattern was clearly visible. In historical perspective this is not perhaps surprising. The political rejection of the old Europe at Concord and Philadelphia was ⁽¹⁷⁷⁴⁻¹⁷⁷⁶⁾ succeeded by the exploration and exploitation of a vast continent going West not East. The difficulty of seeing past and present Europe as either ally or example was reinforced generation on generation by those who sought refuge of spirit and revival of fortune in the New World. But neither the politics of Europe nor its culture and tradition could be kept for long out of American life. Hope in /the United

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In 1917 President Wilson most surprisingly, as it seems to me in retrospect, brought America into the European war. It was surprising because the pressures were so much less compelling than in 1941, and yet Wilson acted much more determinedly and more precipitately than Roosevelt. As a result, there was a brief period after 1918 when he exercised an overwhelming sway in Europe.

There may have been a touch of irony in Maynard Keyes' writing of his arrival, but even so he used words which could not have been used of any other President without turning irony into farce.

"When President Wilson left Washington, he enjoyed a prestige and a moral influence throughout the world unequalled in history. His bold and measured words carried to the peoples of Europe above and beyond the voices of their own politicians.... Never had a philosopher held such weapons wherewith to bind the princes of the world. How the crowds of the European capitals pressed about the President! With what curiosity, anxiety and hope we sought a glimpse of the features and bearing of the man of destiny who, coming from the West, was to bring healing to the wounds of the ancient parent of his civilization and lay for us the foundations of the future."

But Wilson was a knight on his own. And American politics were still regarded by many otherwise well-informed people as not worthy of serious study, a mixture of the squalid and the common. It was a far cry from today, when political scientists from Oxford to Upsala study every detail of the psephological history of New Hampshire or Michigan or Mississippi.

Wilson arose for a brief period like a saint who had been mysteriously wafted up out of the poker rooms. Then he disappeared almost in a puff of smoke. Teapot Dome replaced the moral imperatives of the philosopher-king, and Europe for another decade and more felt it had been right in its detached and superior view of American politics.

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the United States for European political revival was regularly interspersed with irritation at what to many seemed to be the regular outbursts of internecine warfare in Europe.

At the outbreak of the First World War the American Ambassador in London summed up the continuing paradox in a very direct American way:

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"The idea that we were brought upon, that Europe is the home of civilisation in general - nonsense! It's a periodical slaughter-pen, with all the vices that this implies. I'd as lief live in the Chicago stock-yards."

insert

(A) +
(B)

~~In Washington in 1917 President Wilson, in more sober mood, turned American attention more positively towards Europe. But it was a brief excursion. Despite his enormous impact, American politics were still regarded by many otherwise well informed people in Europe as not worthy of serious study, a mixture of the squalid and the comic. Wilson arose for a brief period like a saint who had been mysteriously wafted up out of the poker room. Then he disappeared almost in a puff of smoke. The scandal of Teapot Dome replaced the moral imperatives of the philosopher king, and Europe felt it had been right after all in its detached and superior view of American society and politics. There is a film now showing in Europe called "If it's Brussels it must be Tuesday". Its theme is the breathless tour of Europe now made by thousands of Americans every year. But Europeans should not sneer at this wide-ranging regular contact. I can truly say that if this is Michigan then it must be Sunday.~~

But right up to the end of the first three decades of this century geographical distance reinforced political and social incomprehension. The Atlantic was very wide indeed. It was true in the most literal sense that it still took a long time to get across. Apart from Lindbergh /and a very few

and a very few others nobody did it in less than five days. Very few, except those who were both rich and under-occupied did it at all frequently. The overwhelming majority, including leading politicians on both sides of the ocean, never crossed it at all. As a result the ^{very} of the Chicago stockyards, of the speakeasies, of Al Capone and indeed of Al Smith was very remote from London or Paris. The movies in a sense accentuated rather than bridged the remoteness. The world they portrayed to European audiences was as vivid but unreal as a Verdi Opera.

This is no longer the case. Our movies are the same and our politics interlinked and intertwined. Our mutual comprehension is greater and our common interest overwhelming. My conversations with President Carter in Washington two days ago reconfirmed this to me. We then discussed some of the subjects I will now put to you. They were not, some of you may be disappointed to hear, about contemporary movies but about politics. Thus, "Saturday Night Fever" may have here to give place to "Sunday Afternoon Reflection". I will mention money, developing countries and democracy. Each I believe can illustrate for an American audience both the role a strengthening Europe can play, and our mutual interest in so doing.

Twelve days ago in Brussels the European Council - the French President, the Eight Prime Ministers and myself as President of the European Commission - took a decision to set up a Monetary System for the European Community for January 1st, 1979. The following day the United States Government announced that it believed these new arrangements for closer monetary cooperation within the European Community represented an important step towards the economic integration of Europe, which it had long supported. The announcement continued:

/"We believe

"We believe that the new arrangements will be implemented in a way which will contribute to sustainable growth in the world economy and a stable international monetary system. ~~The United States, Germany, Switzerland, and Japan will continue to cooperate in a fortetful and coordinated way to ensure stability in exchange markets.~~"

I should like to comment on what I believe this decision implies both in the short term and what it could imply in the longer term. First, there has been a developing realisation among the Nine of ^{the Community} Europe that the volatility of exchange rates has seriously constricted internal economic policy. Depreciating currency countries have found their efforts to combat inflation even harder; appreciating currency countries have found that monetary instability has led to slower growth of exports and hence to output ^{as a whole}. The environment for investment in both groups ^{of countries} has been most uncertain; prospects for growth and employment have in consequence been undermined. Despite its internal economic differences, the Community now recognises that the exchange rate stability which exists between New York and San Francisco on the one hand, Tokyo and Osaka on the other would be of positive benefit in Europe between Copenhagen and Rome, ~~London~~ ^{Paris} and Bonn.

~~difficulties~~ Second, we have, in taking this new step, been ~~unable~~ ^{unable} to avoid any action which could cause ~~difficulties~~ ^{difficulties} for the dollar. The reaction of the U.S. Government confirms our optimism in this respect. The European Monetary System is designed to buttress not weaken both the worldwide strength of the dollar and efficiency of existing international financial institutions.

Overstated in a stable dollar becomes greatly not less. We need a peaceful calm in by way of international exchange system, for the launching of an new staff.

This brings me to two longer term reflexions. Our European action is intended to play a constructive part in international financial stability. It could ~~work~~ ^{work} ~~in a more realistic move forward than at any time since the creation of Bretton Woods.~~ ^{in a more realistic move forward than at any time since the creation of Bretton Woods.} During the ~~last generation which has been one of high prosperity, and~~ ^{last generation which has been one of high prosperity, and} ~~in which in~~

and have rapidly rising prospects, in the developed world at least,
in which in Europe the standards of living spread to the
rest of our peoples, we lived behind the shield of the
dollar. It was to our benefit. But the weaknesses
in the structure and the overload on the United States
gathered momentum from the late 1960s, and from the ending
of dollar convertibility into gold, we moved into an era
of floating, sometimes sinking exchange rates, which
strive, unsuccessfully in my view, to reach a new, beneficent
and sustainable international equilibrium. But this did
not, and will not happen of itself. Both Europe and the
United States recognise that positive and disciplined
corrective action is required. The reality of our political
is marked by our actual decisions in this field.

But there is a second European reality worth marking
here in relation to money - and one which I would like
to mention more generally at the end. The idea of an
economic and monetary union has long been a goal of the
European Community. The step we have taken is a partial
move towards it. It is a firm step, even if limited by
the fact that not all the members of the Community are as
yet firmly within it. We must make it a pole of attraction
to those as yet unable to join, not an impossible hurdle
for them to jump. If the present reality is less than we
hoped, the process of recreation of a more integrated Europe
is again within our sights, and yours.

I have stressed our mutual comprehension in the
monetary field. I want to emphasise it too in our relations
with the less developed world. In the monetary field I
believe we can now move into a more equal and therefore
more realistic European and United States relationship.

This can be of benefit to the world as a whole. Equality,
in a more fundamental sense, lies at the root of both
European and American approaches to the third world.
But the search for economic justice is not simply a question
of legal definition whether in your constitution or whether
more pragmatically through our parliamentary democracy.
We are talking in international economic relations of
effective distributive justice.

To illustrate this let me recall Aesop's fable of the Fox and the Stork. The Fox invited the stork to dinner and, being disposed to entertain himself at the expense of his guest, provided nothing but some thin soup (or milk, depending on your translation) in a shallow dish. The Fox lapped it up very readily, while the stork, unable to gain a mouthful, with her long, narrow bill, was as hungry at the end of the dinner as when she began. The stork had her revenge by inviting the Fox to dinner and serving the meal in a ^{Shallow} narrow-necked vessel, down which the stork readily thrust her long neck, while the Fox was obliged to content himself with licking the ^{outside} neck of the jar.

J

There is one simple, and one more complex point I should like to draw from this analogy. The simple and obvious is that the stork wanted food, rather than clumsy or indeed oversubtle attempts at hospitality. Equally the grinding poverty and undernourishment of millions denies any sense of justice. Thus both Europe and the United States have a moral commitment to give practical form to overseas aid. The more complex point, on which we are also agreed, is that we have moved out of the age when a purely charitable approach was, even subjectively, sufficient. On the one hand we have to differentiate carefully between the differing needs of different parts of the world. / On the other we have to take account of our slower economic growth, our present ^{unusually} high levels of unemployment, ^{in Europe} and of new ^{global} threats to our older industries. The point of the fable in this respect is that both parties need sustenance and cooperation but because of our differing economic and social structures we need to agree on ways forward that will meet our mutual needs. Who makes what and for whom in the 1990s is a question to which we must now address ourselves. Europe and the United States cannot afford to turn in on themselves even in mutual dependence. And if we did so the political values which we share and in which we rightly take such pride would sound increasingly hollow and could be increasingly ignored.

the world is very far from being homogeneous

we could do more to try to shut out the world

/This brings

This brings me to the third topical example of European policies of interest to the United States that I want to mention to you this afternoon. ^{European Commission and Council} ~~the Commission~~

next year there will be a direct election to a European Parliament for the first time in European history. ^{only} Instead of the present 198 ^{members} appointed ^{from the national parliaments} members, there will be 410 directly elected representatives. 81 from Britain, France, Italy and Germany; 26 from Holland; 24 from Belgium, 16 from Denmark, 15 from Ireland and 6 from Luxembourg. ^{They are} ~~There are those, and I am one, who would~~ have liked to have seen direct elections take place earlier. ^{in the history of the world} But, ~~historically~~ we are not doing too badly. - The European Community has ~~now been in existence for 26 years, and it~~ ^{since 1958} was not until 1912 that direct elections occurred for the United States Senate. I do not pretend to you that this event heralds an era of ^{democratic} European-wide ~~democratic~~ control like that now exercised for the U.S.A. from Capitol Hill. ^{above all include the latter} The powers of the Parliament, which are limited, will not change ^{but the change will mean} but it will by virtue of election rather than ~~domination for national parliaments~~ give a new dimension and influence to the ~~weight~~ ^{powerful and visible} of its opinions: it will introduce a new democratic element into the process of European integration.

And this will be done at the ^{important} time both ~~symbolically and practically~~ ^{when we stand on the threshold of} of the second ~~phase~~ ^{stage} of enlargement which the Community has undergone. In 1974 Britain, Ireland and Denmark joined the original Six. ^{and then} ~~Now~~ Greece, Spain and Portugal ^{of Spain} have applied. Their reasons for doing so are as much, if not more, political than economic, and in welcoming their applications the Community has rightly shown itself ^{ready} to embody in practice its political commitment to freedom and democracy in 3 states which have ~~recently emerged from dictatorship~~ ^{recently emerged from dictatorship}.

In origin the European Community was endowed with political purpose and economic means to fulfil it. That remains the position and the objective. You ~~will~~ ^{will} notice that I have not once so far used the term common market although it is that limited and strictly economic term which is still ^{almost} invariably used to describe the Community here in the United States. But the term common market is

Handwritten note:
 - this is
 the purpose of a
 government
 to include

a partial truth - in two senses. First, a common market as such is still ^{only} in the process of being set up. We still have ^{some} barriers to internal trade which need to be broken down. Second, our commercial activities and our international trading strength are only a part of ~~our purpose~~ and a means towards wider goals. The founding fathers of the Community were always more interested in politics than in products and markets, but they had well learnt their American 19th century history lesson ^{and} in ~~seeing~~ the powerful thrust towards a continental common interest which lay in the exploitation of a common internal market - in our case ~~now~~ of 260 million people. When Gladstone ^{became} Vice-President of the Board of Trade ~~in his thirties~~ he said:

over 600 million people
more than 200 million.

"I wished to concern myself with the great affairs of men, and instead here I am set to look after packages."

not a
country with
half the
resources
that office in
a British
Government

He learnt that such a scornful sentiment was out of place. So have we - in our ~~case~~ for monetary stability, in relations with third countries and with the third world, and in our commitment to democracy on a European basis. The process of strengthening our economic sinews has political impact and political consequences. This is recognised by Greece, Spain and Portugal. That is why they want to join in the process.

If this is now the reality of Europe, it is ~~also~~ ^{now} how much more the image it has in the United States. Image and reality have moved more closely if not yet perfectly into the same focus. The reflection we find of our common interest in day to day economics and politics is in marked contrast to the ^{unreal} ~~uncomprehension~~ of the first ^{decades} ~~three decades~~ of this century, and ^{in some ways} they are different from the dependence and support of the ^{second three} ~~second three~~ ^{decades} ~~decades~~. ^{But it} ~~would be childish to deny the part that~~ the United States ^{has played in this latter period.} ~~has played in this latter period.~~ America was an early, enthusiastic and even impatient supporter of the process of European integration. I have already touched on two of the motives for this. First there was the ^{unavoidable} ~~unavoidable~~

natural

desire to avoid any repetition of what had happened in 1917 and 1941. Anything the Europeans could do to put an end for ever to their civil wars was obviously a prime American interest. Second, the Americans had their own inner faith in the advantages of closer union, of what could be forged from the mingling of peoples, traditions, customs and ways of life. In addition there was the understandable feeling that the Europeans should organise themselves to use as effectively as possible the massive aid which had enabled postwar reconstruction and should be able, through cooperation, to contribute to their own defence and that of the Western World.

today

I have talked of our common interest, and I have intended, and I hope succeeded, in suggesting a sense of optimism about Europe's capacity to tackle problems on a world scale. In this process image and reality are moving into the same focus but it is extremely easy for Americans, particularly if encouraged by Europeans, to see a constitutional analogy between the United States of America and the uniting states of Europe. This is a temptation which should be resisted; not because there is nothing in it, but because it is, like many historical and political analogies, misleading and unhelpful. In the United States, as much by inadvertence as by deliberate intent, and with many deep misgivings, a group of remote colonists, united by language, custom and the land on which they lived, threw off the authority of a mother country which was itself divided by the constitutional issues at stake. The new country thus began had more than a century in which to develop in relative peace, protected for the most part by the British Navy from uncomfortable involvement in the affairs of the rest of the world.

Contrast this with the origins of the European Community. The original Six had one unhappy thing in common: they had all been defeated, and in many cases devastated, in war. They had also been forcibly united

for four awful years under the domination of Adolf Hitler. Their first thought was to unite to prevent at all costs a third European civil war. But as their prosperity returned, they became more conscious of their historical roots, their different languages, habits of thought and way of life. The recovery of Europe as a whole meant a recovery in the self-confidence of the participating states. Thus what happened was in a way the reverse of what happened in America. Suppose that Massachusetts had been the only British part of America, and that New Jersey had been Dutch, Rhode Island Flemish, Virginia German, Georgia French and Maryland Italian, and that each had proudly retained the traditions of its homeland, how difficult, if not impossible, would have been the elaboration of a federal constitution of anything like the kind which was eventually established. This very diversity is one of the riches of Europe; but it has required/looser, different mechanisms which cannot readily be compared with your own.

and will continue to require

immensely talented

After the first World War an ~~adventurous~~ set of ~~brave~~ young men went, not west, but east - Hemingway, Scott Fitzgerald, John Dos Passos, T.S. Eliot and many others. "They do things better, in Europe, let's go there" was their motto. But these expatriate sojourners ~~was~~ ^{over of the cultural movement} ~~was~~ ^{was} as Woodrow Wilson's military sortie in the interests of World Peace. The American image of Europe has now passed beyond that of a cultural haven set in a political shambles. The European image of America no longer vacillates between supercilious disdain and frustrating envy. Distance and doubt, punctuated by excursions of friendship and affection, gave place on the American side after the Second War to a determined and consistent support. We now find ourselves, having entered the last quarter of this century in a position both of greater equality and of greater understanding than at any time in our history. And the more equal the partnership between the United States and the uniting states of Europe the better for both, and the longer it will endure.

Dr. G. S. ...

/Writing of

Writing of Henry James, T.S. Eliot once said:
"It is the final perfection, the consummation of an American
to become, not an Englishman, but a European - something
which no born European, no person of any European
nationality, can become." This now sounds a dated, and
idiosyncratic statement. But the present reality can
fill it with different meaning for it contains within it
both the pervasive sense of American support for Europe
and also that of a Europe becoming more assured in its
identity and cohesion. It remains a "patchwork sway" -
the pejorative words with which I began, but I use them
now in no pejorative sense. Europe should remain a
patchwork of diverse national cultures, united but not
uniform - allowing its nations free rein in what they do
best but reserving to its overall Community structure
~~those tasks that no individual nation can~~
~~successfully~~ alone. In this difficult but exciting process
of creation I know we shall have both your support and
your understanding.