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REY CALLS FOR RENEWED U.S. - COMMON MARKET TRADE EFFORTS

New York, February 20 -- Jean Rey, President of the Commission of the European Communities today called for new steps by the United States and the Common Market to "maintain momentum" toward freer trade lest retaliatory protectionism on both sides of the Atlantic start spiraling.

The chief of the executive commission of the Common Market made his remarks at a dinner meeting of business executives at the Waldorf Astoria sponsored by the National Industrial Conference Board.

He said there were no "black-and-white" issues in trade and that the U.S. and Europe shared a common responsibility to work together in solving diverse problems in international agricultural and industrial trade. The responsibility, he said rested squarely with the U.S. and the Common Market as the world's two major suppliers and importers.

Mr. Rey stressed the complexity of protectionism in agricultural trade not only because of its political and social role but also because of the lack of any accepted standards for measuring the degree of protection given to the farm economies in Europe and the United States.

He added that the multiple forms of so-called "non-tariff barriers"--ranging from separate fiscal and legal regulations to varying health, safety, and measurement standards -- could in the long run be as effective as tariffs and quotas in inhibiting world trade. These, together with the problems of agricultural trade, he said, should eventually be the subject of "patient negotiations" in which the U.S. and the Common Market "can find the will to succeed."

Mr. Rey also reviewed what he called the "reasons for satisfaction" and the "reasons for concern" of the Communities' Commission in the past year. He cited as reasons for satisfaction the achievement of the customs union; the arrival at a single market stage for agricultural products inside the Six; the free movement of workers inside the Communities; further harmonization of Common Market fiscal policy; and the progress made in renewing the Common Market's agreement of association with the eighteen African states and Madagascar.

But the Common Market President did not minimize reasons for dissatisfaction and concern on the part of the executive commission concerning developments in 1968, particularly the political controversy arising out of the enlargement of the Community.

Mr. Rey said he remained an optimist in the face of the continuing crisis of the Community and saw no reason to delay the timetable for the end of the Community's transition period -- January 1, 1970 -- when full economic and social union among the six nations will be established.

The Communities' head is expected to meet in Brussels next Monday with President Nixon.