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TWENTY-SECOND JOINT MEETING

between the members of the Council of Europe Assembly
and the members of the European Parliament

(Luxembourg, 14 September 1976)

R E P O R T

on the European responsibilities
in the world

(Rapporteur: Mr VEDOVATO)

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I. The role of democratic Europe in a changing world

1. "Europe's responsibilities in the world": so ambitious a theme might well be daunting at first, but it gives the rapporteur an opportunity to put across a message in defence of a fundamental conception of democratic Europe's responsibilities in the world. My plea is intended to be heard not only by my parliamentary colleagues in this chamber but also - and especially - by the public in our respective countries, for when a country is facing a difficult economic and social situation, national feeling is generally hostile to international co-operation or aid of any kind.

2. We must not become so mesmerised by the East-West division in Europe, or by the division of Western Europe into the Community countries and "the others", as to fail to see the broader picture of world interdependence and the active role to be played by democratic Europe as a whole on the world chessboard. Mr Tindemans' report on "European Union" contains a chapter on "Europe in the World". Towards the end of this chapter, Mr Tindemans states that in Europe "... we must pay particular attention to those European countries which have a democratic system similar to ours. We should establish relations with them which make it possible to take account of their interest and their points of view when formulating the Union's political decisions, and also obtain their understanding and their support for our actions...". I know that the Belgian Prime Minister received precise instructions: he was to report to the European Council on prospects for the future development of the European Communities. Even so, I consider that a title as ambitious as "Europe in the World" deserves more than an incidental reference to the existence of a democratic Europe, which today numbers some 20 countries. As members of two parliamentary Assemblies representing almost the whole of democratic Europe, we should, when meeting to discuss Europe's responsibilities in the world, be fully aware of our common duty and of the important role that democratic Europe as a whole can assume in its relations with other parts of the world, and the developing countries in particular.

3. Seen from outside, Europe is not divided into Community countries and "others", but appears as a historical entity ready to establish mutually beneficial cultural, social and economic links of many kinds with the countries of other continents, at various stages of development. The European system of values, founded on our continent's civilisation, has deeply influenced the fundamentals of the world system of values. The concepts that underlie the theory of relationships between states and underlie also the idea of human rights within society, are largely European in origin and provide the standard by which the world, like Europe, can measure its own performance and the extent to which it falls short of its ideals.

4. I am echoing here the thoughts expressed on 23 April 1975 by Mr Garret FitzGerald, then Chairman of the Council of the European Communities, in his address to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Democratic Europe's role in the world is potentially more positive and more significant than we ourselves perhaps realise. For the developing world, Europe today presents much less of a threat to its economic and political independence than do the super-powers, which may have no history of colonial involvement, but have not refrained, in their concern to maintain a balance between themselves, from unwarranted interference in many parts of the world. The West-European countries, by contrast, having once given up seeking to dominate or control other parts of the world, released a dynamic of social, cultural and economic co-operation between Western Europe and the rest of the world, obtaining thereby a unique opportunity to be accepted as partners on a scale and to a degree unknown to any of the other protagonists on the world scene.

II. World priorities as reflected in North-South relations

5. Democratic Europe, accepted and respected as a partner in a changing world: it is from this angle that we must view our responsibilities towards the outside world. In the present day context, such a commitment can find expression only in Europe's active participation in the North-South dialogue. "North-South" is at the same time "West-West", that is to say:

- a. the responsibility of the countries of Northern Europe towards their partners in the South,
- b. co-ordination by the Atlantic partners of their joint responsibility for achieving and maintaining socio-economic and political stability among all the allies, and
- c. the joint responsibility of all the industrialised democracies in the various North-South negotiations now going on. "North-South" is also "East-West" to the extent that, in three-sided co-operation, the financial, technical and manpower contributions of West, East and South could be combined for the benefit of the developing world. But "North-South" is essentially a new kind of responsibility for democratic Europe; it involves the establishment of a new "partnership" on a world scale; in other words, it affords an opportunity for Western Europe, where no country has either the means or the ambition to play the part of a political or economic super-power, to offer its services as an impartial partner.

6. There is, ultimately, nothing new about the North-South dialogue, but it is a fact that the conflicting and converging interests of those concerned show where present-day priorities lie. That is why the dialogue between North and South will have a considerable impact on our changing world. In its Resolution 621 of 4 May 1976, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe calls upon the governments of the countries of democratic Europe "...to initiate creative, dynamic co-operation which will strengthen them in their joint responsibility for the social, technical and economic progress of the developing world, on which stability depends".

7. It was a deliberate choice on my part to concentrate, in this paper for the joint meeting, on the theme of Europe's responsibilities in North-South relations, because I wished to emphasise some of the political priorities for democratic Europe. I am happy to say that I am broadly in agreement with the Chairman-in-Office of the Council of Ministers of the European Communities, Mr Max van der Stoep; in an address to the European Parliament on 7 July 1976, said that the Communities, in their external relations, should concentrate particularly on the North-South dialogue, on negotiations within UNCTAD and GATT and on relations with the Mediterranean countries.

III. European solidarity in the continent's North-South relations

8. The Mediterranean occupies the forefront where European responsibilities are concerned. "International relations in the world are ranged around two axes: the East-West axis between the two super-powers and the North-South axis between the industrialised and developing states. The Mediterranean is the centre of gravity, the point of intersection of the two axes...". These words, spoken by President Giscard d'Estaing on the occasion of the naval review on 11 July 1976, refer not only to French interests but also to the responsibility of the whole of Western Europe with regard to developments in the Mediterranean area in general, and, more particularly, to the situation in the countries of Southern Europe belonging to the family of democratic nations.

9. If the Northern states demonstrate their solidarity with their Southern partners in the political, economic and social spheres, democracy can be saved (or in the case of Spain, established) and a venture fraught with danger for Europe, prevented. As an Italian citizen, I do not wish to exclude my country from this view. I shall therefore repeat what I said on 16 June 1976 when addressing the WEU Assembly: "...if there is a certain risk of the communists coming to power, the responsibility does not lie with the Italians alone. The present situation is a consequence of the fact that, after the war, the allies, out of deference to the USSR, allowed the "left" in Italy to be monopolised by a party which takes its orders from Moscow. This did not make the task of Christian democracy any easier, as there was thus no democratic alternative, and inevitably, the Christian democratic party has suffered from the strain of being continuously in power. The Italian electorate now has the choice between negligent rule by an obsolete class and a total loss of liberty. But there has been a failure in the West as a whole to adapt democracy to present-day requirements. This was a task that ought to have been tackled jointly (1)".

10. Greece, a country freed from dictatorship two years ago, is now on its guard against those of its nationals who continue to favour an authoritarian régime. That is why it hopes, by improving its relations with Europe, to acquire greater freedom of manoeuvre in regard to the United States, and above all to bar the way once and for all to the diehards of the former régime.

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(1) WEU Assembly, Official report A/UEO (22) CR 4, 175 - 191 (unofficial English translation).

11. It goes without saying that any European policy in the Eastern Mediterranean must have a non-military objective, that is to say the maintenance of a just balance in three spheres: the political, the economic and the social. This objective also encompasses relations with an ally - Turkey - which could be considered as a special case. Turkey must not be forced psychologically to abandon its policy of securing and broadening privileged relationships with the European Communities and hence with the West. Then there are the military consequences of the conflict in Cyprus. These, combined with the difficulties it is experiencing with the United States, the reticence shown by Western Europe and the powerful upsurge of the Arab world, could cause Turkey to transfer its diplomatic allegiances and, loosening its ties with the West, establish closer links with the Arab countries, or with Iran and Pakistan. I do not mean to imply that the practical possibilities of a "third world" alternative are certain, but Turkey's increased co-operation within the framework of the Islamic Conference is a fact and does show the need for a more definite European commitment towards a great and valiant nation, and one which earnestly desires active co-operation with its former European partners.

12. As for Cyprus, democratic Europe as represented by the Council of Europe, can but acknowledge its powerlessness to help this member state which is being rent assunder, its Turkish community looking towards the Arab world, and the Islamic Conference in particular, and its Greek community towards the non-aligned countries in Europe, and the third and fourth world, and even towards Eastern Europe and the USSR in particular. Where is there any sign of solidarity on the part of Europe? Surely Europe, with its great tradition, should have come forward and tried, as a first step, to bring about a just and lasting peace by laying the foundations of equitable social and economic conditions for the island's population as a whole?

13. Malta has close historical ties with Europe, but that is true to the extent that Europe does not shut itself off from the problems of the Mediterranean, of the countries between the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic. It is because of Europe's passive attitude that Malta today feels strongly tempted by a "third world" policy, the realities of which seem closer and more pressing than those of Malta's European partners.

14. Portugal, whose entry into the family of democratic countries of Europe we all heartily applaud and whom we look forward to welcoming as the 19th member state of the Council of Europe, is a country with natural historic ties with Africa and the Portuguese-speaking countries of the third world, in so far as they share a common culture. The Portuguese have assured us on several occasions that they feel themselves to be European: they have proved this in the recent turbulent years that followed the dismissal of Mr Caetano and his régime. This valiant nation, glorious in its secular history, has remained Atlantic-oriented and is determined to work with all those who think in terms of Europe for the restoration of political and social peace in the world, and for an equitable distribution of economic resources. Northern Europe has found in Portugal an indispensable partner for its relations with the developing world. Portugal can be relied on to play the part of an honest go-between on condition that Northern Europe gives evidence of sincere and unselfish solidarity in the difficult years that lie ahead for that country in the economic and social spheres.

15. As Portugal is today a test of European solidarity, so Spain will be in the near future. Spain's new political leaders have repeatedly confirmed their country's attachment to Europe. They are told in reply that Spain's political and economic integration is unlikely to be easy. Flexibility is essential, for history shows that in our time no cause unites populations more than the struggle for national independence and against foreign domination. This is so because national consciousness and dignity are pre-requisites for any nation's political, economic and social progress. This is true of the third and the fourth world, and largely true also in the case of Mediterranean Europe which is today the strategic centre of the divergences between the two super-powers. Spain is an example of a great country making rapid progress towards complete modernisation: it should not be made to feel isolated. The reasons for this are not only strategic. Economic objectives are today a fact. As to political motives, ancient and recent history cannot provide Europe with an excuse for ignoring the democratic upsurge of a generation which never knew civil war and has lived with doors wide open to Europe and the West. This generation is not a minority; it is both competent and modern. It needs help if Spain, with its natural riches and its great spiritual qualities, is to find in democracy and social justice the impetus that will enable it once again to play a major role in Europe, the Mediterranean and the world.

16. It is not enough for Western Europe to hope for faster progress towards democracy in Spain; Europe must also realise its great responsibility for that country's future development. Spain cannot be regarded as another "bridgehead" of Northern Europe's commercial expansion: it must become a European partner with the same political rights and equal opportunities in the socio-economic field. We must prevent a situation where a majority of Spanish people would feel that "the interests of the Spanish people coincide only with those of the oppressed peoples fighting for their freedom and national independence, or those who oppose fascism, imperialism and hegenonism".(1)

17. The first aim is to rediscover, in present-day terms, all the ties that lead in turn to co-operation in all sectors of life between nations that are different but united by a great channel of communication. The second aim is to develop co-operation in order to attain economic stability. The third aim is to achieve steady social development as a basis for political stability. These three objectives are the sine qua non for a situation in which the southern flank of Europe ceases to be a direct or indirect objective for strategic and ideological expansion on the part of Soviet Russia.

IV. Closer unity in democratic Europe and its impact on national responsibility in the world

18. Closer ties between Southern and Northern Europe must not imply political and economic subordination. The way to European integration must continue to be flexible and allow for each country's political, cultural, economic and social individuality. But closer unity between all the democratic countries of Europe must be sought through the establishment of a balance between the North and South of the continent. In the non-military sphere, the Council of Europe and the European Communities, with their complementary activities, constitute the ideal framework in which to pursue this aim. And one that could progressively multiply the opportunities for concerted action by European countries at world level. Political co-ordination would increase Europe's capacity to exercise its responsibilities in the world.

19. If we consider the non-aligned bloc, we find that democratic Europe is represented by Cyprus and Malta as members, and by Austria, Finland, Sweden - and Switzerland also in 1976 - as guests. One of the main subjects of the conference of non-aligned countries this year was the restructuring of world economic relations. Democratic Europe's active and convincing participation in the non-aligned conferences - which are attended by about 100 countries, chiefly from the third and fourth world - is vital if we consider the

(1) M FUENTES, Devant l'Europe et le tiers-monde,
LE MONDE DIPLOMATIQUE, July 1976

importance and diversity of the political and economic topics normally appearing on the agenda. Obviously, the European countries present at the conferences cannot assume such a role unless there is a consensus resulting from a European mandate.

20. The United Nations organisation and its specialised agencies constitute a broader and politically more spectacular forum. I do not propose to analyse here the resolutions adopted by the new automatic majority in the General Assembly, a majority opposed to or manipulated against the will of the states holding the real power - resolutions which often have the effect of increasing the unrest in the international community rather than allaying it. But in the course of our debate, we must at least emphasise the grave responsibilities of Europe. In the European Communities, there is agreement that in principle a uniform attitude be presented by a spokesman for the Nine. Unfortunately, where problems pertaining to North-South relations are concerned, there is often total disagreement between the representatives of our continent. The most flagrant case of European disunity within the United Nations Organisation occurred on 10 November 1975 in the vote on the resolution concerning Israel and alleging Zionism to be a form of racialism. Three member states of the Council of Europe voted in favour of this resolution, and one abstained! Immediately two fundamental questions arose: is such a divergency in the interpretation of a principle fundamental to the protection of human rights to be tolerated? Why had there been no prior co-ordination with the Council of Europe?

21. The need for discussion, political co-ordination and preliminary agreement on the positions to be adopted towards the non-aligned or in the United Nations General Assembly is surely self-evident, and it is in the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe that all this should take place. But no such political unity will be achieved unless and until two essential points are settled once and for all: the fundamental divergencies between Northern and Southern Europe must be replaced by genuine, political, economic and social co-operation; this, in turn, implies a sincere and unselfish commitment of all the European partners to democratic Europe's joint responsibility towards the other parts of the world. The member states will then have greater authority in exercising that responsibility.

The importance of the debate on this subject in our two Assemblies is all the greater as it is only through close co-operation between the Communities and the Council of Europe that closer unity in the political, economic and social spheres will be achieved.

V. Joint action by Europe in the world-wide restructuring of North-South relations

22. If Europe proves capable of setting such an example inside its own frontiers, it will win renewed support for the European idea among the public, and particularly among the rising generations. To develop a model for a coherent and emancipated European society, ensuring the survival of all its peoples and, at the same time, promoting equality and justice in the world: what better assignment for a united Europe? The developing world is its special partner: it is important to recognise its international role, especially as reflected in its response to the latter's pressing needs and aspirations.

23. The Lomé Agreement, the policy of co-operation with non-European countries bordering on the Mediterranean, the aid given to the poorest countries, and the generalised preferences accorded to the developing countries are all evidence that Europe is facing up to his responsibilities (1). Also, it is certain that if the European Communities had not existed, the policy of co-operation would never have become as far-reaching as it is today. Many African, Arab, Asian and Latin-Americans now consider Western Europe as a special partner. They have rid themselves of the notion that the complexity of the world is to be attributed to the confrontation between Eastern socialism and Western capitalism, between revolutionaries and reactionaries, between good and evil. They see democratic Europe as a region in which a new, model society is being fashioned, where there is no place for the clichés I have just mentioned. They regard the existence of a European alternative as essential for the maintenance of multi-polar international relations, which they find preferable to a bi-polar system and to the danger of hegemony by a single super power.

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(1) G. VEDOVATO, "L'Europa e il terzo mondo", in: "Studi sui Problemi dello Sviluppo" - Biblioteca della Rivista di studi politici internazionali, Florence, 1974, pp 151-162.

24. The initiatives of Western Europe are gratifying, but we must take warning that any temptation to develop a "new" and largely economic imperialism would be tantamount to disaster. There is another danger: contemporary technocracy naturally states problems in rigid terms of production, money and profitability. Europe, on the other hand, while observing the economic laws, must identify itself with the universal principles and values that are at the basis of freedom for mankind, society and the nations. It is essential that Europe should accord the same rights to the nations of the other parts of the world, and that the participation of each according to its ability in the international community should be the strongest moral imperative of our time. (1)

25. Europe's responsibility to the developing world is not a purely moral commitment, far from it: the Realpolitik of today depends on international solidarity. Mutual confrontation and hostility will, if allowed to persist, lead to problems far worse than inflation and unemployment: they will help to bring about instability, poison the political atmosphere throughout the world, and even encourage blackmail, as the years of the oil crisis have taught us. As to the form which our solidarity towards the developing world might take, I would repeat the suggestions made by Mr Albert Tevoedjre, Director of the International Institute for Labour Studies. (2) Moral solidarity should be embodied in a negotiated contract defining the framework for responsible co-operation. The industrialised countries would provide the necessary financial and technical aid and pass on such fruits or their experience as are transferable. The developing countries, for their part, would give precise social undertakings. The contract would consist of co-operation agreements and conventions, that is to say, of voluntary consensual undertakings. Its influence would also extend to the developing countries' domestic structures, which would be gradually changed so as to bring about a significant reduction in regional, sectoral and social disparities.

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(1) VEDOVATO, "Europa sperata, Europa possibile", Rome. Università degli studi: Facoltà di Scienze politiche, 1976, passiva.

(2) Albert TEVOEDJRE, "Pour un contrat de solidarité" International Institute for Labour Studies, Geneva, December 1975.

26. I do not propose to dwell on this co-operation which will go well beyond the present-day types of agreement concluded between industrialised and developing countries. This is not the place to discuss North-South relations in detail; I did so recently as rapporteur of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (1). As regards European responsibilities in the world-wide restructuring of North-South relations, I repeat that it is particularly important to raise the question of the best procedure for achieving political co-ordination and joint action.

27. In assuming its responsibility towards the developing world, Europe must retain its originality and independence, although this does not mean that it must renounce its traditional, indispensable alliances. Rather, the formulation of a "third world" policy for Europe should logically be the outcome of an agreement reached after thorough discussion. I do not think it politically acceptable that a "Puerto-Rico" type summit conference should announce "practical solution for establishing equitable relations with the third world". While recognising the need for the great economic powers of the world to seek together ways of combating common ills such as inflation and unemployment, democratic Europe can neither regard such a summit conference - from which 16 countries were absent - as representative, nor accept the responsibilities derived from it. Besides, summit meetings of world economic powers, organised in such a manner, serve only to increase distrust among the developing countries.

28. I should like, therefore, to mention in this connection a suggestion made by the Austrian Chancellor, Mr Bruno Kreisky, in an address to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 5 May 1976. Mr Kreisky proposed that the democratic states should meet periodically to consider the problems they have in common with the third and fourth world. He did not rule out the attendance of Canada and the United States at meetings to discuss the problems of a strategy for détente and political co-operation, from the standpoint of the developing countries. In Mr Kreisky's view, the North-South Conference - which began in Paris and has as its goal the organisation of international economic co-operation in the 4 key sectors (energy, raw materials, development and financial and monetary problems) between the industrialised countries on the one hand and the developing and oil-producing countries on the other - would have greater chances of success if the industrialised democracies came to it with a clearer idea of the objectives to be attained.

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(1) Doc. 3763: "The political impact of the North-South dialogue".

29. Mr Kreisky considers that such meetings should take place under the auspices of the Council of Europe - for example, when the organisation's new building is inaugurated in January 1977. While paying tribute to the work of the European Communities and the numerous achievements of their institutions, he recalled that there were 11 European democracies which were not members of the Communities and that, for them, the Council of Europe was the only forum in which their community sentiments could find expression. This view was reiterated recently within the Communities by Mr Genscher. The Federal German Minister for Foreign Affairs proposed that the Council of Europe should be revitalised so that political co-operation between member governments and the other European democracies could be intensified still further (1).

30. The following are two of Mr Kreisky's practical proposals:

- democratic Europe must find a common means of expressing community feeling vis-à-vis the developing world, and of formulating the principles of joint responsibility in this sphere; the Council of Europe is the appropriate political organ for such co-ordination;
- the countries of democratic Europe together with the other industrialised democracies should hold regular meetings to discuss their joint responsibility towards the developing world; the Council of Europe could consider this idea and sponsor such meetings.

VI. The role of Europe in a WEST-EAST-SOUTH dialogue

31. Chancellor Kreisky also felt that in addition to holding meetings for co-ordination and discussion, the industrialised democracies could consider a strategy for detente and that the best time for this was after the signature of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and before the next meeting of the 35 participating countries in Belgrade. We warmly welcome this suggestion. As to the restructuring of North-South relations, Western Europe could take the initiative by including aspects of the North-South dialogue in the East-West detente dialogue. In view of the recent events in Angola, I am not convinced that a political detente would be easy to establish in certain regions of the third and fourth world. It is all the more important to explore the possibilities of West-East-South co-operation in order to prevent the final clash of interests between the super-powers.

(1) "European foreign policy: needs and possibilities",
BULLETIN, Bonn, 14 July 1976.

32. Despite the absence of the Soviet Union and its European allies from the joint efforts of the industrialised and developing countries to find solutions to food supply problems and to the problems of over-population and of economic co-operation in general, a new trend is discernible in industrial co-operation. The possible advantages of tripartite co-operation should stimulate the interest of each of the partners: for the West, new markets - normally difficult to penetrate - would be opened up as a result of a new relationship with the Eastern partners; consequently, exports and co-operation projects would increase and the prices offered by the West would go down. The East would be able to sell equipment and so procure foreign currency or raw materials, acquire knowledge and know-how and penetrate new markets or preserve existing ones. For the South, the cost of imports and co-operation projects would be reduced owing to the presence of the two partners; there would be increased credit facilities available (including capital from the oil-producers) and the possibility of compensation agreements; an alternative would be found to the monopoly of multinational corporations, and a balance would be preserved between East and West.

33. Western Europe has everything to gain from exploring the avenues leading to West-East-South co-operation, and seeking to create a new international economic order. Negative results would be borne only by whichever group of countries withheld their co-operation. Europe would find itself in a stronger position in terms of moral and political prestige.

VII. Conclusions

34. North-South relations reflect present-day world priorities. North-South is also West-West, that is to say

- a. relations between European countries in the North and around the Mediterranean,
- b. responsibility of the Atlantic partners for socio-economic stability among all the allies, and,
- c. joint responsibility of the industrial democracies towards the developing world.

North-South is also East-West in so far as triangular co-operation between West, South and East could be achieved for the benefit of the developing world. Democratic Europe must concert its efforts in order to fulfil its world-wide responsibilities. It is greatly to the advantage of the developing world to have a united "Europe" as a partner carrying its full weight in the North-South dialogue:

- the developing countries fear a bi-polarisation of world politics under the authority of the two great powers, and for that reason hope that a unified Europe will help create a multi-polar world;
- Europe is an important trading partner (as witness the Lomé Agreement, the Mediterranean policy, the various forms of economic and technical co-operation etc);
- Europe is regarded by the developing countries as an example to be followed, a mirror reflecting the problems they will be facing tomorrow.

By assuming its responsibilities, democratic Europe could play a key part in WEST-SOUTH-EAST relations.

35. "Democratic Europe" will be a myth for as long as political and cultural divergencies and economic and social disparities exist between Northern and Southern Europe:

- closer unity between all the democratic countries of Europe will alone create a sense of joint responsibility;
- democratic Europe must cultivate a community consciousness and formulate principles for joint action vis-à-vis the developing world;
- the existence of a community consciousness could facilitate political co-ordination of the positions taken by democratic Europe within the United Nations;
- The European Communities and the Council of Europe, with their complementary activities, are appropriate organs to formulate a common policy for democratic Europe vis-à-vis the other parts of the world.