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PRESS RELEASE

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CONGRESSMEN AND EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEMBERS ISSUE JOINT STATEMENT

WASHINGTON, DC -- May 10, 1973 -- A delegation of US Congressmen and European Parliament members yesterday concluded three days of talks in Strasbourg, France, on trade, agriculture, monetary, energy, and security issues. The Congressmen and European Parliament members issued the following joint statement:

"We are convinced that the United States and Europe share a profound common interest and destiny underlying our entire relationship. We must remind ourselves that the continuity through the years of these common interests is a most important linkage between the various issues we discussed.

"The American participants obtained a renewed sense of the vigor of the European Community. Both sides stress the need for continuing review of our institutional relationship in order to prevent structures from becoming outdated. The dynamism resulting from the enlarged Community will force changes in the Atlantic community.

Trade

"The importance of the forthcoming GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade] negotiations in achieving freer trade was emphasized. The results of the negotiations will depend largely on the mandate that will be given on the one side by the Congress to the President of the United States and on the other by the Council to the Commission of the European Communities after consultation with the European Parliament. It is necessary that these mandates be given in due time and allow each party adequate freedom of movement.

"The forthcoming negotiations should aim to consolidate and continue the liberalization of international trade on the basis of reciprocity and mutual advantage. They should also include opportunities for the developing countries to participate in the expansion of world trade.

Agriculture

"The two delegations recognized that the farmers should share fully in the prosperity of their countries while adequate food supply and fair prices for producers and consumers are maintained. In order to achieve steady growth of agricultural trade in a stable world market, international agreements, in particular specific agreements for certain commodities, are needed to set minimum and maximum price levels taking into account production targets corresponding to a real demand. These agreements should provide for storage of reserved stocks, with the cost sharing to be agreed upon, and the stocks to be made available to countries with severe food shortages. A minority held the view that farm prices should be allowed to move more freely, and incomes of farmers be subsidized by their respective Governments.

"Recognizing certain differences between the structural problems of European and US agriculture, the American participants expressed understanding of the present social basis for the common agricultural policy of the EC. Both sides recognized that problems in their respective agricultural policies must be faced in order to help create, by reciprocal adjustments, a better equilibrium of world markets.

Monetary Reform

"Both sides viewed the present flotation of exchange rates as acceptable under prevailing circumstances. There was agreement on the need for a long-term solution to the problem with Special Drawing Rights [SDR's] in the center of the new system. Difference of approach arose, however, concerning the urgency of taking early measures. Some called for immediate action, while others expressed confidence that the short-run, controlled flotation will be effective in improving the United States' balance of payments. The European Community's goal of economic and monetary union, as confirmed by the Paris 'Summit' in October 1972, was welcomed by both delegations as being of the utmost importance in this context.

Energy Policy

"Taking note of the expanding international demand for energy and of the balance of payments problems this poses, the two delegations agreed to urge a new cooperative relationship among the major energy-consuming nations. Objectives of the relationships should include development of new and expanded sources of energy, minimizing damage to environment by the production and consumption of energy, acquiring adequate reserves of certain forms of energy, and avoiding waste of energy.

East-West Relations

"While recognizing the limitations imposed by the Treaty of Rome, the delegations discussed East-West relations and respective defense policies in the light of the forthcoming talks on security and cooperation in Europe and on mutual and balanced force reductions.

"There were frank differences expressed concerning US troop levels in Europe and on burden sharing within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO]. The European members emphasized the considerable improvements made in their defense efforts in recent years. While recognizing these developments, the Americans explained the political, budgetary, and balance of payments considerations behind that American public opinion which seeks US troop reductions in Europe.

"Both delegations agreed that adequate American defense forces should be maintained in Europe. The exact size and composition of these forces should be the subject of careful scrutiny by NATO.

"Both delegations welcomed the joint approach which the EC nations have adopted in the preparatory talks in Helsinki, which are facilitating closer cooperation with the United States in these discussions. They stressed the need for parallel progress in the Helsinki Conference on European Security and Cooperation and in the Vienna talks on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions."

Co-chairing the American delegation were Rep. Benjamin S. Rosenthal (D-NY), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe, and Rep. Donald M. Fraser (D-Minn.), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements.

The other Foreign Affairs Committee members scheduled to participate in the exchange were: Rep. John Buchanan (R-Ala.); Rep. J. Herbert Burke (R-Fla.); Rep. L. H. Fountain (D-NC); Rep. Peter H. B. Frelinghuysen (R-NJ), ranking minority member of the Europe Subcommittee; Rep. Tennyson Guyer (R-Ohio); Rep. Guy Vander Jagt (R-Mich.); Rep. Ogden R. Reid (D-NY); Rep. Lester L. Wolff (D-NY), and Rep. Gus Yatron (D-Pa.).

Other Congressmen scheduled to take part in the study mission were: Rep. Phillip Burton (D-Calif.), of the Education and Labor Committee and chairman of the Territorial and Insular Affairs Subcommittee of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee; Rep. Sam Gibbons (D-Fla.), of the Ways and Means Committee; Rep. John Melcher (D-Mont.), of the Agriculture and Interior and Insular Affairs Committees; Rep. David R. Obey (D-Wis.), of the Appropriations Committee, and Rep. Henry S. Reuss (D-Wis.), of the Banking and Currency, Government Operations, and Joint Economic Committees.

The first EC-US parliamentary exchange took place in January 1972, when US Congressmen traveled to Luxembourg, site of the European Parliament's Secretariat. In May 1972, a European Parliament delegation traveled to Washington. Another European Parliament delegation is scheduled to visit the United States later this year.