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## SOAMES CALLS ENERGY CRISIS A TEST CASE FOR US-EC RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC, January 18 -- Sir Christopher Soames, Vice President of the Commission of the European Communities told the European Parliament on January 16 that the energy crisis is "a test case" for relations between Europe and the United States.

Soames said there were bound to be differences between both sides, due to Europe's greater dependence on Middle East oil and its different historical and political relationships. On the other hand, he said the United States and the European Community share common concerns for the future which must bring about "a meeting of the minds across the Atlantic." Neither side, he said, could afford competition for oil between the consumer countries or international monetary anarchy and the destruction of the third world.

Soames said the Commission saw the crisis as an opportunity for closer and more far reaching cooperation between the industrialized countries, and welcomed the Council of Ministers' decision that the Community would attend the International Energy Conference in Washington, February 11.

In answer to a question from Parliament, Soames denied that there had been a marked deterioration in relations with the United States. He described the problem as being psychological. "On both sides of the Atlantic there was built up last year, a certain expectation that relations between Western Europe and the United States would somehow very consciously be defined." He went on to explain that while redefining relationships between old adversaries "can have dramatic usefulness,...it is a much more delicate and complicated process when old friends are involved,...a process from which it would be misconcieved to hope for dramatic results."

"In any case" he continued, the Mideast war and the energy crisis "have rather cut across that process of formal and somewhat abstract redefinition and faced us with some very specific and immediate tasks." He said this situation "brings home a fundamental truth" that the satisfactory development of transatlantic relations will not be secured by drafting texts, no matter how cleverly or constructively. Instead, according to Soames, "it is much more by the way we handle the often unforeseen events and problems we both face that this relationship will really be defined."

Referring to the multilateral Trade talks in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), Soames looked forward to substantive negotiations beginning some time this year. He pointed out that they would be long and complicated, especially due to the change in the world economic climate and the unforeseen problems that have arisen since the Tokyo GATT meeting.