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THIS MONTH IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Highlights of the July session of the European Parliament, held in Strasbourg, France, from July 6 - 10.

EC Commission urged to negotiate voluntary restraints on Japanese exports

July 10 -- The European Parliament has adopted a resolution on trade relations between the European Community and Japan urging the EC Commission "to agree with Japan, on a voluntary basis, specific quantifiable restraints in respect of the exports to the Community". The Commission is also urged "to make clear to Japan that any failure to abide by these restraints must lead to counter-measures on behalf of the Community".

In its resolution, the Parliament expresses its concern with the persistent and increasing deficit in the Community's balance of trade with Japan which, although comparatively small in the context of the Community's overall trade figures, "implies a severe threat to the Community in certain specific sectors, particularly in manufacturing industry".

The resolution says that the problems created by the EC trade deficit with Japan can be best resolved by the formulation by the Commission of a vigorous common Community trade policy towards Japan. This policy would include closer cooperation and improved efficiencies in European industry, the elimination of Japanese tariff and non-tariff barriers, the encouragement of European exports to Japan and reciprocity in banking and investment facilities. The resolution also asks the Japanese to cooperate with these policies.

Carrington to pursue Afghan peace bid

July 8 -- In his first speech to the European Parliament as the new President of the Council of Ministers, British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington said that he would be having a further meeting with Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko in New York in September to pursue the question of the European Community's proposal for a conference on Afghanistan.

Lord Carrington said he had reminded the Soviet government that the Ten were convinced that the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan is an essential element of any solution. Mr Gromyko had described this proposal as unrealistic, but he did not say that he rejected the proposal and it remained on the table.

The proposal provides the best hope of a negotiated settlement, which is wanted by the international community, and which the Soviet Union has also said that they want, Lord Carrington said.

Turning to the European Community budget, Carrington said he thought it would be politically unrealistic to ask for the Community's resources to be increased "until it is clear that the budget has been restructured in such a way as to ensure that the excessive rate of growth of agriculture expenditure has been curbed and that member states will not be called upon to make unreasonable or unacceptable contributions to it."

He said that there had to be changes in the Common Agricultural Policy to discourage the production of surpluses, but not so as to undermine the principles of the CAP or to lose the benefits Europe gained from having a healthy agricultural industry and secure food supplies.

Parliament moves towards a single seat

July 7 -- The European Parliament has voted "pending a final decision on a single meeting place of the European Parliament" to hold all its sessions in Strasbourg and to organise the meetings of its committees and political groups as a general rule in Brussels.

Currently, sessions of the Parliament are held in either Strasbourg or Luxembourg. The Parliament's staff is also based in Luxembourg.

The Parliament also adopted an amendment implying that a significant proportion of the staff will now have to leave Luxembourg.

Background note

The European Parliament has 434 members, 410 of whom were directly elected by the citizens of the then nine member countries of the European Community in June 1979. They were joined by 24 members from Greece when that country joined the Community in January 1981.

Members of the Parliament sit not by country but by political group. These are :-

Socialist Group	120
Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democratic Group)	107
European Democratic Group	63
Communist and Allies Group	45
Liberal and Democratic Group	39
Group of the European Progressive Democrats	22
Group for the Technical Coordination and Defence of Independent Members	11

In addition, there are 10 members who are non-attached and 16 who have decided to indicate at a later date which group, if any, they will be joining.