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US, EC TO HOLD INTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS
ON AGRICULTURE

The United States and the European Community agreed at a cabinet-level meeting in Brussels today to hold intensive discussions on agriculture early next year in an attempt to resolve their differences on agricultural trade matters. The following is the text of the official joint communique released by EC Commission President Gaston Thorn and US Secretary of State George Shultz:

"We have had a frank discussion on the problems we face in agriculture. We are agreed to avoid disruption of world markets. We agree therefore that this factor should be borne in mind in the decisions we will both be taking on agricultural support programmes. We agreed that an intensive exchange of views at official level should start in the first half of January on actions which could be taken within existing systems and which would help in dealing with problems. An evaluation of the progress made should be made before the end of March."

In a joint US-EC press briefing President Thorn stressed that the Community's Common Agricultural Policy was not negotiable and that the EC Commission had not made any commitments in the course of today's discussions. He said that the measures the two parties would take to avoid disruptions of world markets would be taken within the context of their own respective policies. Thorn mentioned as examples the grain production reduction program unveiled yesterday by US President Ronald Reagan as well as Community efforts aimed at reducing sugar surpluses.
