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WORKING TOWARDS A NEW EUROPE

by Sir Alec Douglas Home

The following is the transcript of the speech made by Sir Alec Douglas Home, the Foreign Secretary, to a joint meeting of the Swiss-British Society and the Europa Union in Berne on 18th May. This text was kindly communicated to us by Dr. Armin Daeniker, former Minister Plenipotentiary in London. Sir Alec's speech was entitled the "Future of Europe".

I am delighted to be here at this joint meeting of the Europa Union and the Swiss/British Society. All too often,

Ministerial visits to foreign countries seem to be confined to discussions between politicians. Opportunities to attend important public meetings such as this and to talk to members of the public are rare. So I am particularly grateful to my Swiss hosts for giving me this opportunity to talk to you during this, my first official visit to Switzerland. This is not only my first visit to Switzerland, it is also my first visit to a European country outside the European Community since Britain joined the Community.

M. Graber and I have had a most

useful and interesting exchange of views on how we see the development of Europe. And it is of this that I wish to speak tonight — the future of Europe.

But before I turn to this, I would like to say a few words about the relationship between Britain and Switzerland. I am glad to say that both M. Graber and I came to the conclusion that these relations are close and in excellent shape.

Historical Community

We have much in common. This is not surprising. We both believe deeply in freedom, and above all in the freedom of the individual. We have held this belief for centuries. We both believe that different individuals have the right to be different. We have both attained national unity on this basis, not by decree or force of arms. The cantons of Switzerland originally came together to pursue a common struggle against the Hapsburgs. Although they have had disagreements, they continue to work together in a realistic and practical way for the common interest of the confederation.

Coming from a country with no written constitution, I think your constitution is a convincing example of a federation based on voluntary consent. It has provided you over the years with a flexible mechanism for preserving unity without forcing uniformity. The mixture of cohesion and diversity is a remarkable achievement and a lesson in political maturity.

I think we in Britain have also found our way by different paths to a similar degree of national unity which, like yours, is never more apparent than when we are subjected to extreme dangers. But we are also, I am glad to say, astonishingly diverse and individualistic — as any Welshman or Scotsman will be only too glad to tell you. Like you, we look to our long tradition of law with its emphasis on human rights as the essential fabric of democracy. And like you we have a reputation for obstinately protecting those rights, frequently with little regard for administrative or practical convenience.

Our common attitudes have made for an easy relationship between our two countries in international organisations, especially, until quite recently, in EFTA (European Free Trade Association). I want to emphasise that the parting of our path from that of EFTA does not mean that our basic relationship of friendliness to and trust in your country will change in any way. We will continue to build on the good relations we had with you and the other countries



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with whom we were associated in EFTA.

Nor does our membership of the European Community, now that it has been achieved, mean that we will turn inwards and forget those countries which for a variety of reasons cannot, or do not wish to become members. The Community's agreement with Norway is I hope an earnest of that.

We will still retain the closest possible relationship with our former EFTA partners, both bilaterally and through the agreements with the Community which we worked together to achieve; through the Council of Europe and through the other international bodies of which we are jointly members.

We for our part hope that you will feel that we sought to ensure for Switzerland the maintenance of the essential achievements of EFTA in the development of trade.

Oiling in the international machine

We in Britain greatly value Switzerland's important role in international affairs. We believe that neutral countries like Switzerland have a special contribution to make to the solution of world problems.

Although neutral, you play an outstanding role in humanitarian activity and international reconciliation. We all recognise the imaginative work which the Swiss have done in the organisation of aid and in giving help for the relief of suffering and hardship. You oil the wheels for many of the international conference and organisations that pro-

liferate today. Switzerland is also renowned for its skill as a go-between in international disputes and for providing representational services in cases where diplomatic relations are broken. In a world of confrontation that is a service of great value.

How then do we see the future of Europe?

For us in Britain, the concept of European unity has always embraced the totality of European peoples. Now that the Community of Six has been enlarged into a Community of Nine, with new Associate members, we have a new springboard for our joint effort. Far from its being an introspective selfish club of countries with their eyes only on their own affairs, blind to the essentially interdependent nature of the modern world, we see the Community as a catalyst. It is, and will increasingly be seen to be, a catalyst for greater co-operation within Europe — and I mean the whole of Europe — between the Community and the North American continent and Japan, and between the Community and the developing countries.

As you may have observed, not all my countrymen have been enthusiastic about the Community. This is not difficult to understand after ten years in which the Community often seemed almost an adversary. I believe that many are changing their minds now that at last the Community is "we" and not "they".

My countrymen are realising that the Community will give us a better,

fuller and richer life than if the Nine had remained separate countries. We also believe that the enlargement of the EEC will be of great benefit to non-member countries. Not only will it generate a faster growth of world trade but its influence will also contribute to increasing political stability. The Community is already working constructively for progress in East-West relations, through its contribution to NATO and to the work of the Helsinki talks in preparation for a European Security Conference. It is only since the Community was enlarged that the Soviet Union has in effect recognised that it is here to stay and has suggested that businesslike relations might be established with the EEC.

While it is yet early days to say what precisely the future will hold, we have definite views on how we wish to fashion it. That is not to suggest that we have a rigid blue print to which to work. I do not think it would help us to achieve our goals if we were to adopt now too detailed a programme or timetable. What we must do is to move forward, disposing of sacred cows where they no longer are relevant and promoting greater integration within the framework of the decisions taken and the objectives set out at the European Summit last October. As for new institutions, there will no doubt be some as the years unfold. But we shall not invent them unless there is something substantial for them to do. There is plenty of bureaucracy without adding to it. Institutions are not immune from Parkinson's Law.



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We shall first study what has to be done and then, if an institution is required to do it, we can go ahead. The practical advantage for the Community must be the test.

Influence-through unity

We start from the proposition that the European countries are still determined to take charge of their own destiny; to act and not merely to react to be acted upon; and that Europe has a contribution to make in the world, interests to protect and ideas to offer about our relationship with other countries.

I am convinced that only if we unite shall we be able to make that contribution, protect those interests and shape those relationships. None of us is strong enough alone.

The British Government is determined that the Community should acquire the means to concentrate its collective influence effectively on international issues. Mr. Heath has repeatedly made it clear that we look forward to the establishment of a Common Foreign Policy not as some kind of luxury or demonstration of European integration for its own sake, but as an essential complement to the economic integration inside the Community. In short, we must act responsibly, positively and in full awareness of the inevitable international political implications of the actions and policies of the world's largest trading group — which is what the Community is.

To forge and implement a common foreign policy will be no easy task. Each of us has rather different priorities and traditions. But in the common interest, the nine must consciously set out to find the maximum consensus, making use of the different sets of machinery which are available to them in both the EEC and the Political Co-operation framework for the purpose.

The creation of a common Community foreign policy does not mean that we will build a barrier round the boundaries of the Community, ignoring

European countries with which the Community has fashioned the closest trade links.

We wanted to have as many EFTA members as possible in the Community; not because we thought that our ex-EFTA partners would always agree with us — after all they often disagreed with us when we were in EFTA — but because, on essentials, we had so much in common. The enlarged Community will thus always attach very great importance to its relationship with the non-member states of Western Europe.

It is encouraging to see how closely not only the Nine but also the other countries of Europe are working together in Helsinki in the multilateral preparatory talks for a conference on European Security and Co-operation. The same problems face us and by and large we all wish to achieve the same ends. Détente has far too long been merely an ambitious word. We must try from now on to turn it into reality, to give it meaning.

The importance of good US-EEC relations

We are now in an era of negotiation rather than confrontation. We are all seeking to achieve a more constructive relationship with the Russians and other East Europeans in a number of different ways and contacts. We believe that practical results of value to us all can be achieved. There is no reason why we should not see a substantial increase in trade, wider cultural exchanges and eventually improved security.

But we must be cool-headed at the same time. We need more than a few brief years of comparative quiet — for that is all we have had — before we can say that a new order in Europe has come. Physical security is always basic to confidence. We must keep it. Let us by all means be positive in our search for stability in Europe, but let us avoid euphoria. That is not a basis for the proper conduct of foreign policies.

But it is not only towards the East that unity and a common purpose

is necessary. A satisfactory relationship between Europe and the United States is of absolute importance to the prosperity and security of both.

Dr. Missinger has performed a timely service in painting the size of the international canvas against which the solution to our common economic political and security problems have to be seen.

We are much preoccupied with the fashioning of the expanding Community, but even at this early stage we have to find additional imagination and energy. Nothing less than constructive co-operation between the United States, Europe and Japan will measure up to the insistence which all our people lay on the better, fuller life.

A combined effort at expansion in which Europe, America and Japan pursued complementary monetary and economic policies would vindicate the way of life which we share.

There is already a wide range of shared activities and interests between the countries of the developed West. In the trade field, all are affected by the commercial weight of the enlarged EEC; by the innate economic power of the United States.

In the monetary field we all need a system which will banish the recurrent crises of recent years.

Resources tied up by fear

In defence Europe relies on the US nuclear umbrella. The Soviet Union has reached near equality with America as a nuclear power. Too many resources are tied up by fear. Our problem is how to create the international climate which will enable us to reduce armaments without impairing that basic security on which alone confidence rests.

In all these matters we should make sure that our attitudes are realistic and our institutions flexible. This responsibility falls on Europe just as much as on the United States.

The reaffirmation by Dr. Kissinger that the US Government will maintain its security commitments to her allies is most welcome. It is also encouraging that President Nixon has repeated his pledge that United States' troops will not be withdrawn from Europe's defence (which is also America's defence) without a balancing reduction by the Warsaw Pact.

It is also up to Europe to respond to the United States. It is *our* responsibility as well to make this "the year of Europe". What we are trying to build in Europe will not happen in a day. But who 30 years ago could have predicted the pattern of events that we have experienced since the war, and the response to them?

The smaller countries of Europe have been closely involved in the construction of the new Europe. Paradoxically, the larger the organisation to which they belong the greater has been their influence.

As for the next 30 years, the twin

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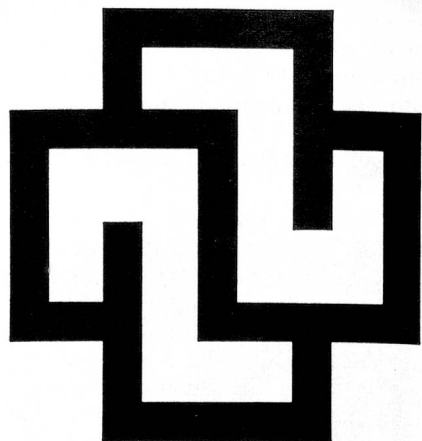
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needs are for greater integration within Europe and a better spirit of understanding towards countries outside Europe, and this includes the developing world whose aspirations and needs are our common concern.

These aims are by no means incompatible. To hold back on integration through anxiety about the transatlantic relationship would be a fundamental error. It would benefit no-one. An economically strong and united Western Europe may create some awkward cases of competition for the United States. But a weak and divided Western Europe would be a dangerous source of instability.

And only if Western Europe is strong, can it contribute in full measures

to the narrowing of the gap between the living standards of the rich and poor countries of the world, a gap which must be closed in the interests of all of us.

We should therefore give the search for co-operation and understanding priority over technical and doctrinal differences. In every sector there should be the strongest incentive to work for agreed solutions. Each of the countries of Western Europe must be resolved to play its part in discussions at the highest level to preserve the harmony of the West.

These are exciting days. The new Europe is for us to fashion. It is on the move. It is for us to ensure that when the new Europe speaks, the world listens.

Switzerland, the Society was able to secure a three-year lease in *Henrietta Street*, off the Strand. The day school thus came into being in January, 1923 with a Headmaster and a full-time secretary looking after 50 students. Some of them are still alive today and members of the S.M.S.

Three years later, it proved necessary to seek more suitable premises. The S.M.S. College moved to its present site at 34-35 *Fitzroy Square*. This terraced building had served as a Swiss hostel for girls since 1906. The S.M.S. obtained a long lease on the building, carried out major transformations and moved in after an inaugural ceremony presided by the Swiss Minister, *Mr. C. R. Paravicini*, on 11th December, 1926.

This is where the school still stands today and will continue to carry out its valuable services in future following the purchase of the freehold. This was made possible last year thanks to an appeal with the support of leading businessmen. The SKV and the Swiss Government's support were essential to the realisation of the project. The SMS is presently awaiting final authorisation by the Council to extend the premises and carry out modernisation work all round. These works are planned to last about eight months. During that time, the school will have to operate in other, unfortunately scattered premises. This problem is gradually nearing its solution.

The teaching work of the S.M.S. hasn't essentially changed during these fifty years. There were over 200 students before the war, there are 260-280 of them today. The outbreak of war forced the closure of the College. Its premises (also called "Swiss House" in the Colony) were in fact used as a mobilisation centre. One day in September, 1939, the College's male students, some of its teachers, and many members of the Colony who had received their call-up assembled at Fitzroy Square for the ominous journey home which they accomplished in a special train.

Since the opening of the Fitzroy Square premises, the S.M.S. College has given evening classes as well as day classes with, today, a full-time staff of 16 teachers all of British nationality. More than 20,000 students have sat on the College's benches over those fifty years.

The College sets high standards and students can hardly afford to be slack if they want to successfully complete the full course, which consists of six stages of five weeks' duration. Curriculum includes English language, translation to and from Germans, French and Italian, commercial correspondence, commerce and literature and also English shorthand. The diploma examination, which embraces all subjects taught, can be taken at the end of grade six, which can only be reached by passing the regular monthly class-tests. The award of an S.M.S. diploma therefore vouches for a good working knowledge of English. It is certainly no coincidence that a higher-than-average number of S.M.S.

NEWS FROM THE COLONY

The Swiss Mercantile Society College is 50 years old



The College of English run by the Swiss Mercantile Society in London celebrates its 50th Anniversary this year. By coincidence, the *Schweizerische Kaufmannische Verein* (SKV), the Parent Organisation, celebrates its Centenary Year. This event was marked by a special issue of the weekly SKV paper. Among various special features and an outline of the work and history of the SKV, there appeared a long article written by *Mr. Walter Burren*, Secretary of the S.M.S. and teacher at its college, relating the history of those past fifty years.

Mr. Burren first recalled that the Swiss Mercantile Society in London was created on 26th September, 1888 by 13 compatriots in London with the object of advancing professional and linguistic education. Within a month, an application

was sent to the SKV for admission as a local section. This would give members of the SMS the advantages offered by the Central Society.

For the first thirty years of its existence, the SMS confined its teaching activities to evening classes. This was made possible by the absence of restrictions on immigration. Young Swiss had no trouble finding work in Britain and could therefore combine work with the study of English at off duty hours. With the introduction of the Aliens Act of 1920, it became increasingly difficult for young Swiss to obtain permits in England. But the need to learn English remained, and it was decided to create full-time courses in England and commercial subjects.

As a result of an appeal launched in