

PRIME MINISTER

STRASBOURG: YOUR OPENING STATEMENT

In your bilateral talks with President Giscard, Chancellor Schmidt and Signor Andreotti, you have on each occasion begun with a firm and unequivocal statement of the Government's total commitment to the European ideal and to British membership of the Community. I think it would be very desirable to do the same when you make your opening remarks to the European Council in Strasbourg on Thursday.

[Handwritten signature]

Equally, I think it would be wrong to ignore the coincidence that it was in Strasbourg, almost 30 years ago, that Sir Winston Churchill made one of his great European speeches (I attach the text). The symbolic continuity between his remarks in 1949 and your own could, I believe, make an effective impact.

I have therefore re-drafted the speaking note attached to your steering brief, particularly its opening paragraph, and attach the result below which you may like to glance at before your briefing meeting.

[Handwritten signature]

19 June 1979

DRAFT OPENING REMARKS AT THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL (FIRST SESSION)
AT STRASBOURG ON 21 JUNE

① I am very glad to attend, for the first time, the highest political forum of the Community, where final responsibility for the Community's affairs is exercised. If I had any feeling of unfamiliarity, it has been dispelled by the warmth of your welcoming remarks, Mr. President.

② Our meeting in Strasbourg today has a very special significance for a British Prime Minister and especially for a Conservative Prime Minister. For it was here, only a few hundred metres from where we are sitting, that almost exactly thirty years ago Sir Winston Churchill made the first great British affirmation of commitment to the European ideal.

On 12 August 1949, at an open air meeting in the Place Kleber in Strasbourg, Sir Winston declared:

"That primary and sacred loyalty that one owes to one's own country is not difficult to reconcile with this larger feeling of European fellowship. On the contrary, we will establish that all legitimate interests are in harmony and that each one of us will best serve the real interests and security of his country if we enlarge at the same time both our sentiment of citizenship and of common sovereignty - if we include in this sentiment the entire continent of States and of nations who have the same way of life."

/ Sir Winston

Sir Winston began his speech with the phrase which many of you will recall: "Prenez garde! Je vais parler en Français." My courage is less monumental than his. But I should like to make, for the new British Government, an affirmation which I have already had the chance to express to you, Mr. President, and to some of our colleagues in the Council: an affirmation which provides some continuity with that August day in Strasbourg thirty years ago.

The new British Government has a positive belief in the European ideal and a total commitment to the United Kingdom's membership of the Community.

We believe that our membership offers the best way forward for our country and that it can bring benefit to Europe as well. My Cabinet colleagues and I are deeply devoted to the cause of Europe: we shall do everything we can to make it work and we shall co-operate on all issues to the greatest extent possible.

Our approach to the Community is simple and direct: we can achieve much more together than any of us can achieve alone.

/ I have, I hope,

I have, I hope, made it equally clear that where aspects of our membership give rise to real problems or difficulties we shall be as resolute as any of our partners in defending our interests and working for redress.

Our agenda gives us the opportunity to work together on the most important issues of the day: the economic and social situation of our own peoples and of the world, particularly in the face of the energy crisis.

~~Second~~, This Government is determined to tackle the problems of the British economy. Last week's Budget will put us on a different road. A stronger Britain means a stronger Europe.

*Although we reserve our position on joining (cont'd)
make a decision of the 7th*

" I should like to inform my colleagues that the UK Government ~~have decided~~ *would* to participate in the deposit of reserves on a swap basis with the European Monetary Co-operation Fund in exchange for ECUs." *This will be announced later today.* This will make it clear that, whatever our decision in due course on participation in the exchange rate arrangements, we desire to be closely involved in the evolution of the European currency unit and of European monetary institutions.

/Together we can

Together we can build a stronger Europe to face the grave crises which threaten us in the next years, in energy and perhaps in more direct form from the growth of Soviet power in a dangerously chaotic world. We should take decisions here in Strasbourg which will clear the decks and get rid of old outstanding grievances so that we can face these problems and move forward more effectively together.