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Version I

PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH

ON

EUROPE

IN

BRUGES

ON

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VERSION
I

First, may I thank you for inviting me to
deliver this address.

Where better place to speak of Europe's
future than in a building which so
gloriously recalls the greatness that
Europe had already achieved over 600 years
ago.

Perhaps I should also thank you for your
temerity in inviting me to speak on the

subject of Europe at all.

If you believe some of the things said and written about my views on Europe, it might seem rather like inviting King Herod to speak on the subject of nursery education.

Britain and Europe

So I might start by disposing of some myths about my country, Britain, and its

relationship to Europe.

To hear some people, you would think that Britain first interested itself in Europe some time in the late 1950s, was rebuffed by General de Gaulle's non, and finally limped into the community in 1973 as an unconvinced member, wishing heartily that it could be somewhere else.

Well, that's nonsense, as anyone with an iota
of historical understanding knows!

The fact is that Britain's relations with the
rest of Europe, the continent of Europe,
have been the dominant factor of our
history:

- the Celts who first cultivated our
land came from the continent of Europe;

- for three hundred years we were part of the Roman Empire;

- the Anglo-Saxons, like the Normans and Danes who followed them, came from the continent of Europe;

- our nation was - in that favourite Community word - "restructured" under

Norman and Angevin rule in the eleventh and twelfth centuries;

- throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Britain fought in a series of European civil wars;

- from the sixteenth century, Britain looked outwards from Europe to a wider world - as had Portugal before us, and

France, Spain and Holland after us.

The difference was that we were more
successful-

Britain did indeed fight wars against other

European countries - which European
country did not?

But the cause for which we fought -
against Philip II, against Louis XIV,
against Napoleon, against the Kaiser,

against Hitler - was to save Europe from falling under the dominance of a single power.

We did not fight against Europe.

We fought against totalitarianism and for freedom.

Had it not been for Britain, I dare say that

Europe would have been united long before now.

But at what cost would it have been?

At different stages in history, it would have
been at the cost of all Protestant Europe:
of independent Holland: of Catholic
Spain: of free Belgium.

Would Prussia have maintained its independence
in the eighteenth century without British
help?

Would Spain have rid itself of Joseph

Bonaparte without the Duke of Wellington?

Would Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands

be free now but for the determination of

Britain and Austria to fight Nazi tyranny

Moreover, when the movement towards European

economic unity gathered force after the

war, some of the most powerful

encouragement came from Winston Churchill

in his renowned speech in Zurich in 1946.

It is true that Britain did not then grasp the opportunity to become part of the emerging European Economic Community.

With hindsight, that was a setback for Britain - but also a setback for Europe, which set out to build a Community without the benefit of the British traditions of individualism, of freedom under the law

and of common sense.

Europe's Future

This is no arid chronicle of obscure historical facts.

It is the demonstration that Britain is as full, as rightful, as wholeheartedly a part of Europe as any other member state of the European Community.

The future European Community belongs to all its members, and must reflect the aspirations of all of them in equal measure.

And let me be quite clear.

Britain seeks no alternative to a European Community.

Our destiny is in Europe, as part of the

Community - which is not to say that it lies only in Europe, any more than that of France or Spain or indeed the Community itself does.

The Community is not an end in itself: it is the instrument by which the people of Europe can ensure their future prosperity and security in a world in which many other powerful economies are emerging and

in which increasing numbers of countries will have access to powerful and sophisticated weapons, including nuclear weapons.

The world will not wait for us.

We cannot afford to waste time on internal disputes or arcane institutional debates. Europe has to be ready to compete - and compete in a world in which success goes

to the countries which show the greatest flexibility and guarantee the greatest freedom for the enterprise of their people.

I want this evening to set out some simple guidelines for that future which I believe will ensure that Europe does compete and will succeed.

Strength through Diversity

My first guideline is: forget a United States
of Europe; it will not come.

I do not say that lightly: after all, it was
Winston Churchill in Zurich who was one of
the first to speak of a United States of
Europe.

The fact is that the founders of the present

European Community did their thinking at a time of Europe's maximum weakness and division.

In the historical circumstances of the time, in which victory was owed above all to the United States of America, it was natural that they should believe that Europe's salvation lay in federation and the creation in the longer term of a

single European State.

There are two fundamental weaknesses in that theory.

First, it underestimates the strength of national traditions in Europe and the desire of people to preserve them. Those national traditions and the regional differences are part of Europe's vitality

and inventiveness, which give it the great cultural achievements of the past, such as this magnificent hall.

Can anyone believe that such a monument would ever have been created, had it been the task of 'COREPER DEPUTIES' to supervise its design, as is the case with the new Council Building in Brussels!

Europe will be stronger precisely because it

has France as France, Spain as Spain,
Belgium as Belgium, and Britain as
Britain, each in its own language and
traditions, rather than trying to dissolve
them into some sort of neutral
personality.

If we try to enforce uniformity at the
cost of diversity, we shall deprive Europe
of the source of its greatest
achievements.

The second weakness of the federalist theory is that it fails to recognise greater decentralisation as the path to economic and political success.

I am the first to say that on as many issues as possible the countries of Europe should speak with a single voice.

I want to see them work more closely

together on the things we can do better together than singly.

Europe is stronger when we do so, whether it be in trade, in defence or in our relations with the rest of the world.

But - and this is where I take issue with some of the recent comments by President Delors - working more closely together does not require a sacrifice of political independence or of the rights of national

Parliaments; it does not need the creation of a new European super-state with the Commission at its heart.

This may not be easy for those who are used to governments running the economic life of a country to grasp.

But for those who believe that governments should provide the framework, while leaving everything else to the decision of

individual people, it seems quite natural.

Indeed I find it ironic that when those

countries such as the Soviet Union which

have tried to run everything from the

centre are learning that success depends

on developing power and decisions away

from the centre, there are those in the

Commission in Brussels who seem to want to

move in the opposite direction.

Let me say bluntly on behalf of Britain: we

have not embarked on the business of

throwing back the frontiers of the state

at home, only to have a new super-state

getting ready to exercise a new dominance

from Brussels.

It is absolutely crucial for the European

Community's success that, at each stage of

its development, it should act with the full consent of the people.

That will not be achieved by insidious extension of the powers of the Commission or the invocation of the European Court in a form of judicial review.

It will require decisions reached by governments each elected by their people, with those decisions endorsed by national Parliaments.

Europe open to enterprise

My second guideline is the need for the

Community to encourage individual

enterprise if it is to flourish and

succeed.

The basic framework is there: if you read the

Treaty of Rome carefully you will see that

it is indeed a Charter for Economic
Liberty.

Our own experience in Britain has pointed the
same way.

We have rediscovered the spirit of
enterprise by realising that public
resources are in fact private resources
taken by the state, and that the
individual is far better equipped to take

many decisions than the state is.

The aim of a Europe open to enterprise is the moving force behind the creation of the Single European Market by 1992.

By getting rid of barriers, by making it possible for companies to operate on a Europe-wide scale, we can best compete with the United States, Japan and the other new economic power centres arising

in Asia.

But completion of the Single Market must not mean tying ourselves up in ever more regulations.

It means

- more liberalisation than harmonisation;

- deregulation not regulation;
- diversity not dirigisme.

Europe open to the world

That means that we must ensure that our
approach to the outside world is
consistent with what we preach at home.

We cannot work to reduce barriers and regulations within Europe, while practising protectionism in our trade with other countries.

We cannot urge others to reform their agriculture, unless we are prepared to continue the process in Europe beyond the start which we have already made.

Just as economic success in each of our countries has come from restructuring,

from getting rid of restrictive practices and subsidies, and by privatising state-run industries, so the expansion of the world economy requires making a success of the GATT.

Europe, which has a longer tradition than any other country of being outward-looking, has a responsibility to give a lead here, a responsibility which is particularly directed towards the less

developed countries.

They need greater trade opportunities, not the dumping of Europe's agricultural surpluses in the form of food aid.

Europe and Defence

Lastly, we need to look much more seriously at Europe's role in defence.

We have to find ways to reconcile:

- maintaining the US commitment to Europe's defence while recognising the burden on their resources of their world role and their natural desire to reduce their defence spending in Europe itself;

- the requirements of stronger conventional defence in Europe with the

reluctance of electorates, in some European countries at least, to provide the necessary funds for an adequate defence;

- the need to preserve Europe's strength and unity at a time of change and possible instability in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, while keeping the door open to future collaboration with those

countries.

These various aims can only be achieved if we give substance to the declarations about the need for higher overall defence spending and better value for money through the standardisation of equipment which have for too long remained empty phrases.

The answer must lie in strengthening NATO, in removing the obstacles to full military collaboration between all NATO's members, and by developing the WEU not as an alternative NATO, but as a means of strengthening the European contribution to it.

It is here, to enhancing security, rather than to devising new long-term goals for the

European Community that the weight of European governments' intellectual and political efforts will need to be devoted over the next few years.

The British approach

I have set out the ways in which we in Britain want to see Europe develop.

It is a pragmatic and common-sense, rather

than visionary approach, and all the
better for that.

It does not require new documents: they are
all there in the North Atlantic Treaty,
and the Treaty of Rome, texts written by
far-sighted men.

What we need is to implement those texts
rather than let ourselves be distracted by
distant and utopian goals.

However far we may all want to go, the truth is that you can only get there one step at a time.

Let's concentrate on making sure that we get those steps right.