

PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH

ON

EUROPE

IN

BRUGES

ON

20 SEPTEMBER 1988

PRIME MINISTER, RECTOR, YOUR EXCELLENCIES (2)

First, may I thank you for giving me the LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

opportunity to return to Bruges - and in
very different circumstances from my last
visit shortly after the Zeebrugge ferry
disaster, when Belgian courage and the
devotion of your doctors and nurses saved
so many British lives.

Second, may I say what a pleasure it is to (3)

 speak at the College of Europe / under the
distinguished leadership of its Rector,
Professor Lukas^{shuev}zewski.

The college plays a vital and increasingly
important part in the life of the European
Community.

Third, | may I also thank you for inviting me
to deliver my address in this magnificent

hall.

(4)

What 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?

Your city of Bruges has many other historical

associations for us in Britain.

Geoffrey Chaucer was a frequent visitor

here.

⑤

And the first book to be printed in the
English language | was produced here in
Bruges | by William Caxton.

Britain and Europe

Mr Chairman, you have invited me to speak on
the subject of Britain and Europe.
Perhaps I should congratulate you on your

courage.

(6)

If you believe some of the things said and written about my views on Europe, it must seem rather like inviting Genghis Khan to speak on the virtues of peaceful co-existence!

I want to start by disposing of some myths about my country, Britain, and its relationship with Europe.

And to do that I must say something about ⑦

the identity of Europe itself.

Europe is not the creation of the Treaty of Rome.

Nor is the European idea the property of any group or institution.

We British are as much heirs to the legacy of European culture as any other nation.

Our links to the rest of Europe, the

continent of Europe, have been the

⑧

dominant factor in our history.

For three hundred years we were part of
the Roman Empire / and our maps still trace
the straight lines of the roads the Romans
built.

Our ancestors - Celts, Saxons and

Danes - came from the continent.

Our nation was - in that favourite Community (9)

word - "restructured" under Norman and Angevin rule in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

This year we celebrate the three hundredth anniversary of the Glorious Revolution in which the British crown passed to Prince William of Orange and Queen Mary.

Visit the great Churches and Cathedrals of (10)

Britain, read our literature and listen to
our language: all bear witness to the
cultural riches which we have drawn from
Europe - and other Europeans from us.

We in Britain are rightly proud of the way in
which, since Magna Carta in 1215, we have
pioneered and developed representative
institutions to stand as bastions of

freedom.

(11)

And proud too of the way in which for
centuries | Britain was a home for people
from the rest of Europe who sought
sanctuary from tyranny.

But we know that without the European legacy
of political ideas | we could not have
achieved as much as we did.

From classical and medieval thought we

have borrowed that concept of the rule of ⁽¹²⁾
law which marks out a civilised society
from barbarism.

And on that idea of Christendom - for long
synonymous with Europe - with its
recognition of the unique and spiritual
nature of the individual, ^{on that idea} (we still base
our belief in personal liberty and other
human rights.

Too often the history of Europe is described as¹³
a series of interminable wars and
quarrels.

Yet from our perspective today / surely what
strikes us most / is our common experience.

For instance, the story of how Europeans
explored and colonised and - yes, without
apology - civilised much of the world / is
an extraordinary tale of talent, skill and
courage.

We British have in a special way contributed to ⁽¹⁴⁾

Europe.

Over the centuries we have fought to prevent Europe from falling under the dominance of a single power.

We have fought and we have died for her freedom.

Only miles from here in Belgium / lie the
120,000
~~84~~
bodies of ~~120~~,000 British soldiers who
died in the First World War.

Had it not been for that willingness to ⁽¹⁵⁾
fight and to die, | Europe would have been
united | long before now - but not in
liberty, not in justice.

It was British support to resistance
movements throughout the last War | that
helped to keep alive the flame of liberty
in so many countries until the day of
liberation.

Tomorrow, King Baudouin will attend a service ⁽¹⁶⁾

in Brussels / to commemorate the many brave

Belgians who gave their lives in service

with the Royal Air Force - a sacrifice

which we shall never forget.

It was from our island fortress / that

the liberation of Europe itself was

mounted.

And still today we stand together.

Nearly 70,000 British servicemen are
stationed on the mainland of Europe.

(17)

All these things alone are proof of our
commitment to Europe's future.

The European Community is one manifestation of
that European identity.

But it is not the only one.

We must never forget that East of the Iron

Curtain/peoples who once enjoyed a full ⁽¹⁸⁾
share of European culture, freedom and
identity have been cut off from their
roots.

We shall always look on Warsaw, Prague and
Budapest as great European cities.

Nor should we forget/that European values
have helped to make the United States of
America/into the valiant defender of

freedom which she has become.

(19)

Europe's Future

This is no arid chronicle of obscure facts from the dust-filled libraries of history.

It is the record of nearly two thousand years of British involvement in Europe, co-operation with Europe and contribution to Europe, a contribution which today is

as valid and as strong as ever.

(20)

Yes, we have looked also to wider horizons
- as have others - and thank goodness for
that, because Europe never would have
prospered | and never will prosper | as a
narrow-minded, inward-looking club.

The European Community belongs to all its
members.

It must reflect the traditions and

aspirations of all its members.

(21)

And let me be quite clear.

Britain does not dream of some cosy,
isolated existence / on the fringes of the
European Community.

Our destiny is in Europe, as part of the
Community.

That is not to say that our future lies
only in Europe.

But nor does that of France or Spain or (22)

indeed any other member.

The Community is not an end in itself.

Nor is it an institutional device to be

constantly modified according to the

dictates of some abstract intellectual

concept.

Nor must it be ossified by endless

regulation.

The European Community is the practical means ⁽²³⁾

by which Europe can ensure the future prosperity and security of its people in a world in which there are many other powerful nations and groups of nations.

can't

We Europeans cannot afford to waste our energies on internal disputes or arcane institutional debates.

They are no substitute for effective

action.

(24)

Europe has to be ready both to contribute in
full measure to its own security and to
compete commercially and industrially, in
a world in which success goes to the
countries which encourage individual
initiative and enterprise, rather than to
those which attempt to diminish them.

This evening I want to set out some guiding (25)
principles for the future which I believe
will ensure that Europe does succeed, not
just in economic and defence terms but
also in the quality of life and the
influence of its peoples.

Willing Co-operation Between Sovereign States

My first guiding principle is this: willing and

active cooperation/between independent (26)
sovereign states is the best way to build
a successful European Community.

To try to suppress nationhood/and concentrate
power at the centre of a European
conglomerate/would be highly damaging and
would jeopardize the objectives we seek to
achieve.

Europe will be stronger / precisely because it (27)

has France as France, Spain as Spain,
Britain as Britain, each with its own
customs, traditions and identity.

It would be folly to try to fit them into
some sort of identikit European
personality.

Some of the founding fathers of the Community /
thought that the United States of America

might be its model.

(28)

But the whole history of America is quite
different from Europe.

People went there / to get away from the
intolerance and constraints of life in
Europe.

They sought liberty and opportunity; and
their strong sense of purpose has, over
two centuries, helped create a new unity

and pride in being American - just as our (29)

pride lies in being British or Belgian or
Dutch or German.

I am the first to say that on many great issues /

| the countries of Europe should try to

Speak with a single voice.

I want to see us work more closely on the

things we can do better together / than

alone.

Europe is stronger when we do so, whether ⁽³⁰⁾
it be in trade, in defence, or in our
relations with the rest of the world.

But working more closely together / does not
require power to be centralised in
Brussels / or decisions to be taken by an
appointed bureaucracy.

INDEED, /
Indeed, / it is ironic that just when those

countries such as the Soviet Union, which (31)
have tried to run everything from the
centre, are learning that success depends
on dispersing power and decisions away
from the centre, ^{there are} some in the Community who
seem to want to move in the opposite
direction.

We have not successfully rolled back the
frontiers of the state in Britain, only to

see them reimposed at a European level, (32)
with a European super-state exercising a
new dominance from Brussels.

Certainly we want to see Europe more
united / and with a greater sense of common
purpose.

But it must be in a way which preserves
the different traditions, / Parliamentary
/ powers and sense of national pride in

one's own country; for these have been the ⁽³³⁾
source of Europe's vitality through the
centuries.

Encouraging Change

My second guiding principle is this.

Community policies must tackle present
problems in a practical way, however
difficult that may be.

Can't
If we cannot reform those Community
policies which are patently wrong or
ineffective and which are rightly causing
public disquiet, then we shall not get the
public's support for the Community's
future development.

(34)

That is why the achievements of the
European Council in Brussels last February
are so important.

It wasn't right / that half the total Community ⁽³⁵⁾

Budget was being spent on storing and
disposing of surplus food.

Now / those stocks are being sharply
reduced.

It was absolutely right to decide that
agriculture's share of the budget should
be cut / in order to free resources for
other policies, such as helping the less

well off regions/and training for jobs. (36)

It was right too/to introduce tighter
budgetary discipline to enforce these
decisions/and to bring total ^{Community} (EC) spending
under better control.

Those who complained that the Community
was spending so much time on
financial detail/missed the point.

^{can't}
You cannot build on unsound foundations, (37)
financial or otherwise; and it was the
fundamental reforms agreed last winter
which paved the way for the remarkable
progress which we have since made on the
Single Market.

But we cannot rest on what we have achieved to
date.

For example, the task of reforming the

Common Agricultural Policy is far from
complete.

(38)

Certainly, Europe needs a stable and
efficient farming industry.

But the CAP has become unwieldy,
inefficient and grossly expensive.

Production of unwanted surpluses }
safeguards neither the income/nor the
future of farmers themselves.

We must continue to pursue policies which

(89)

relate supply more closely to market requirements, and which will reduce overproduction / and limit costs.

Of course, we must protect the villages and rural areas which are such an important part of our national life - but not by the instrument of agricultural prices.

Tackling these problems requires political

(40)

courage.

The Community will only damage itself in the eyes of its own people and the outside world, if that courage is lacking.

Europe Open to Enterprise

My third guiding principle is the need for Community policies which encourage

enterprise.

(41)

If Europe is to flourish and create the jobs of the future, enterprise is the key.

The basic framework is there: / the Treaty of Rome itself was intended as a Charter for Economic Liberty.

But that is not how it has always been read, still less applied.

The lesson of the economic history of (42)
Europe in the 70s and 80s is that central
planning and detailed control don't work,
and that personal endeavour and initiative
do.

- That a State-controlled economy is a
recipe for low growth; and that free
enterprise within a framework of law
brings better results.

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
European
~~Europe-wide~~ scale, / we can best compete
with the United States, Japan and the
other new economic powers emerging in Asia
and elsewhere.

(44)

And that means action to free markets, action to widen choice, action to reduce government intervention.

Our aim should not be more and more detailed regulation from the centre: it should be to deregulate and to remove the constraints on trade.

Britain has been in the lead in opening its 45
markets to others.

The City of London has long welcomed
financial institutions from all over the
world, which is why it is the biggest and
most successful financial centre in
Europe.

We have opened our market for

(46)

telecommunications equipment, introduced
competition into the market for services
and even into the network itself - steps
which others in Europe are only now
beginning to face.

In air transport, we have taken the lead in
liberalisation and seen the benefits in
cheaper fares and wider choice.

(47)

Our coastal shipping trade is open to the
merchant navies of Europe.

I wish I could say the same of many other
Community members.

Regarding monetary matters, let me say this.

The key issue is not whether there should
be a European Central Bank.

The immediate and practical requirements

are:

- to implement the Community's commitment to free movement of capital - in Britain we have it;

- and to the abolition throughout the Community of ~~the~~ exchange controls - in Britain we abolished them in 1979;

- to establish a genuinely free market in ⁽⁴⁹⁾
financial services, in banking, insurance,
investment;

- to make greater use of the ecu.

Britain is this autumn issuing
ecu-denominated Treasury bills, and hopes
to see other Community governments
increasingly do the same.

These are the real requirements / because

(50)

they are what Community business and industry need, if they are to compete effectively in the wider world.

And they are what the European consumer wants, / for they will widen his choice / and lower his costs.

It is to such basic practical steps that the Community's attention should be devoted.

(51)

When those have been achieved, / and sustained
over a period of time, / we shall be in a
better position to judge the next moves. //

It is the same with the frontiers between our
countries.

Of course we must make it easier for goods
to pass through frontiers.

Of course we must make it easier for our

people to travel throughout the
Community.

(52)

But it is a matter of plain commonsense
that we ^{can't} cannot totally abolish frontier
controls / if we are also to protect our
citizens from crime / and stop the movement
of drugs, of terrorists, and of illegal
immigrants.

That was underlined graphically only three (53)
weeks ago, when one brave German customs
officer, doing his duty on the frontier
between Holland and Germany struck a major
blow against the terrorists of the IRA.

And before I leave the subject of the Single
Market, may I say that we certainly do not
need new regulations which raise the cost
of employment and make Europe's labour

market less flexible / and less competitive ⁽⁵⁴⁾
with overseas suppliers.

If we are to have a European Company
Statute, / it should contain the minimum
regulations.

And certainly / we in Britain would
fight attempts to introduce collectivism
and corporatism at the European level -
although what people wish to do in +

own countries is a matter for them.

(55)

Europe Open to the World

My fourth guiding principle is that Europe should not be protectionist.

The expansion of the world economy requires us to continue the process of removing barriers to trade, and to do so in the

multilateral negotiations in the GATT. (56)

It would be a betrayal if, while breaking
down ~~the~~ constraints on trade within Europe,
the Community were to erect greater
external protection.

We must ensure that our approach to world
trade is consistent with the
liberalisation we preach at home.

We have a responsibility to give a lead on

(57)

this, a responsibility which is

particularly directed towards the less developed countries.

They need not only aid, more than anything

they need improved trading opportunities

if they are to gain the dignity of growing

economic strength and independence.

Europe and Defence

(58)

My last guiding principle concerns the most fundamental issue, the European countries' role in defence.

Europe must continue to maintain a sure defence through NATO.

There can be no question of relaxing our efforts / even though it means taking difficult decisions and meeting heavy costs.

It is to NATO that we owe the peace that has been maintained over 40 years.

The fact is things are going our way: the democratic model of a free enterprise society has proved itself superior; freedom is on the offensive, a peaceful offensive, the world over / for the first time in my life-time. /

We must strive to maintain the United States' commitment to Europe's defence.

(60)

That means recognising the burden on their resources of the world role they undertake, and their point that their

Allies should play a full part in the defence of freedom, particularly as Europe grows wealthier.

Increasingly they will look to Europe to play a part in out-of-area defence, as we

have recently done in the Gulf.

(61)

NATO and the WEU / have long recognised
where the problems with Europe's defences
lie, / and have pointed out the solutions.

The time has come when we must give
substance to our declarations about a
strong defence effort with better value
for money.

(2)

It's not an institutional problem.

It's not a problem of drafting.

It's something at once simpler and more profound: / it is a question of political will and political courage, / of convincing people in all our countries / that we cannot rely for ever on others for our defence, / but that each member of the Alliance must shoulder a fair share of the burden.

We must keep up public support for

(63)

nuclear deterrence, remembering that
obsolete weapons ^{do not} ~~do not~~ deter, hence the
need for modernisation.

We must meet the requirements for effective
conventional defence in Europe against
Soviet forces / which are constantly being
modernised.

We should develop the WEU, not as an

(64)

alternative to NATO, / but as a means of
strengthening Europe's contribution / to the
common defence of the West. //

Above all at a time of change and uncertainty
in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, / we
must preserve Europe's unity and resolve, /
so that whatever may happen / our defence is
sure.

At the same time, we must negotiate on (65)

arms control/and keep the door wide open

to co-operation on all the other issues

covered by the Helsinki Accords.

But let us never forget/that our way of life,

our vision,/and all that we hope to

achieve/is secured not by the rightness of

our cause/ but by the strength of our

defence.

On this we must

never falter

never fail.

On this we must never falter, never fail. (66)

The British Approach

I believe it is not enough just to talk in
general terms about a European vision or
ideal.

If we believe in it, we must chart the way
ahead and identify the next steps.

That's what I have tried to do this
evening.

This approach ~~does not~~ ^{it} require new documents: (67)
doesn't

they are all there, / the North Atlantic
Treaty, the Revised Brussels Treaty, / and
the Treaty of Rome, / texts written by
far-sighted men, a remarkable Belgian -
Paul Henri Spaak - among them.

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

What we need now is to take decisions on the

(68)

next steps forward rather than let

ourselves be distracted by Utopian goals.

Utopia never comes because we know we shouldn't - but if it did.

Let Europe be a family of nations,

understanding each other better,

appreciating each other more, doing more

together but relishing our national

identity no less than our common European

endeavour.

Let us have a Europe which plays its full part
in the wider world, / which looks outward
not inward, and which preserves that
Atlantic Community - that Europe on both
sides of the Atlantic - which is our
noblest inheritance and our greatest
strength.