

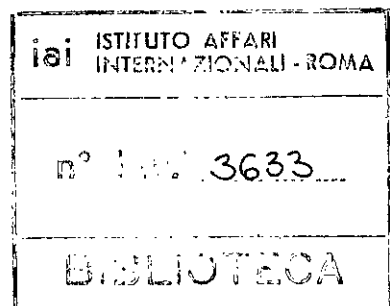
UACES

Wider European Community

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- (1) UACES: "Report of UACES study group on European union"
- (2) Wallace, William/Allen, David: "Political co-operation: procedure as substitute for policy?"



REPORT OF U.A.C.E.S. STUDY GROUP ON EUROPEAN UNION

(1)

In September 1975 UACES set up a study group to discuss the Tindemans Report and to prepare for this present conference. The following report, which summarizes these discussions, is thus not meant to be conclusive but to provide an initial stimulus for our deliberations over the next few days.

A. PHILOSOPHY OF UNION

This section is based upon the group's evaluation of the basic assumptions underpinning the various reports produced by the Community institutions (and the Spiremburg Group) as part of the exercise that led up to the eventual publication in January of this year of the Tindemans Report itself.

It should be said at the outset that the study group as a whole was extremely dubious of the utility of the Tindemans exercise in the light both of the proposals that were made and the reception that they were likely to receive from the national governments both individually and sitting collectively as the European Council. The noticeable silence that has followed the Tindemans Report to date suggests that this scepticism was in fact justified. Although there was general agreement that the time was ripe for some sort of stocktaking of the state of European integration, doubts were expressed as to the likelihood of the European Council being prepared to accept anything in the way of either a realistic appraisal or a radical reappraisal in any other than the most general and uncommitting terms.

Instead of considering at length the nature of the proposals put forward in these various reports, all of which perhaps wisely avoided any attempt at a final definition of the exact nature of a future European Union, the group decided to concentrate their attentions on the philosophy and assumptions that lay behind them. It was felt that the

European Studies

University Association for Contemporary

various suggestions for institutional reform and future development of common policies and practices, whilst providing ample material for academic discussion, were so out of touch (albeit by design rather than ignorance) with the political realities of the day that they did not form the basis for real and immediate progress. The group was most struck by the ready acceptance, on the part of all those involved in the Tindemans exercise, that the only possible way forward for Europe was via a continued expansion of the Communities and the 'Community method'. This is not to suggest that the conclusion we reached implied the dismantling of the Brussels edifice as it now stands, more that what was required was a closer examination of the realities of the current system and the reasons for its successes and failures. Allied to this need for a more searching examination of the foundations of a future European Union as perceived by the Commission and Tindemans, was the feeling that the positions of the current national governments required both understanding and evaluation. The tendency to regard all the recent failures of expectations as being the product of some ill-defined lack of 'political will' only serves to mask a number of fundamental differences between the member states both in their approach to integration in general and to specific policies in particular. Simply to regard these differences as being of attitude and not substance is to ensure that proposals for action at the Community level will continue to fail for lack of unanimous or even majority support. Thus the failure of a number of member states to perceive the logic of Commission proposals for common action at the European level can not be simply explained in terms of perverseness, for to do so is to surrender all hopes of immediate progress and to wait instead for certain administrations to 'see the light'. This indeed appears to be the basis of the Tindemans proposals for the future development of the currency 'snake'.

Instead of addressing the realities of the position of the pound, lire and perhaps too the franc Tindemans seems to be suggesting that those governments at present unable to adhere to relatively fixed rates will somehow learn by the example of observing those better situated making further advances. Although Tindemans rightly disputed the charges of those who claimed that he was seeking to create a 'two-tier' Community, his proposals in this area seem likely to have that effect; whether or not this would be a good thing is again a subject that is better discussed outside of the assumption that anything not undertaken by the Nine as a whole is 'uncommunautaire' and thus by definition a bad thing.

1. Evolution and Change

Here, prompted by the tendency noted above to perceive future progress in Europe rather strictly in terms of the continuation of the established 'Community' method or model, we discuss the effects of some of the changes that have occurred within Europe since the establishment of the Communities.

a) The Role of the Treaties:

It was felt that the role of the Treaties and the subsequent Secondary Legislation, whilst having played a major part in the establishment of the Common Market, would have to be different in the search for a European Union. It was recognised that a number of people still felt that the way forward was via a series of legally binding obligations and that this was indeed the basis of Tindemans suggestions for the future development of the political co-operation machinery and for the eventual incorporation into the Treaties of a clause guaranteeing fundamental human rights, but it was also argued that the distinction needed to be made between the utility of legal obligations in the differing spheres of positive and negative integration (accepting that at the margins such a distinction

is not always easy to make), and that whilst the Treaties and their attendant timetables had proved to be a successful tool for removing inter-state barriers to trade and for providing an initial stimulus to integration this did not mean to say that they could play the same part in the development of the common policies now held to be so fundamental to a European Union.

A good example of this distinction can be found in the field of competition policy where a certain success has been achieved in regulating various anti-trust activities under the provisions of Articles 85 and 86 but where attempts to move into the area of positive integration by the creation of a common merger policy have so far proved to be unsuccessful despite the fact that in its prosecution of the Continental Can Company the Commission had established that the Treaties did in fact provide a legal basis for such a policy. Similarly in other policy areas there is very little difficulty in finding a legal justification for common Community action, the problem is more one of the incompatibility of the interests and objectives of the member-states. Again the objective of this discussion is not to suggest that law does not have a part to play in the forwarding of the integration process, merely to promote a more rational analysis of exactly what role it has; the fact that the Community made considerable progress in the early years via a series of legally binding agreements does not mean that this must inevitably be the case in the future, indeed it may well be the case that antipathy towards the EEC within the member-states will be increased by the continued application of a legalistic and at times politically insensitive set of procedures. It might be added in this context that the great strength of the North Atlantic Alliance over the last 25 years has to a certain extent been a

product of the non-binding nature of the obligations that its members have undertaken. This has enabled the Alliance to react flexibly and pragmatically and thus preserve a common interest in the face of internal disagreements and disruptions.

The tentative conclusion of all this is that whilst the Treaties and their interpretation by the European Court have played an important role in establishing and maintaining the framework of European Union, the actual development and deepening of this structure will require a more flexible and political approach. In a nutshell the legalistic approach is ideal for policing or regulating but not necessarily for policy-making.

b) The Nature of the Treaties:

A second point of criticism of proposals for European Union that rely primarily on the development of the existing Communities is that the European situation both internally and externally has dramatically changed over the 20 or so years since the Treaty of Rome was drawn up and signed by the original Six. Although the current period of economic depression may (hopefully) be only another low in a constantly fluctuating economic cycle, so that the criticism that the Treaties are essentially 'fair-weather' instruments may not prove of relevance in the long term, there is no questioning the fact that the economies of the European states have changed both in structure and behaviour from those that existed in 1958. The Treaties of Rome were drawn up essentially to create and control a relatively laissez-faire economic system incorporating six countries at roughly the same stage of economic development with roughly the same economic and social objectives. The role that governments played in the management of these economies was not so great and the Treaties reflected this at the supranational level

The various common policies, with the significant exception of agriculture (the CAP always being an exception and thus not a useful model), were not clearly delineated for two reasons, firstly, and this is apparent now, because of the difficulties of reaching agreement between even these six states and secondly because they were regarded primarily as adjustment mechanisms for a largely self-controlling economy. The position today is very different with government intervention playing a far more fundamental role in the central management of all the European economies and particularly so in the case of the largest addition to the original Six - Britain. Again the distinction between positive and negative integration and the role of the Treaties becomes apparent for the tasks of the European Executive in the present or future European Union are inevitably going to be at variance with those anticipated by the Treaties. It is no longer possible to envisage a workable unified European economy operating in isolation from an equally unified and legitimate political structure. The Treaties are based, as is much of the neo-functional theory that underpins them, on the assumption that economics and politics are separable to quite a large degree because of the free workings of the market mechanism. Indeed the Treaties are rather based on the assumption that politics and thus political integration are essentially about the rarified workings of foreign and defence policy and only marginally concerned with economic management - the distinction is once again between a Treaty system designed for policing and the current demand for policy making.

The assumption that with the creation of a large European market, the benefits of the economies of scale could once again be enjoyed without the attendant disadvantages of monopoly and thus that

economic growth could be sustained at a healthy rate by the operation of the free market alone has not been justified in the face of the changes that have occurred in the ensuing years. In response to the failings of the free market to satisfy the demands of both European and non-European societies, the role of government expenditure and policy (or lack of it) has assumed an importance second to none and thus led to a renewed concentration on action at the national level, for it is only at this level that the budgets are of a size sufficient enough to be of significance in the management of the economy. Thus the handling of economies has become the stuff of high politics at both national and international level whilst the satisfactory operation of the Treaty system is still frozen in a time period when it was assumed that these things could be managed by a ^{rational} technocracy freed from the inhibiting burdens of political division and dogma. In short the Treaties and the 'Community method' were designed for a period that no longer exists and is unlikely to return. The difficulties of achieving a measure of integration between political parties and ideas, employers and employees across national frontiers which the Treaties assume can be circumvented by economic incrementalism are now those that must be faced if Europe is to maintain the progress made to date, let alone advance further.

In this area the study group felt that Tindemans went some way towards recognising these changes most particularly in his proposals for the establishment at the European level of the sort of Tripartite discussions (between employers, workers and government) that play such an important part in the running of the national economies of the 1970's. Again, however it needs to be noted that the increasingly corporate nature (particularly in Britain) of the relationship between business, labour and government is at variance with the

plurastic model of the late 1950's.

c) Economic and Monetary Union

All the participants in the Tindemans exercise have placed a great emphasis on the fundamental place of an Economic and Monetary Union within any future European Union. Indeed it is difficult to envisage anything other than the achievement of a unified European state if such an EMU was to come about. Monetary Union presumably means an eventual single European currency and Economic Union implies a common European budget and a series of common policies both of which would require a single decision making centre to exactly the same extent as a common European defence policy. It seemed to us that the debate about Economic and Monetary Union was in much the same sort of chicken and egg tangle that once surrounded the question of the European Parliament (whether to have direct elections before or after strengthening Parliament's powers). Now there seems to be similar argument about whether monetary union should come before, along with or after economic union. We did not go into the arguments of the economists, monetarists or adherents of the Manifesto Group, (although the participants at the conference may well choose to), but instead looked at the whole idea of EMU in the light of the current realities that Europe faces; most particularly the fact that the Community no longer consists of a group of homogeneous states to quite the extent that it did in earlier times and that with the prospect of future enlargement looming on the horizon, this tendency towards heterogeneity is likely to increase.

Firstly of course when EMU was initially proposed the original members of the EEC enjoyed surpluses on their balance of payments and were able to take fixed exchange rates somewhat more for granted

than they can now. Progress towards both monetary union and common economic policies was both more feasible and possible incrementally under these conditions than it is under the present floating arrangements, particularly in view of the havoc wrought on payments balances by the quadrupling of oil prices and by the non-oil deficits that several members are currently running. Whilst it is easy to accept the logic of the argument that common economic policies are both essential to the satisfactory workings of a monetary union and themselves unworkable without currency stability this still leaves the problem of attainability and timing. Tindemans solution does not seem to take us very much further than the now redundant Werner proposals and the study group was surprised that he concentrated so much of his attention on the 'snake' and so little on the suggestions that abound for the establishment of a parallel currency. That would give the Community leverage but not control over members' monetary policies and might also prove to be a means of dealing both with dollar surpluses or deficits and the problem of petro-dollars. Secondly it must be recognised that the combination of enlargement and a shift in economic fortunes has brought about a fundamental change in both the demands on the Community and the balance of power within it and there must be considerable doubts about the continued willingness of the more prosperous countries to pay the price that will inevitably attend Economic and Monetary Union. Thirdly the determination to centralize at the European supranational level needs to be placed in the context of the way that in particular monetary issues are currently being handled. In part this relates to the next section and the question of the use of forums wider than the present Community but it is also of significance that the progress that has been made to date has occurred essentially within an

intergovernmental rather than a supranational framework. Given the dependence of national governments on manipulation of economic and monetary policies for their own political survival and given the interdependence of so many economic policies previously thought to be at least partially separable the 'Community method' surely requires at a minimum some sort of re-examination. Certainly it is difficult to see how in the current climate the objectives of EMU can be sought by the building block principle as it is that much harder to envisage half-way supranational measures. In Tindemans' terms there is either a common currency or there isn't and economic policies are now so intertwined both with themselves and the management of the economy as a whole that their separate development, one by one as in the ideal 'Community model', does not seem realistic. Thus the Commission's plans for a merger policy make very little sense in the absence of either a large regional fund or more important a common industrial policy which in turn would require much greater harmony on the social, particularly employment front. In a sense part of the old Community logic still holds, progress in one area will lead to demands for similar advances in other areas, what is in question is the ability to handle these problems one at a time over an extended period.

Thus the problem with Tindemans is that, despite his determination to deal with current problems rather than future ideals, there is little in his report, other than the demand that the Council studies the problem, to suggest how one goes about integrating economies which despite their obvious interdependence show increasingly idiosyncratic tendencies. Our conclusions were best summed up in an article that recently appeared in International Affairs (October 1975).

"The Community would move ahead further and faster if Eurocrats and

other ardent Europeans took their eyes off the distant horizons and kept them instead on the rocks, puddles and pitfalls that lie ahead."

B. THE NATURE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AS A UNIT

In its own submission to Tindemans the European Commission suggested two broad alternatives for a future European Union. One, of Federalist origin, envisaged a single over-arching institutional framework, not dissimilar to the old EPC and developing out of the existing Communities; the other in tune with functionalist thinking saw Union as developing in a variety of European organizations covering differing geographical areas in a number of possible tasks and via institutional arrangements appropriate to those tasks. Not surprisingly the Commission chose to reject the latter and interpret union as meaning unity in every sense of the word. Nevertheless it would seem legitimate to pursue the question of whether the EEC as it is now constituted and even more as it might be constituted in the future remains the only basis for European Union, indeed whether in some areas the European level, however it is defined, makes sense for the management of the political and economic affairs of its constituent parts. The group was struck by the variety of forums that have emerged in recent years for the discussion and attempted management of the problems that beset us. The whole question of energy is a good example where in addition to, in some cases in advance of, the Communities' efforts, organisations such as the OECD and the International Energy Agency have concerned themselves with the problems that have arisen in this area particularly since 1974. Similarly in monetary matters the IMF and the Groups of 5 and 6 sometimes appear to be more successful in their attempts at management and control than the European Communities. In the whole complex question of European and Atlantic defence the EEC does not form a coherent unit particularly in view of the fact that the major security problems in Europe are increasingly perceived as occurring on the (as yet) non

EEC flanks (Greece, Turkey and Norway). Within the forums such as the UNCLOS the general Community interest particularly over fishing and the exploitation of the sea bed is not always obvious. Whilst this may seem to be a particularly British view, it is not born, as so many purists of the EEC perceive, out of a natural cussedness or a desire to be non communautaire but out of a real clash of perspective if not of interests and it is a problem that must be practically faced, not defined away in terms of a lack of political will. The traditional response to this problem on the part of the Commission is to say that the existence of these alternative forums only serves to increase the need for prior EEC consultation and agreement if member-states interests are to be most effectively protected and there is indeed a certain truth in this; the question remains as to whether this applies to all policy areas for all time. The most striking recent example that has raised doubts about the nature of the European unit has occurred in the aerospace field where the Commission has recently put forward proposals to the Council for a common European aerospace programme. One of the early motivations for establishing the EEC was the hope most fervently held by the French that European firms might be created capable of successfully competing with those of the United States, but the recent experience of collaboration in Europe has not been an entirely happy one partly because of the lack of policy at the national let alone the European level; it is significant that where collaboration has been most successful, within the space sector (ESRO) it has been partly because of the close links that individual companies and states have with the U.S. industry. It is noticeable that at the very time that the EEC is trying to plan a future European aerospace industry the European companies in league with their respective governments are in the midst of negotiations with the U.S. for participation in future projects. Indeed the French are rumoured to be desirous of developing

a new generation of the European airbus with American wings instead of those that are at present manufactured by a British company and the British themselves have recently been negotiating with Boeing for similar future projects. All this seems to indicate not that the member-states are conducting a subversion of the EEC, merely that in certain areas of advanced technology the appropriate unit of analysis does not coincide with the frontiers of the EEC. It may well be that there are other areas where the Nine do not constitute the most appropriate level and where a variety of differing forums are called for. On the other hand a number of the proposed common policy areas seem over ambitious when one observes the lack of similar policies at national level. Thus the frequent calls for a Community industrial policy tend to ignore the fact that the difficulties of creating such a policy have so far proved to be too great at the national quite apart from the European level. Government is in crisis at all levels within the EEC and it is by no means clear that the answer to the problems that it faces are only to be found at the Community level. In this context it may well be the case that a refusal to consider the structure of an eventual European Union at this early stage is less of a pragmatic advantage than was initially assumed. Now may well be the time for returning, albeit in less theoretical and dogmatic terms, to the debates of the past about the relative advantages of federal or functional systems of government particularly in view of the fact that despite their formal reticence all those involved in the Tindemans exercise came up with solutions that are essentially federal in character. The question for the conference is basically whether for the problems that we face the present rather artificial boundaries of the EEC constitute a viable unit.

One of the major changes that has occurred within the EEC in recent years has been a move away from a comparative homogeneity amongst the

member-states to produce what at present is a more heterogeneous collection

- a process that is likely to continue if the Community is further enlarged. The original Six were bound together by a common objective born out of a common experience which they all wished to avoid in the future. In many ways the success of the EEC in contributing to or coinciding with their mutual economic recovery has led to an understandable ebb in the tide of doctrinal enthusiasm for European Integration for its own sake. There is a very real sense in which all the members of the Community are now pragmatists in their dealings with it and this situation has become the more obvious since the last enlargement although it does not stem from it. The member-states are not now progressing at the same rate, indeed some are not progressing at all, and although all have been hit by the ravages of inflation they have not all been hit at the same rate and it is the difference between rates which has proved to have been of more importance than the shared experience. Similarly the political systems of the member-states whilst just about continuing to share a belief in liberal democracy are beginning to show marked differences of interpretation and thus increased frustration with one another. The sharpening of the political distinctions between left and right within the European countries is not yet reflected in Brussels - some would say that this is one of the problems of the present Community system - but they are reflected in inter-state relations. Despite the warm reception that Mrs. Thatcher received at the CDU congress this year and despite the expressions of solidarity between the various Socialist parties in Europe the divisions between the national political parties seem in reality to be greater than ever as they become submerged in their own national problems and in their national reactions to each others problems, particularly in a period of elections and fluctuations in leadership, all of which are in part a product of declining economic fortunes. The concept

of strength during periods of crisis which played so important a part in the foundation of the Communities and which contributed so much to the sense that the EEC was a natural unit would appear to have been reversed in the 1970's. Instead a great deal of effort which might be better directed towards the solution of real problems is concentrated on what can be regarded as a doctrinaire insistence that the Community must always be seen to think and act as one. In a recent editorial The Times, whilst sympathizing with the feelings of for instance Belgium and Holland about the planned participation of Britain, France and Germany in the coming economic conference in Porto Rico, nevertheless pointed out that whilst it was unlikely that no direct harm would be done to the interests of non-participants, there was more chance of generally beneficial results coming from a small forum than from some of the posturing that often attends meetings of large numbers of states.

The whole question of the nature of the European unit is brought more sharply into focus when one considers the possibilities of future enlargement particularly in view of the fact that future possible applicants to a much greater extent than Britain, Denmark and Italy are attracted far more by individual economic benefits than the common political vision that cemented the initial experiment and which supplied so much of its original 'raison d'etre'.

2. ENLARGEMENT

(i) From Six to Nine, Nine to (?)

Although as William Wallace (World Today March 1976) has pointed out the European Community was never intended to be an exclusive club it is nevertheless the case that many of the more ambitious integration objectives are rendered that more attainable by a degree of exclusivity. Regardless of who the actual new

members are it is quite obviously easier to envisage the progressive harmonization of the political and economic activities of 6 states than it is of 9 or possibly 13. The study group approached the question of future enlargement very much mindful of the Community's experience since its expansion in 1973 but with greater doubts as to whether the element of choice which existed then will be as prevalent in the future. If there is a real choice to be made about future enlargement then one of the determining factors must be the extent to which additional members will advance or delay progress towards the still undefined goal of European Union. If on the other hand, as we tended to suspect, the Community is likely to be constrained into accepting new members whether it likes it or not then it may well be that the goal of eventual Union will have to be modified or at a minimum reconsidered. The most obvious and immediate example of this question of choice occurs with the Greek application, where despite the hesitation and qualifications expressed by the Commission in its Opinion of January 1976, the Council of Ministers felt it necessary, whatever their private reservations, to publicly respond to concerned Greek comment by unanimously and enthusiastically endorsing the Greek application. It is difficult to see, given the commitment of all the member-states to the advance of democracy in Greece and the extent to which the Karamanlis government has staked its political future on a successful application, how the Council would have acted otherwise. It is nevertheless the case that the problems raised by the Commission; the Cyprus question, the relationship between Greece and Turkey, the adjustments required of the Greek economy and the disrupting effect on the Community institutions, have in no way

been faced or solved by the Council's decision. It is clear that in the none too distant future Spain, possibly Portugal and less probably but more controversially Turkey are also going to be in a position to claim that they too fulfill the twin, as yet still loosely defined, criteria of economic compatibility and political acceptability. Far more than was the case with the accession of Britain, Denmark and Ireland, the Community countries are going to have to consider the implications both for Europe as a whole and for the future of the applicant countries of a negative response. It is argued here that as with the Greek case it is likely that the nature of these implications will be such as to present the Community with no real choice other than to begin negotiations.

Although the likelihood of eventual enlargement is thus great it is not likely to take place under the same circumstances or in the same way as the previous expansion from 6 to 9 when three countries traditionally more intimately related to the original members all joined at the same time. It is highly probable, indeed the process can be said to have already started, that the Community is going to be involved in the enlargement process continuously over the next 20 odd years and that negotiations are going to take place on an 'ad hoc' one at a time basis. If the experience of the past enlargement is anything to go by, this will inevitably involve a disruption of the on-going activities of the Communities as the present members jockey for position vis-a-vis the applicants, and as considerable amounts of time and effort are expended on the long and complex negotiations which will have to take place. Given this it is particularly important that the EEC has a much clearer sense than it has now of exactly

how it wishes to develop and how this development might be inhibited or assisted by the addition of new members. Some might argue that this process has to a certain degree been initiated by the Tindemans exercise. Others that Tindemans really only serves to illustrate the fact that there is indeed no clear and agreed conception amongst the Nine of their eventual preferred destiny and the means of achieving it.

It does however seem fairly clear that, despite the tremendous problems that enlargement will create both for the Common Market and its institutional structure, unlike the previous experience, there will be less doubts about the enthusiasm of new members for the active pursuit of the objectives associated with further integration. Thus already the Greek government, apparently supported by a significant majority of its population, has expressed its acceptance of all the eventual goals of Economic Union and has pledged itself to an active and constructive role within the Community once admitted. All of this contrasts quite markedly with the internal debates in Britain and Denmark particularly

with their general reluctance to accept any other than the most limited initiatives towards further integration. Ironically it may well be the case that despite the criteria of 'proven democracy' those new members whose experience of the above is most recent, will prove to be somewhat easier to absorb politically, if not economically, than those with long established democratic tradition have been.

Although, as we have stated above, the enthusiasm for the Communities is potentially greater within the new applicant countries than it was in 1973, the problems that lie ahead for the operation of the

Common Market and its institutions are probably greater because of the still relatively backward nature of their economic systems and particularly because in the production of Mediterranean-type agricultural goods the Community, as it now stands, is well on the way towards becoming self-sufficient. The consequence of this is that initially and for a considerable adjustment period new applicants are going to require protection either by special terms or compensating common policies if they are not to suffer economic set-backs from membership. An increased demand on either the Regional Fund or the Agricultural Guidance Fund will create pressures either for an increase in funds from the current net contributors or a reduction in the benefits that certain existing members (Britain, Italy and Ireland in particular) currently enjoy. Alterations of this nature will inevitably reverberate throughout the Community system as so many of the present arrangements represent complex compensating package deals. The Community is thus likely to be faced less with the sort of adjustments required in 1973 and more with fundamental alterations in its existing policies, most obviously of course the Common Agricultural Policy. The increased diversity that will follow from further enlargement will make it even harder to devise acceptable agreements on new or revised common policies, which in their present state are probably incapable of absorbing new adherents. The likely consequence of this pressure on common policies is the emergence of a two, three or four-tier Community with differing sets of rules for differing members and issues. Whilst the desirability of such an evolution is perhaps worth discussing, even though it is quite specifically rejected by most advocates of European Union, it is undoubtedly the case that as far as the present basis of the

EEC is concerned some sort of limit was reached with the enlargement of 1973 and any further expansion is likely to have a far more fundamental effect; the nature of the Community is such that it is just not capable of producing 'more of the same' for an increasing membership.

Finally the institutional implications need to be considered in the light of the past experience of enlargement. Here much the same arguments can be made if one is to insist on the attempted extension to 12 or 13 members of the current institutional system. Many people argue that the Commission itself has already become too large to effectively operate as a collegiate body although it is difficult to see how either the larger states could be persuaded to accept less than two members or indeed whether a country like Spain with a population of 35 million can be reasonably expected to accept the same representation as Luxemburg. If the experience of the past enlargement is anything to go by the application of the principle of *juste retour* is likely to be rigidly applied with all its implications for the efficiency of the Commission and the morale of its staff, who find their promotion blocked by their nationality. This problem is likely to be enhanced by the calibre of national quotas from countries without a large reservoir of experienced civil servants, that can be easily spared from pressing national needs. The difficulties in reaching agreement on common policies are likely to be reflected in a Council of Ministers, which is already severely incapacitated by the existence of competing and seemingly incompatible interests. The result is likely to mean more pressure either for an inner Council, or some sort of Gaullist-type 'directoire'. Again whilst

it may well be that such adjustments are desirable they do not accord with the stated objectives of many of those currently seeking an all-embracing European Union and they may well lead to frictions not only between new and old members but also between the original participants. The tentative conclusion of all this is that there are likely to be fundamental differences between future enlargement and that of 1973 and that the Community structure as it now stands is probably not capable of absorbing Greece, Spain Portugal and Turkey in the way that it did Britain, Denmark and Ireland. Before further enlargement can take place, a reassessment more fundamental than the Tindemans exercise is called for; the greatest danger to the Community probably lies not in enlargement per se, for many would argue as they did in 1973 that new members have much of great worth to offer the Community, but in an unplanned ad hoc attempt to simply squeeze new residents into a house that is already badly in need not of demolition but modernization.

ii. The North/South Syndrome

This question proved to be surprisingly contentious within the study group for some members felt that whilst further enlargement in any form made the work of building Europe that much harder, enlargement that specifically related to the countries of the Southern European flank rendered the objective of European Union unattainable. It was felt for instance that if any enlargement had to take place, and some were concerned that given the recent experience any such move was inadvisable, then it was the countries of the northern tier, Norway, Sweden and perhaps even Austria and Switzerland that should be considered both because of their more advanced and prosperous economic structure and because it was felt that their political and social systems would be more easily

absorbed into the Community structure. The opponents of this line of argument in the first instance objected to the idea that this was a matter of choice for the Community given the nature of its own criteria for membership and its constant avowals that it was not meant to be a rich man's club. It was also pointed out that the neutral status of Austria and Sweden and particularly Switzerland was likely to produce just as large a barrier to the formation of a European Union with a supranational foreign and defence policy as that of 'southern' applicants.

With reference to the title of this section others argued that it was difficult to imagine in reality the existence of any real conflict between advocates of a northern or southern-based Community. It is certainly true that the French government has for many years keenly pursued the idea of a 'Mediterranean' Community especially as a counter-balance to the recent 'Anglophone' enlargement. It is also the case that in the past countries like Britain, Denmark and Holland have displayed greater ideological hostility to the political systems that existed in Greece, Portugal and Spain. However, the point surely is that these structures are now changing, hence the raising of the question of further enlargement at this time, and as they change so will the nature of much social democratic opposition. It would be particularly unfortunate if such opposition to the southern states were to be carried over into this new period of political experience for them as such opposition could be then interpreted perhaps incorrectly but anyway with disastrous results as in some way racial in origin.

In direct opposition to the idea of a north-south split within the Community, David Rudnik (World Today April 1976) has argued

that rather than the countries of the northern tier it is more likely that Italy for both political and economic reasons will be opposed in particular to Spanish membership and it should be repeated that regardless of its political ambitions it is France rather than Britain, Germany and others that has most to cope with economically in the case of enlargement to the south.

Hugh Thomas (New Europe, Spring 1976) has pointed out that there is as yet no clear conception of the geographical basis of a future united Europe. To the extent that a 'northern tier' conception can be identified, this stems from the original incentive for establishing the Communities, namely the desire to prevent in the future another war between France and Germany. This specific rationale he argues is now anachronistic as the chances of such an event are indeed slim; nevertheless the question of security is still predominant and taking the worst possible case of a total American withdrawal from Europe he points to the immense strategic significance of Spain, Portugal, Greece and Turkey in advocating the desirability of their association with any future European Union. Even if one regards this anticipation of an American withdrawal as pessimistic in the extreme it may well be that those countries traditionally most closely associated with the U.S. (and firmly based in the north) will come to regard Greek and Spanish membership especially as necessary for the preservation of that connection. It has already been widely reported that the German government far from opposing an expansion of the Community towards the South perceives membership of the EEC as an incentive for a Greek reconsideration of her attitude towards NATO.

Those who oppose enlargement towards the Mediterranean basin tend to specifically argue that cultural and social differences

allied with the inevitable requirements of major economic support will serve to, at the worst, destroy the Community system and its hopes for an eventual Union and at best limit its development to that of a Free Trade area. Those who favour such enlargement point out with some justification that the potential applicant countries are already closely associated with Community Europe both in the provision of labour (usually under conditions of employment that 'Europeans' would regard as unsatisfactory for their own nationals) and, of increasing importance, of leisure and vacation facilities.

The question for this conference is firstly whether or not participants feel that a potential split within an enlarged Community on north/south lines is likely in the future and allied to this whether the aspirations expressed for instance in the report of Mr. Tindemans are compatible with the eventual membership of Greece, Turkey, Portugal and Spain or applicable only to those countries of the 'northern tier'.

C. EUROPE'S FOREIGN AND DEFENCE POLICIES

i. Co-operation or Integration

Much of what we wish to discuss under this heading is summed up in the paper on Political Co-operation by William Wallace and David Allen. The following represents a summary of the study group's own discussion of the foreign policy issue and raises a number of additional points.

The discussion of foreign policy in the context both of the present Community and a future European Union has become extremely popular in recent years, representing quite a shift in focus from the 60's obsession with the internal dynamics of integration - an indulgence which in

its most extreme form seemed to require the rest of the world to mark time whilst the great experiment was carried out. There are several explanations for this shift in focus of which the most obvious is the power and economic size of the Community itself, which by the end of the 1960's ensured for it a significant place in the world even if it was as several writers have put it, the place of "an economic giant but a political dwarf". Part of the manifestation of this external emphasis was the creation of the political cooperation machinery, a formula originally designed to enable the member-states to discuss those aspects of foreign policy that fell outside the specific provisions of the Treaties - the so-called substance of 'high politics'. The consequence of having two possible forums, one supranational the other intergovernmental was that an artificial and in the long run untenable distinction arose between the two areas, a distinction which achieved the peaks of lunacy in November 1973, when the foreign ministers of the Nine flew first to Copenhagen to discuss political cooperation matters and then at lunchtime got in a plane and travelled to Brussels in order that they might reconvene as the Council of Ministers of the EEC. The significance of the distinction has of course recently been greatly reduced particularly now that the French government has ceased to regard the separation of political cooperation from the Brussels operation as being a matter of doctrinal principle but mainly because as in other areas the distinction between matters political and matters economic is rapidly becoming one that is impossible to make with the result that often the same subject comes up for discussion in both settings.

External relations have also risen high on the European agenda for a number of other reasons; a basic principle of foreign affairs has been

for a long time that in periods of internal stress or stagnation, attention can often be shifted to the outside world as a restorative and this is certainly the case with the Europe of the 70's; frustrated by internal stagnation and lack of agreement on the nature of future policies, the development of an external stance has been attractive simply because it has represented movement if not progress. Europe has also become that much more aware of its own vulnerability, particularly during the crisis of 73/74 and the member-states have begun to seek collective compensation for their individual weakness towards both the producers of essential raw materials in the developing world and the two super powers who in their discussions of detente and arms control again appeared to be capable of ignoring the West (and East) European interests. Finally of course, foreign policy is attractive to integrationists at a time when the internal process appears to be slowing down because most of the essential dynamics come from the outside world - much of foreign policy or external relations is reactive, activity in the area at either the European or national level is not dependent on the prior establishment of a common or coherent policy; in fact, a certain amount of incoherence and uncertainty has often been perceived as advantageous in external bargaining situations.

Given this marked shift from the internal to external focus the study group viewed the Tindemans proposals on external relations which were central to the whole report, in the light of what has already occurred. Six questions dominated our deliberations:

- 1) Does the development of the Political Co-operation machinery in particular represent an advance in substance or merely in procedure? This question is important in view of the desire of both Tindemans and the Commission

to, as it were, bring political co-operation back into the Community fold and to base its future development on the same sort of legal obligation that exists for certain economic matters within the framework of the Treaties.

- 2) What is the nature of the relationship between internal and external affairs in the search for a European Union? In particular are the external pressures that the Community is currently facing leading to more or less internal cohesion and in some cases is the achievement of a common policy that represents the lowest common denominator a desirable objective? The Group discussed the position of the Community at the United Nations and other international forums where it was argued that when a common position represents a weak compromise there are definite advantages in also having nine strongly supported positions, which may differ on certain points of substance, but whose overall impact, vis-a-vis the Group of 77 in the UN for instance, is likely to be much greater.
- 3) Allied to what was said above is the question of whether developments in the external field are the sole product of pressures in the external environment and thus essentially reactive or whether a more constructive and positive external policy might now arise from the necessity to relate internal developments to the outside world. Whilst the internal/external relationship is obvious in the case of the Lome arrangements or the GATT negotiations an awareness of the potential competition from the rest of the world is also an important stimulant for common action at the industrial and monetary level. In an increasingly interdependent world the Community is less likely to be

able, as it was to certain extent in the 60's to conduct its internal experiments in private.

- 4) Related to the discussions above about the nature of the European Unit is the question of the relevant circle for the advancement of individual European interests in the world. The EEC is not a self-contained unit and the broader framework of the various international conferences that have sprung up recently needs to be considered in its own right, not simply as a challenge to the Community system. It may well be that there are greater advantages to be had in a network of intra and extra EEC alliances than in an insistence that in all matters the EEC should present a united front. This argument takes us back to a consideration of the model for European Union rejected by the Commission in its report, namely that of a greater spread of functional institutions and forums. It is clear for instance that regardless of the present state or future development of the 'snake' a sort of two-tier Community already exists when monetary matters are discussed at the global as opposed to the European level.
- 5) Because the question of direct elections and powers to the Parliament had apparently been settled the Tindemans Report placed less emphasis than might have been expected on the strengthening of the democratic process within the Community. This is a particularly difficult question in the field of external relations which at the national level along with defence policy is not noted for its parliamentary control. Although there are sound reasons of secrecy and negotiating flexibility to explain this feature it is nevertheless

the case that at the European level and especially as far as the political co-operation machinery is concerned, democratic control is negligible. The political directors are not accountable to any democratic forum, indeed the whole basis of their work some might say their enthusiasm and relative success, is this non-accountability and confidentiality. Even within the Community framework the difficulties of making the activities of the Council of Ministers and the European Council accountable to either the European Parliament or national parliaments is well known and this becomes a greater problem when so much of our internal life is conditioned by the success of our governments in external negotiation.

- 6) Finally there is the question of the extent to which the development of an external posture can be advanced by the application of the 'community method'. As we have seen the Tindemans proposals envisage an incorporation of the foreign policy process into the Treaties of Rome, leading to the development of a legal obligation to achieve a common position in advance on all Community matters if necessary by majority voting. Is foreign policy a suitable area for this sort of mechanism or does its essentially pragmatic and reactive nature preclude the formation of common positions in advance? One of the problems that the Community has faced in external negotiation has been the fragility of the common positions that it has internally pre-negotiated. It has often been the case particularly in dealings with the Americans that negotiation from a common position has proved difficult because of the

inability to make concessions and alterations that might affect the delicate balance of a pre-agreed stance.

With regard to the Tindemans proposals themselves the Group found itself in sympathy with the 4 broad areas that he delineated namely a) the establishment of a new world economic order, b) relations with the United States, c) security (see below) and d) the crisis occurring within Europe's immediate geographical surroundings. It was less happy about his proposals for 'legalising' the political cooperation machinery and whilst accepting the arguments for a much greater division of labour in foreign policy did not think that the suggestion of appointing one member of the Council to handle relations with the US was likely to receive much support from the Council as a whole. As far as the division of labour is concerned, this is an appropriate topic for discussion at a time when the budgets of several European foreign offices are under fairly close scrutiny. It is certainly the case that in the area of political reporting and to a lesser extent that of representation there are a number of activities that no one foreign service can afford to continue to do independently but which might be achievable under a system of divided labour. The problem here is that in a number of countries of the world where common representation might be envisaged (i.e. South America) the member-states are direct commercial rivals (as is only proper within the framework and logic of the Treaties) and the job of representation is primarily concerned with the advance of individual national commercial interests.

Finally although they have been treated separately here, foreign and defence policy are inevitably inter-related and any future European Union will have to take account of this relationship.

ii. The Defence Issue

In his report Mr. Tindemans states that "during the gradual development of the European Union, the member-states will have to solve the problems of maintaining their external security. European Union will not be complete until it has drawn up a defence policy". He goes on to recognize that at present the member-states are not in a position "to determine the general guidelines without which no common defence policy is possible" and proposes as an intermediary measure that, as well as exchanging views on defence problems, the member-states concentrate their efforts on cooperation in the manufacture of armaments.

The question of armaments and their currently wasteful production within the Alliance as a whole, but particularly in Europe, has already been seized on by the Commission as a way into the defence issue in the light of the recent controversies over the so-called 'arms sale of the century'. There have been suggestions recently for the setting up of an European Arms Procurement Agency. Such a suggestion raises a number of problems, many of which have dogged the Europeans in their thinking about defence matters for a number of years. Firstly there is the question, related to our previous discussion on the nature of the European Unit, of which states are to be included in any such agency, indeed in 'European' defence thinking as a whole. Here all the old problems of French participation, Anglo-German desire not to weaken the American connection and the neutrality of Ireland are raised. At least three possible forums have been advocated; a) the Eurogroup, which with a different membership to that of the Communities nevertheless functions in many ways as a sort of defence equivalent of the political co-operation machinery. On 5 November last year the ministers of the Eurogroup met at the Hague and proposed the establishment of a Defence Procurement Secretariat and commissioned a study into the tasks that

a European defence procurement organization might undertake. b) The Standing Armaments Committee of WEU was suggested in 1973 by M. Jobert as a possible organizational basis, a suggestion that was nevertheless rejected by the other 6 members. c) It might prove possible to adapt the Davignon procedure and establish a Community Arms Procurement Agency. It should of course be added that solving the problems of participation and organization would still leave the far more complex question of what any such agency might actually procure, for the difficulties of reaching a common specification for a weapon system that is desired by a number of countries at about the same period of time are likely to prove even more intractable.

All these possibilities raise the critical question of French participation which in the light of the current outcry in France about Giscard's defence proposals (which some claim imply a move back towards NATO and away from the previously independent line) will have to be handled with extreme pragmatism. Equally any future proposals will be critically dependent on the way that the Europeans perceive the American position vis-a-vis Europe to be developing. For a number of years the Europeans seem to have been in a situation where too little effort on defence has raised the spectre of American withdrawal in disgust, whilst at the same time the possibility of a viable and adequately funded European defence policy has raised fears that the Americans will thankfully conclude that Europe is now capable of taking care of itself. Many of these fears would appear to have been based on a misunderstanding of American interests in the defence of Europe for of course US security too is involved; indeed one might argue, and this was certainly the problem over the flexible response doctrine, that the Americans have found it much harder to convince the Europeans of the credibility of

the deterrent than they have the Soviets. Perhaps one of the major questions for the conference is an evaluation of likely US action with regard to NATO and Europe over the next 20 years; until some clear ideas on this are established it is extremely difficult to envisage the future shape and nature of the defence element of European Union. Are we for instance talking about the Defence of Europe or European Defence? Julian Critchley in a recent article (NATO Review 1976 No. 1) has posed a number of questions all of which are worth consideration by the participants at this conference. He points out that the Defence of Europe relates to the task that NATO has adopted: the physical prevention of invasion by armed forces. European Defence on the other hand, is a more speculative subject still. Will a common defence precede or follow, the achievement of European unity, of a Confederation of Europe? Would Europe if it had the choice remain allied to the United States? A reversal for all but the French, of the choice that has worried us for so long. What peculiar European responsibilities would Europe adopt in any division of tasks between the US and Europe? In the advent of an American withdrawal would Europe collapse or respond by forging unity? Would the Soviet Union react aggressively to the prospect of European unity with Germany its major component?

Finally, to conclude on a pessimistic but hopefully provocative note, is defence really an issue? Have we not lived too long under the protection of the American deterrent to pay the political and economic price of a separate identity, particularly at a period in our economic history when the competing demands on government expenditure have never been greater and in our political history when we have never felt more secure?

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**POLITICAL CO-OPERATION : PROCEDURE AS
SUBSTITUTE FOR POLICY?**



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POLICY - MAKING IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Chapter 11

POLITICAL COOPERATION : PROCEDURE AS SUBSTITUTE FOR POLICY

William Wallace and David Allen

Final Draft January 1976

Political co-operation: procedure as substitute for policy

Political co-operation at its birth represented a landmark in the continuing debate about the character of political integration and the formal or informal nature of European institutions. It was entirely outside the competence of the Treaties; without any legal framework beyond the text of the Communiqué of the Hague Summit at which it was conceived.¹ It had no definite institutional basis; it had no secretariat, at best tenuous links with the existing institutions of the European Communities, and no fixed meeting place -- condemned instead to travel in succession round the capitals of the member states. The objectives it was to pursue were couched in the cloudiest rhetoric, thinly disguising the underlying disagreements about its purpose and its future development. There was no mention of "common policy" even as a distant aim; no hint of deadlines for the completion of intermediate or final stages of an outline plan, as in the Werner Plan for Economic and Monetary Union or in the original programme for the customs union set out in the Treaty of Rome -- indeed, no plan at all, and only the flimsiest of guidelines for activity. As set out in paragraph 15 of the Hague Communiqué and in the "Luxembourg Report" of July 1970 on "The Problems of Political Unification", political co-operation represented the reductio ad absurdum of the lowest common denominator principle in European integration.² Unable to agree about policy objectives or about the institutional framework appropriate to co-operation in this new issue area, but accepting the need to give an

added impetus to the "relaunching of Europe", the Heads of State or Government at the Hague agreed to establish a new procedure instead.

The confusion and suspicion which surrounded its birth owed much to the conflicting motives of its parents, as well as to their memories of earlier attempts at co-operation in the area that has become known as high politics. The very first conference of the Heads of State or Government and Foreign Ministers of the six member states, in February 1961, had claimed as its object "to discover suitable means of organizing closer political co-operation" as a basis for "a progressively developing union" among the six.³ There followed twelve months of argument, primarily between the French Government and its partners, about the shape of the proposed "Political Committee" or "Commission", the status of its secretariat, and its relationship with the existing institutions of the Communities. Behind these, there was disagreement about the shape of the "political union" to which it was intended to lead; about whether its creation should precede or should follow the admission of Great Britain and its fellow applicants; about the inclusion of defence questions, and about its future association with NATO and the United States. The Community crisis of 1965-6 which had ended in the "Luxembourg Compromise" raised similar issues about the future shape of European co-operation, and left them similarly unresolved. For many of those at the Hague, therefore, political co-operation was less a novel departure than an already familiar subject, which carried with it a large number of sensitive and contentious issues - raising again the threat posed in earlier discussions to the "Community method" and the Community themselves. Pierre Werner, the only statesman

at the Hague who had attended the Paris and Bonn summits of 1961, voiced his own doubts as to whether the time had yet come "to reopen the dossier on political co-operation as such."⁴

The Luxembourg Report and the creation of the structure.

Nevertheless, the subject was reopened. The Hague Conference declared its intention to pave "the way for a united Europe capable of assuming its responsibilities in the world of tomorrow and of making a contribution commensurate with its tradition and its mission"..... and "instructed the Ministers of Foreign Affairs to study the best way of achieving progress in the matter of political unification within the context of enlargement" and "to make proposals before the end of July 1970."⁵ The Ministers, in their own report, nine months later,

"felt that efforts ought first to concentrate specifically on co-ordination of foreign policies in order to show the whole world that Europe has a political mission....Desirous of making progress in the field of political unification, the governments decide to co-operate in the sphere of foreign policy."

"The objectives of this co-operation are as follows:-

- to ensure, through regular exchanges of information and consultations a better mutual understanding on the great international problems;
- to strengthen their solidarity by promoting the harmonisation of their views, the co-ordination of their positions, and, where it appears possible or desirable, common actions."⁶

The modesty of these proposals is evident in comparison with the language of the draft treaty presented by the French during the earlier discussions

of 1961, which had declared that: "It shall be the aim of the Union... to bring about a common foreign policy in matters that are of common interest to member states".⁷

The objectives of the different member governments were just as mixed. For the French Government, adjusting its European policy slowly after President de Gaulle's resignation, the acceptance of enlargement needed to be balanced by a renewed emphasis on other articles of the Gaullist covenant: resistance to any expansion of the roles of the Commission and the European Parliament, the creation instead of an intergovernmental structure for European co-operation and the pursuit of a common policy for Europe distinct from (and if necessary opposed to) that of the United States. The Dutch and German Governments were prepared to yield to the French on this point in order to gain acceptance of the principle of admitting the four applicant states, hoping that it would prove only a temporary arrangement which could in time be brought closer and closer to the established institutions. All of the six saw the advantages of moving towards a common policy towards third countries, in terms of greater influence and status for the Community members in their relations with the United States, with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and with the Arab countries of North Africa and the Middle East. All were painfully aware of the major obstacles which lay in the path of a common policy. The West German Government also had other interests in promoting political co-operation; "at a time when we are trying to bring East and West together", as Herr Brandt emphasised at the Hague, the Germans were concerned both with balancing their Ostpolitik with an active Westpolitik and with creating a vehicle for the more active foreign policy they now aimed to pursue.⁸

The modesty of the stated objectives of consultation, co-ordination and "where possible or desirable common action" also stood in sharp contrast to another of the decisions taken at the Hague, the ambitious commitment to Economic and Monetary Union. The Foreign Ministers' procedural proposals (formulated by a committee of the Political Directors of the six Foreign Offices, under the chairmanship of the Belgian Political Director, Vicomte Davignon) were similarly less ambitious than those of the Werner Plan. Foreign Ministers were to meet "at least every six months"...."on the initiative of their chairman." The main institution proposed was a Political Committee, composed of senior officials from national foreign ministries. They were given the loosest of mandates, to "meet at least four times a year to prepare the ministerial meetings and carry out any tasks delegated to them by the Ministers," and to have authority to set up "working groups" and "groups of experts", or to institute "any other form of consultation" necessary. Secretarial and organisational arrangements for meetings were "as a general rule" to be the responsibility of the country holding the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. Meetings would take place in that country's capital, rather than in Brussels, with the host country providing the chairmanship. Disagreements about the Parliament were tempered by a commitment to invite the Commission "to make known its views" when questions of overlapping competence with the Communities were discussed. It was also agreed to hold an informal "biannual colloquy" with the Political Committee of the European Parliament, which would not however report to the full Parliament in plenary session. As a procedure, it promised everything or nothing. There was no commitment to agree, but simply to "consult on all important questions of foreign policy"

or on "any question of their choice" which member states might propose. National governments might thus, in the words of one sceptical observer, "both have their cake and eat it" - both to pursue common policies and to preserve the freedom to opt out when it suited them. Scepticism, indeed, seemed to be a fairly widespread reaction. Maurice Schumann, summing up as chairman the second of these new "Conferences of the Foreign Ministers of the E.E.C. countries", concluded defensively that "far from splitting (as had been expected) we have, on the contrary, considerably narrowed the gap between our points of view".

Both national and Community attitudes to this new procedure were coloured by the suspicion that political co-operation was as much a threat to the established procedures of the Communities as a means of widening the area of collaboration among member governments. Its link with the ill-defined concept of "political union" reinforced the fears of those who saw this as a renewed Gaullist onslaught on the Community method and on the Community structure as the basis for a future European union. In the first three years those involved were therefore often just as concerned with questions of institutional status and procedural detail as with the substantive problems under discussion. The distinction between "political" and "economic" issues, between those within the competence of the Communities and those that went beyond it, was fundamental to the establishment of political co-operation as a separate procedure. It was to deal with issues of high politics in the traditional Gaullist sense, rather than with technical problems falling within the

legal framework of the treaties. The Commission's reaction was at first defensive, concerned to maintain the boundaries of its legal competences against any attempts at encroachment and to insist that it alone was entitled to represent the common interest in areas of established Community policy. For some within the Commission the term "political" still had pejorative connotations, implying a threat to all that the Communities had so far achieved. The French Government was just as concerned to keep the new procedure untainted by the insidious atmosphere of Brussels, and to prevent the Communities from encroaching on an area of policy so central to national sovereignty. The dispute over the possible creation and location of a political secretariat and its relationship with the existing Community institutions distracted attention from the question of what such a secretariat might do. The differentiation between the "Conference of Foreign Ministers of the E.E.C. Countries" and Council of Ministers was seen at its most absurd in the mid-day trek from Copenhagen to Brussels between meetings in November 1973. Moreover, it prejudiced the chances of achieving coherence with related areas of Community activity.

The rigidity of this distinction was consistently opposed by both the Dutch and German Governments.¹⁰ The European Parliament, too, soon began to express its irritation at the formalistic refusal of successive foreign ministers, while holding the Presidency, to discuss with the full Parliament matters which "do not fall within the competence of the Council".¹¹ The Parliament's anger reflected a determination to extend its competence and its representative role to this new area of

collaboration, and a continuing feeling that political co-operation represented a threat to the Communities. Some Danish representatives, in contrast, insisted at the same time on ^{the} principle of democratic control and on limiting the Communities' competence to economic and welfare issues. They argued rather that political co-operation should be made subject to the control of national parliaments - an alternative which would have risked the disclosure of confidential multilateral discussions.¹² Although several member governments did not fully accept the distinction between political and economic relations or between high and low policy on which the political co-operation procedure rested, their foreign ministries had little difficulty in adjusting to them. Throughout the Six, the division of foreign relations into "political" and "economic" categories was institutionalised in these ministries' division into Political and Economic Directorates, with the latter responsible for Community matters - a division most marked in the French and German Foreign Ministries. Political Directors were already accustomed to the principle of multilateral consultation within the N.A.T.O. framework. They were, however, not involved in the network of relations through which governments coordinated national policy towards the Communities. This also meant that they had little or no contact with the Permanent Representations in Brussels. Political co-operation for the first time gave Political Directors and their staff an opportunity to play a role in the Community arena. The readiness, even enthusiasm, with which officials in Foreign Ministries and Embassies abroad took to the development of

political co-operation may also have reflected a bureaucratic instinct to expand their functions. Within the Community framework the traditional Foreign Ministry role of overseeing the whole spread of external relations, of acting as gatekeeper between national policy-making and international co-operation, had been threatened and eroded by the direct involvement of domestic ministries in the Community process. The political co-operation procedure, in contrast, focussed upon the central concerns of diplomacy; and Foreign Ministry control of that procedure was neither challenged by any other powerful ministry nor threatened by any particularly powerful domestic constituency. As long as the French Government maintained its formal resistance to any blurring of the boundaries between political co-operation and the Communities, it was easy for other governments to assume that this was the main barrier to closer co-ordination of the two frameworks. They were, however, to discover, during 1974, that the lack of contact between Permanent Representatives and Political Directors and between different sections within their own Foreign Ministries seriously impeded such a convergence. An informal diplomatic style rapidly stamped itself upon political co-operation. "For diplomats", one of those involved remarked, "it's not the end result that counts, but the atmosphere and the sense of mutual understanding."

For all that, the character of political co-operation as it came to resembled closely that of policy-making in many areas within the

competences of the Treaties. The Political Committee, like COREPER, prepared the agenda for ministerial meetings; like COREPER and the Commission, it spawned sub-committees and working groups on specific topics. Although political co-operation was not constrained by the legal framework of the Treaties, its working methods were similar to the process of 'concertation' used to co-ordinate other areas of policy not yet subsumed to the authority of the Commission. The most noticeable difference between political co-operation procedures and those of the Communities was its confidentiality. News of meetings, let alone their content, rarely leaked to the press, and disregard for the confidential nature of the deliberations were seen as intruding on the general rule of secrecy.¹³ Indeed as the French Government's resistance to linking the two procedures began to weaken it was around the 'leakiness' of the Commission and the Council that arguments for their continued separation revolved.

The issues on the agenda.

The first topics for consultation were imposed as much by external developments as by the initiative of the member governments. "The most detailed exchange of views" at the first Ministers' conference in November 1970, was on the Middle East situation. Procedural questions occupied much of the discussion. The other major topic was the question of preparing for the proposed European Security Conference - pressed on the attention of the ministers both by the concern of the West German Government to provide a multilateral context for the Ostpolitik, and by the repeated lobbying of the Soviet Union in each of their capitals.¹⁴

The second two-day conference in May 1971 devoted one day each to the Middle East and to "matters connected with the possible holding of a conference on European Security".¹⁵ The third, in November 1971, was primarily concerned with preparations for the Summit then planned for March 1972, including a series of proposals for "strengthening" the Communities. Pierre Harmel introduced a list of "basic guidelines" for the Summit agenda, calling for "a constructive definition of E.E.C. - U.S.A. relations" and the "adoption of a common policy towards the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe."¹⁶ Relations with the United States, at the heart of the disagreements about a common foreign policy in 1961, were among the disputed issues which led to the postponement of the 1972 Summit from March to October. President Nixon's "Initiative" of August 1971, which had called for a redefinition of US/European relations, demanded a more political response from the Communities than their first reaction, couched in primarily economic terms. The three major themes of European political co-operation, throughout its first five years, were thus established at the outset, less at the choice of the member governments than on the insistence of third countries.

The involvement of the political co-operation machinery in the preparations for the 1972 Paris Summit marked the first step towards the development of its wider role in the Communities' slow progress towards political union. Although in this instance preparatory discussions were primarily concerned with questions of foreign policy, its contribution

to the preparations for the 1973 Copenhagen Summit and - much more importantly - for the December 1974 Summit in Paris also touched on questions of institutional development. In the autumn of 1974 these included direct elections, the proposal for regular meetings of Heads of Government, majority voting and the strengthening of the political co-operation procedure itself. The preliminaries to the 1974 Summit were thus divided between two sets of committees, in a pattern which became the norm for European Councils thereafter. The first was an "ad hoc" group which dealt with matters of "substance", such as regional and commercial policy. It met in Brussels within the COREPER framework and reported to the Foreign Ministers both through COREPER and through the Political Directors. The second consisted of the Political Directors themselves, with a Commission representative. Several political co-operation meetings in the period before the Summit were given over almost exclusively to institutional questions. This two-pronged approach to the preparation of Summits at first caused a number of difficulties at national level, within those administrations where relations between political directors and permanent representatives (and their subordinates) were not always of the best. This may have contributed to the adjustments made within the French and German foreign ministries to the relationship between their economic and political directorates during 1975, as the European Council became a four-monthly event.

The CSCE presented the most immediate issue for consultation, and arguably the most incentives for co-operation. The Six - and the four applicant members - all had a common interest in ensuring

that specifically European concerns, the interests of small and medium countries in West and East Europe, were fully and effectively represented alongside those of the two super-powers. There were no fundamental differences of national policy towards Eastern Europe comparable to those which then existed on policy towards the United States and the Arab countries. There were potential gains to all of the member governments in co-operating to maximise their influence over the shape and agenda of the projected conference. Given the relative lack of policy differences, few problems were to be anticipated. Furthermore, the division of the agenda of the conference into separate "baskets" of issues neatly fitted the distinction between Community competence and political questions. The Danish Chairman of the EEC Foreign Ministers claimed after the two opening sessions of the CSCE, in July and September 1973, that the nine had made "a decisive contribution" to the development and the tone of the conference so far.¹⁷ He might equally well have argued that the CSCE had made a decisive contribution to the development and the tone of political co-operation. As one Irish participant remarked, "the problem itself created the machinery".

A working group was set up to prepare for the "confidence-building", security, and humanitarian and cultural aspects of the CSCE, composed of the responsible officials from each national foreign ministry, and reporting to their Political Directors in the Political Committee. The frequency of the meetings of the Political Committee rapidly became more frequent than the Luxembourg Report proposal of four a year, reaching a total of nine in the twelve months preceding the first session of the CSCE, in July 1973. Signor Malfatti, as President of the Commission, had been invited to join in the last session of the first Foreign Ministers' Conference, in November 1970. He had outlined the Commission's point of view on East-West relations, and emphasised the need for "the active presence of the Community" in all commercial relations with Eastern Europe. A separate "ad hoc group" was therefore established with Commission participation, to prepare a position on the economic aspects. Consultations took place among the Embassies of the existing Community members and

applicants in Helsinki, during the long series of preparatory sessions from November 1972, and among the delegations at the opening sessions of the Conference itself. This extended the practice of political co-operation from the capital of the presiding government to the capitals of third countries and into multilateral negotiations. The series of Committees and sub-committees created in the opening sessions drew in more national officials and generated more activity. The focus for continuing activity which the CSCE provided operated as a motor for the whole development of the political co-operation machinery. Moreover daily contact among the Nine on the agenda for the CSCE, in Helsinki and Geneva, made up for the lack of a secretariat. Both ministers and officials of all the member governments drew great satisfaction from their success in reaching and maintaining common positions on the major issues of the conference. Their consequent ability to influence the direction of the conference established political co-operation as a viable enterprise, in spite of the continuing inability of member governments to reach a comparable degree of agreement on other issues.

The continuing disagreement among the Nine about their relations with the United States was again thrown in to sharp relief by Mr. Kissinger's proclamation, in a speech in New York on 23rd April, 1973, of "the Year ^{of Europe."} ^{"the United States"} proposes to its Atlantic partners", he declared, "that by the ^{(Time the President Travels to Europe Towards the end of the} year we will have worked out a new Atlantic Charter setting the goals for the future" of the transatlantic relationship. Such a blunt challenge only emphasised the depth of the division between the French government and its partners on relations with the USA. ^{Temporarily, the Nine agreed to the} French proposal that they must first define the nature of the European enterprise before they embarked upon a new Atlantic declaration. During the summer of 1973, therefore, national officials began work upon a document on "The European Identity", to be completed in time for the Copenhagen Summit in December.

From Luxembourg to Copenhagen

The Luxembourg Report had argued that the applicant countries would "have to accept

the goals and procedures of political co-operation" as soon as they became Community members. In practice all the new members (including Norway, until its referendum) had been participating in political co-operation as "observers" for some months before. Paradoxically, the British and German Governments suddenly became the most enthusiastic about further development, with the French Government apparently urging caution because it found itself so often isolated.¹⁸ The Paris Communiqué directed that consultations should be intensified at all levels", with the Foreign Ministers in future meeting quarterly.¹⁹ The "aim of their co-operation was now more ambitiously stated as "to deal with problems of current interest and, where possible, to formulate common medium and long-term positions ". They were able also to keep in mind, inter alia, "the international political implications for and effects of Community policies under construction", and to maintain "close contact" with Community institutions on matters "which have a direct bearing on Community activities". The Foreign Ministers were asked to prepare by June 1973, a second report on methods and procedure for improving political co-operation. Although, as before, it was possible

to agree on procedural measures, the Paris Summit recorded continuing disagreement on most other policies. The preamble asserted that "Europe must be able to make its voice heard in world affairs, and... must affirm its own views in international relations, as befits its mission to be open to the world and for progress, peace and co-operation." This opaque language masked the continuing inability of the member governments to agree on what that voice should affirm in its dealings with the United States or with the Middle Eastern countries.

The "Copenhagen Report" approved one month later by the Foreign Ministers in July 1973, set out as much to describe an already-developed machinery as to lay down plans for its further development. This studied generality contrasted with the detailed proposals for future progress laid down in many Community plans in other fields. It noted that "the characteristically pragmatic mechanisms set up by the Luxembourg Report have shown their flexibility and effectiveness." The "habit of working together", it claimed, had become "a 'reflex' of co-ordination.... which has profoundly affected the relations of the Member States between each other and with third countries. This collegiate sense in Europe is becoming a real force in international relations."²⁰ Confusingly, many of its "proposals" for improving co-operation had already been attained - as the report itself noted in an Annex entitled "Results obtained from Political Co-operation". Thus, for instance, the group of "Correspondant^s" which the Report announces is to be established had already begun to meet regularly. It was to follow through the implementation of decisions, to meet the absence of a secretariat by dealing with "problems of organisation and problems of a general nature", and to provide a link

between the growing number of "groups of experts" and working parties. Similarly, the proposal to increase the frequency of meetings of foreign ministers and of the Political Committee formalised existing practice. In addition, in each capital of the Nine, officials from the embassies of the other Member States were designated as "correspondents" to the Foreign Ministry of the country to which they were accredited. In third countries, co-operation among the embassies and missions of the Nine was to be encouraged. A special network of communications among Foreign Ministries was established, based on the COREU system of telegrams. Guidelines for relations with the Commission, the Council, and the European Parliament were laid down, emphasising still that

"the Political Co-operation Machinery, which deals on the inter-governmental level with problems of international politics, is distinct from and additional to the activities of the institutions of the Community."

The Presidency's responsibility for ensuring "that the conclusions adopted at meetings of Ministers and of the Political Committee are implemented on a collegiate basis" and for calling and servicing meetings at all levels was recognised as an increasing administrative burden, but nothing concrete was proposed to alleviate it. With the rhetoric that so often camouflages continuing disagreement about content, the report added that "the ministers consider that co-operation on foreign policy must be placed in the perspective of European Union".

By the autumn of 1973, then, the machinery of political co-operation had grown in an unplanned and "pragmatic" manner into an extensive network of consultation inside and outside the capitals of the Nine, capable of

reaching decisions on common policy on a limited number of issues, and of narrowing the breadth of disagreement over a wide range of problems. In addition to the three major themes already mentioned, officials (and occasionally ministers) had discussed a wide variety of foreign policy topics, ranging from the civil war in Pakistan to the admission of China to the UN, the recognition of Bangla Desh and the international problems of hijacking and drug-trafficking. Co-operation within the United Nations was beginning to take shape in the 1973 General Assembly; a working group had discussed Rhodesian sanctions, another had considered Malta and in the following year would consider the Cyprus crisis. On average, one or two working groups met each week, often for more than one day at a time; in the six months of the Danish presidency, from July to December 1973, there were no less than four Foreign Ministers' meetings. But it is hard to identify any positive output from all this activity. The strength and the weakness of the whole network of procedures lay in its informality. The description of the Political Committee's informal lunches by one participant as "a committee of gentlemen, a little old-fashioned, talking in French and raising a pencil or hand to speak" may be taken as characterising a great deal of the activity generated. The image of a gentlemen's dining club, indeed, appeared to be widespread among the Foreign Ministries and Embassies of the Nine. "So we meet, eat well, and exchange views; and if we disagree, then tant pis, we will return to the question when we meet again." There were no deadlines for decision, no legally-imposed requirements for a definite outcome; the consultation brought its own reward.

There were, of course, some tangible gains, for the participants in this purely intergovernmental process. The quality of the information about each other's attitude to forthcoming issues had been immeasurably improved. "There are no longer any surprises among the Nine," "we all know each other's minds", were the responses from Foreign Ministry to Foreign Office. One Embassy official in London in 1973 complained that the desk officer on Vietnam in the FCO was better informed than he was about thinking within his home Foreign Ministry on South East Asia. But beyond a certain socialisation of attitudes among national diplomats, a certain and intangible sense of European identity unaccompanied by any more definite transfer of allegiance, it would be hard to demonstrate any real policy achievement outside the bounds of the CSCE itself. Without a secretariat, without a basis for common policy in an agreed set of attitudes and priorities in relation to third countries, political co-operation could not hope to impose any pattern on international events. Without the capacity to plan ahead or to act quickly or decisively in a crisis, the Nine were condemned to a reactive position, struggling to agree on issues not of their making or their own definition.

From Copenhagen To Gymnich.

In July 1973 the Italian and Irish representatives had proposed that the Political Committee should consider its long-term position on the Middle East. They were overruled, because of the improbability that any such position could be agreed. The Nine's reaction to the October Middle East war (though listed in a pamphlet issued by the FCO in 1974 as among the "common positions" so far reached) was therefore unavoidably weak

and ⁱⁿprecise. Community co-operation effectively disintegrated under the pressure of the Arab oil embargo, despite their modest achievement in agreeing on a common "Declaration" of policy, for the first time on this issue area.²¹ The Copenhagen Summit was a fiasco, with an Arab oil deputation playing the role of Banquo at the Feast, allegedly on the secret and unilateral invitation of M. Jobert. It also witnessed the final act in the parallel fiasco of the attempt to define "The European Identity" without first defining the most important aspect of that Identity, its relationship with the United States.²² After a great deal of drafting and redrafting by national officials (of which the British participants, in particular, were at the time very proud) the Foreign Ministers of the Nine declared that they had "the political will to succeed in the construction of a united Europe" and that they intended "to play an active role in world affairs", as "the construction of a united Europe" evolves "in a dynamic way". But it was hard to be more precise about what sort of role they intended to play, and on the central issue of the Atlantic Alliance they could only record their continuing disagreement.

The "dialogue" with the United States reached its most acrimonious stage in the early months of 1974. Yet it had been resolved by the beginning of that summer: the formalistic attempt to draw up a "Declaration of Principles" dropped, American demands for a closer degree of association with the consultations of the Nine met by the compromise agreed at Schloss Gymnich, where the Foreign Ministers spent an informal weekend unencumbered by crowds of officials.²² This was symptomatic of a sea-change

in both the atmosphere and effectiveness of political co-operation in the nine months between January and October 1974. The barriers between the procedures of the Community and those of political co-operation were markedly lowered. The Commission, its initial suspicion much allayed, was now increasingly encouraged to participate in meetings and in working groups with its position as a "tenth member" at last accepted. Foreign Ministers ceased to maintain the arbitrary distinction between their roles within the framework of political co-operation and within the Council of Ministers, discussing foreign policy questions "within the margin" of Council meetings and within the Council building in Brussels - and managing in consequence to meet a good deal more frequently. Resistance to the often-repeated efforts of the European Parliament to extend its right of information and questioning beyond the closed colloquies with its Political Committee on to the floor of the Assembly gave way to an acceptance that, in this forum as in others, Community issues and political co-operation were interrelated. M. Sauvagnargues, as President in the latter half of the year, even incorporated his report on Community developments and his references to political co-operation into a single speech.²³ The Euro-Arab dialogue, a political response to the oil producers couched in economic and technical terms, was developed within the framework of political co-operation; and pursued, in negotiations with Arab representatives in October and November 1974, jointly by the President of the Conference of Foreign Ministers and the President of the European Commission. By early 1975 mixed groups of experts had been set up, and the single delegation which the Community

11/22

members fielded in Cairo was jointly led.

The interpretation of the reasons for these remarkable changes is crucial for one's understanding of the significance of political co-operation as an experiment in intergovernmental co-operation and as the basis for a more integrated process of foreign policy-making among the Nine. It is arguable, for instance, that the cumulative experience of the previous three years had laid the basis for a great leap forward. This sprang from the growing mutual understanding, the socialisation of a large number of national officials responsible for managing and making foreign policy into thinking "European"; ^{which had led to} the establishment of a pragmatic consensus, even the emergence of a certain copinage diplomatique bypassing the domestic constraints upon national governments. The salutary lessons of the autumn and winter of 1973 had provided the shock necessary to translate this potential into practice, jolting those involved into realising the full possibilities of the machinery they had already built. The emergence of another informal institution, the discursive weekend gathering of foreign ministers without officials, first tried under the German presidency at Schloss Gymnich in April 1974, further fostered an atmosphere conducive to consensus. It promoted a collegial sense among Ministers paralleling what already existed at official level, marking the emergence of a foreign ministers' 'club' as close in its personal relations and mutual understandings as the parallel club of finance ministers.

An alternative - or complementary - explanation might be found in the major issues and external pressures facing the Nine. Throughout 1973 the US Government made repeated, ^{and at} times contradictory, efforts to

11/23

secure a "satisfactory" response from the West European Governments to its demands for consultation and alignment of policy. During the spring of 1974 both a reassessment of policy within the American administration and the increasing domestic preoccupations bearing in upon the White House weakened the thrust of American demands. The Nine therefore found it easier to reconcile their differences over the Atlantic relationship. The emergence of the Euro-Arab dialogue as a central issue in political co-operation created new problems, in its unavoidable overlap with Community responsibilities. The CSCE had conveniently fitted the arbitrary barriers erected by political co-operation; but the Euro-Arab dialogue unavoidably cut right across them. The Nine were reluctant to deal directly with the political issues at the heart of the Middle East conflict. They lacked the influence with either side to encourage a settlement. They risked re-opening American suspicions about their precarious agreement on the Atlantic relationship. Moreover, they could not agree upon what policy to follow, as their disunity on the PLO issue at the UN publicly displayed. Equally, the oil issue was too explosive for explicit discussion. What they were left with was a hotch potch of commercial, technical and financial questions which could be discussed safely and which would enable them to play for time. Once the Nine had chosen to conduct the dialogue in these terms, they had virtually no option but to involve the Commission. If the CSCE had set the pattern for political co-operation from 1971 to 1973, then the Euro-Arab dialogue began to impose a different pattern from 1974 onwards.

None of these factors, however, provides a sufficient explanation for the suddenness of the change. The transformation can be dated fairly precisely between February and June. In February Herr Scheel told the Political Affairs Committee of the European Parliament that co-operation was proving difficult and that he saw no hope of an early rapprochement between France and the eight on relations with the United States. In June he announced to a surprised press that the Foreign Ministers had found agreement on "all" issues so easy that they had concluded the business of a two-day meeting in one day.²⁴ The Gymnich meeting had clearly played a role in untying the tangle of disagreements, and in persuading the new British Foreign Secretary of the value of political co-operation - an interesting example of rapid socialisation. His enthusiasm removed a potential source of friction after the British change of government, particularly with the prospect of renegotiation. But the decisive event, without doubt, was the death of President Pompidou on April 2nd. Two "pro-European" candidates were the front-runners in the French presidential election campaign, from which Giscard d'Estaing emerged victorious on 9 May. The changed tone of French policy was rapid enough to throw its diplomatic representatives into some confusion. M. Sauvagnargues, the new foreign minister, made it clear from the start that he saw no harm in blending Community issues with political co-operation. The fruits of French - and British - pragmatism were evident in the handling of the Cyprus crisis during July, when for the first time Foreign Ministers conferred informally on political matters within the Council chamber. This strongly suggests that the decisive factors influencing

11/25

the progress of political co-operation were national policies and national attitudes, in spite of the habits of consultation built up over three and a half years. The postures of governments were determined above all by domestic influences and domestic politics, to which the emergent European consensus was only secondary. Political co-operation thus remained in 1974-5 an intergovernmental process, subject to governmental control, rather than a transgovernmental alliance, resting upon the mutual understanding built up among embassies and foreign offices.

Conclusions.

Nonetheless, it is clear that the achievements of political co-operation in its first five years were in many ways much more positive than its originators had dared to hope. A procedure set up with only the bare minimum of agreement on objectives evolved, through a largely incremental process, a limited range of common policies and a wider span of co-ordinated actions and constructive consultations. The changing pressures of external developments and the evolution of the individual foreign policies of member governments provided an extra impetus. The solidarity of the Nine within the CSCE, from beginning to end, had clearly been its major achievement so far, helping to set the whole tone of the Conference and to ensure that West European interests were fully represented. The troubled dialogue with the United States was time-consuming and unproductive. But the developing dialogue with the Arab states survived initial setbacks and, by early 1976, had included a series of meetings of expert "commissions" on technical and economic co-operation. This had already contributed to a more constructive atmosphere in political relations, though it showed little in the way of concrete achievements.

Co-operation within the United Nations, begun unsteadily during the 1972 and 1973 General Assemblies, had created by 1974-5 a relatively cohesive West European "bloc", ^{successful} ^{together} in voting ^{with} increasing frequency, in capturing the attention of other states and groups of states, and in promoting Gaston Thorn as candidate for President of the 1975 General Assembly.²⁵ On the related issues of Cyprus and Greece over the summer of 1974 the Nine managed to present a united front and to exert a moderating influence. In retrospect, ^{though,} the main utility of consultations on Cyprus was to provide an appearance of activity without making a substantive commitment, thus enabling the British Government as a signatory of the treaty of guarantee to adopt a low profile. The United States by contrast played a much more interventionist role, strengthened by its military presence in the area and its economic leverage over both Greece and Turkey. Significantly, however, Greek resentment at American interference both before and during the Cyprus crisis intensified their new government's commitment to apply for membership of the European Communities, as an alternative source of external support. The effect of the cautious approach of the Nine was thus to heighten the Greeks' favourable image of the Communities, without giving offence to the Turks.

Political developments in Portugal were monitored from the overthrow of Dr. Caetano onwards. A common attitude was adopted and maintained,

11/27

through which the Communities were able to exercise both political and economic leverage, and the Nine were able to speak with one voice through their President.²⁶ On issues of less immediate importance to the Nine - such as Latin America, or South and South East Asia - political co-operation had achieved much less. Ministerial discussions were more infrequent, and the working groups met far less often, although co-ordination of the work of embassies in these areas did appear to be improving. On sub-Saharan Africa there had in effect been an agreement to differ, because of the sensitivity of well-established national interests. Some useful discussions were held in 1973 and 1974 on Rhodesian sanctions, at the insistence of the British, but most other African issues were left off the agenda until the Angolan civil war began to take on an international dimension in the final months of 1975. The Nine failed to act together in extending diplomatic recognition to the victorious MPLA, in February 1976, with the French Government again breaking ranks. Yet within a fortnight they were able (on the 23rd February) to issue for the first time a policy declaration on Southern Africa which demonstrated a considerable degree of solidarity.

This record of achievement compares very favourably with the protracted debates in other sectors of Community policy. It is tempting to conclude, as Mr. Callaghan, the British Foreign Secretary, from time to time, ^{remarked,} that pragmatic intergovernmentalism offers the best model for Community co-operation in general, benefitting as it does from the absence of legal structures or formal controls.²⁷ But one

11/28

must doubt how far the experience of political co-operation could be transferred to the spheres of economic or industrial policy. There was something for all the member states to gain in political co-operation, and very little tangible lose. The German Government found a multi-lateral endorsement for its Ostpolitik, and a vehicle for the development of its extra-European foreign policy inside and outside the United Nations (to which it was at last admitted in ¹⁹⁷⁴). The French and British Governments found a new basis for their diplomacy, to replace the world roles which they had previously tried to sustain independently. The smaller states greatly expanded their range of foreign policy interest and enhanced their international standing. The Irish experience is indicative; enabling them for the first time to open direct relations with the Arab states, and discovering through their exercise of the Presidency a greater independence of their British Neighbour in foreign policy-making than they had ever had before. The costs, both in terms of incurring monetary burdens and in terms of provoking domestic opposition, were minimal. In bargaining over the allocation of the Regional Development Fund or over the realignment of agricultural prices, each government can calculate the gains and losses involved; in foreign policy, the gains and losses are in the more intangible currency of prestige and influence.

The case of political co-operation thus shows that the different requirements of each sector of national policy-making imposes differing

forms of intergovernmental co-operation and integration. This throws into question the relevance of European political co-operation as a model for other areas of policy. The procedure so far evolved, moreover, is not self-evidently the most appropriate for attaining the objective^s already agreed by the Nine, or as the institutional foundation for the future achievement of a common foreign policy. The input of time by national officials has been very considerable - providing a welcome new source of activity, perhaps compensating for the declining demands of bilateral diplomacy. Officials in the German Foreign Ministry and the Quai d'Orsay, for instance, used this as an argument to resist pressure for a reduction in their budgets and staffing. The lack of a secretariat may have increased the sense of collegiality and encouraged direct contact, but it has unavoidably meant both a duplication of work and a certain inability either to look ahead or to respond rapidly to changing external events.²⁸ It is difficult to disagree with the Commission's severe comment in its 1975 Report on European Union that "hitherto, political co-operation has seldom led to anything more than the Community reacting to events".²⁹

The continuing distinction between political and economic external relations perhaps still served the convenience of national bureaucracies and foreign ministries. But it only confused and irritated third countries, and appeared increasingly arbitrary as economic issues came still closer to the centre of international relations. Paradoxically

enough, in spite of the original intentions of the French Government in trying to establish political co-operation clearly outside from the Community framework, the Commission had come to play a useful and significant role in co-ordinating discussions between the two structures. National governments still frequently sent different representatives, from different parts of their administrative machinery, to parallel meetings within the political co-operation structure and the Community arena. But increasing^{ly} officials from the Commission's General Secretariat and a limited number of officials from DGI were now involved in both. Thus the Commission, having spent the early years of political co-operation standing in corridors waiting to be summoned in for Community-related business, now found itself upon occasion in the position of informing the Permanent Representatives or the Political Directors of the overlapping content of each others' deliberations. The Commission's role, built up with great care and with unusual attention to the need to maintain confidentiality, remained, however, a passive one: an observer rather than a participant, with a standing which owed as much to the personalities and qualities of its individual representatives as to a change in governmental attitudes to the Commission itself.

The creation of the European Council as the pinnacle of both the Community and the political co-operation structure further eroded the distinctions outlined in 1969-70. At its sessions the whole range of relations between Europe and the outside world were discussed by Commission staff, members of the Council Secretariat, the national administration

of the government holding the Presidency, national officials and ministers. Prime Minister Tindemans, in the Report on European Union he presented to his colleagues in January 1976, called bluntly for "an end to the distinction which still exists today between ministerial meetings which deal with political co-operation and those which deal with the subjects covered by the Treaties", though he also made it clear that "the current procedures for preparing the diplomatic discussions of the Ministers" through the separate Political Committee structure should in his opinion remain unaffected.³⁰ His report admitted the Commission's charge that in political co-operation "we are equipped to react rather than to act". His only remedy, however, was that "the Ministers on Foreign Affairs will have to see that the existing machinery is improved."³¹

The trend was therefore towards a closer association of the political co-operation structure with the Community institutions. This might perhaps culminate in the creation of a permanent secretariat as a new branch of the Council Secretariat, and the gradual assimilation of political co-operation into the Community process - the opposite outcome from that feared in 1969-70. Political co-operation within its limited capacities had won the esteem of all nine member governments. The central importance they now gave to their relations with other countries, and to the potential which their collaboration in foreign policy offered in this sphere, was reflected in the emphasis placed upon this in the Tindemans Report; indeed, the comment in its introduction that "the development of the Union's external relations cannot occur

without a parallel development of common policies internally" seemed to imply an image of foreign policy collaboration as a powerful impetus for further integration.³² But the requirements of rapid reaction and the ability to plan ahead can come, in this sphere as in others, only from a substantial transfer of authority from national governments to a "decision-making centre". The political co-operation structure, as it has so far developed, offers little foundation for such a centre. Perhaps the German Government's interpretation of the purpose of political co-operation at its birth, was better founded than the then intentions of the French. Political co-operation provided a useful vehicle to bypass French resistance to allowing high foreign policy to fall within the Community framework. But in the history of European integration it is more likely to merit description as an interesting experiment than as a model for the future.

Footnotes Chapter II

1. Communiqué of the Conference of the Heads of State and Government of the European Community's Member States of 2 December 1969, in The Hague, Article 15.
2. First Report of the Foreign Ministers to the Heads of State and Government of the European Community's Member States of 27 October 1970 (Luxembourg Report).
3. See the Communiqué issued after this meeting, published in Community Topics No.25 p6. EEC Press and Information Office, London.
4. Bulletin of the European Communities (hereafter Bulletin) 1-1970, p.52.
5. Hague Communiqué, paragraphs 3 and 15.
6. Luxembourg Report. Part 2; 1.
7. For a discussion of the "Fouchet proposals", as this draft became known, see Geoffrey Goodwin, "A European Community Foreign Policy?", Journal of Common Market Studies, Vol. X11 no. 1 Sept. 1973, pp 17-18.
8. Bulletin 2-1970, p.35.
9. Bulletin 6-1971, p.21.
10. Berndt Von Staden, "Political Co-operation in the European Community", Aussenpolitik, Vol. 23 no.2 1972, pp 123-133.
11. Official Journal of the European Communities, Debates of the European Parliament, July 9 1974, p.89.
12. Ibid, p90.
13. Although see Richard Norton-Taylor, "European Political Co-operation has a bad day", Guardian, May 7, 1975.
14. Bulletin 1-1971, p.14.
15. Bulletin 6-1971, p.21.
16. Bulletin 8-1972, p.18.
17. Statement by Knud Andersen on Political Co-operation made to European Parliament during session of 17 October 1973. See Bulletin 10-1973, p.104.
18. Guardian 18 Jan 1973.
19. Declaration of the Conference of the Heads of State and Government of the European Community's Member States of October 21, 1972. Bulletin 10-1972.
20. Second Report on Political Co-operation, printed in Bulletin, 9-1973 p14-21.

Footnotes (continued) Chapter II

21. Declaration of the Nine Foreign Ministers of 6 November, 1973 in Brussels on the Situation in the Middle East. See Bulletin 10-1973 p.106. See also the "Appeal of the Nine Foreign Ministers of October 13, 1973 for a Suspension of Hostilities in the Middle East." Bulletin 10-1973 p.105.
22. Document on the European Identity published by the Nine Foreign Ministers on December 14, 1973, in Copenhagen. See Bulletin 12-1973, p. 118-122.
23. Debates of the European Parliament, No. 182, October 1974, p. 122-23.
24. Bulletin 6-74, p.124.
25. The Nine voted together in 43% of contested votes in the 1973 General Assembly, in 61% in the 1974 Assembly, and in 65% in 1975. Split votes however included resolutions on the Middle East, disarmament and decolonisation, among the more important issues before the General Assembly.
26. The alternative informal network of the Socialist International arguably proved as effective a channel of influence on developments in Portugal, however. The attitude of the Nine to Portugal's request for an E.E.C. loan in early 1975 illustrated the inadequacies of the Political Co-operation machinery for handling delicate and fluid crisis situations. At several meetings Foreign Ministers were able to reach agreement only on the basis of postponing the decision, to the deep frustration of "moderate" ministers in Portugal.
27. See, for instance, Challenges and Opportunities for British Foreign Policy, by Jim Callaghan, Fabian Trust no. 439, London 1975, p.13.
28. See, for instance the comments of Roberto Ducci - until shortly before, the Italian Political Director - on the need for some form of European planning staff to anticipate international developments. Agence Europe, no 1810, 4th Sept 1975, and no. 1811 5th Sept 1975, Editorials.
29. Supplement 5/75 to Bulletin, p.23.
30. Supplement 1/76 to Bulletin, pp14,31. It is worth remarking that Vicomte Davignon also had a hand in the drafting of this report, as M. Tindemans' Political Director.
31. Ibid p.32.
32. Ibid, p. 13.