

# Opening speech

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by Henri FAYAT,

Minister, Deputy to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

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After having thanked and congratulated the Belgian Institute for Political Science for its initiative, Henri Fayat, Minister, Deputy to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, stresses the importance and the urgency of the questions that have been inscribed on the agenda and on which he is pleased to see that a frank discussion is opened in. In democracy, discussions should more frequently be devoted to political questions. The decisions to be made are based on the existence of opinions among which a choice is to be made. Therefore it is proper that the initiative has been taken to have them expressed, fully formulated and freely confronted.

About the subject itself, Minister Fayat judges that some retrospective views ought to be presented, in order to put the debate in the historical setting of the events which have led to the actual situation and which, in spite of everything, remain of considerable importance for the military defence of Europe.

*« As our subject is the military defence of Europe, Minister Fayat declared amongst other things, and as in this enterprise we are allied to the great North-American democracy, it is useful examining how the United States have behaved towards Europe — both for its organisation and its defence — since the end of World War II.*

*Need we remind of it that, shortly after the end of the war, Europe was in a state of decadence and confusion from the economic point of view. So much so that repeatedly it had to appeal for generous American aid.*

*However, a moment has come when, because of the sacrifices this aid imposed upon the American people, the United States government had to step back and reconsider the whole situation, thereby asking itself the question: « What is the*

*best general policy for us to follow with regard to Europe? »*

*I think one ought to underline that the result of this deliberation has been of an importance which permanently determines the present evolution of Europe.*

*There is in fact a formula of the « Realpolitik » saying: « Don't ever create rivals, never encourage the conjunction of certain forces ». The wisdom of the nations is in this respect to be summarized in a rather cynical precept: divide et impera.*

*It ought to be said, to the honour of the great North-American democracy, that the government of the United States, faced with the problems of the reconstruction and the future of Europe, has kept to the opposite of this maxim. Instead of saying, with regard to Europe, divide et impera, the government of the United States wished the unity of Europe. Not only did it want this, but it has from the beginning laid out the economic basis for it, expecting this unity to bring about a unitarian political construction of Europe.*

*Remember the essentials of the Marshall plan. It wasn't the proffered aid of a spectacular twenty milliards of dollars to be spread over four or five years. The essence of the Marshall plan was that the United States, from 1947 onwards, have made known their desire not to give any more fragmentary aid to national European states. They have offered to the whole of Europe a global aid, asking the European states to take, amongst themselves, the necessary measures to distribute this aid and to make it bear fruit by European economic cooperation.*

*This gesture was as generous and clear-sighted as not to address itself to western Europe alone; but to the whole of Europe. It has been neither*

our fault not the United States' if very soon it was to become clear that the application of the Marshall plan would not extend beyond western Europe. Then arose this conglomerate of states in western Europe that gave birth to the European Organisation for Economic Cooperation.

But this desire of the United States went still further: they emphasized that they were not only interested in an economic cooperation between governments. They also wanted this cooperation to become as irreversible as possible and to take the form of a community leading to political unity.

Whatever the vicissitudes of political events, especially those of recent months, the same pattern is still to be found. It is for the greatest political unity of democratic Europe that the United States have made their voice heard... »

About the extent of the American cooperation in the military field, Minister Fayat expressed himself as follows, pointing out what, according to his views, forms these three essential elements:

« I believe there exists another leading trend in American policy with regard to Europe. Actually, this is significant for the appreciation of the attitude of the United States, not only in Europe, but also in other theatres.

The first element which is to be remembered and which remains an important one for the whole political, strategical and military situation of the world, as well as for the future of Europe, is the unswerving determination of the government of the United States, supported by the American people, to resist aggression and to take all the risks that accompany such determination.

I am not going to trespass on what others undoubtedly will say. But a cardinal question is to be put: Where, in the western world, does one find, on such a scale, with such constancy and with such a quasi-unanimous popular support, the same determination, the same unshakeable will to resist aggression and to take all the risks of it?

The second element to be considered is shown by figures — for there isn't only that determination and the acceptance of the risks that go with it,

there is also the acceptance of financial sacrifices that are necessary to sustain this determination, to make it not merely a moral element, but equally a material reality of the first importance.

The third element evidently is that, apart from the acceptance of these sacrifices and due to the degree of political and economic integration the United States have attained, they can avail themselves of the means that are needed to render their military and strategical determination fully effective.

In this retrospection, I want to stop here. For the future, I should like to limit myself in bringing one single element to the debate. It would be a sign of wisdom and elementary foresight for us to ask ourselves what will be the further process of cooperation within Europe and when we shall be able to contribute, on a more or less equivalent scale, to the effort which the American people itself has made to safeguard the military defence of Europe. Undoubtedly many ways may be considered. But if we were to neglect reckoning with the essential elements that have been mentioned here, if we were to examine the military defence of Europe in its European settings or in a European perspective, even with the best intentions, but limiting our horizon to Western Europe, we shouldn't place this military defence of Europe in its real perspective. In fact, we are to keep on seeing the problem of this defence within the compass of a steadily intensifying atlantic collaboration. Moreover, it seems that collaboration in the military field should be completed by consultations and exchanges of views in the political field of a growing intensity. For in this matter, where so many common interests are at stake, the essential element is evidently the element of mutual trust. To a considerable and already determining extent, the United States have consented to these exchanges of views, to these consultations and thus to the maintenance of this atmosphere of confidence.

The essential thing in a debate of this kind, is confidence. It ought to serve as a starting point and be mutually reinforced.

