

Address given by Paolo Emilio Taviani (March 1957)

Caption: In March 1957, Paolo Emilio Taviani, Italian Defence Minister, summarises the efforts made to achieve European integration in connection with the signing in Rome of the Treaties establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom) and emphasises the importance of transatlantic relations and the role to be played by Christians in the political unification of Europe.

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We are about to take another important step along the road of European unification. As on other occasions, for instance the Strasbourg Council, the Schuman Plan and the European army, there is a mixture of enthusiasm, approval, criticism and opposition.

We can disregard as malicious the opposition and criticism from those who wish to keep Europe divided solely because an artichoke can only be eaten leaf by leaf and not all at one go.

More serious criticisms, albeit not always cool-headed, are coming from representatives of those economic sectors keen to retain customs protection or from conservatives fearful of any change, which they invariably feel to be a dangerous leap in the dark. We cannot give in to this type of criticism, especially in the present situation.

Euratom and Common Market

If the Euratom and Common Market Treaties have a defect, it is certainly not that they do not foresee the problems that six economies will have in adapting to a single economy. There are all too many concerns already! It will be the task of leaders, parliamentarians and all men of good faith who believe in the unity of Europe — in the long period during which the Treaties gradually come into force — as far as possible to moderate and alleviate any impasses, temporary windfalls and protective trappings. There are already so many curbs and checks in the texts of the Treaties that to increase them further to take account of this or that partisan concern would ultimately make it impossible to achieve anything serious. The real danger that we continue to face is not — as the timid and faint-hearted lament and as the Soviet leaders and their Communist followers from every country fear — that a united Europe will finally come into being, but that the Europe we are building is not a true Europe, but only a semblance of what we could actually build: something with a veneer of Europeanism that may temporarily appease public opinion, the vast majority of which is calling for European unity, but not to the extent of building the solid edifice that the more progressive and mature Europeanists expect and intend to construct.

If this were to happen there would be real damage with no benefits.

We have already tried to take a step along the difficult road of European unity on three occasions.

The first involved the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. The assembly that was set up may well have its uses: it enables parliamentarians from the different countries of the continent periodically to meet and understand one another.

Then there was the Schuman Plan. This was a small step, but it was taken with courage and fully implemented, breathing life into a new body and a new spirit.

Last was the attempt to set up the European Defence Community, which might have been the fastest shortcut towards the goal of European unification. Nothing came of it, after many dreams and many hopes.

But something good came from disaster: the remorse of many of those who had helped to destroy the castle for which such careful preparations had been made. It led to a melancholy atmosphere of dejection, similar — to some extent — to the atmosphere in Italy after the ‘fatal’ battle of Novara in 1849.

Western European Union has not been able to dispel this atmosphere. WEU, however useful and necessary for the defence, security and peace of Europe and the free world, makes very little contribution — some would say none at all — to the goals of European integration.

WEU has made it possible, in the calmer climate within the Atlantic organisation, to rearm Germany: it has therefore enhanced Western Europe’s security and helped to consolidate its internal solidarity. In this sense, WEU may have served and may continue to serve the goals of integration. On its own, however, it is little

more than an insignificant crumb of integration.

On the other hand, all that it has taken was for this dejection and remorse to be combined with French and British bitterness over the events in the Middle East to breathe new life into the creative fervour for Europe.

We need to be careful not to want too much or too much too soon, because that would lead us back to a failure along the lines of the EDC. We need to be just as careful not to stand in the way of the little that can be achieved, so that the undoubtedly not very reassuring experience of the Strasbourg Assembly is not repeated.

For instance, the original Monnet-inspired text for Euratom is now in shreds, although some solid things still remain. If, however, during the first years of its application, its bones were to be picked over further, we would need to ask whether it is fit to be served at the table of the Europeans who are looking anxiously at unity as the only possible solution to many of their problems.

The Italian negotiators have done well not to give in to French and German reservations and to continue to press forward. It is in Italy's interests and in keeping with the fundamental principles of Christian Democracy, reflecting the important lessons taught by De Gasperi, that any action that is taken, during the long and difficult stage of application of the Treaties, now and in the future should be stimulating and motivating and not restricting, as it has been up to now.

Unity within unification

Mr Giuseppe Pella rightly observed, in his speech to the Christian Democrat national congress, that it is in the interests not just of Europe but of Italy in particular that the new unified institutions are as supranational as possible.

We know that many groups within the French Parliament have reservations here. These reservations have more to do, however, with questions of form than of substance, and in some cases, probably, with preconceptions and mistrust of individual personalities. Negotiation and compromise as to matters of form have been and should still be possible; on matters of substance, we should try to make effective progress along the road of supranationality, as it is the only guarantee of solidity and soundness.

The forms of unification that have taken place so far also need to be unified. There is already agreement on the merger of the various assemblies; the agreement quite rightly does not cover the Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. In a merger of this kind, the wine of the parliamentary powers of the European Coal and Steel Community, Euratom and the Common Market would be watered down by the pure and virginal spring of the Council of Europe Assembly. It is to be hoped, rather, that the merger of the ECSC Assembly with that of Euratom and the Common Market will where possible increase the deliberative powers of the European Parliament.

As regards the executive organs of the ECSC, Euratom and the Common Market, there seems to be no reason why there cannot be some unification — at least at a later stage. Unifying the High Authority of the ECSC with the European Commissions of Euratom and the Common Market does not seem possible unless there are radical changes. However, in the case of the Councils of Ministers or, moreover, as is already planned, the Courts of Justice, there seem to be few problems.

Italy's economic situation and the Common Market

There has been much talk of the advantages, or disadvantages, of Italy's membership of the Common Market. Various objections have been put forward, but one is fundamental. Will Italy's economic fate in a united Europe not mirror that of Calabria in a united Italy?

From our point of view, the answer is clear.

Today's relationship between the Italian and the European economies cannot be compared in any way with the relationship between the economies of Calabria and the rest of Italy in 1860.

A comparison of the economic situation of over half the regions of Italy — including Sicily and Apulia — with that of a number of the Departments of Aquitaine and almost all of central France provides an unexpected result. Leaving aside the demographic situation, the comparison would be in our favour.

There is more: Italy nowadays has competitive resources of the first order, resources that our clear-sighted policy of liberalisation has provided. We know about Italian economic successes in Venezuela and Rhodesia, but perhaps they are not valued highly enough. According to an otherwise serious and measured article that I recently read, these successes could not be attributed to a policy but were the result of incidental events. This is not true: they were the outcome of the unwavering foreign and economic policy that has been conducted in Italy from 1947 to today, a clear and precise line producing a revitalising wind of change through our country, placing it in circumstances very different from those of some regions of the south in the time of the Bourbons.

The comparison with Calabria does not stand up, especially as we Italians will go into a united Europe with our political weight, our political representation and our political force. A great deal could nevertheless be said about the self-interested political representations that southern Italy sent to Rome between 1860 and 1914!

Here, as relevant evidence, we can cite the experience of the Coal and Steel Community. There were concerns, doubts and scepticism in Italy when the Schuman Plan was being discussed. In Parliament, not only the Socialists and Communists, but also prominent independents and members of free parties, prophesied that the application of the Treaty would bring disaster and ruin. None of those partisan, hasty and yet pessimistic prophesies has come true. Things have gone better than we could have predicted.

There are many reasons for this, but one of the most important is that our political weight in the Coal and Steel Community, as in tomorrow's Euratom and Common Market Community, is proportionally greater than the needs of our economy.

The other fundamental reason is that our economy needs to move forward and not remain as it is.

We have everything to gain from a reorganisation of the current situation, in contrast to the areas that need to preserve the economic *status quo*, such as the coal-mining regions of Belgium and northern France. This is an issue that should be reflected upon by all those who, in one way or another, think that the protectionist concerns of a sector, or even of a single enterprise, can coincide with the general interests of the country. Most of our economy is developing (for instance, think of the new source of energy, natural gas) and has little to lose, and indeed everything to gain, from its inclusion in new situations in competition with economies keen to protect positions already achieved under other circumstances and other technical conditions.

Returning to the relationship between Europeanism and Atlanticism

A fundamental and, I would say, elemental problem for a clear and unequivocal Europeanist policy is the relationship between Europeanism and Atlanticism.

The first buds of Europeanism sprouted from the trunk of the European 'third-force' movement. The initial idea of the Schuman Plan germinated from this and not from the Atlantic plant, although thereafter, during the process of growth and ripening, there was a fatal change of course. From the start, Italy stressed that the process of European integration could not take a third-power and neutralist road. The very day on which the work of the delegations of the six European countries started in Paris, on 20 June 1950, I stated that the Schuman Plan could not and should not pave the way for a policy of neutrality: 'A policy of neutrality would be neither a policy of security nor a policy at all: it would be suicide. The lessons of the last war must have taught us something. Europe's peace and security lie not only in unity but also in economic and

political integration and in Western solidarity. The unity of Europe and Western or Atlantic solidarity are not, however, opposing goals and are not independent. They are interdependent. It is Utopian to perceive European unity as lying outside the political and economic solidarity of the West as a whole.'

These statements from 1950 are just as true today, seven years later.

The concept of Europe as a third or fourth power is — without doubt — broader than the concept of neutral Europe; while to some extent it includes this concept, it can at the same time be independent from it. The notion of a Europe that stands alone, dissociated from the notion of Atlantic union, is shaped by a whole range of motivations.

There are, to start with, those who are nostalgic and romantic. They have remained spiritually enslaved to the nationalist conception of history, even though they have reluctantly realised that the dramatic events of contemporary life mean that the nation is no longer an appropriate unit of measurement; and they are clutching on to the Europeanist idea, even using it as a catch-all for their autarchic and particularistic leanings — whether ideological and national, or cultural and economic. They, as is perhaps also true of other groups of Europeanists, harbour an ill-concealed anti-British sentiment, which is not just the legacy of Fascism and the war in Italy and Germany, or Pétainism in France. Other even more deep-rooted feelings are to be found in places: anti-Protestant, perhaps, or at least the sense of being mainland Europe. In the same way — less perhaps in Italy than in France, Germany, Spain and the low countries — there is a form of superiority complex vis-à-vis the representatives of the new continent, a widespread and deep-seated complex, especially among men of culture and certain remnants of the aristocracy.

Then there is the fear of war. The first instinctive reaction is to wish for national neutrality, in our case for Italian neutrality. Anyone in their right mind understands, however, that a neutral nation is a nonsense nowadays, except in cases such as Chile or Peru. Moreover, extrapolating the typical cases of Swiss or Swedish or even Austrian neutrality to Europe is illogical and irrational, precisely because they are possible only as a result of the Atlantic policy of armed defence, solidly prepared and organised by the rest of Europe. Unfortunately it is not and will not be the individual nations of the West that decide whether or not to remain neutral; and, as Europe today is an overall strategic unit that can be divided only into tactical sectors, there is no doubt that on the day Europe is attacked all its nations will be involved in the conflict whether they want to be or not.

It is for this reason that the primal instinct of neutralism is being transferred to a European level. Here as well, however, is it more than a mere irrational instinct? It would not seem so, because the idea of a neutral Europe lacks any concrete meaning unless it is merged with the idea of an armed Europe, a Europe armed and able to respond appropriately to any attack from the East. Can Europe in practice arm itself in this way without American help? Is Europe able to acquire the force needed to withstand or fend off the USSR without American solidarity, outside of Atlantic interdependence? The answer has to be no.

Even if we disregard the lack of raw materials and energy sources, a simple strategic consideration is enough to show that Europe does not possess the hinterland it needs to resist any attack from the East in any lasting way.

There is something more: Western Europe does not possess the economic resources, i.e. the wealth needed to set up and maintain armed neutrality. The two nations of Europe that have freely chosen the path of neutrality have been able to do so because, as we know, the rest of Europe is solidly organising its defence in cooperation with North America. This would not, however, have been enough on its own. Switzerland and Sweden can retain a solid armed neutrality precisely because they are the two wealthiest countries of Europe and are therefore managing to maintain, in a system of liberty and democracy, a high standard of living while taking on the burden of massive military costs. Without such wealth, there would have been an inevitable alternative: either the massive military costs imposed by armed neutrality would bankrupt the democratic regime, or the maintenance of the democratic regime would entail such a lack of weapons as to make neutrality unarmed, but spineless.

Western Europe needs Atlantic solidarity if it wants its defence and security to be more than abstractions likely to be shattered at the first strike. Western Europe needs Atlantic solidarity for strategic reasons and to meet the needs of its own industrial organisation supporting the armed forces and the fundamental needs of prosperity and well-being of its peoples.

Atlantic solidarity is therefore a prerequisite for the security of Europe and, as a result, a prerequisite for European unification, which would be a vain hope without a climate of security. We should add, however, that European integration is just as necessary as a stable guarantee of this security and this peace in a system freedom and justice that are the fundamental goals of the Atlantic Alliance.

The problem of security can be viewed in two ways. From an immediate and military point of view, there is no doubt that the Atlantic Pact is enough on its own, especially after German rearmament supervised by WEU. There is, however, a more profound aspect: in the long term, even when security is guaranteed by the most formidable military apparatus, it will be short-lived unless it is based on a country's political, economic and social stability. From this point of view, Atlantic solidarity is not enough on its own to ensure the security of our peoples: European integration is needed as well. This integration is the only way in which the stability that, in the long term, is a prerequisite for security can be maintained and consolidated. None of our countries is capable on its own of resolving its problems of protection, consolidation and development.

A divided Europe would necessarily be a millstone weighing down the economic system of the free world and above all of the United States, the major player in this world. A united, or highly integrated, Europe, however, with complementary links with America and closely integrated with Africa, can achieve an economic level at which it can solve its serious and pressing social problems and guarantee a future of dignity.

I would add this: Atlantic policy (I do not just mean the Atlantic Pact) defends the peace and liberty of our peoples; only European policy, however, can offer us a long-term guarantee of the independence and development of the individual nations of Europe.

The political leaders of the USSR have fully understood this interdependence between security and European integration: this is the only explanation of their stubborn hostility to any form of European unification. It would even seem that Soviet military leaders tended to prefer, at the time of the EDC, the inclusion of the Germans in the European army to German national rearmament. Soviet politicians, however, imposed what was from their point of view an imperialist policy, looking further into the future: better the risks of a resurgence of German nationalism than the stability of a united Europe.

This continues to be the litmus test revealing whether Pietro Nenni and his Socialist followers are really detached from the Soviet-led Communists. There does now seem to be some distancing, especially as regards their appraisal of European policy. Nenni, though, seems to be seven years behind, having only now reached the position of supporting the 'third-power' approach that was in fashion seven years ago and that has now to a large extent been put on ice, even in France, faced with the melting pot of the inexorable events of our times, i.e. the inexorable reality of Soviet imperialism.

Moving beyond the two blocs seems to be the current slogan of Mr Nenni and of other, although isolated, economic interest groups. Such a separation may well be a pleasant dream, or a hope for future generations, but to present it today as a political programme is naïve, to say the least. The pitiless Russian colonialism that rages in Hungary, Romania and East Germany, and the situations of Poland and Czechoslovakia are such evident, important and significant facts that it is difficult to decide whether ingenuously disregarding or underestimating them is infantile or devious. It is hard to dispel the doubt that people who now speak of moving beyond the two blocs are cultivating a hope that Italy will abandon and break up the bloc of the free world in order to become easy prey for the other bloc: the imperialist and totalitarian bloc.

European unification and Great Britain

Another problem pertains to the geographical area.

We have said on several occasions that Europe, considered in its entirety from the Urals to Andalusia, from the North Cape to Cape Passero, from Ireland to the Bosphorus, is no more than a geographical term.

There are many reasons for the unproductive nature, as mentioned above, of the approach taken to European integration by the Strasbourg Council. The most important development, which has proved more pregnant with consequences than any other, has been the wish to band Turkey together with Iceland, or Sweden with Greece.

Relations with Great Britain also have to do with the problem of area.

Our thinking on British history and its recent experiences — to be found in other pages of this volume — had led us to believe that the only realistic road towards European unity was one that did not include Britain. It should be not against Britain: rather than participation, if not in fact association there should be neighbourly relations, with Britain's agreement. Now that the British association with the Coal and Steel Community is becoming a reality, now that many events have shown the British that they cannot stand aside from a policy unifying the old continent, we need to adopt a more cautious stance. It seems appropriate for us continentals to adopt the method so dear to the British, empiricism. Let us work by degrees, testing the water at each stage, and not take an inflexible line — at least as regards the relations between an integrated Europe and Great Britain.

It nevertheless continues to be true that the European area, whether six or seven countries are involved, in which the process of unification can take place should always be limited. Today, just as five years ago, we can say that 'little Europe' is the only Europe politically possible in the free world. Those who criticise the Europe of six, proposing the Europe of fifteen, do not really want Europe.

Christian Democracy and a united Europe

In 1950, I wrote that 'a political will is needed to build Europe; unifying particular economic sectors may well be a potential method, but if that, like any other process of unification, is to be achieved, there needs to be a deep conviction and firm resolve in political circles that can also be imposed on economic interests.'

My view remains the same and, indeed, events have unequivocally shown that the EDC failed because the French Parliament lacked the necessary political resolve. This resolve now seems to be growing stronger under the lash of the autumn's events in the Middle East.

Leaders and parliamentarians must possess this firm political resolve, which can come only from a belief in the deep-seated motivations that underpin Europeanism.

In this respect, Christian Democracy has a particular mission to perform: a mission of propaganda, education and national and international initiative. The ground to be sown is fertile. People at every level of society are open to the Europeanist idea.

We need, however, to clarify, to explain that the United Europe that we want is not — as a few mistakenly believe and as many opponents are trying to insinuate — a surrogate for national sovereignty. On the contrary, Europeanist policy is genuine national policy. Going beyond the nation as a unit of measurement in dealings between peoples means that those who want to avoid the fate of satellites or proconsuls, or even of protectorates and colonies, have to move on to higher units of measurement.

No one thinks of the European Community as a new state replacing the five, six or seven national states. We think of it as a union of national states: the only possible union, the only union able to safeguard and strengthen national values.

There is therefore no conflict between national policy and European policy. Those who continue to pursue a nationalist policy, opposing European integration, with its indispensable supranational structures, are short-

sightedly pursuing a colonial policy, and I mean colonial in the passive rather than the active sense.

The task of Christian Democracy is also to prevent any form of foolish rivalry or competition with the other ideologies as regards the formation of the new Europe. A Strasbourg MP said one day that if the Europe we are building has to be Christian Democrat, it would be better not to build Europe at all. Mr Lodovico Benvenuti rose to confirm that the important thing was to build Europe; it did not matter whether it then had a Christian Democrat or Social Democrat majority.

Europe came into being like Christendom. The schism came afterwards. The 'nations' (France, Poland, Hungary, Switzerland, Spain, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Germany, etc.) are more recent than the old unity. In the beginning, there was unity. And that common foundation has never been lost, even when the nationalist conception of the world permeated culture in its entirety, leading us to believe that moving beyond national divisions would be a lower level of civilisation.

Nowadays, we no longer use the baptismal name of our world, 'Christendom'; today we use an anodyne geographical term, 'Europe'.

Over and above the words, however, the substance remains, and that is Christianity. Generations and generations have tried to conceal or to leave their mark on this substance, but most of the myths they have constructed have collapsed or are collapsing: individualism, illuminism, racism.

In the collapse of these forces, Europe has met the Bolshevik challenge with a manifestation of faith in the political and social capacities of Christianity.

The Christendom of old can still provide us with useful criteria, which apply to our edifice: the sense of right, of the autonomy of the individual and the private citizen, the sense of social solidarity, the conception of national features not as absolutes but as relative components that are part of a whole. Modern experience helps us to give our edifice a livelier sense of religious freedom and a wider and more conscious use of the technical.

These considerations may perhaps seem optimistic to observers of the gravity of today's situation. They are nevertheless the canon that guides our action.

We must not have inferiority complexes. Over and above the parties and political organisations linked with them, we must have the same faith in the relationship between Christianity and the unity of Europe that Frédéric Ozanam had in the relationship between Christianity and democracy.