

NY Times 25 April 73

# EUROPE GREETING NEW CHARTER IDEA

## U.S. Plan Called 'Good Start' —But Skeptics Focus on American Intentions

By ALVIN SHUSTER  
Special to The New York Times

LONDON, April 24 — The United States' proposal for a "new Atlantic charter" was generally welcomed today in European capitals, where officials said that it provided a new vision of if not new solutions to vexing problems in the alliance.

The words used to describe the speech yesterday by Henry A. Kissinger formulating the proposal were "sober," "realistic" and "needed." President Nixon's national security adviser allayed some fears abroad about American intentions, but not all.

"It was a good and important start in the new relationship," an official here said. "Now we'll get together and talk about it over here. But we've got a long way to go before all is rosy."

Rarely has a public document created such a stir among European officials, although many Europeans had to look hard to find it reported in their newspapers. Many papers continued to give more prominent coverage to the Watergate case.

### Ministries Studying

At official levels, however, Mr. Kissinger's views on the political, economic and military questions involved in Atlantic relations were being examined line by line, with public comments from foreign ministries kept to a minimum. Officials in London, Paris and Bonn, among others, said that they had not received word in advance of what Mr. Kissinger planned to say.

The Kissinger speech, delivered before the annual meeting of The Associated Press in New York, called for a new "unifying framework" within which the United States, Western Europe, Canada "and ultimately would work to resolve strains and misunderstandings and to vitalize their relationships.

The British Foreign Office commented: "This is clearly an important speech with a constructive intent which we will study with our European allies. We particularly welcome the acknowledgment of the concept of a unified Europe working cooperatively with the United States and the recognition of the roles of Japan and Canada.

"We also agree that the challenge is now whether the unity of the West, forged in the past by a common perception of danger, can draw new purpose from shared positive aspirations."

### Divisive Issues Surveyed

In spelling out "goals for the future," Mr. Kissinger surveyed the issues dividing Europe and America pledged continued American support for European unification, urged European countries to increase their defense expenditure, and promised to work cooperatively with European countries on all common problems. He noted that the Atlantic community could not be an exclusive club because it must include Japan as a principal partner.

In Paris, however, the dominant tone was skeptical, ranging from vague suspicion that the proposal represented a new American ploy aimed at dominating Europe to cautious concession that it was all right so far as it went. Like many officials elsewhere, those in Paris were still unclear about the precise meaning of the phrase the "new Atlantic charter," particularly as Mr. Kissinger wants to include Japan.

"In Paris," commented the conservative newspaper Le Figaro, "there has always been considerable mistrust of an alliance that could appear a bit like that between the wolf and the sheep, because of the specific weight of the main partner." In broader terms, of-

ficials and others concerned about the alliance welcomed Mr. Kissinger's efforts to lift the problems to a high political level to prevent the technical disputes from giving the impression of severe and basic disruption in the partnership.

They noted that crucial conflicts still lay ahead, particularly when tough trade negotiations begin between Washington and the nine-nation European Economic Community.

Whatever the concerns about the future—and President Nixon's trip to Europe this autumn is awaited with increased interest—virtually all those whose opinions were sampled today expressed relief that Washington at last was coming up with what they viewed as the first meaningful and authoritative statement on Europe by the present Administration. Just when Europe can manage to create the "one voice" to deal with the outstanding issues is another matter.

"What Washington would like to do is sit down with one man in Europe and work out everything," commented one alliance expert here. "It's just not feasible for the community for a long time. It will have to deal with Europe on the separate issues—trade, defense, money."

In any event, officials in European capitals clearly heard things they wanted to hear from the White House: that the United States has "no intention" of destroying a unified Europe, that it will not unilaterally withdraw troops

from Europe, that it will not sacrifice the interests of her friends in the pursuit of "superpower diplomacy," and that it recognizes the need for a "new relationship."

But officials also read some phrases that bothered them a little: That the United States is clearly worried about the "prospect of a closed trading system" forged by the Common Market; that defense burdens must be "equitably shared," meaning more spending by Europeans; that, after Vietnam, there were signs of protectionism in the United States and a "reluctance to sustain global involvements."

Apart from that, there was lively interest in Mr. Kissinger's suggestion that there was a need for a major reassessment of the strategy of the North Atlantic treaty forces. His comments that the alliance faced the "new challenge" of maintaining collective defense "under radically changed strategic conditions" was enough to send officials at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization headquarters in Brussels to their drawing boards in anticipation of more definite proposals.

"We're all analyzing and analyzing," said one London analyst involved in alliance matters. "But, in a sense, it's not so much what Kissinger said in a speech that contains so many generalities, however welcome. The point is that he made it. The White House is now ready for Europe."