The Illusion of Europe

John W. Holmes

During the excitement of expansion, members of the European Economic Community may be forgiven if their comments on Community policy are often more rhetorical than rational. In sober moments European leaders display an awareness of the dilemmas they face in achieving that ambiguous state of grace known as unity. What is less fully recognized is the dilemma the Community presents to outsiders, particularly those who are and wish to remain its friends.

How are we to deal with, how are we to accommodate, how are we to make provisions for this creation which, because it is in the process of shaping itself, does not know what it is going to be? Do we accept it for what it seems to be at this moment, a loose association of sovereign powers which already can exercise some authority in internal matters but is not acting in external matters like the unit it seems to want to be? Or do we make our calculations on the basis of the rhetoric?

EEC spokesmen at times stress the freedom of its sovereign parts. But they usually go on to talk about Europe speaking with one voice to defend its rights and its interests. They like to regard Europe as one of five great or superpowers, and they add up populations, resources and trade, not to mention armed forces, to show that they count in a superclass. What distinguishes a superpower, however, is not its amalgamated resources. If one adds up the combined populations, resources and armed forces of the continent of Asia, he gets something pretty stupendous.

What makes a superpower super is the capacity to accept responsibility. Internal discipline enables government to behave effectively, whether it does so in its own or in the international interest. Internal differences indeed limit the effectiveness of both Washington and Moscow, and probably Peking. But none of them can evade the responsibility of power for the very reasons which, for the foreseeable future, will excuse the leaders of the European Community from fulfilling any but the blandest international commitments.

Once the celebrations are over, it is time for more candid talk about all this. West Europeans have been spoiled in the honeymoon period by their conviction (encouraged by Americans) that, since they were engaged in creating utopia in the obvious interests of humanity at large, they were entitled to indulgence. Who could be against unity?

Whether the EEC is a step forward in the long path to the brotherhood of man or just another effort to build an exclusive economic and political bloc is a matter on which opinion will continue to differ. There are many outside the bloc who may wish the Treaty of Rome had never been concocted. This is not to say, however, that the wiser among them would now wish the European Community to collapse. For good or ill, it has been launched. Having in mind the paralyzing schizophrenia which gripped Britain for the past decade, one is warned against the paranoia which could afflict the West European peoples if they were denied the chance to make something of their experiment. What they make of it, however, affects the rest of us in vital ways.

Ralf Dahrendorf has expressed surprise that relations between the United States and the European Community are shaped, not by the White House, nor by the State Department, nor by leading foreign policy specialists in Congress, but by the California and Arizona Citrus Association.1 What does he expect? The EEC is designed to protect and further the economic interests of certain countries in West-Central Europe, and that is legitimate. Other countries will legitimately bargain with, make deals with, or form alliances against, the EEC in line with their understanding of their own interests. They can be

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expected to make concessions for the unity of "Europe" to the same extent that Western Europeans would sacrifice their farmers for the benefit of such political ideas as the Republican Party, the survival of the Commonwealth or the independence of Canada. It is the EEC, after all, which is incapable of political decisions and asks others to deal with a bureaucracy.

Unless relations with "Europe" are to be regarded as a zero-sum game, there must be a mutual disposition to act in the broader international, rather than the purely national, interest. Europeans, however, must be warned against the assumption that because the EEC claims to be international, it is acting more nobly when it further the special interests of its demicentury than Australia, Japan or the United States when they act in the name of national interest. Continentalism is not inherently more moral than nationalism and may indeed be more dangerous. It is not the unwillingness of the EEC to act generously and farsightedly that is worrying, it is their inability to do so.

The puzzle for outsiders—friends or otherwise—is to know which way they would like the Community to move. There are many good reasons for worrying about the emergence of a united European superpower. We have quite enough overkill loose in the world at the moment. We certainly don't want to be drawn any more into European civil wars. But the argument that the creation of a European Community would put an end to the danger of war in Europe has lost credibility. The rebirth of Germany and the creation of NATO settled that question long before the Treaty of Rome.

We might rather fear that differences will be exacerbated by efforts at amalgamation. Continentalist economics provoke economic conflicts, internally and externally. It would be unfair to blame the EEC alone for the more ruthless nationalism evident in American economic policy over the past couple of years, but there is an interaction between American nationalism and the threatening Continental nationalism of the EEC—together with, it must be admitted, the nervous economic nationalism of lesser powers. When Continentalist economics are accompanied by Continentalist cultural assertion and the mythification of European history, the overseas barbarians have reason to shudder.

One might wish the Europeans would just sensibly go on about coordinating their transport and rationalizing their neighborly relations and forget about their mission as Europe. On the other hand, if they are going to take common actions without being able to accept common responsibilities, wouldn't it be better if they did indeed become something more like a sovereign power? As Herr Dahrendorf himself acknowledges: "The six European States have created a political reality which need not be defined as something different from them, but which, in accordance with the will of its architects, cannot be controlled by any one of them alone. This reality has an effect on the outside world, whether decisions are taken or not. The Six are therefore jointly responsible for seeing that what they have created does not adversely affect them individually or jointly, and above all for ensuring that it does not do damage in the world which they would find it difficult to repair."

Belief in some general West European interest or in the defense of an EEC institution or practice will presumably, on occasion at least, prompt EEC members to close ranks and demand or force international organizations to accept certain policies or commitments. But the record of established governments in living up to their commitments is hardly impeccable. And the Community can be a special problem because, when conducting negotiations, it can always plead that it has no sovereign control over its members and to enforce discipline would be politically difficult.

Philippe Simmonot, writing in the London Times (June 20, 1973), sees the main negotiating advantage of the United States to be "the indiscipline of the countries of the European Community" because "the people in Brussels are obliged to stop short at the point at which agreement between the Nine would bring down the European edifice in ruins." He fails to see the disadvantage to others who want to make mutually satisfactory agreements with European countries in the context of a complex relationship involving wider political considerations. How often have we all complained when the Americans used the excuse of attitudes in Congress to avoid commitments.

The response of Western Europeans to Henry Kissinger's recent statesmanlike call for a reexamination of the Atlantic relationship has not been reassuring. What was clearly set out as an invitation to revise Atlantic relations on a more equitable basis was too widely regarded as not more than a crude effort to force economic concessions in payment for defense protection. Even the London Times (April 25, 1973), which welcomed the initiative to lift discussion from "a largely technical level where conflicts of interest are unavoidable" to "the broad political level where the long-term common interests of the partners are more clearly visible," nevertheless pointed out that "Europeans have rightly resented attempts to link the military commitment with trade policies."

But who is doing the linking? Canadians have been led to believe that they must leave forces in Europe if they are to have any hope of a fair deal on trade from the EEC. And there can surely be little doubt that a withdrawal of American forces would promptly be used in Brussels as an argument to abandon
generous consideration of American economic difficulties. Defense and economics are irrevocably linked in the Atlantic Alliance, Article Two of which was intended to make clear that the spirit of cooperation and mutual respect which was essential to security was essential also in economic relations if the Alliance was to hold together. Kissinger was simply reminding Europeans of a fact they too readily forget.

In an alliance based on give and take, North Americans tend to feel they have done all the giving. Both the United States and Canada sent troops to a European war, poured relief funds into the reconstruction of the Continent, then sent more troops to hold the line until the Europeans could recover. When the Europeans did recover, they insisted the troops stay on, and their recovery took the form of an economic bloc which looks more hostile than friendly.

Even an internationally minded European like Theo Sommer of Die Zeit writes in Foreign Affairs (July, 1973) that the preparedness of the Nine in principle “to conduct a good neighbor policy toward everyone will be subject to only one qualification... when in doubt act in the interests of the Community.” Such a principle may be unavoidable, but it is doubtful if it is going to be reconcilable for many years with his further statement: “In the security field, there is no substitute for America’s contribution to European defense.”

Comments in Europe on the Kissinger speech were not all parochial. The shrewd may have come from the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, which asked which Europe would give the answer: “Pompidou’s fading neo-Gaullism? Brandt, suspended between Atlantic loyalty and necessity and the temptation of crises?” Raymond Aron reminded Europeans that they are vulnerable not only in defense but also in economics if they disavow the Atlantic tie, and he pointed to the need for the whole Western community to act together in face of the dire threat to their security posed by oil shortages. “It follows,” he wrote in Le Figaro (June 2, 1973), “that broad policy ought to be defined not only by defense against the commercial ’aggression’ of the United States but by the search for common objectives. In the hypothetical situations of an economic war or of a Soviet-American condominium, who has the most to fear and to lose if not the Europeans, divided among themselves, who owe their wealth to the transformation of primary materials coming from the whole world?”

Unfortunately, this is not the language of the new breed of European chauvinist. Andrew Schonfeld has noted the tendency in the EEC to live in a charmed circle, to think they can carry on their private world without affecting anyone else.

Friends of Europe must ask themselves, of course, whether it is premature to push questions about the long-range intentions of a single European voice. It may be that Europeans have in mind a long-term process by which the habit of working together would eventuate in a Continental/national consciousness able to secure a consensus strong enough to permit a new Europe to act some day as a responsible unit in international politics. Even from this perspective, however, we must ask Europeans to clarify what they hope to achieve. Unity is not a sufficient end in itself.

When Jean Monnet set out on his crusade, few people doubted that the integration of larger units was the wave of the future. Now this is a more dubious proposition. Nationalism and sovereignty, which seemed bad things, have reappeared as the last defense of peoples against multinational economic forces and the aggrandizement of government. We may charitably regard the EEC as a supereffort to create a superstructure that can defend the interests of a “continent” against superpowers, specifically against the Soviet threat and the American challenge. And that may well be the only way Europeans think they can protect their standards and ways of life, the presumption being that they have common interests which are sufficiently distinctive to separate them from other countries struggling for similar protection. At the same time, however, they are creating another threat of superproportions. As far as lesser powers are concerned, the EEC, because of its amorphousness, may be harder to do business with than are the United States or Japan, China or the Soviet Union.

One of the specters confronting us is the possibility that nationalism, having become continental, will become hemispheric. The fear of the consequences of the EEC’s special agreements in Africa may be exaggerated, but even a careful and sympathetic observer of the EEC like Miriam Camps is pessimistic. She doubts “whether the growing European-African and European-Mediterranean special relationships could be broken except as part of a large restructuring of relationships which includes the withdrawal of the United States from the OAS system.” Although she herself favors “a drastic shift to a truly multilateral system,” she finds it hard to see it happening:

The more likely development is a continuation of special arrangements between the European Community and the less developed countries to its south, continuing American protests against this development, constant friction, and a general drift towards a world in which the main developed countries have, in fact, fairly well defined spheres of influence—or spheres of responsibility if one wishes to be euphemistic—in the less developed countries (“Sources of Strain in Transatlantic Relations,” International Affairs, October, 1972).
The word imperialism has been flung about so casually of late that one is hesitant to use it in this case. Nevertheless, the proprietary attitude toward Africa adopted by some European leaders, and not only in France, raises doubts as to whether, in the process of European continent-building, they may be carried away from their more laudable policies of relatively generous responsibility for assisting the Third World.

The political factor to be faced is the spirit of rivalry and even hostility inherent in the process of setting up any new community. The view is that there is nothing incompatible between a united Europe and a cooperative Atlantic world; in fact, a cooperative world is proclaimed, no doubt sincerely, by European leaders. But how else can one build a community except by emphasizing its exclusiveness?

The argument as to whether the Community would be inward looking or outward looking has been called "un faux problème." True, but the reason it is false is that unless the Community is inward looking, it is nothing. The leaders can be inspired by a more or less liberal attitude on world trade and development, but the whole enterprise is meaningless except as an attempt to put a wall of some height around a community.

Members of the Community, having been for centuries world traders, travelers and emigrants, have varied associations overseas. They can't, and say they don't, want to cut themselves off from old associates, but they are bound now to emphasize whatever interests they can find in common with their European neighbors. The idea that the British would bring international perspectives into the Community may be an illusion. It is the Germans of the Brandt regime who seem most aware of the extent to which the European countries are embedded in a wider community—perhaps because they have no extra-European ties to renounce. The French, from the beginning, have insisted on the primacy of the European loyalty. The British, until recently at least, have been busily denigrating their relationships with the U.S., Canada and Australia to prove their virtue as Europeans.

Community builders do need a few good menaces. The Soviet threat is less ominous at present. In any case, the Soviet threat is an argument for the strengthening, not of the European Community, but of the Atlantic Alliance. To accept the Soviet menace as a reason for the Community's cohesion would be to accept responsibility for constructing a truly European defense system. It is both easier and cheaper to maintain the Atlantic system.

And so the Community's apologists reach for the threat to Europe posed by the collusion of the superpowers, but they are not very clear about how they will be collectively harmed by the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks or by Soviet-American trade negotiations. If there is no obvious enemy, one must be created. European zealots in Britain even managed to transform the Commonwealth into a threat, thereby doing permanent damage to a worthy and harmless institution and unnecessarily embittering relations between the British and those who had in the past perceived common interests when the threats to Britain were far from imaginary.

These questions of imagination and emotion may not seem important, but Europeans do not seem to grasp that their "economic community" is a matter not only of opening doors but of slamming doors as well. The consequences will be less dangerous if the members of the EEC recognize that they are engaged in an operation that is not necessarily complementary to Atlantic or wider international community building.

The need to emphasize barriers is what disturbs those who recognize the EEC as a fact but hope it will not accentuate the drift in the world at large toward national or regional self-interest. The creators of the European unity movement have certainly seen the movement as part of an overarching international system. Much of that spirit still inspires European leaders. The question is whether it can survive the transition period when the European interests of the members of the Community have to be emphasized or invented.

Europeans can in return call for understanding from others of what they are trying to do. In fact, they have had little cause to complain on this score. The United States, propelled by the illusion that it was creating a partner in the maintenance of world order, was more than generous in the formative stages. With the Community now established, the United States need not apologize for recognizing the EEC as a competitor, to be dealt with competitively. The Commonwealth, not being an entity, took no stand against British entry. British opponents of the Market holding antiquated views of the Empire used the Commonwealth as a weapon with which to beat the EEC. But the behavior of the major Commonwealth countries affected was correct. They did not, by and large, share the illusions of Americans about the blessings of European unity, but they recognized Britain's right to self-government. Their approach on the whole has been pragmatic.

The institutions on which Europeans are now concentrating constitute only a part of the continent of Europe. They are cutting off the Eastern, Northern and Southwestern peoples...
of the same continent. Eastern Europe has, of course, isolated itself, but there is a question as to whether its present straining for pan-European institutions is getting the right response in the closing off of the EEC.

A more immediately relevant question is whether it is desirable to strengthen EEC institutions or those of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. There is an advantage in the OECD concept which is perceived more clearly perhaps by those who are neither Europeans nor Americans. An unhappy consequence for Canadians, Australians, Norwegians or Swedes of the Europeans' emphasis on continentalism is that they fasten this pattern on others. Canada and the United States do not claim to speak with one voice, for example, although their economies are closely intermeshed. Nevertheless, Canadians are continually finding themselves, to their own disadvantage, included in an entity called North America, which has no existence as a political or economic institution. For countries like Canada, Australia, Sweden, Switzerland and many others the fashionable new two-power concept of Europe and the United States (or the three-power concept of Europe, the United States and Japan) is unattractive and inaccurate. This concept seems particularly attractive to those Europeans who, especially in Britain, see the EEC as a way to maintain great power status.

The OECD, on the other hand, not only gives major and lesser powers appropriate voices but also reflects more accurately the realities of the world economy, where resources count for more than guns. It may also be a less polarized and more flexible international system. Although it is itself too restricted in membership, it has always expressed the broad international responsibilities of its members.

The EEC answer to all this is, of course, that the EEC has no intention of renouncing these broader associations—from NATO and the OECD to the United Nations—but seeks only to coordinate the European voice within these institutions.

That is all very well in theory, but what does the coordination of the European voice mean? This is something much more than just a Central American caucus or an Arab lobby. Would the hardening of a European bloc within NATO do anything to strengthen the organization? Some Europeans have wisely recognized that an arbitrary insistence on all European members speaking with a common voice in NATO could lead to assumptions about European defense which they wish to avoid. Yet much is made of defense interests which European countries are supposed to have in common—even though NATO was based on the firm assumption that the defense interests of North America and Western Europe were common.

In other international bodies, whether the OECD, GATT or the International Civil Aviation Organiza-


tion, the formation of a disciplined European bloc cannot be accepted without unpleasant consequences. Questions will eventually be asked about whether a group which acts in this way can go on calling itself a group or whether, if it wishes to speak with one voice, it should not, in accordance with prevailing rules of the game, have only one vote. In the U.N., London and Paris might continue to claim special seats on the model of Minsk and Kiev. Voting blocs beget voting blocs. They don't necessarily strengthen the hands of those who participate. The position of the Atlantic countries was strengthened rather than weakened by their refusal to vote as a team in the United Nations. Immovable states, like those of Eastern Europe, have had little influence. The contrast with independent Yugoslavia has made that clear.

This brings us to the question of a common foreign policy for the EEC, one of the frequently proclaimed aims of founders and members. And in some ways the easiest to achieve because it requires no more than an agreement among governments that they will either define a common policy on major world issues and stick to it or caucus on each issue and, in the absence of consensus, accept a majority vote. Yet one has only to define what is necessary to realize how unlikely this is.

Foreign policy, as its practitioners know, is not just a matter of great principles but of deciding how to vote, speak or act on thousands of daily issues. It isn't differences on principle that matters most; it is the variations of attitudes on tactics. No one has, and probably no one can, specify those natural interests which should keep Europeans aligned. So many world issues are ideological, and the present government of the Federal Republic of Germany might conceivably find harmonization of policies easier at one moment with the Australians than with the British.

Commonwealth citizens recognize this question of a common foreign policy as an old and sad story. The idea of "one voice" Commonwealth foreign policy was a favorite of British Conservatives and Australian Laborites at the end of the Second World War. British Tories thought it meant the dominions would, like sensible chaps, accept policies defined by the wiser and more experienced people in Whitehall. Australians thought it meant they would have a great deal more to say in the determination of British foreign policy. The European member states might be warned that many British Tories are now talking the same way about the EEC—having been let down by the Empire.

In fact, the Commonwealth survived for many useful years because this concept of a single voice was rejected as not only impossible of achievement but also exceedingly divisive. Of course, no two situa-
tions are analogous. The EEC is creating a much more integrated structure than the Commonwealth was or wanted to become in 1945. Nevertheless, many of the same difficulties in coordinating a common voice obtain. NATO in the fifties was a fairly tightly knit structure with vows of coordination, but it survived because a flexible attitude was taken toward foreign policy.

Judging by the so-called “Davignon principles” formulated by the six foreign ministers in 1970, one might assume that a fairly sensible attitude is being taken on this subject. Mention was made of “exchanges of information and regular consultations” and the harmonizing of points of view “when it appears possible and advisable, by trying to adopt common policies.” Nevertheless, in Brussels the beavers are busy with committees, secretariats and draft agreements on major items of policy. Again we recognize the illusion that afflicted the Commonwealth in 1945, the illusion that the problem is one of structure. It persisted too in NATO—the idea that if there could be ministerial instead of ambassadorial representatives on the permanent NATO Council we would have a common foreign policy.

Committees and secretariats, however, can do no more than draft compromise formulae. The real problem is a meeting of minds and a consensus on aims and tactics which is not forced. On most world issues it has been easier to get agreement between Copenhagen and Ottawa than between Copenhagen and Paris, and a Canadian may be forgiven for wondering about the advantages of a situation in which not only the Danes but the British and the Belgians would be obliged to support French policy toward Canada, whatever it might be. Perhaps countries like Canada, which have normally found among the smaller European powers their habitual collaborators in international policy, are most inclined to regard the creation of a rigid European caucus as purposeless.

Just what the basic principles of an EEC foreign policy would be is a problem. It is not difficult to define common interests of a security and political nature. It is more difficult to define interests which are unique to them and not shared by other members of the Western community and, indeed, by countries in other parts of the world.

The possibility of the Community having unique economic interests to protect and negotiate is clearer. These are not so much inherent European interests as created EEC interests. Although for the time being important monetary issues are debated in organizations broader than Europe, the question of whether the EEC will act as a unit in monetary questions is yet to be decided.

But the need to stand together on money does not necessarily imply standing together on Portuguese colonies or on the Continental Shelf. The creation of any kind of community, whether it be NATO or the Commonwealth or the Organization of African Unity, sets up expectations of loyalty. Not to vote with one’s associates seems a particular form of unpleasantness which merits retribution. Most of the so-called disunity in NATO is attributable to expectations of unity which ought never to have been proclaimed in the first place. That members of the EEC should pay due respect to the wishes and interests of their partners in the Community is something which the rest of us can live with and understand. That they should be required to shut their ears to other friends and vote like sheep, however, is a demand that is likely to invite retaliation.

When one attempts in this way to probe the elements of a “common foreign policy,” Europeans have a habit of reacting impatiently against what they consider caricature. This, we are told, is obviously not what they have in mind. Well, if not, then what do they mean by having a common foreign policy and speaking with one voice to defend the interests of Europe? These are the illusions which breed disillusion.

It is advisable to match limited expectations with limited rhetoric. The rest of us may not have a sure interest in the transformation of the EEC into a fifth power in the world, but we do not want a weak Western Europe. The effort to push too far the idea of a common foreign policy can result in a foreign policy of the blandest variety based on the lowest common denominator.

If we do not see the EEC as in itself a third or fifth power, we do nevertheless look to the great countries of Western Europe, and the smaller but wiser ones as well, as counterweights, as alternatives, and as constructive forces in the creation of international community. In the world we are facing it is not necessary to have military power to have wisdom and influence, although some superpowers will continue to be superstrong. When the British pull themselves together, we trust they will realize they do not need to have a fleet East of Suez to be the great constructive force they have been in international affairs. The voice of Germany, strengthened by its successes in European détente, should bring new hope to the United Nations. France shows some signs of emerging from its isolation into a new internationalism. What we do not want is to have these Europeans so intent upon the problems of their internal bureaucracy and so much preoccupied with producing an indigestible mash called a common European foreign policy that they vacate the field entirely to the real great powers.

I am tempted to end with a simple plea to Europeans to cool their enthusiasm for power and a role, to get on with the business of harmonizing their interests and, out of their regional confidence, to behave in the world like the magnani-
mous and constructive countries their wealth and experience qualify them to be. If they can, ad hoc, act together in good causes, so much the better. It is the imposed obligation to unity and uniqueness which is mischievous. If they really have interests—economic, political or military—which they do not share with others, obviously they must protect them in common. But if they do not resist the temptation to seek out or invent such interests, they will only isolate themselves and fall behind in the search for international community.

And yet I am worried by Dahrendorf’s warning. If the EEC does not set about doing the impossible, forging a unitary instrument of government, will it not remain a mindless creature, capable of doing grave mischief but lacking the internal discipline to deal with the consequences? Can it move further in a common foreign policy than agreement on its basic grievances and resentments? In meeting the complex international issues we all face, how much could we expect from a peevish Europe?

The hope expressed by many Europeans is that the EEC will be an economic and social power, that in the new world equilibrium military power is unnecessary. It is the Japanese approach, as well as that of Canada and other lesser powers who are economically potent but whose military potential, even in alliance, is increasingly seen as negligible.

The argument against this is what the Americans call burden-sharing. This can no longer be understood in crude military terms, meaning that Japan and the EEC should take over the United States’s security responsibilities in their respective regions. It is doubtful if, given the present state of the world, Japanese or West European public opinion would permit the increase in defense spending necessary for such a purpose—even if the United States disarms substantially. And the paradox of the American demand for security burden-sharing is, of course, that the United States does not want the EEC or Japan to control their own nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, these great economic powers will be decisively affecting international relations in an age when resources and commerce are the vital issues of national survival. On these subjects divergence between the U.S., Japan and a hungry but headless Europe can be swift and drastic.

If the military burden cannot be shared, the burden of maintaining the essential structures of a mutually beneficial world economy must be shared. It is not good enough, as is common both in Europe and the U.S. of late, to disguise a reluctance to share burdens and international responsibilities as a renunciation of imperialism.

That the members of the Community will serve their own and the general interest best by acting as a bloc is an assumption that should be reconsidered. One thing is certain. If they use their power, in what can only be described as an old European tradition, to bully and blackmail weak governments in Africa or elsewhere, they will propel the world further into anarchy. United States policy toward Latin America could be cited as a precedent. But it is a bad precedent and one which now seems as moribund as the OAS.

We need to bury the mischievous two-pillar theory which John Kennedy and his Boston gamesmen and their European friends did so much to propagate. The American idea, which goes back to Dean Acheson and John Foster Dulles, was that a united Europe would share with the United States a benevolent hegemony in the world. Insofar as it meant accepting responsibility and sacrifice to promote a peaceful and prosperous world community, it was a noble idea. But it had two great flaws: It gave the Europeans the wrong idea of how they could act in the American model; the other enormous flaw has been revealed in the Vietnam disaster, the gross error into which even a noble concept of hegemony can lead a great and united power.

The danger, of course, is the swing to the other extreme: renunciation by the U.S. and other Western countries of concepts larger than their own national or continental interests. The reasons why the United States might turn isolationist at this stage of its history are obvious. It is a time when noninterference in other parts of the world can look like a sound moral principle. That Western Europe is also in an isolationist mood is less frankly acknowledged, because Europeanism is portrayed as internationalism.

The rest of us are not in a position to preach sermons, but we nonetheless view with anxiety West Europe setting itself apart. Canada, in the throes of a reaction against its active internationalism, is no example to any country. We need European energies on a wider stage. Frankly, our historical memories do not permit total confidence in the political wisdom of Europe united and rampant; we would rather see the Europeans concentrating on something more useful and relevant than trying to transform themselves into a semisuperpower. The promise of a Europe wise, united and responsible by the twenty-first century isn’t much to count on for the issues crowding in upon us in the rest of the twentieth: multinational corporations, computer transnationalization, global television, global pollution, preprogrammed nuclear warfare and the survival of government by the people.

NOTES


2. See, for example, Max Beloff, "The European Course of British History, The Round Table (October, 1971) or Alain Clement, "Le temps des recriminations," Le Monde (April 25, 26, 27, 1973).

3. Dahrendorf, op. cit.