

ARE WE ALL AGREED THEN?

French President Jacques Chirac chooses the Reichstag to deliver one of the strongest calls yet for an avant-garde core group in the E.U.

By JAMES GRAFF BRUSSELS

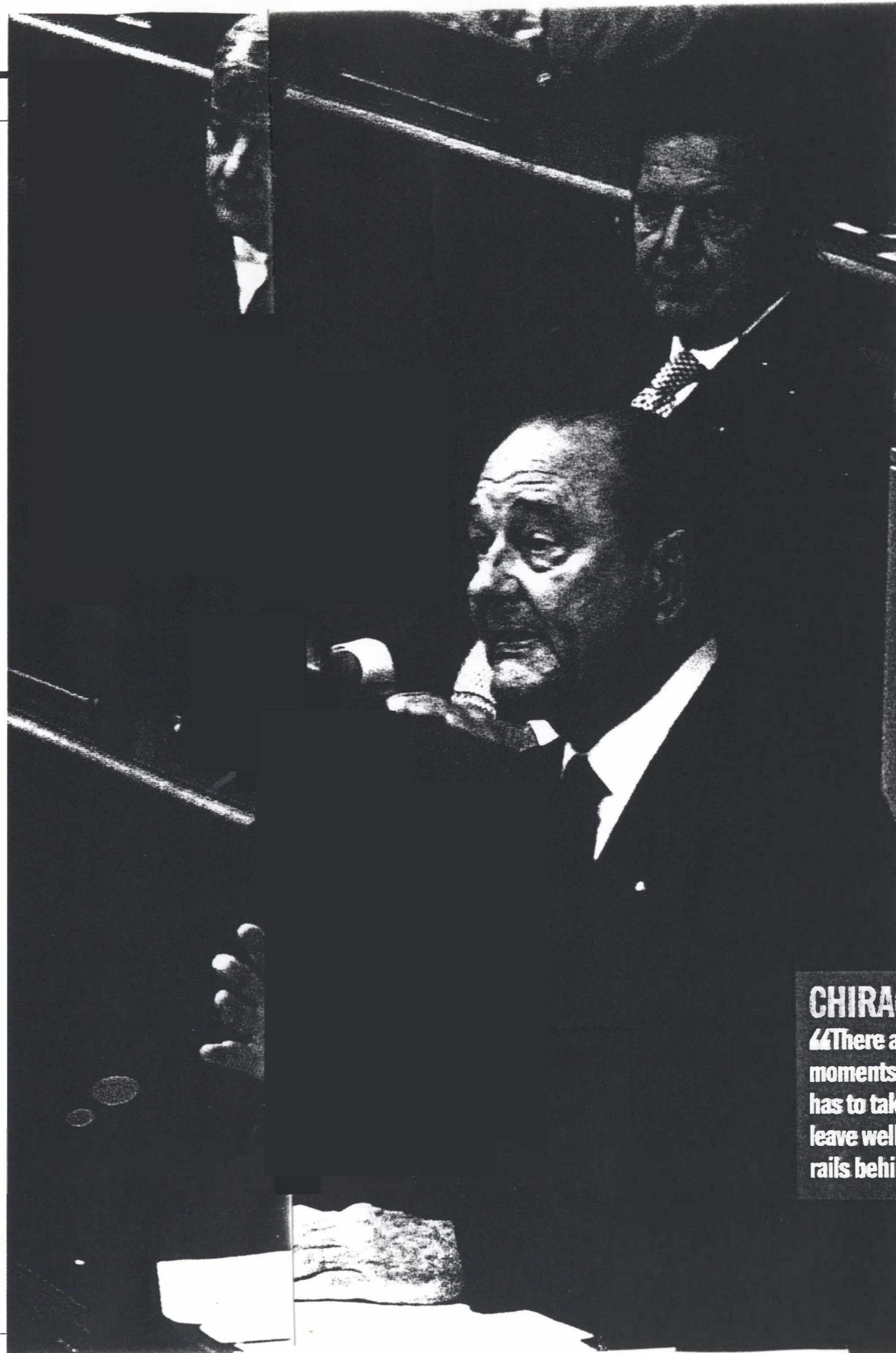
CERTAIN RIGHTS ADHERE TO BEING a founding member. France, one of the European Union's originals, claimed those privileges last week when President Jacques Chirac suggested that some E.U. counties—charter members Germany and France, for starters—should form a “pioneer group” within the 15-state union that could move “farther or faster” toward political integration. Chirac chose the perfect pulpit when he became the first foreign leader to address the German Bundestag in the revamped Reichstag building in Berlin. His tone in outlining his vision for the bulky and often disparaged institution was frankly proprietorial. In a speech that trumpeted the continuity of relations between Europe's two most important countries,

Chirac declared, “There are moments when one has to take risks and leave well-traveled rails behind. Only at that price will we be able to execute this great common project.”

Chirac appears to have a willing partner for such new departures. German parliamentarians showered him with applause in a standing ovation, and Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer—who looked downright bored during the 45-minute oration—later called it “a very, very important speech.”

But perhaps because a certain resentment also accrues to founding members, Chirac's proposals rekindled fears of a two-speed Europe. For the United Kingdom—already in effect relegated to Europe's second tier because it chose not to be a member of the euro zone—the prospect of a concerted Franco-German effort to leave it still further in the dust was not a pleasant one. Nevertheless, the British government put on a brave face, plagued as it is by endless debate about adopting the euro. Said Prime Minister Tony Blair: “There is absolutely no problem with the speech President Chirac gave and I think we in Britain should have a little more confidence in our ability to shape arguments, have influence and to play our part in Europe without constantly worrying that Europe is going to turn into a conspiracy against Britain.” Blair had a lower-key meeting with Chancellor Gerhard Schröder in Berlin later in the week to press the point that the U.K. is still a player in Europe.

London, which has been a driver of European unity in defense matters, recognizes that enhanced cooperation among some members will have to be possible in a European Union that could include 27 or 28



DOUBLE MEANING Chirac's speech to the German parliament was aimed as much at the French electorate as the rest of Europe

members by the end of the decade, so that, as Blair said, “one country could not block the progress of others when that was perfectly sensible.” Such agreements already exist, of course, in everything from the euro 11 to the Schengen agreement on border controls. Chirac's proposals for further integration are nebulous enough now for Downing Street to keep its public utterances on the same level of abstraction; the real fighting will come in the lead-up to the European Council summit at year's end in Nice, where France hopes to present key treaty changes to set the E.U. for enlargement.

It is undeniable that a Europe of two dozen-plus can't function under current arrangements, but the candidate countries are leery of any suggestion that the goalposts are still shifting. The first among the present 13 candidates have seen their accession date recede further and further. Chirac himself predicted in 1996 that Poland and Hungary would be members by 2000, yet that prospect remains a good four years off at best. Without referring to Chirac's speech, Günter Verheugen, the European Commissioner overseeing enlargement, felt compelled last week to warn member states: “Do not introduce second-class membership. We cannot afford a closed shop system of a core group of countries.”

The debate Chirac joined with such gusto in Berlin isn't new: in 1994, German Christian Democrats proposed a “core Europe” that would march farther and faster than other members; a passel of politicians since then—including former Commission President Jacques Delors—have made their own proposals for an avant-garde within the E.U. In a seminal speech at Berlin's Humboldt University on May 12, Fischer proposed forming a “center of gravity” around core states that would conclude their own treaty, leading to a federation within the E.U. with its own elected president and parliament.

Chirac was in one sense more modest than Fischer, partly by dint of his position. “It was not possible for a French head of state to go further, as Delors and Fischer have done,” said a presidential adviser. But at the same time—perhaps also by dint of his position at the head of the E.U.'s most influential member, which

took up its six-month presidency July 1—he set off alarms with his suggestion that this pioneer group should have a secretariat to ensure “coherence.”

CHIRAC
“There are moments when one has to take risks and leave well-traveled rails behind.”



SIDELINED Blair and Schröder insisted that Chirac was not calling for a two-speed E.U.

While Chirac said that such a group "must stand open to all who want to join it," it was this idea of institutionalizing the core group that worried many observers. "It's an old French trait to set up a *directoire* with them in the middle," says Michael Emerson, senior research fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies, a Brussels think tank. "But they have to realize they're not the France of Napoleon anymore: if they don't submit to the democratic will of their co-member states, they'll find they won't get anywhere."

Swedish Foreign Minister Anna Lindh recognizes the need for some reinforced cooperation among certain members, not least among the 11—to become 12 next January with the addition of Greece—who have adopted the euro. "We want to be a part of the euro zone at some point, and there's no question that there is a need for more political cooperation among the Euro 11 or 12," she told *TIME*. But Lindh is worried that formalizing an inner core could send a dangerous signal. "Institutionalizing an avant-garde group might raise a big threat of Europe splitting into an A team and B team," she says. "New members should not have to fear automatically being placed on the B team," says Lindh. "That could create a divided Europe all over again."

What's more, there are points at which "enhanced cooperation," to use the Euro-speak, could rub up against the demands of Europe's prime *raison d'être*, the single market. With its Scandinavian neighbors, Sweden has been at the forefront of promoting tighter environmental standards, such as restrictions on the prophylactic use of antibiotics for farm animals. Says Lindh: "We need to have higher standards for everyone, not just for an avant-garde. Otherwise we could be at a competitive disadvantage in the marketplace."

With his Berlin speech, Chirac has stolen a march on his putative adversary in 2002 presidential elections, Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, by being the one to give a French twist to Fischer's own proposal. "By speaking out, he is taking the lead as the more pro-European of the two men," says Dominique Moïsi, deputy director of the French Institute of International Relations. "Outside France, he didn't want to leave the benefit of taking the lead on Europe to the Germans alone." The onus is now on both Chirac and Jospin to dispel doubts about their commitment to enlargement by brokering revision of the E.U. institutions in time for the Nice Council. With so much fog in the air over the Union's future, keeping the eye on that ball will be no easy task. —*With reporting by J.F.O. McAllister/London, Thomas Sancton/Paris and Regine Wosnitza/Berlin*



HAMBURG HORROR: This pit bull killer of a six-year-old boy had a history of aggression

Anger Unleashed

A schoolyard mauling stuns Germany into action



UNLIKE THE FRENCH, with their fondness for poodles, Germans prefer canines to be a bit more imposing. This is, after all, the country that bred German Shepherds, Rottweilers and Doberman Pinschers. But last week, after a pit bull terrier and a Staffordshire terrier jumped into a schoolyard in Hamburg and mauled to death a six-year-old boy, Germans were forced to focus on the sharp distinction between family pets and, in the words of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, vicious "fighting machines."

The debate over dangerous dogs has been growing for months. In March, in the town of Gladbeck, a Rottweiler killed an old woman outside her home. In May, officials from all 16 German states met with Interior Minister Otto Schily to address the issue, but accomplished little. At the time, Schily said that regulating house pets was not the responsibility of the federal government. But the Hamburg mauling finally spurred Schily to intervene: last week he quickly secured agreement from the state interior ministers for an immediate import and breeding ban on pit bulls and related breeds. The local response was equally swift. While Hamburg authorities arrested the owner of one of the killer canines and held him without bail, the city senate voted to ban the ownership, breeding, training and trading of "dangerous" dogs. That law, which requires the now contraband dogs to be destroyed, is the

toughest so far, but other localities have enacted measures ranging from mandatory leashing and muzzling to sterilization.

The problem is not limited to Germany. In France, two recent attacks have drawn renewed attention to the issue. A law that went into effect earlier this year places severe restrictions on certain breeds. But such measures have proved difficult to enforce, in part because even professionals can have trouble identifying the prohibited purebreds. A 1991 British law that was passed in response to an attack on a six-year-old girl restricts the ownership of pit bull terriers, Japanese Tosas, Fila Brasileiros and Dogo Argentinos. Spain's list of suspect breeds includes 12. But Spanish dog psychiatrist Alberto Arquero says that "the problem with 'problem' dogs lies not so much with the animal but with its owner ... Most breeds can be dangerous if they are not cared for properly or if people encourage them to attack."

That view is increasingly in the minority. Animal researcher Gudrun Beckmann is among the more than 70% of Germans who believe the only way to prevent deadly canine attacks is to ban specific breeds. "The tendency toward aggressive explosions is born in these animals," he says. "You'll never get a poodle to jump onto a man's face no matter how hard you train it and you'll never prevent an attack dog from at least thinking about it." In other words, some of man's best friends are just a whole lot nicer—and safer—than others. —*By Aisha Labi. Reported by Steve Zwick/Cologne and other bureaus*

Greece Hits the Wall

Organizers of the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens scramble to recover from their painfully slow start

By ANTHEE CARASSAVA ATHENS

FOR ATHENS, THE DECATHLON IS MORE than a 10-event competition. It's the Greek capital's race to resolve 10 severe snags to staging the 2004 Olympic Games. "Three years of dillydallying is enough," huffs one International Olympic Committee vice chairman. "No more delays or excuses. Athens has to put its mess in order."

The warning, topped by the I.O.C.'s branding of Athens as "the worst organizational crisis in 20 years," has seen Prime Minister Costas Simitis, who is credited with putting the country's faltering finances in order, step in to try to do the same with the Olympics. Simitis has begun refereeing seven ministers squabbling over multibillion dollar planning works. Heeding I.O.C. advice, he also drafted Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki, who led Athens' winning bid in 1997. Appointed to head the troubled Athens Organizing Committee (ATHOC), Angelopoulos, a 44-year-old lawyer, took the job on condition that she be given a free hand in forcing through reforms.

Last week's shake-up of ATHOC bore her stamp. It also cost the state an estimated \$1 million to pay off Costas Bakouris, ATHOC's sacked manager. His replacement, Petros Sinadinos, is also from the bid team.

Some of the I.O.C.'s mix of businessmen, Olympians, retired politicians and sundry aristocrats are encouraged. Most, including Dr. Jacques Rogge, chairman of the I.O.C.'s Coordination Commission, remain cautious. "The proof is in the eating," says the Belgian-born former world yachting champion.

YANNIS LONTOS FOR TIME

For all the revamping, Athens will have to hurry to meet the I.O.C.'s deadlines by Aug. 23 (see box). "Sometimes I don't think the Greeks realize the urgency that is demanded on key matters," says Rogge. "You can't wing the Olympics." Much of the squeeze comes from the international sponsors who have already banked on Greece's winning marketing theme: the Olympic homecoming. Local sponsors, however, have yet to pledge a cent.

At the heart of Athens' Olympic woes is bureaucracy, with a hint of skulduggery. Says Bakouris, "It took me 18 months to hire a mere typist. I had no authority to make decisions without a zillion state

approvals and rivalries." A bill designed to cut through such red tape was pushed through Parliament on June 22. It gives organizers flexibility in spending, licensing and tendering. But this rush to make up for lost time has kindled fears of corruption and cronyism in the awarding of fat construction contracts. "Transparency," says the Athens daily *Avgi*, "may be a luxury which Athens' cramming cannot afford."

Despite the shake-up, Anita DeFrantz, an I.O.C. vice president and U.S. Olympian, remains worried about the athletes' accommodation. The 124-hectare site for the Olympic Village is still no more than pasture for goats, rabbits and sheep.

After Atlanta's over-commercialization, the I.O.C. was seduced by the Athens mantras of "values over value," and "ideals over deals." Now, however, it is clinging to the more prosaic "better late than never." And if Athens doesn't meet its August deadlines? Says Canada's Richard Pound, the I.O.C. vice president: "Then we will have to sit back and take a new decision—fast." ■

THE MARATHON FACING GREECE

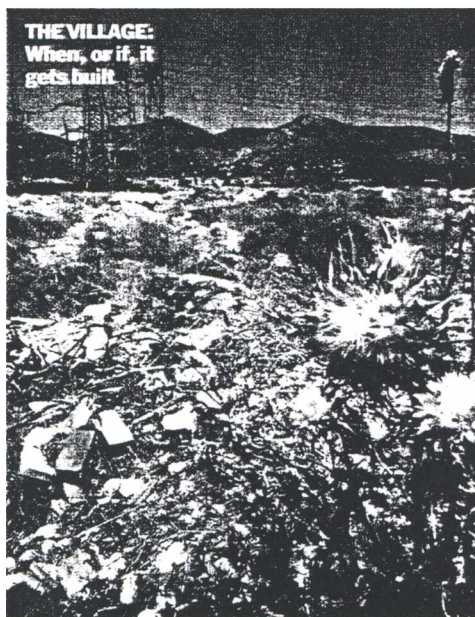
On May 13, the International Olympic Committee set 10 targets which Greece must meet within 100 days, or by Aug. 23:

1 **Luxury accommodation for the 25,000 sponsors, VIPs and I.O.C. members.**
PROGRESS: Organizers and Athens hoteliers signed a draft agreement two weeks ago, but individual hotels have yet to endorse detailed terms.

2 **Appointment of a TV broadcaster.**
PROGRESS: Five companies, including the BBC, are bidding but a deal is unlikely to be signed by August.

3 **Selection of media village venue to host about 17,000 journalists.**
PROGRESS: Organizers hope to have found a location by July 15, with planning approvals expected soon after.

4 **Recruitment of managers to direct the Games' 28 events.**
PROGRESS: Athens vows to have all key positions filled ahead of deadline.



5 **Security plan in place.**
PROGRESS: Legislation pushed through Parliament on June 22 paves the way for procurement of security and surveillance equipment.

6 **Security legislation, or legal go-ahead to establish 50,000-strong Olympic Security Force to shield athletes and visitors.**

PROGRESS: On June 22 Parliament approved. The force will come under the Public Order Minister.

7 **Faliron multisports complex, a secondary venue 12 kms southwest of the Olympic Stadium.**
PROGRESS: Still in the early planning stages. Organizers are undecided

on locations for some sports, including hockey and archery, enraging the sports' federations.

8 **Memorandum of understanding between the Environment Ministry and the Secretary of Sports on a string of environmental safeguards linked to the Olympic Village and a bird habitat near the rowing and canoeing sites.**
PROGRESS: High court rulings pave the way for the construction of the two projects, but planners are moving slowly.

9 **Legislation to give the Athens Organizing Committee more flexibility in spending and on agreements with local sponsors.**
PROGRESS: The critical provision was passed by Parliament on June 22.

10 **Culture Olympiad arrangements.**
PROGRESS: Michalis Cacoyannis, director of *Zorba the Greek*, appointed project manager last month, but programs and events have yet to be announced.