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From the Private Secretary

16 February 1990

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

The Irish Ambassador telephoned me early this morning to say that the Taoiseach was intending to organise an informal meeting of Heads of Government of the European Community in April to discuss the consequences for the EC of German unification. He had agreement in principle from France and Germany and hoped that the Prime Minister would feel able to give her consent. He would like to be able to announce agreement to the idea of such a meeting later today.

After consulting the Prime Minister and speaking to you, I telephoned the Irish Ambassador back to say that the Prime Minister wanted to be assured that what the Taoiseach had in mind was something very similar to the informal meeting of Heads of Government in Paris on 18 November last year, ie a talk followed by a working dinner. She was not in favour of a special session of the European Council itself, which she thought would be a bad precedent. She would also want to be clear that the implications of German unification to the European Community was the only subject on the agenda and the occasion would not be used to review other matters such as the dates of an IGC.

The Ambassador subsequently telephoned again to say that the sort of meeting envisaged by the Prime Minister matched Mr. Haughey's conception of it, although no final decision could be taken until all Community Heads of Government had given their view. It was the Irish Government's intention that the meeting should cover only the matter which he had mentioned to me, namely the consequences for the Community of German unification. I said that, on that basis, the Prime Minister would give her agreement to a meeting, subject to convenient dates being found. She would not be able to manage the last few days in March, nor the middle of the week beginning 1 April (because of the Indian State Visit). The following weekend (7/8 April) would be possible. The Irish Ambassador said that the dates were now slipping towards the middle of April. He would let me know as soon as there was a firm proposal.

I am copying this letter to John Gieve (H.M. Treasury), Martin Stanley (Department of Trade and Industry) and Sonia Phippard (Cabinet Office).

C. D. POWELL

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