

CONFIDENTIAL



file
A: /FOREIGN/UNION
(MEM)
bcc PC

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

26 April 1990

INFORMAL EUROPEAN COUNCIL: DUBLIN

The Prime Minister had a talk with the Foreign Secretary this evening about the informal meeting of the European Council in Dublin on 28 April.

The Prime Minister said that she had been giving some thought to the line that she would take on the subject of political union. She had reached the conclusion that she would start by saying that the phrase political union caused far more difficulty than good, at least in the United Kingdom. The Council's first task should therefore be to try to relieve anxieties and suspicions about it. We should define what political union did not mean. We should make clear that it did not involve:

- giving up separate national Heads of State;
- abolishing or substantially reducing the powers of national Parliaments. They would continue in existence and retain the right to pronounce on all major decisions in the Community;
- altering the Council of Ministers' role as the main decision-making body in the Community;
- any attempt to accrue more powers to central institutions at the expense of national governments and Parliaments. The principle of subsidiarity would be embodied in the Treaty of Rome in order to secure this;
- weakening in any way the role of NATO in assuring our defence.

Within those broad parameters we would be happy to see closer co-operation, particularly on issues which stretched across national borders, both within the Community and beyond it. Once we were all clear what we were not considering, it would be much easier to make progress.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

The Prime Minister thought that this approach of trying to relieve people's fears could be presented as a positive one and helpful in terms of political debate in this country. She would like it worked up into a speaking note, with a fuller and more considered list of what political union should not mean.

The Foreign Secretary welcomed this approach as a good one and said that he would give instructions for some urgent work to be done on it.

I am copying this letter to Sonia Phippard (Cabinet Office).

CHARLES POWELL

J. S. Wall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

CONFIDENTIAL