



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

22 June 1990

Dear Charles,

European Council: "Political Union"

/ The Foreign Secretary wrote the enclosed article setting out UK views on "political union" for publication in the continental press in the run-up to Monday's Dublin discussions.

/ It is now clear that it will be published in full in all eleven other Community countries on or before the first day of the Dublin Council (I enclose a list of the papers concerned).

Copies of this letter go to the Private Secretaries of OD and OD(E) colleagues, and to Sonia Phippard.

Yours ever,

Richard Gozney

(R H T Gozney)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

ARTICLE BY SECRETARY OF STATE: EUROPEAN POLITICAL UNION

At Dublin next week the European Council meets for the third time in six months. The Single Market and EMU, last December. German unification in April. And now, European Political Union. A daunting agenda. But what does our latest challenge actually mean? Is political union just a phrase, or can we make it a fact?

Britain has positive ideas, and we will play a central role in that debate. The Community matters to us. Community business is a dominant theme of our foreign policy, and of our domestic policy too - well over half the British Government regularly attend Councils in Brussels. Our commitment to constructing Europe, to making Europe work, has never been greater. It is a commitment we act on daily.

We want a Europe which is strong, liberal and democratic. That is the Community which has inspired the workers in Poland, and the students in Romania. That is the Community which is attracting businessmen in EFTA, and investors in America.

Robert Schumann wisely said in 1950 "Europe will not be made all at once or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements, which first create a de facto solidarity". A prophetic test for his time, a wise one for ours.

I see four principles guiding our work on Political Union at Dublin and beyond. First we must strengthen democratic accountability, and make Europe more relevant for our citizens. Second, we want our institutions to operate as effectively as possible. And we want them to operate where necessary and only where necessary: that much vaunted principle of subsidiarity. Finally, we must strengthen the Community's voice in the world, keeping Europe open and liberal.

But we do not need a revolution. The Community is a success, and we are building Schuman's concrete achievements.

The Commission is playing a central role in the 1992 process, bringing down the barriers to free trade and fair competition. No-one is suggesting that the European Parliament is not democratic. The adjustments made by the Single European Act to our decision-making in the Council have worked well. Our institutions represent 30 years of achievement and development. Let's not knock them.

But they should not become ossified either. Europe is on the move, and the Community must stay dynamic. So our debate is about step-by-step improvements, building on our success, not about a massive leap, even less about empty new phrases. As

Goethe put it: "the deed is all, and not the glory".

Our first task must be to strengthen democratic accountability. The Community has two democratic pillars. As Jacques Delors said in January this year "the two reflections of the popular will - the European Parliament and national parliaments - are in partnership".

A principal source of democratic control lies in the accountability of Ministers in the Council to the national parliaments. This is increasingly widely recognised in the Community. The view that national parliamentary control should be strengthened is one of the most interesting developments in European thinking over the past year or so.

In London we are in the process of improving our own parliamentary procedures for scrutinising European legislation. Other parliaments are looking at this too. Indeed there was a recent conference in Ireland of all the national parliamentary committees responsible for examining EC legislation. I welcome this. Such cooperation must be taken further.

The second democratic pillar is the European Parliament. In the Single European Act we significantly increased Strasbourg's role in the legislative process. That has worked well. We can look at this again, but I see no need for radical change.

Where I believe there is a democratic task not adequately fulfilled at the European level is in parliamentary control over the executive. National parliaments cannot and should not keep watch over day-to-day administration and expenditure by the Commission. But someone must. For our citizens rightly expect proper parliamentary control of Community spending, value for money, checks on the implementation of the Community policy. Parliamentary control over the executive is a fundamental democratic task. I would like to give Strasbourg the necessary teeth to do it.

We should also consider whether there is any gap in our democratic institutions. Does the citizen have adequate recourse against mal-administration? In many Member States we have parliamentary ombudsmen. Is there a role for a European ombudsman too? And if so how do we involve the European Parliament?

My second principle for Dublin is that we make the Community more effective. One example. Reasonable progress has been made in agreeing the Single Market. We are well over half way through the programme. But that legislation is of no value to our electors unless it is implemented and enforced. Our procedures for implementation and enforcement have fallen way behind our legislative zeal. That cannot continue. It is the

1992 programme above all which has fired the imagination of our friends and competitors in the wider Europe, in North America. We must not let that achievement slip from our grasp.

I would therefore like us to consider strengthening the powers of our Community enforcement agencies. Can the European Court of Justice procedures be speeded up? Should the European Court have powers, like national courts, to impose penalties on persistent offenders, even if they are Member States? Is there a greater role for the European Court of Auditors in investigating fraud? How can the Commission ensure Member States give effect in their national law to obligations taken at Community level? In all these areas we will have positive suggestions to make. This is the Europe of fact and not phrases.

Running through all these decisions will be the theme of subsidiarity. I am no theologian, and it is not a phrase which commends itself to a politician - I don't hear it debated in the pubs in my constituency. But the idea is right. We should take action at Community level only where that is more effective than national action. The question is how to achieve that.

Finally, we must look at our external role. Our policy discussions this year will be dominated by EFTA, by Eastern Europe, by the GATT Uruguay Round on world trade. But in our focus on procedures, what matters is the effectiveness of European political cooperation. In more and more areas we are establishing, in effect, a European foreign policy. Developments in Eastern Europe, the remodelling of the wider European architecture, provide us with a particular opportunity. We should use it. We should find ways to strengthen the effectiveness of our machinery. Perhaps through reinforcing the Secretariat in Brussels, through greater coordination with the work of the Foreign Affairs Council, through closer integration of the work of Community countries embassies in third countries. We must seek out policy opportunities where the Twelve can stand as one. CSCE offers us a tremendous opportunity. I shall work for particular progress here. Of course we must move forward carefully, maintaining consensus as we go.

European Union is a process. As we agreed as long ago as the 1976 European Council in the Hague: "European union will be built progressively by consolidating and developing what has been achieved". Step-by-step, we are getting there. And at every step that European Union has to be accepted by our electors, relevant for our citizens, and rooted in the real world. Not just rhetoric but reality: not just phrases but facts.

We are forging something unique in history. It must work well internally, and remain open to the outside world. It must play a leading role in casting the new mould in Europe. Britain's commitment to succeed in that task is second to none. So Mrs Thatcher and I look forward to next week's discussions in Dublin.

[Signed: Douglas Hurd]

Belgium - De Standaard, 25 June
Denmark - Politiken, 22 June ("Britain Wants on Open
and Liberal Europe")
France - Le Monde, 23 June
Germany - Die Welt, 23 June
Greece - Vima, 24 June (Sunday paper)
Ireland - Irish Times, 22 June
Italy - Il Sole 24 Ore, 23 or 24 June
Luxembourg - Luxemburger Wort, 22 June
Netherlands - NRC Handelsblad, 22 June
Portugal - Independente, 22 June (weekly)
Spain - ABC, 22 June

21 June 1990.

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