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SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ANGLO-IRISH ENCOUNTER

Thank you for your minute of 26 July.
The Prime Minister is content with the
proposed announcement today of the establish-
ment of the Anglo-Irish Encounter organisation.

A. J. COLES

27 July 1983

Ref. A083/2255

MR COLES

Anglo-Irish Encounter

When the Prime Minister met the Taoiseach in Stuttgart last month, they agreed to go ahead with the establishment of the Anglo-Irish Encounter organisation envisaged in the statement issued after their meeting in November 1981.

2. Mr Nally and I had a meeting on Monday 25 July with Sir David Orr, the proposed British Chairman of the Encounter, and with Dr T K Whitaker, the proposed Irish Chairman.

3. The Irish Government are anxious to announce the establishment of the Encounter after tomorrow morning's meeting between the Irish Foreign Minister, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Northern Ireland Secretary. We were able to agree with Sir David Orr and Dr Whitaker the terms of a draft press statement incorporating terms of reference for the organisation; I attach a copy of the statement herewith.

4. Mr Nally said that, though Mr Haughey approved the proposal to establish the Encounter organisation when he was Taoiseach, recently, Mr Haughey's party Fianna Fail had decided not to send representatives to the forthcoming conference of the British Irish Association at Balliol College, Oxford, on the grounds that it was not prepared for a conference of such an Association at such a place to discuss the Irish neutrality. This reaction made it, in the present Taoiseach's view, important to check with Mr Haughey before an announcement was made about the Encounter organisation, that he was still in favour of it, and would not oppose it. The Taoiseach would have an opportunity of doing this with Mr Haughey the following day (today) in time to postpone an announcement if Mr Haughey's reaction was adverse. I have just heard that Mr Haughey's reaction was not adverse, and the announcement can therefore go ahead.

Prime Minister

Content with this announcement?

Yes mh

FERB
26.7.

Approved by
ROBERT ARMSTRONG
and signed in his absence

26 July 1983

ANGLO-IRISH ENCOUNTER ORGANISATION: DRAFT PRESS STATEMENT

Following today's meetings between the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ireland, Mr Peter Barry TD, and the Secretaries of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the Right Honourable Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP, and Northern Ireland, the Right Honourable James Prior MP, it was announced that the two Governments have decided to support the establishment of an "Anglo-Irish Encounter" organisation as recommended in the Anglo-Irish Joint Studies of 1981. Sir David Orr MC LLB has agreed to be United Kingdom Chairman; Dr T K Whitaker has agreed to be Irish Chairman. It is hoped that Encounter's activities will start early in 1984.

2. The terms of reference for the organisation will be:
"The objective of both Governments in initiating the Anglo-Irish Encounter organisation is to contribute to the improvement of relations between their peoples in the interests of peace, reconciliation and stability. Encounter will organise periodic conferences and seminars, with a wide range of representation, on economic, social, cultural and other matters of common interest with a view to promoting mutual understanding, useful co-operation and good relations. Encounter will be an independent non-governmental organisation but it is envisaged that the ideas generated at its conferences and seminars may be submitted to the two Governments for their consideration".

NOTES FOR EDITORS

The establishment of an Anglo-Irish Encounter organisation was recommended in the report of the Anglo-Irish Joint Studies (Cmnd 8414) which was approved by the two Heads of Government at their meeting in November 1981. It will be for the two Chairmen and the Executive Board - whose members will initially be co-opted by the Chairmen - to decide how the organisation should develop. Encounter will, however, receive an initial measure of financial support from the two Governments.