

Meeting with Nally  
on 11 July

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CABINET

OFFICIAL COMMITTEE ON ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS

MEETING OF THE OFFICIAL STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE ANGLO-IRISH  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL (AIIC) IN LONDON ON 11 JULY 1983

Note by the Secretaries

1. Circulated herewith, for the information of the Committee, is the record of the second meeting of the Official Steering Committee of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council (AIIC) which was held in London on 11 July.

2. The record of the first meeting of the AIIC Steering Committee, held on 20 January 1982, was circulated on 2 February 1982, under cover of a Note by the Secretaries (AI(82)1).

Signed D H COLVIN

Cabinet Office  
14 July 1983

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RECORD OF A MEETING OF THE OFFICIAL STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE ANGLO-IRISH  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL HELD AT THE CABINET OFFICE ON 11 JULY 1983

Present:

Sir R Armstrong, Secretary of the Cabinet	Mr D Nally, Secretary of the Government
Mr A C Goodison, HMA, Dublin	Dr E Kennedy, Irish Ambassador, London
Mr A D S Goodall, Cabinet Office	Mr S Donlon, Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs
Mr G L Angel, Northern Ireland Office	Mr M Lillis, Department of Foreign Affairs
Mr P H C Eyers, Foreign and Commonwealth Office	Mr B McCarthy, Taoiseach's Office
Mr D H Colvin, Cabinet Office	Mr M Burke, Department of Foreign Affairs

1. After welcoming the visitors, Sir Robert Armstrong suggested that the best way to proceed would be to pick up the threads at the point at which business had been interrupted in early 1982. Following the meeting between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach in Stuttgart on 19 June, they might discuss plans for future meetings in the context of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council (AIIC) at various levels, including meetings at the Summit, and carry further discussions of the proposed Encounter Organisation. Mr Nally agreed. Much water had flowed since 20 January 1982, some of which should never have flowed. Today's meeting was of symbolic importance as well as having matters of substance to discuss. It was agreed that it should constitute a meeting of the Steering Committee of the AIIC under the terms of the Joint Memorandum of 20 January 1982.

Resumption of AIIC Business

2. Sir Robert Armstrong said that a number of Ministerial meetings had taken place since the Steering Committee last met. Some tidying up of agreed records was needed to bring the list up to date but that was only a detail. He suggested that the discussion be based on the agreed check-list of action points raised in the Joint Studies. Mr Nally agreed. (Note: it subsequently emerged that the Irish check-list differed in some respects from the British version: the references which follow are to the British version.)

## Structures

3. It was noted that the intergovernmental body had been created (1.1).
4. Sir Robert Armstrong said that the Prime Minister took the view that it was for the Parliaments to consider how their links should be strengthened (1.2). He saw little prospect of early progress from the British side on the proposed Parliamentary body. Mr Nally put down a marker that this proposal would be raised at the Summit in the autumn; Dr Fitzgerald was under pressure to give it some impetus. The Parliamentary tier raised a whole complex of issues, including possible developments in the Northern Ireland Assembly, and was one of the major political items of disagreement between Dr Fitzgerald and Mr Haughey. Sir Robert Armstrong took careful note that the Taoiseach would wish to talk to the Prime Minister at the Summit about the question of Parliamentary links. Mr Donlon hoped that the Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Group would continue, subject to changes following the British election. Sir Robert Armstrong said that the setting up of Select Committees was being delayed and would not be completed until after the recess. This might also affect bodies like the Anglo-Irish Party Group. Mr Lillis said that the Irish Foreign Minister, Mr Barry, would be meeting members of the Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Group when he visited London at the end of July. On the Parliamentary tier, the Taoiseach differed from the Prime Minister in so far as he saw it as the task of Governments, not only of Parliament, to stimulate progress. Sir Robert Armstrong noted this indication of the Taoiseach's thinking but said that the Prime Minister did not see the Parliamentary body as a layer of the AIIC but as a separate organisation. Mrs Thatcher would be sensitive to any suggestion that she was trying to tell Parliaments what to do. Speaking personally, he could foresee an Anglo-Irish Parliamentary body meeting formally with Government representatives on particular occasions; but it was much more difficult to foresee any kind of continuing Ministerial presence. It would be very difficult for Ministers to be in any sense committed by the deliberations of a Parliamentary body. Mr Donlon repeated that the creation of a Parliamentary tier was of very considerable importance to the Irish side and they would wish to pursue it.
5. Discussion of Encounter (1.3) and the creation of an Advisory Committee (1.4) was deferred until later in the meeting (see paragraphs 21 to 33 below).

## Citizenship rights

6. Mr Nally said that a Bill to give the vote to United Kingdom citizens resident in the Republic (2.1) had been printed and was now available. The next steps were for it to go through the Dail and Senate and thereafter to be submitted to the President. The intention had been to do this before the recess. However, doubts had been raised about its constitutionality and it might need to be referred to the five Judges of the Supreme Court before being signed into law. The Bill was now unlikely to go before the Dail until 19 October 1983 at the earliest. Sir Robert Armstrong took note and said that we would await further developments.

7. Sir Robert Armstrong said that a Select Committee of the House of Commons had re-examined the right of Irish citizens to vote in United Kingdom elections and had concluded that the present arrangements should continue.

8. Mr Donlon asked about the Irish request for further consideration to be given to the possible removal of differences in treatment of citizens of the Republic as between Great Britain and Northern Ireland (2.2).

Mr Angel confirmed that there would be difficulties in making changes in present circumstances. Mr Nally said that the Irish should not be seen as pressing; and Sir Robert Armstrong agreed that the question should remain on a back burner.

## Security

9. The Irish side pointed out that this section had been omitted, by agreement, from the published version of the check-list, and said that they were not briefed to discuss it at the present meeting.

## Economic Co-operation

10. Mr Nally suggested that a detailed examination of the section on economic co-operation should be a task for the Co-ordinating Committee, when it was set up and met for the first time. Sir Robert Armstrong agreed. The Steering Group should decide whether to recommend to Ministers that the Co-ordinating Committee should meet and, if they agreed, leave it to that Committee to review progress.

11. Mr Donlon said that exchanges over energy matters (4.2), notably Kinsale Gas, has been the main area of activity over the past year. Discussion was best left to those concerned. Unfortunately, there was a real prospect that negotiations over Kinsale Gas would fail, in which case it might be best to defer any announcement until after Mr Barry, the Irish Foreign Minister, had met Sir Geoffrey Howe and Mr Prior at the end of July. Mr Angel was ready to co-operate in playing down the failure of the negotiations but suggested that it would be prudent to reflect further on whether the announcement should be linked to the meeting with Mr Prior. Mr Donlon said that we should not be overpessimistic; negotiations might still succeed. But if they did not, the Irish would prefer a pause for reflection after Mr Bruton met Mr Butler on 18 July. Mr Goodison said that he had reported this Irish preference on 9 July (Dublin telegram No 215). Sir Robert Armstrong agreed that, if possible, we should co-operate over the tactical handling of the Kinsale Gas decision.

12. On other areas of economic co-operation, it was agreed that little progress had been made, despite the fact there were a number of important developments that needed discussing, such as direct satellite broadcasting.

13. Mr Nally drew attention to the problem of the boundaries of the border loughs (4.6). Action was needed to facilitate economic development. Mr Angel said that recent incidents in the loughs had demonstrated the serious difficulties which existed. If the prospects of solving the underlying problem were very poor, we might nevertheless seek as working accommodation which would reduce the risk of difficulties arising from such incidents in the future. In reply to Mr Goodall, Mr Nally said that, as a result of the dispute over the loughs, the prospects for sea-bed exploration could be inhibited; but a more immediate problem was that of port development on Carlington Lough. There was also a problem over the Foyle shell-fish beds.

14. On increased co-ordination in economic development in border areas (4.10), Mr Donlon said that Ministerial involvement was important to prevent local interests driving a wedge between the two Governments in the hope of obtaining more funds. Mr Nally stressed that any joint efforts in the border areas helped to fight sectarianism and were invaluable for that reason. It was agreed that this area together with 4.11, 4.12 and 4.13 needed further detailed examination.

15. The Irish side said that their version of the check-list included a reference to the need for increased bilateral consultation on European Community (EC) problems. They attached importance to this, and hoped that such bilateral consultation could cover questions arising under Political Co-operation. A meeting between the British and Irish Political Directors would be welcome. Sir Robert Armstrong agreed that bilateral discussion of EC matters would be valuable, despite well-known differences of approach, particularly over the Common Agricultural Policy. It was agreed that these ideas could be pursued at the proposed meeting between Mr Barry and Mr Rifkind in early September. Mr Donlon said that it was important that this meeting should take place. He would be in touch with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office about the arrangements.

16. Mr Nally pointed out that a 1 per cent levy had been imposed on all incomes in the Republic to raise money for industrial training (4.15). This had raised a very large sum of money. Unfortunately, there were three bodies in Ireland dealing with this subject, two too many. It would be useful to compare notes.

Measures to encourage mutual understanding

17. Mr Nally said that there had been some progress on youth exchanges (5.1), funds for which were made available by the Irish Department of Education. Mr Goodall remarked that on the British side the funding of youth exchanges created problems because only very limited resources for this purpose were held centrally. Mr Nally proposed that the Co-ordinating Committee should review the whole range of measures to increase mutual understanding, perhaps with a view to Encounter devoting its first conference in 1984 to this subject. This might help to give it an auspicious start.

Meeting of Co-ordinating Committee

18. Sir Robert Armstrong said that, in reporting to Ministers, it might be appropriate for the Steering Committee to recall the Joint Memorandum of 20 January 1982 and recommend that the Co-ordinating Committee should be activated in order to review progress on implementing the action points raised in the Joint Studies. Mr Goodall suggested that the Committee should first of all agree on a common text for the check-list of action points. It might then establish the extent of existing official contacts on each of the points listed and seek to identify any of the areas in which such contact was *not*

taking place or might be useful. Finally, it might be charged generally with making preparations for the next Summit. Experience suggested that it was helpful internally to have some co-ordinating point within each Government machine to help Departments to look seriously at what they were (or were not) doing and to maintain a central check. It was important to foster the habit of passing information around and to provide a suitable channel for this purpose. Mr Nally agreed that the Co-ordinating Committee's remit should be on the lines suggested. As regards internal co-ordinating, it would not be desirable to create another tier of bureaucracy. The arrangements should do nothing to impede those Anglo-Irish contacts which were already taking place successfully. On the Irish side, Mr Lillis would be the Co-ordinator, supported by Mr Brian McCarthy. Sir Robert Armstrong said that on the United Kingdom side, Mr Goodall would lead, supported by other officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Northern Ireland Office and Cabinet Office as appropriate.

19. Mr Nally assumed that, despite the commitment in paragraph 11 to review the contents of the Joint Memorandum of 20 January 1982 after an interval of not more than one year, it should be accepted as it stood for the time being. Sir Robert Armstrong agreed. If Ministers accepted the recommendation concerning the Co-ordinating Committee, the latter would be governed by the terms of reference contained in paragraph 7 of the Joint Memorandum.

20. Mr Nally asked about the future of the Anglo-Irish Economic Steering Group which had been set up under the Callaghan Government and dealt mainly with transport and tourism. Mr Evers recalled that the Group's future had been discussed at the time of the Joint Studies when it had been agreed that in due course it would become part of the AIIC framework.

#### Encounter

21. Sir Robert Armstrong noted that the British side had put forward a paper on Encounter in January 1982. The Irish had put forward a Note dated 8 June 1983. It would be useful to look at the sort of organisation Encounter might be and to consider its possible purposes. But Encounter ought to be self-motivated and not a creature of government. It would be for the joint Chairmen to work out what they wanted to do. The United Kingdom side thought that Encounter should partly be responsible for sponsoring major occasions but there was also scope for smaller gathering in seminar-style.

22. He noted that the Taoiseach had nominated Dr Ken Whitaker as Chairman. On the British side, Sir David Orr had been approached, but he had not yet agreed: he wanted first to be clear what Encounter was to do; and he was intending to speak to Dr Whitaker. Sir Robert thought that once the two Chairmen-designate had exchanged ideas, they should be invited to discuss the prospect with Mr Nally himself.

23. The first question to address would be the establishment of a Board of Governors. In addition to an Executive Board, there might need to be an Administrative Director who would look after the nuts and bolts. The British side had not identified anybody in particular yet but had in mind that the task might be undertaken by a retired civil servant. It would be necessary to discuss the selection of the right person with the Chairman of the Board. Whatever was put to them must be a blueprint, not a mandate. Mr Nally interjected that the Irish Government would like to disengage as soon as possible. Sir Robert Armstrong agreed that what was wanted was something which ran itself. He would like to pass the baton as soon as possible to Sir David Orr. Mr Goodall said that experience showed that it was very difficult to set up such an organisation in a way which allowed government to withdraw completely. The Chairman must be a major figure. One could not expect him to look after the nuts and bolts; a person to do that well would not be easy to find. The trouble was also that if government gave the impetus, government usually ended up having to pay for the man concerned. If government was to be associated directly with the organisation by having a representative on the Executive Board, it was probably better that the person concerned should not be too senior, and should attend only as an observer. Otherwise government would be held to be the motor. Mr Goodison said that he echoed Mr Goodall's thought. A part-time Director was likely to prove very expensive. Mr Goodall said that we should not overlook differences between the Franco-British Council's conferences and what was in question here. The conferences at Edinburgh and Bordeaux had been intended to be symbolic and to create a splash, while Encounter was intended to go into more everyday issues. The British-Irish Association (BIA) already organised larger conferences.

24. Sir Robert Armstrong said that Sir David Orr was concerned about the relationship with the BIA, to which a number of distinguished people from both sides belonged. It would be necessary to tread warily. Encounter and the BIA should work in harmony - the BIA should not be cut out. He wondered whether the first Encounter conference might not be arranged jointly with the BIA.
25. Mr Donlon said that he had had a preliminary talk the previous week with Dr Whitaker. Dr Whitaker thought that there should be no independent Secretariat: rather, existing machinery should be used on a fee-paying basis. He had it in mind to draw on the resources of the Institute of Public Administration in Dublin. They might have an experienced conference organiser who could be used part-time. There would then be no need to find offices, typewriters and secretarial support. He thought an alternative might be to draw on the facilities of the Bank of Ireland, of which both he and Sir David Orr were Directors.
26. Mr Donlon said that on the Irish side it had been the idea that their Government nominee should initially be a relatively senior figure, perhaps himself or Mr Lillis. This might be necessary to ensure that Encounter got off on the right track. A more junior representative could take part later on. The Irish had earmarked IR£30,000 for the project, but they hoped that it might be possible to raise money from outside sources later. Indeed the membership of the Board ought to be so chosen that people from organisations with money were represented on it. Dr Whitaker had said that he thought it was too late now to contemplate any activity in 1983 but it should be possible to think of Encounter meeting in the spring of 1984. That timing fitted in with the BIA conference which was to be held at Balliol College in September.
27. Mr Goodison said that the United Kingdom side had seen Encounter as having more modest functions than the BIA. If they did have different functions from those of the BIA it would help separate the two organisations. Dr Kennedy said that leading members of the BIA had come to see him to express concern. He thought it important that some of their members should be associated with Encounter on the Executive Committee. Mr Nally said that he would prefer to see Encounter and the BIA with a degree of common membership at the Executive level rather than holding a joint conference.

28. Mr Goodall said that it would be necessary to be able to answer the question what Encounter was to do which would be different from what the BIA did. The comparison with Koenigswinter could be misleading. Sir Robert Armstrong said that Sir David Orr's view was that the Koenigswinter model was appropriate for countries which had been very far apart. But the role identified for Encounter would have to take account of the many existing contacts. The best relations would be established within it if governments got out of the way. There might be semi-political reasons which would make it desirable to have a big public occasion to kick off Encounter but generally smaller occasions might get more useful work done.

29. Mr Donlon said that there were some strands of nationalism which were reluctant to participate in any form of Anglo-Irish contact or discussion. These strands found expression in Fianna Fail and the SDLP. The advantage of having a new organisation distinct from the BIA was that it would provide an opportunity to finesse this problem and to attract representation of these strands of opinion. It would be desirable also to reflect this in the membership of the Executive Board.

30. Mr Goodall said that there might be a greater chance of attracting a wider range of participants to Encounter if it concentrated initially on some of the specialist, politically less contentious issues. Mr Donlon doubted this. If Encounter appeared to duck the central issue, expert meetings would be seen as smokescreens. Mr Lillis endorsed Mr Donlon's point; there were not many issues likely to interest those concerned other than the Irish question. It would be necessary to face the facts. It was not realistic to suppose that Encounter would not deal with that main subject. Sir Robert Armstrong said that he had understood that our purpose over the years had been to get around that problem by concentrating on East/West aspects in order to encapsulate, as it were, the North/South problem within that greater field. He hoped that Encounter might operate on those lines. Certainly it was not possible to pretend that the problem did not exist but we could attempt to put it into a wider context. Dr Kennedy said that there was a difference between the Koenigswinter approach and the present one. Koenigswinter had been able to address economic, social and cultural questions, because there had been no major, politically sensitive issue between the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany since

the war, as there was between the United Kingdom and the Republic. Encounter could not dodge this: but it could perhaps deal with it by bringing together trades unionists, church leaders, intellectuals and others to handle the issue from their separate points of view. Mr Goodall agreed that it would be right to bring experts together to discuss their particular problems. They would clearly do this in the overall context of the Irish problem, but not necessarily with the civil problems as the central scheme of their discussion.

31. Mr Donlon said that the BIA used to conduct conferences of this sort. He thought the last had been on economic planning. But they had proved unable to attract sufficient support. Those they wanted to attract were already meeting one another and found it unnecessary to go to the BIA conference.

32. Mr Angel said that there was a problem relating not only to imbalance in the attendance at BIA conferences: they were also repetitive. Encounter would fall into the same trap if it held an annual conference, for example, on "the problem of Northern Ireland". Mr Nally said it was desirable to see the problem in a strategic way. Officials met in the Anglo-Irish context. Meetings of Parliamentarians were foreseen. It was necessary that there should also be meetings of ordinary people. The point was how to get that. He thought that Encounter could with advantage talk about the Measures to Encourage Mutual Understanding. Whether Encounter did that at large or small conferences or at a series of seminars was up to them to decide. He had prepared short terms of reference for the organisation which he was minded to put to Dr Whitaker (see Annex) and on which he could welcome the British side's comments. Sir Robert Armstrong undertook to study these.

33. Mr Nally asked when the establishment of Encounter should be announced. Given that the decision to set it up had been taken in November 1981, he did not think it would be an event of sufficient importance to announce at a Summit meeting. Sir Robert Armstrong agreed. He said that he and Mr Nally would have to talk to Sir David Orr and Dr Whitaker but he thought it might be announced as soon as possible thereafter. Mr Nally suggested that it might be something to be announced after the meetings between Mr Barry, Sir Geoffrey Howe and Mr Prior on 27 July.

## Anglo-Irish Summit

34. Sir Robert Armstrong recalled that it had been generally agreed at the meeting on 19 June between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach that they should look towards a Summit meeting in the autumn. No date had been fixed. The Prime Minister's diary over that period included the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and the European Council meeting in Athens. On the Irish side, there was the work on the Forum. The view had been taken that, on balance, it was probably better to hold the Summit before, rather than after, the Forum had reported. With these considerations in mind, he was now authorised to propose a date in November in London for the Summit. Mr Nally was grateful for the offer of a firm date in November which at first sight seemed acceptable although he would of course first need to report back to the Taoiseach. It would be important to make no announcement until much nearer the time; and meanwhile knowledge of the date should be held very tight. Meanwhile the Taoiseach wondered whether it would not be possible to hold the meeting in Dublin rather than London. The sequence of meetings had been May 1980 in London, December 1980 in Dublin and November 1981 in London. On that basis it was Dublin's turn. This was the kind of issue which could be sensitive in domestic political terms. Sir Robert Armstrong agreed to report the suggestion of Dublin and to consider further.

35. On the basis of a Summit in November, Mr Donlon suggested that the Co-ordinating Committee ought to aim to meet not later than September. Sir Robert Armstrong agreed to recommend accordingly. Mr Nally said that the Irish would want to keep the Summit and associated AIIC business away from the Forum. The theme of the Summit would be normalising Anglo-Irish relations. However, it would also be necessary to consider how developing political questions (eg the Northern Ireland Assembly and the future of the SDLP) might be handled at the Summit. Sir Robert Armstrong agreed, adding that it would be necessary to have some content on the AIIC side to flesh out the communique. On the British side, the Foreign Secretary and the Northern Ireland Secretary would be present. Mr Nally said that on the Irish side Mr Barry would certainly be present.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ANGLO-IRISH ENCOUNTER ORGANISATION HANDED OVER BY MR DERMOT NALLY ON 11 JULY 1983

The objective of both Governments in initiating the Anglo-Irish Encounter Organisation is to contribute to the improvement of relations between the peoples of the two Islands in the interests of peace, reconciliation and stability. To this end, 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. On the basis of these contacts and exchanges, Encounter will be in a position to offer independent advice to both Governments.