



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

15 June 1983

Anlgo/Irish Relations: Meeting with Dr. Fitzgerald  
at Stuttgart

The Prime Minister has seen your letter of 13 June, John Lyon's letter of the same date and Sir Robert Armstrong's minute of 14 June.

Mrs Thatcher agrees that there should be a meeting between her and Dr. Fitzgerald in the margins of Stuttgart. I should be grateful if you could so inform the Irish Government, state that I shall be glad to discuss precise timing on arrival in Stuttgart and that we should wish, as on the last occasion, to keep publicity to the minimum and agree on a short statement to be issued after the meeting.

On the other points in your letter, the Prime Minister is content that at the meeting with Dr. Fitzgerald it should be confirmed that official contacts should be resumed at the level of Sir Robert Armstrong and Mr. Nally. She will also be ready to agree in principle to the establishment of "Encounter" subject to agreement on details to be discussed further between Sir Robert Armstrong and Mr. Nally.

The Prime Minister wishes to reflect further about the question of a Summit. I therefore suggest that the brief merely sets out the various factors involved in consideration of this matter.

I am copying this letter to John Lyon (NIO) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

A.J. COLES

J.E. Holmes, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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*MS*

PRIME MINISTER

Anglo/Irish Relations

The attached FCO letter contains some recommendations for a possible meeting with Dr. Fitzgerald at Stuttgart. The Northern Ireland Secretary has expressed his agreement with it.

May we confirm to the Irish that you will have a brief meeting with Dr. Fitzgerald during the European Council, and agree with them that publicity should, as last time, be minimal?

Do you agree to the other points in this letter, namely:

(a) that we should confirm agreement that official contacts should be resumed at the level of Sir Robert Armstrong and Mr. Nally?

*Yes*

(b) that if Dr. Fitzgerald raises the possibility of a Summit, we should agree to one in late October or early November; partly in order to influence the conclusions of the "Forum" which is expected to end its work by the end of the year?

*Commonwealth Conference in Nov.*

(c) that at your meeting with Dr. Fitzgerald you should agree in principle to the recent formal Irish proposal that the "Encounter" organisation ~~had~~ be established, subject to agreement on details to be discussed further by Sir Robert Armstrong and Mr. Nally?

*Yes*  
*ms*

14 June, 1983.

*A.S.C.*

*P.S. I attach a further minute from Sir R. Armstrong which has just arrived*



Ref. A083/1675

MR COLES

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Anglo-Irish Relations: Meeting with Dr FitzGerald  
at Stuttgart

The Prime Minister may find it helpful to have one or two comments on the advice contained in Mr Holmes's letter to you of 13 June about her forthcoming meeting with Dr FitzGerald in the margins of the Stuttgart European Council. The Irish are taking it for granted that this meeting will take place: I received a message this afternoon via the Irish Embassy from the Taoiseach's office, to say that Dr FitzGerald was hoping to discuss with the Prime Minister the implications for Anglo-Irish relations of the General Election results in Northern Ireland; and, more generally, future measures to improve Anglo-Irish relations. He is hoping for "agreement in principle" on the establishment of the Encounter Organisation.

2. I agree with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that the Prime Minister's objectives at the Stuttgart meeting should be to sound out Dr FitzGerald's thinking on the way ahead and to confirm our readiness to resume official contacts within the framework of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council. You will recall that this was in effect agreed between the Prime Minister and Dr FitzGerald when they met in Brussels on 22 March. I had therefore arranged to meet my Irish opposite number in London on 20 May but postponed the meeting when the Election was called. Mr Nally and I agreed at that time that, subject to developments, we might aim to reinstate the meeting some time in the second half of June.

3. I think it very likely that Dr FitzGerald will, as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office letter predicts, press for a full scale Anglo-Irish Summit fairly soon: I see from today's Times that the

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Irish Foreign Minister, Mr Barry, has already called for a return to the system of twice yearly Summits; and this may well reflect Dr FitzGerald's own thinking. If he does press for a Summit later this year, it will clearly be difficult for the Prime Minister to turn the idea down without appearing to rebuff Dr FitzGerald's declared policy of seeking closer relations with the United Kingdom. I am inclined to agree with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that, for the reasons given in Mr Holmes' letter, it would be to our advantage to agree to a Summit in late October or early November. But if the Prime Minister prefers not to commit herself on this so soon she could perhaps ask for time for reflection and suggest that the subject should be pursued at an early meeting between senior officials.

4. As to the Encounter Organisation, I see no difficulty about going along with Dr FitzGerald's wish for agreement in principle that the Organisation should be set up, on the understanding that no announcement should be made until the details had been settled by officials. But we should disabuse him of the illusion that the British Government are committed to match the £30,000 which the Irish Government have provided in their budget for the Encounter. It was made clear in earlier discussion that there was no such provision in the British budget, and that the British Chairman of Encounter would be expected to raise the money from outside sources. That was also made clear to Sir David Orr, when he was asked to undertake the chairmanship.

5. I am making sure that Sir David Orr is still prepared to take this on.

6. If the Prime Minister is content with the foregoing I would propose to see Mr Nally in Stuttgart, before the Prime Minister meets Dr FitzGerald, in order to prepare the ground with him.

7. Copies go to the Private Secretaries to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

14 June 1983

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



CONFIDENTIAL

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
GREAT GEORGE STREET,  
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

John Coles Esq  
No 10 Downing Street  
LONDON

13<sup>th</sup> June 1983

*Dear John,*

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS: MEETING WITH DR FITZGERALD AT  
STUTTGART

The Secretary of State has seen the letter of today's date  
from John Holmes about a meeting with Dr FitzGerald in Stuttgart. *with ABC*

Mr Prior very much agrees that, for the reasons given, it would  
be right to have a meeting with Dr FitzGerald. Anticipation  
of the report of the Dublin Forum, and its terms once it is  
received, will be significant factors in Northern Ireland during  
the rest of this year and into next. It is desirable that we  
should be in a position to exert such influence as we can both  
over the report and over the position of the Irish Government  
towards Northern Ireland after the Forum has completed its work.  
A brief meeting of the kind proposed, and expected, by the Irish,  
would help set the right tone and pattern for our contacts, and  
he hopes that it will prove possible to arrange.

Mr Prior also agrees with the lines suggested on the possibility  
of a Summit meeting and on the Encounter organisation.

Copies of this letter go to John Holmes at the FCO and  
Richard Hatfield at the Cabinet Office.

*Yours sincerely,  
John Lyon*

JOHN LYON

CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

13 June 1983

*Dear John,*

Anglo-Irish Relations: Meeting with Dr FitzGerald at Stuttgart

You will recall that when the Prime Minister saw Dr FitzGerald in the margins of the European Council on 22 March, she indicated that she would be prepared to meet him again at Stuttgart. The Irish have made clear that they expect this meeting to take place. To disappoint that expectation could sour relations with Dr FitzGerald.

A brief meeting of the sort envisaged would not allow any discussion of great substance. But it could lead to discussion of the general pattern of contacts in Anglo-Irish relations over the next six months or so. There would be advantage in this. However the situation in Northern Ireland develops in the next year or so, our need to secure the continuation of close co-operation in the field of security, the influence of the Dublin Government on the minority community in the North, and the implications for opinion in Northern Ireland of the Dublin Forum, make it desirable that we should be in a position to exert whatever influence we can on Dr FitzGerald's Government.

In these circumstances, our aim for a meeting in Stuttgart might be to sound out Dr FitzGerald's thinking on how he sees the way ahead in the next year or so and to confirm agreement that official contacts within the framework established two years ago should be resumed at the level of Sir R Armstrong and Mr Nally. For his part, Dr FitzGerald is likely to raise the possibility of an Anglo-Irish summit meeting. He might well suggest this Autumn. There could be attractions in that timing. The Irish plan that their Forum for a new Ireland should reach a conclusion by the end of the year. A summit meeting in late October or early November would be an opportunity to try to steer the conclusions in the direction least harmful to our interests, while avoiding the appearance of a meeting directly related to the Forum's conclusions (as a summit meeting after the Forum had pronounced might appear to be).

/This is



This is not to say that a summit meeting could be expected to make any great advances. But the absence of likely progress in areas attractive to the Irish make personal relations and mutual confidence the more important. Delay could make this most difficult.

The Irish have already proposed one specific piece of business. At the meeting on 22 March Dr FitzGerald suggested that progress might be made with the proposed "Encounter" organisation (which would run conferences covering a wide range of issues of Anglo-Irish concern on lines similar to the Koenigswinter conferences, though on a more modest level as far as attendance and subject matter are concerned). The Irish Embassy, on instructions, have now formally suggested that the setting up of this body might be confirmed when the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach meet, although the announcement of an agreement might be made later. I enclose a copy of the speaking note left behind.

The Irish may see this proposal as something of a test of HMG's readiness to take things forward and we believe that it would be wrong entirely to disappoint the Taoiseach. At the same time the Irish note makes no reference to the earlier British paper which was put to them with the Prime Minister's agreement in February last year, and leaves a number of loose ends. In the circumstances the best approach might be for the Prime Minister to indicate that HMG is agreeable in principle to the establishment of Encounter, subject to agreement on details (which should not be difficult to achieve) and that this should be taken forward in discussion between Sir R Armstrong and Mr Nally. Meanwhile it would be inappropriate to make an announcement.

If the Prime Minister is content with this general approach we will send a separate short brief for a meeting with Dr FitzGerald and confirm to the Irish that the Prime Minister is ready to meet Dr FitzGerald briefly in the margins of Stuttgart (at a moment to be fixed between respective delegations). We would say to them at the same time that publicity should be minimal, as on the last occasion.

I am sending a copy of this letter, which is being submitted in parallel to Sir G Howe, to John Lyon (NIO) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office). The approach set out in it reflects discussion at official level in both departments.

*Yours ever*  
*J E Holmes*  
 (J E Holmes)  
 Private Secretary

ASÁID NA HÉIREANN, LONDAIN.



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

(A)  
17, GROSVENOR PLACE  
SW1X 7HR

The Irish Government consider that the establishment of the Encounter Group might usefully be confirmed when the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister meet at Stuttgart although the announcement of agreement might be made later. The function of the Encounter Group should comprise the organisation of high-level conferences on the Koenigswinter model by an Executive Board composed of independent public figures of repute and ability as well as Government figures.

The Irish Government will appoint Dr T K Whitaker as Irish Chairman of the Executive Board. It is understood that the British Government also have a nominee in mind. It is suggested that the initial Executive Board might have fourteen members, four each from Dublin, London and Belfast to be suggested by the Chairmen. The membership of the Board should comprise one official each from Dublin, London and Belfast as well as others drawn from public life as envisaged in paragraph 20 of the Institutions Joint Study.

The location and nature of a possible secretariat would be matters for the Chairmen.

The Irish Government has set aside Irish £30,000 as initial funding for the organisation and understand that the British Government will contribute a similar sum. Future financing should be on the basis of a continuing commitment by the two Governments, supplemented by private funding.



The organisation should aim to hold its first major conference in Autumn 1983. It is proposed that this should take place in Northern Ireland and that the theme might include the Report of the Joint Study Group on Measures to Encourage Mutual Understanding.

In order to get the organisation off the ground the two Chairmen and appropriate officials should meet as soon as possible after the announcement of the establishment of Encounter with a view to completing the nomination of the other members of the Executive Board and preparing the first Encounter conference.

London 8th June 1983

13 JUN 1983

