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Forum for Peace and Reconciliation

A/Sec O hUiginn

1. When we spoke briefly during the week on the Programme of Work paper which I had done regarding the above, you suggested that an expansion was needed to include an itemisation of specific areas to be studied, a list of the people who might undertake such studies and the identification of people who could be invited to make submissions. I subsequently asked Mr Montgomery to begin some work on these areas. The outcome is attached.
2. As to how the settling of the Programme of Work might be handled by the Forum, I imagine the issue would be examined in the first instance in the Co-ordinating Committee, perhaps the week after next (I doubt if any developments would take place ahead of the Inaugural Meeting). I feel we should be aiming towards a good paper which the Secretariat could table at the Committee as a starting point for the discussion. I would hope that in Mr Montgomery's draft, perhaps together with my original overview, we have a solid basis upon which we can build such a paper. I would be grateful for your clearance of this general approach.
3. In the interests of speed, I propose to share this paper informally with Wally Kirwan on Monday. Perhaps we can discuss on your return from Chequers.

*Joe*

T O' Connor  
21 October 1994

Forum for Peace and Reconciliation  
Programme of Work: Studies and Submissions.

1. The following is very much a preliminary, indicative list of topics which the Forum might wish to examine. It is assumed that debate among members of the Forum will be of primary importance in shaping the outcome of its deliberations, above all on the key political issues. This process could be supplemented in a number of areas by the preparation of sectoral reports (drafted by the Secretariat or by outside consultants, or by both collaboratively). In addition, it is also proposed that written submissions be invited from the public. Some individuals or groups who might make especially pertinent oral submissions (and who could possibly be explicitly invited to do so) have also been suggested. In some instances, their contributions might fall within specific areas of expertise; in other cases, it might be expected that they would range widely over a number of areas. It might not be particularly productive, therefore, to try to be too schematic in organising oral submissions.
  
2. In considering the timescale of the Forum's work, it should be recalled that specialist studies (even if not requiring original research) will almost certainly require a number of months to complete. In addition, it would be necessary to offer a reasonable deadline (at least one month?) for the submission of written public contributions, which would then have to be assessed by the Secretariat. Directly inviting selected individuals to make oral presentations might accelerate matters.

Barriers to Trust and Reconciliation

3. In one sense, this heading is almost all-embracing, potentially covering a wide range of matters of very

diverse character. Furthermore, the barriers which exist between the two communities in the North, and between North and South, are mostly rather different. One approach could be for the Forum, in the light of its own internal debate and of public submissions, to prepare a report identifying perceptions of the primary barriers which exist. This report might be principally a summary, in fairly neutral terms, of key issues as they have emerged. It might be drafted by the Secretariat, without expert input. Some issues could be examined more critically and in greater depth in separate studies, which might also include recommendations for action or change.

4. Among the possible themes might be the following:

- Violence: effects and legacy.

[Possible contributors: those bereaved, and support/lobby groups - Gordon Wilson, Dublin/Monaghan bombing families, Joyce McCartan (Lower Ormeau - son killed by loyalists), Parrys, Bloody Sunday campaign, FAIT, Fr Faul. A psycholgist/psychiatrist specialising in effects of violence, esp. on children. Former members IRA/loyalists (Shane Paul O'Doherty, Gusty Spence, John White).]

- Fears of future resumption of paramilitary violence; stocks of weapons and explosives; punishment squads.
- Role of security forces, in particular policing structures.

[Both issues primarily for the Forum's own members? Committee on Administration of Justice might make useful contribution on latter point.]

- Differing constitutional doctrines and aspirations (this would obviously merit closer specific study, and is treated in (5) below. Nevertheless division on these issues is clearly of central importance and could be acknowledged - many submissions can be expected to touch on theme)

- The role of the Churches

[Possible contributors: the four main churches, and other religious groups. Irish School of Ecumenics? Dr John Dunlop. Radicals(Pat Buckley)?. Fr McGreil? Fr Brian Lennon]

- Education: integrated vs denominational education. Education for Mutual Understanding. Teaching of history, politics and literature.

[Churches; teacher unions; champions of integrated education (Chris Moffatt, head of Lagan College).]

- Misinformation/Stereotypes/Clash of cultures and perceptions

[Possible contributors: Joe Lee, Edna Longley, John Wilson Foster, Seamus Deane, Tom Paulin, A. T. Q. Stewart].

- Discrimination/workplace sectarianism

[Bob Cooper; Inez McCormack; COUNTERACT (ICTU-sponsored anti-sectarian body); Rory Galway (Equality Officer, Shorts).

- Deprivation/unemployment

[Community leaders on both sides; NICVA; Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust. ]

- The absence of human contact, especially between North and South.

Constitutional and Political Issues: Realities and Requirements for a Settlement

5. This aspect of the Forum's work can be expected to attract the widest degree of public and media attention, and to be politically the most sensitive. It can be presumed that the range of viewpoints represented within the membership of the Forum will be vigorously expressed. The issues of self-determination and consent will doubtless be aired, and the Framework Document, when published, considered.
6. The Government has made clear that the Forum is not a negotiating body. It would not appear productive or helpful for it to seek to develop institutional or constitutional models. However, as suggested by John Hume, and along the lines of the New Ireland Forum, the Forum could usefully try to reach consensus on the realities which would need to be taken into account in framing a settlement; on the consequent requirements of such a settlement; and on the principles which could underpin it.
7. While doubtless many public submissions will address these issues, they are primarily for the members of the Forum itself. Thought might be given as to whether the Government qua Government should from time to time authoritatively advise the Forum on its thinking and on



recent developments.

#### North/South Co-operation

8. The scope for, and value of, enhanced co-operation between North and South, above all in the economic field, arises from the Forum's terms of reference as an important issue for consideration. In recent times, much has been published on these matters; (Ireland in Europe: A Shared Challenge; National Plan 1994-9; CBI/IBEC Dublin/Belfast corridor study; ESRI/NIERC studies). The Forum's main contribution might be less to sponsor new research than to synthesise and publicise what has already been done. Primary responsibility for this might rest with the Secretariat's economist member.

Public submissions could be made by: George Quigley; CBI/IBEC; Paul McNutt (UU); John Bradley (ESRI); Graham Gudgin (NIERC), if a dissenting voice were sought; Chambers of Commerce; Co-operation North.

#### Role of EU Membership in Promoting Reconciliation

9. Again, this is explicitly mentioned in the Forum's terms of reference. The economic impact of EU membership has been extensively studied in the past decade (IEA seminars; Ireland in Europe; academic work). The Forum, as at (8) above, could make accessible the findings of these studies through preparing an analytical summary. The wider, psychological, effects of membership, and the EU's role in building bridges between former adversaries, should also be considered. The progress of the EU reconstruction initiative could be reported upon as it develops.

This work could be conducted primarily by the Secretariat's EU member. Additional consultancy expertise could be provided by Prof Alan Matthews (Economics, TCD) and Prof Brigid Laffan (Politics, UCD).

Submissions could be solicited from representatives of the Commission (Carlo Trojan? Colm Larkin?), European Parliament (MEP observers could be involved here), John Simpson (has written on Northern Ireland in EU).

#### Parity of Esteem

10. This is one area which has not been analysed much in depth and where a genuinely path-breaking report might be possible. Work could be commissioned from Tom Hadden and Kevin Boyle (though they could also be usefully engaged on the Covenant idea). An alternative might be Chris McCrudden (University of Oxford), a lawyer whose chief interest is in discrimination law, or Conor Gearty (London University), an Irish academic with an interest in human rights matters.

#### Obstacles to Pluralism in the South

11. This topic is suggested by the Taoiseach's undertakings in paragraph 6 of the Joint Declaration. However, given the extreme domestic sensitivity of this topic, and its capacity to distract attention from the core work of the Forum, it might best be handled in comparatively neutral form in the general "Barriers" paper discussed at (2) above. It would be hard to find an expert who would not be regarded as parti pris, but it can be assumed that these matters will arise in debate among the Forum's own members, and in many submissions, especially those from



Northern Protestants.

Covenant

12. The concept of a Covenant setting out in broad political terms a set of rights reflecting a majority/minority reality both within the North and in Ireland as a whole, first proposed by the Tánaiste (and also implied in the listing of rights in para. 5 of the Joint Declaration), is being examined in discussions on the Framework document. The Forum might usefully seek to flesh out the idea in the light of the developing international jurisprudence on human and minority rights and even, perhaps, to propose the outline of such a Covenant. Hadden and Boyle would appear to be the obvious choice to advise the Forum on the international practice and precedents, and on possible language. This area would not seem one in which public submissions would necessarily make a major contribution.

General Submissions

13. In addition to the individuals/groups listed above, the following (many of whom made contributions to the New Ireland Forum and/or the Opsahl Commission) might well make valuable submissions or presentations. Given the absence of the Unionists from the membership of the Forum, it seems especially important that this voice be heard.

Unionist Tradition

Jackie Redpath; Jackie Hewitt; Glen Barr; Rev Roy Magee; Women's group from the Village; David Hewitt; Des Rea; Sam McAughtry; Rev Sidney Callaghan; Cadogan Group; Barney Gadd; Sam Burnside (Waterside Arts); Lady Faulkner; Raymond Ferguson; Ken Bloomfield.

Nationalist Tradition

Eileen Howells; Geraldine McAteer; Des Wilson; Eamon Deane (Holywell Trust, Derry).

Others

John Darby; Robin Wilson; Maurice Hayes; John Robb; David Bleakely.

A place might also be found for contributors from outside Ireland, in particular from Britain (Lord Kenny? Lord Hulme? Kevin McNamara?) and the Irish-American community (Irish-American Economic Advisory Board).

Rory Montgomery

21 October 1994