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**Reference Code:** 2021/96/39

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*Mr. Griffin*

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AIDE-MEMOIRE

Forum for Peace and Reconciliation

Purpose of Aide-Memoire

1. The Taoiseach and the Tánaiste wish to discuss further with their colleagues in Government the issues of principle and of practical operation that arise in regard to the proposed Forum for Peace and Reconciliation. Over the past month, there have been meetings at political and official levels with parties concerned from South and North, while written submissions were received from a number of parties. Fine Gael, the Progressive Democrats and Democratic Left were offered meetings with officials to discuss practical issues of the operation of the Forum. They have not taken up this offer but instead are seeking a joint meeting between their leaders and the Taoiseach. They have also asked that any meeting with them at official level would be on a similar joint basis. In response, they have been told that the Government intend to keep the consultation process on a bilateral basis. In the absence of further input by them, the options set out below on various aspects of the Forum do not take full account of the views of these three parties. However, it is envisaged that following the Government's discussion of this Aide-Memoire there will be a further round of discussions at political and, if necessary, official level.

Background of Forum

2. The genesis of the Forum is in paragraph 11 of the Joint Declaration by the Taoiseach and the British Prime Minister on 15 December, 1993. This states:

"The Irish Government would make their own arrangements within their jurisdiction to enable democratic parties to consult together and share in dialogue about the political future. The Taoiseach's intention is that these arrangements could include the establishment, in consultation with other parties, of a Forum for Peace and Reconciliation to make recommendations on ways in which agreement and trust between both traditions in Ireland can be promoted and established."

3. In his statement to the Dáil on 17 December, 1993, two days after issue of the Declaration, the Taoiseach spelled out the role he envisaged for the Forum. It would be a consultative and advisory body, exploring the "steps required to remove barriers of distrust, which at present divide the people of Ireland and which also stand in the way of the exercise by them of self-determination on a basis of equality". The Taoiseach also outlined the criteria for membership of the Forum - it would be open to "democratically mandated parties in Ireland, which abide exclusively by the democratic process and wish to share in dialogue about Ireland's political future and the welfare of all its people".

4. In his statement to the Dail of 31 August 1994, welcoming the announcement by the IRA of the ending of their campaign, the Taoiseach indicated that he proposed "shortly to initiate bilateral discussions with all interested parties on the establishment of the Forum, which I envisage will meet before the end of October".
5. In the course of his remarks at the Liam Lynch commemoration on 11 September, 1994, the Taoiseach said:

"The Forum will not be a body with executive powers nor even a negotiating table. Its task is to identify, examine and clarify issues that will help us to achieve reconciliation and agreement on a peace settlement".

6. In his speech to the United Nations General Assembly on 28th September, the Tánaiste said:

"We are establishing a Forum for Peace and Reconciliation, to enable all democratic parties in Ireland who are so minded, to make recommendations on ways in which agreement and trust between both traditions in Ireland can be promoted and established. This will not be a negotiating forum, although we are hopeful that its work will contribute positively to the climate in which negotiations take place, and that many of its recommendations can be translated into practice."

Terms of Reference of Forum

7. The terms of reference of the Forum, as revised, which it is now proposed to put to the political parties concerned in the next round of contacts, are as follows:

"The Forum for Peace and Reconciliation is being established by the Government in accordance with their intentions as expressed in the Joint Declaration, for as long as is necessary, to consult on and examine ways in which lasting peace, stability and reconciliation can be established by agreement among all the people of Ireland, and on the steps required to remove barriers of distrust, on the basis of promoting respect for the equal rights and validity of both traditions and identities. It will also explore ways in which new approaches can be developed to serve economic interests common to both parts of Ireland, including in the framework of European Union. It will be a fundamental guiding principle of the Forum and of participation in it that all differences relating to the exercise of the right of self-determination of the people of Ireland, and to all other matters, will be resolved exclusively by peaceful and democratic means. The purpose of the Forum will be

to provide, as far as possible, an opportunity to both major traditions as well as to others, to assist in identifying and clarifying issues which could most contribute to creating a new era of trust and co-operation on the island. Participation in the Forum will be entirely without prejudice to the position on constitutional issues held by any party."

8. The revised version takes account of some points made by parties consulted and by Department officials. As compared with the draft circulated at the Government on 7 September, 1994, the principal changes are, with explanatory comments,
  - (1) To meet a concern raised by a number of Opposition parties, addition of the phrase, "in accordance with their intentions as expressed in the Joint Declaration ....." in the first sentence. Some parties wished to include language that would amount to making acceptance of the principles of the Joint Declaration a test for participation in the Forum. Sinn Féin do not wish any new preconditions for participation to be added to those set out in paragraphs 10-11 of the Joint Declaration itself. The solution proposed avoids this but seeks to meet the concerns of Opposition parties by including a tangential reference to the Joint Declaration.
  - (2) At the end of the first sentence, "equal rights and validity of both traditions and identities" is considered more precise than the earlier "equal rights and identities of both traditions".
  - (3) The words "and to all other matters" were introduced into the third sentence, taking up a Fine Gael suggestion.
  - (4) In what was previously the last sentence and is now the second last, the words "to provide, as far as possible, an opportunity to both major traditions as well as to others" have been added after "The purpose of the Forum will be". This is done to meet points made by Opposition parties and the Alliance Party, and accepted by Sinn Féin, as to the importance of maximising unionist involvement in the Forum.
  - (5) The second half of that original sentence has also been changed. The phrase "issues that may be the subject of full negotiation in all-party Talks" has been replaced by "issues which could most contribute to creating a new era of trust and co-operation on the island". This change reflects concern that formally linking the Forum's work to the wider Talks, even in the qualified way suggested by the



original text, could have led to the Opposition seeking to transform such linkage into a mandate for negotiations. It also reflects concern on the part of the Alliance party that there should be the clearest demarcation between the Forum and wider Talks.

- (6) The final sentence has been added, reflecting a sentence in the Taoiseach's letters of invitation to Mr. Molyneaux, Dr. Paisley and Mr Kilfeddar, to ease the possibility of unionist involvement, in whatever way and to whatever extent may ultimately emerge as possible.
9. A number of other Fine Gael suggestions which either appear superfluous in essentially repeating language already included or which it was clear would be unacceptable to some at least of the other parties were not included. It is felt, nevertheless, that the revised terms of reference now proposed should command a wide measure of agreement among prospective participants.
- Purposes of Forum
10. Against the above background, a principal purpose of the Forum is to consolidate and sustain the peace process, by providing an early political arena for Sinn Féin, in which they can pursue, and be seen to pursue, the concerns of their supporters, and thus to cement their entry into constitutional politics.
11. Sinn Féin, in their written submission, express their belief that the search for agreement between the Irish people on the exercise of the principle and right of national self-determination should be a central objective of the Forum's purpose. This, in itself, is not necessarily problematic, but Sinn Féin may well view the Forum as an opportunity to develop a broad-based political strategy for the "ending of partition". They clearly envisage the Irish Government as playing a pre-eminent role in such a strategy, the objective being a broad nationalist coalition embracing the Government parties, the SDLP and themselves (and at a wider level including Irish America also). This issue will require careful handling by the Government as sponsors of the Forum; a prudent balance needs to be struck between, on the one hand, the legitimate goal of consolidating Sinn Féin's participation in the democratic process and, on the other, ensuring against perceptions of so-called "pan-nationalism". In this regard, an important and useful function of the Forum will be to expose Sinn Féin to the views and analyses of other parties - and indeed of the great majority of nationalists on the island - on the core issues of consent and agreement.
12. The purposes of the Forum will, of course, be expected to go beyond definitively bringing Sinn Féin into the

democratic, constitutional fold and facing up to the realities of consent and agreement. The Forum will also be viewed as having important potential in terms of breaking down barriers and promoting reconciliation in Ireland. More specifically, in the context of their cautious reaction to the IRA cessation of violence and taking account of their strong residual suspicion about "secret deals", the Forum will be expected to build confidence among unionists, and seek to convince them of the value and potential benefits of dialogue and constructive engagement.

13. It should also be added that recent contacts with Northern constitutional nationalists suggest concern among some in their ranks that, in the efforts to bind Sinn Féin into the democratic process, disproportionate attention will be paid to that party's agenda. It will be important that the Forum provide reassurance in regard to such concerns also.

Relationship of Forum to Framework Document and Talks

14. As already decided informally by the Government, the Framework Document negotiations are an entirely separate operation from the Forum. The latter will not be the ultimate meeting ground of the two main traditions in Ireland, particularly if, as is emerging, the main unionist parties will not take up membership, at least at the initial stage. The ultimate encounter may be the Talks process. The Forum can play a useful role as a bridge towards such Talks. To this end, it will be important to maintain a careful balance in selecting community groups and other interests to be invited to make presentations to the Forum.
15. It is vital, however, that the work of the Forum should not prejudice - or appear to prejudice - the Government's commitment to the delicate compromise which it is expected the Framework Document will represent. Ideally, the Forum should only convene after the Framework Document has been agreed and presented - it is hoped that the draft can be completed by the end of October. If, however, there were any delay in this process, it would be preferable to initiate the Forum, so as to avoid the risks for peace that could flow from a political vacuum. In those circumstances, however, particular care would be needed to ensure that the Forum's work did not prejudice the Framework Document or Talks Process. The former could be presented as the two Governments' joint understanding of where a balanced package might lie and as expressing the objective towards which their own efforts would be directed in Talks. Parties who dissented from the Framework Document could, of course, make their reservations clear, but the Document itself, as the Governments' view, would not be for negotiation.

Parties to participate

16. The tests of eligibility to participate set out in the Joint Declaration and in the Taoiseach's Dáil statement of 17 December, 1993 were

- that parties be democratically mandated
- that they abide exclusively by the democratic process.

The issues arising relate to

- (1) the position of small parties; and
- (2) the position of independent parliamentarians.

17. Among the smaller parties that do not have elected representatives in either the Dáil or Westminster but do have representatives elected at local level, in the South and/or the North are

The Workers Party (3 Councillors in the North, 5 in the South)

The Ulster Democratic Party (1 Councillor, Mr. Gary McMichael)

The Progressive Unionist Party (1 Councillor - Alderman Hugh Smyth, Lord Mayor of Belfast)

The British Conservative Party in Northern Ireland (7 Councillors)

18. A reasonable case could be made for allowing representation of at least the first three of these, which have good links with community groups among the unionist/loyalist grassroots. However, if representation is to bear any reasonably proportional relationship to support in elections, a Forum that included even one representative of these parties with very small support would be too large to be workable or effective. It seems preferable to find other ways of associating them with the work of the Forum - see below. A possible basis for differentiation that would cut out these four parties from full membership would be to set a threshold of support at the last General Election. A 5% threshold, as in Germany, would not cut out the Conservative Party (5.7% in the 1992 Westminster election). A threshold of 50,000 votes would include Sinn Féin and Alliance but exclude the Conservatives, who polled 44,600 votes.
19. It is clearly desirable to involve these parties as far as possible in the work of the Forum, possibly subject, in the case of the two small loyalist parties, to a permanent cessation of violence by the loyalist paramilitaries, with whom these parties are perceived by many to be associated. It will, of course, be possible to ask them to make submissions or presentations to the Forum. However, there have been suggestions for a two-tier Forum, in some versions with a second tier including Churches, trade unions etc. as well as very small parties. One possibility may be to invent, for the



smaller political parties, an "observer status", but substantive reasons and limitations of accommodation might require restrictions on the prerogatives of such observers. One possibility is that such observers would have the right to attend and speak when invited by the Forum.

20. The four independent Deputies in Dáil Éireann have sought a meeting with the Taoiseach to discuss the Forum, as has the group of independent Senators. They may be expected to raise the question of representation. Some consideration has been given to including them in full or alternate membership and they have the claim of having been elected (or nominated) to a national parliament, as distinct from a local authority. However, to allow them representation could prejudice any votes threshold to draw the line between different Northern Ireland parties, with particular reference to the British Conservatives - unless one sets the criterion as membership of a national parliament or 50,000 votes in an election to such a parliament.

Level of representation of parties

21. The numbers of full members now suggested are:

<u>Party</u>	<u>Full Members</u>
Fianna Fáil	9
Fine Gael	6
Labour	5
Progressive Democrats	2
Democratic Left	1
Green Party	1
SDLP	5
Sinn Féin	3
Alliance	2
Independents	1
Total	<u>35</u>

22. The starting basis for examination of this matter was the number of votes obtained in the Westminster Election of 1992 in the case of Northern parties and in the General Election of November, 1992 in the case of Southern parties. On the basis of the aggregate of votes in these two elections, the membership now proposed gives the Northern parties a representation level of roughly twice their entitlement. This is for obvious reasons, but suggests the need carefully to consider in advance what basis would be adopted if, at any stage, the two main unionist parties in the North sought representation. Apart from the political reasons, the favourable treatment of Northern parties is influenced by their wish or need for minimum absolute numbers of full members, coupled with a desire to keep the overall size of the Forum down to a level that will be workable and



effective. The numbers proposed for Southern parties are disproportionately favourable to the smaller parties; this follows the precedent of the New Ireland Forum.

23. At an earlier stage, the numbers 5,3,2 for the respective membership of the SDLP, Sinn Féin and the Alliance Party - representing in proportionate terms their electoral performances in the 1992 Election(s) - were given to the SDLP and Sinn Féin. Alliance have sought parity of representation with the other Northern parties, but particularly with Sinn Féin. They argue that this is close to being justified on the basis of election results (for instance, they have currently 46 Councillors in Northern Ireland compared to Sinn Féin's 51). A more crucial argument in favour of parity, in their view, is the fact that they are the only prospective participating party drawing support from non-nationalists in the North; less favourable treatment for them than for Sinn Féin would send a strongly negative signal to unionists. They have made clear that this is an issue of critical importance for them. The Taoiseach considers that parity between Alliance and Sinn Féin is indeed an arguable option, but that nonetheless the balance of political advantage rests with the 5:3:2 breakdown.
24. In the likely event of criticism of such a breakdown - certainly from Alliance themselves - it can be pointed out that Sinn Féin has consistently outpolled Alliance in local, Westminster and European elections. Moreover, Sinn Féin draws electoral support from both jurisdictions; its combined vote in the two General Elections in 1992 was over 106,000, compared to 68,695 for Alliance in the 1992 Westminster Election, a differential of one and a half times in Sinn Féin's favour. (Consideration may also be given to giving Alliance an extra alternate seat (see following), meaning that their overall delegation size would be the same as Sinn Féin.)
25. It might also be possible to allow the Independents in the Dáil and Seanad 1 full member and, perhaps 3 alternates.

#### Alternate Members

26. The New Ireland Forum included provision for alternate members. It is considered that this practice should be repeated for the Forum. In respect of the Northern parties, it was initially envisaged that the SDLP would have 5 alternates, Sinn Féin 2 and Alliance 2. Consideration could be given, for the reasons outlined above, to giving Alliance an extra alternate seat.
27. Further consideration needs to be given to the number of alternate seats to be assigned to the Southern parties. To avoid the difficulties about the overall size of the Forum which would flow from giving each party the same

number of alternates as full members, consideration could be given to replicating the proportionality between full and alternate seats that applied in the New Ireland Forum (in respect of new parties, the ratio that applied in, say, the case of the Labour Party could be used). This would give 4 alternate seats to Fianna Fail, 3 to Fine Gael (rounded up), 2 to Labour and 1 each to the other parties. As in the New Ireland Forum, it is envisaged that alternate members would have the right to speak at Forum sessions only when replacing full members. They could, however, if they wished, attend all sessions.

Total Membership

28. Taking into account all of the above factors, and presuming the seating breakdown proposed for Sinn Féin (3:2), Alliance (2:3) and the Independents (1:3), the total figures would come to 35 full members and 25 alternate members.

Chairperson

29. It will be vitally important to have an effective Chairperson of the Forum, particularly if, as proposed below, it is decided, as in the case of the New Ireland Forum, to opt for minimal rules of procedure and to regulate the operational business of the Forum on a basis of consensus. The Chairperson will be required to promote and forge compromises, both as to operational business and on substantive matters. This will be primarily a matter of brokerage and of negotiating skills. He/she will need to enjoy the confidence of a wide spread of parties, extending across a spectrum from the Alliance Party to Sinn Féin.
30. Consideration has been given to a wide range of possible candidates for the post. Necessary requirements would include, in addition to brokerage skills and the capacity to command confidence across the spectrum,
- . familiarity with the problem and issues
  - . a sympathetic attitude to efforts to resolve the problem
  - . an understanding of the positions, attitudes and psychology of the participating parties and of nationalists and unionists generally in Northern Ireland
  - . chairmanship experience and skills.

In addition, it has also been thought that if could one identify a person originally from a unionist background in Northern Ireland, who had the necessary qualities and skills, was willing to do the job and judged, overall, to be suitable for it, this would serve to allay fears about pan-nationalism and help to demonstrate that the Forum

was truly an exercise in reconciliation.

31. C.V.s and assessments of a short list of candidates are set out in Appendix 1, while a fuller list considered is at Appendix 2. It is considered that, in the final analysis, experience or procedural skills in chairmanship are less important than having the confidence of participants across the spectrum, deep knowledge of the issues and the capacity to bring the positions of the participating parties closer together. The Taoiseach and the Tánaiste remain open to suggestions and wish to discuss with their colleagues who best meets the specifications. The need for confidentiality on the matter at this stage cannot be strongly enough emphasised.

#### Secretariat

32. The secretariat of the new Ireland Forum was drawn from
- (1) the staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas - but other than the Secretary of the Forum, these did not play a particularly active part
  - (2) the Departments of the Taoiseach and Foreign Affairs
  - (3) the Services of the European Commission - an official on loan to the Department of the Taoiseach
  - (4) persons nominated by the chairman and by party leaders, drawn from the University and semi-state sectors.
33. Although nominated by the party leaders, including the Taoiseach, the Secretariat operated strictly on a collegiate basis, careful at all times to preserve and insist upon its independence, with no question of internal division along party lines.
34. With a larger number of parties and a wider spread of political views, these considerations will be even more important in the case of the new Forum. It is considered greatly preferable, to ensure the smooth and effective internal operation of the Secretariat, that it be drawn wholly from public services - that of the Government, that of the European Commission and, if necessary, the Northern Ireland Public Service. While the leaders of all participating parties would have to accept the proposed membership, it is felt that nominations by Party leaders should not be sought or accepted on this occasion, as this could expose the Secretariat to the risk of such a disparate and partisan membership as to severely reduce prospects for its smooth operation.

#### Duration and Intensity of Forum

35. The draft terms of reference indicate that the Forum will



continue in being "for as long as is necessary" and it has been indicated to Sinn Féin that it is envisaged as having some continuing existence. Clearly, however, it is largely a bridge to a comprehensive Talks Process. If this got underway it is to be expected that the main players would be so actively engaged in it as to preclude their active involvement in the Forum. In contacts with political parties, it has therefore been suggested that the Forum might have an initial intensive phase - until the Talks Process starts - followed by a less intensive phase, with meetings perhaps monthly.

36. It is difficult to gauge how long an initial phase of the Forum might last. If, however, one considers the British Government's "quarantine period" for Sinn Féin and the likely minimum length of "talks about talks" leading to a Talks process, a minimum duration of 6 months seems likely. At all events, the maximum flexibility as to the Forum's operation should be retained, in order to fit into the evolution of political events, with particular reference to the Framework Document and the Talks Process.
37. In the context of a possible six months' life, there would be considerable advantage in having the Forum commence at a rapid pace, perhaps meeting two days weekly in the first two/three weeks, and perhaps weekly thereafter. This would, of course, involve a considerable commitment for the Government parties, particularly if some of their representatives were members of the Government. In this connection, it seems likely that the Opposition parties will accord high priority to the Forum, in terms of the level of their representation.

#### Procedural Aspects of the Forum

38. As a non-negotiating, consultative body, it is envisaged that the structures and working methods of the Forum would be such as to facilitate the widest possible level of open debate and dialogue. In the manner of the New Ireland Forum, it is proposed that the Forum avoid the adoption of detailed rules of procedure and allow decisions on operational matters to emerge by consensus.
39. Nevertheless, some means of directing its work will clearly be necessary. In the case of the New Ireland Forum this was done through a Steering Committee comprising the party leaders and the Chairman. On this occasion, given the somewhat different exercise in question, it is envisaged that co-ordination of the work of the Forum would be handled through a committee of party representatives (operating in a similar capacity to the Whips). This group, perhaps to be known as the Co-ordinating Committee, would be chaired by the Forum Chairman. It would be responsible for settling issues



such as the agenda for Plenary sessions, timetable, studies to be commissioned, the regulation of debates, and indeed any other matter relating to the smooth running of the Forum.

40. While the primary instrument of the Forum would be the Plenary formation, it would be open to it, if considered useful, to establish sub-committees to undertake specific assignments. These would also be serviced by the Secretariat.
41. Consideration could also be given to a mechanism whereby, as well as making statements on party positions, members could question each other on aspects of those positions. The modalities of such interaction would be for decision by the Forum itself (with the assistance, if necessary, of the Co-ordinating Committee and the Chairman). This would represent a departure from the precedent of the New Ireland Forum. Such interaction could in the early stages be confined to closed sessions, if it were felt that to engage in a public exercise might encourage the adoption of excessively confrontational attitudes. (The experience of the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body represents a useful model in this regard.)
42. It is proposed that the opening session of the Forum be public. There would be clear advantage in terms of allaying suspicions and fears if some further sessions were held in public. To facilitate frank exchanges of views between members, it would seem desirable, however, to retain the option of holding closed sessions.
43. To facilitate liaison between parties and Secretariat, and to ensure the overall smooth running of the exercise, it is proposed that each party would nominate a Secretary/Liaison Officer. This would replicate a practice that worked well in the case of the New Ireland Forum. It seems desirable also that provision be made for the attendance at sessions, where requested by delegations, of a party special adviser.
44. It seems desirable that there be a quorum for the Forum. The figure would be for decision at the first meeting of the Forum. As in the case of the New Ireland Forum, it is envisaged that the use of alternate delegates will ensure that the issue of the quorum will not arise frequently in practice.
45. Most parties consulted made the point that inclusiveness must be a guiding principle of the Forum, which should seek to obtain the widest possible participation, including of unionists and their political representatives and of community groups and non-governmental organisations. It seems entirely appropriate that the Forum have and be seen to have this inclusive dimension. Accordingly, it is proposed that

the Forum invite submissions from the public. It would be open to the Forum to receive these in written form and/or by means of a presentation in person before it. The making of submissions would be open to groups and individuals. Submissions would be sought through advertisements in the media and through other appropriate channels.

Programme of Work

47. The Forum will at an early stage have to determine its programme of work and the issues on which it wishes to focus. Presumably the precise details will be a matter for the Forum itself, but the Government will be expected to propose some initial suggestions. These might include:
- the identification of barriers to trust/reconciliation and of ways of surmounting them
  - the promotion of North-South and cross-border economic, social and cultural co-operation
  - how EU membership can assist the processes of peace and reconciliation
  - rights and identities, the concept of parity of esteem in the North, as well as an exploration of paragraph 6 of the Joint Declaration (examination of obstacles to pluralist society in the South).
  - consolidation of the peace process, as well as ways to mark and acknowledge the suffering of both communities in Northern Ireland
  - the concept of a Covenant, as proposed by the Tánaiste.
48. As outlined above, a critical question in terms of the programme of work will be the relationship between the Forum and the Framework Document. It is inevitable that if the Document enters the public domain before or during the life of the Forum the parties will wish to consider it. Nevertheless, as indicated earlier, the Government will wish to make it clear that the Document is not for renegotiation and that formal, detailed debate on its terms is more appropriately a matter for the wider, round-table Talks.
49. A further central issue to be resolved at an early point is whether the Forum should aim at the production of a single Report, as did the New Ireland Forum. Given the wide differences that are known to exist between the parties participating in the Forum, to attempt to produce a single consensual Report, recording agreement on all substantive issues, would be highly problematic and perhaps even counter-productive to the objectives of the

exercise. However, the Forum might usefully publish reports on particular topics or sectoral issues, and a record of its public proceedings should be published. It might also wish to aim at an overall summary Report setting out the issues it explored and the views expressed on these. Where there were differences between parties, these would be recorded. The Report might also include recommendations for action in respect of areas where consensus had emerged. Such a document might serve as a useful "testament" of the work of the Forum and in itself represent a contribution to reconciliation in Ireland. (It might be noted that the Opsahl Report adopted such a format.)

50. It seems probable that it will be necessary for the Forum to commission some specialist research, in particular on economic matters. In this it would again replicate the practice of the New Ireland Forum.
51. Fine Gael have suggested that the drafting of Reports of the Forum should be the responsibility of "Rapporteurs", along the lines of the European Parliament model, rather than of officials of the Secretariat as was the case in the New Ireland Forum. Their argument is that reports drafted by a Rapporteur would be less likely to tilt "towards the lowest common denominator" and would enhance the level of agreement achieved. However, this argument is predicated on the assumption that what was sought was consensus on substance. As indicated above, such an approach would not be appropriate given the Forum's objectives and nature; it is felt, therefore, that the Forum should follow the practice of the New Ireland Forum, whereby responsibility for the drafting of Reports rested in the first instance with the Secretariat.

#### Venue

52. It is proposed that the primary venue for the Forum will be Dublin Castle. The Castle has the facilities necessary to handle the plenary sessions and the office accommodation required by party delegations. The Forum Secretariat would also be located in the Castle. The opening ceremony would be in St Patrick's Hall, with the regular plenary sessions taking place in George's Hall.
53. Consideration may be given at a later stage to holding some sessions of the Forum outside Dublin. The New Ireland Forum held a number of hearings in Northern Ireland and consideration could be given to the Forum doing likewise. In deference to unionist sensitivities, however, it would seem advisable that such visits not take place until the Forum had been sitting for some time and confidence had been built. As a means of emphasising the inclusive nature of the Forum exercise, consideration might also be given to a small number of sessions in other locations in the South.



Administrative Matters

54. The costs of the Forum would be a charge on the Vote of the Department of the Taoiseach. Work is continuing on calculating an estimate of the total costs. The final figure will, of course, be contingent on decisions about the size of delegations, the number of sessions etc. The following are among the considerations involved:
- The payment system for the New Ireland Forum distinguished between Oireachtas members, non-Oireachtas members and consultancy services. A similar breakdown would appear sensible in regard to the Forum.
  - Operating on the basis of the new Ireland Forum precedent, Oireachtas members would be paid travel expenses and overnight subsistence (for those resident outside 10 miles of Leinster House) at Oireachtas rates for those sessions held on days when the Dail or Seanad were not sitting. As in the case of the New Ireland Forum, it is not proposed to pay attendance allowance for Oireachtas members.
  - For non-Oireachtas members, it is proposed to pay travel and subsistence allowances at Civil Service rates. In addition, non-Members of Parliament might, as before, be paid an Attendance Allowance. The figure proposed is £150 per day (this calculation is based on the figure of £100 paid in respect of the New Ireland Forum, updated to take account of inflation). The Attendance Allowance is intended to compensate for loss of income arising from attendance at Forum meetings.
  - Some parties have raised the question of public funding of support and research staff. In the case of the New Ireland Forum, £7,500 was made available to each of the parties to meet the cost of consultancy services. In practice, this sum was used by the parties to pay an allowance to delegation Secretaries/Liaison Officers. On the basis of this precedent, the current equivalent, £11,400 per annum, might once again be payable to the parties. In addition, travel and subsistence costs were paid in respect of the SDLP's Liaison Officer and this precedent might also be followed in respect of the Northern parties on this occasion. A further question is whether an additional small allowance might also be made to the Northern parties in respect of possible extra secretarial and/or administrative costs. It is felt that the totality of these payments should be sufficient to cover any additional research costs incurred by parties.
  - As indicated, it will probably also be necessary for the Secretariat to hire outside consultants, for



special assignments (studies etc) as the need arises and again drawing on the New Ireland Forum precedent. The cost of these assignments will vary, depending on the extent of the work involved.

As in the case of the New Ireland Forum, it is envisaged that catering costs for the Forum participants will be paid by the Department of the Taoiseach. This would involve providing breakfast/lunch for members on the days of sessions. As before, it is proposed to have a free bar service available to Members during periods of each session (approximate cost, £500 per hour).

There will also be costs arising out of the provision of telecommunication and office facilities for parties in Dublin Castle. The calculations in this regard have yet to be finalised.

Media

55. It is proposed that a Press Officer be appointed to the Forum and work as a member of the Forum Secretariat. It is envisaged that the media will have access to all public sessions of the Forum.

Annex 1

CVs and Brief Assessments of Some Chairperson Candidates

Thomas Mitchell

Born Belcarra, Co. Mayo, 1940  
Educated Ballaghaderreen Diocesan School; UCG (BA); Cornell  
(Ph. D in Roman history).  
Professor of Latin, Swarthmore (Pennsylvania) 1967-79; TCD,  
1979-1991  
Provost, TCD, 1991-  
Has published 3 books on Roman history (Cicero)  
Married to Lynn Hunter (American); 4 children.

Pros:

An able administrator; symbolism of his position as first  
Catholic Provost of Trinity; US experience.

Cons:

A narrow background, especially in political matters; no track  
record as a chairman in wider arena

John McGuckian

Born Ballycastle, resident Ballymena  
Educated St. MacNissi's, Garrantower and QUB.

Wide-ranging business interests, including agri-business and  
property.

Chairman, Industrial Development Board; UTV; Laganside  
Corporation. Numerous directorships past and present  
(including Aer Lingus and Unidare).

Senior Pro-Chancellor, QUB.

Former Chairman, International Fund for Ireland.

Married with four children

Pros:

Very extensive experience both in business and public service.  
High reputation as a chairman. Nationalist, but has risen to  
top of several "establishment" institutions in NI. Through  
IFI has an awareness of reconciliation/economic regeneration  
issues.

Cons:

Regarded as too "green" by Unionists? Recent highly  
publicised loss of tax avoidance case in Court of Appeal.

Catherine McGuinness

Born Belfast, 1935 (daughter of C o I rector).  
 Educated Alexandra College, Dublin and TCD.  
 1961-7, parliamentary officer, Labour Party.  
 1977: Qualified as barrister. Then SC. Chaired Kilkenny  
 Incest case enquiry, 1993. Now Circuit Court Judge.  
 1979-87: Senator for Dublin University.  
 Former chairperson, Employment Equality Agency, National  
 Social Services Board, and member of Council of State and  
 NESC.  
 Long standing member of Church of Ireland synod.  
 Married to Proinsias MacAonghasa, journalist and former  
 chairman of Bord na Gaeilge. Herself a fluent Irish speaker.

Pros

Committed liberal Protestant with strong Northern connections.  
 Extensive public experience in wide range of areas. Some  
 political background. Public praise for conduct of Kilkenny  
 enquiry.

Cons

Forceful personality - would this sit easily with type of role  
 required of Chairperson? Opinions on Kilkenny performance  
 mixed.

Colm O hRoche

Born Ring, 1926. Brought up in Irish-speaking home. Educated  
 Dungarvan, Colaiste Iosagain, Ballyvourney; UCC; University of  
 California (Ph.D in Oceanography).

Professor of biochemistry, UCG. President of UCG since 1976.  
 Service on numerous public bodies (inc. National Science  
 Council; IIRS).

Chairman, New Ireland Forum, 1983-4.

Pros

Regarded as balanced and careful chairman of NIF.

Cons

New circumstances now prevail; situation has moved on  
 considerably. Appointment of same Chairman, therefore, the  
 wrong signal?

David Kennedy

Born Dublin, 1940. Educated Terenure College, UCD, Case

Institute of Technology, Ohio (M.Sc).  
 Chief Executive, Aer Lingus, 1974-1988. Now private consultant  
 and professor of strategic marketing, UCD.

Has been chair or member of various public and private sector  
 bodies, including Irish National Petroleum Corporation, Bank  
 of Ireland, Cement Roadstone.

Has been chairman, Co-operation North

Pros

Strong business background and leadership skills. Interested  
 in North-South reconciliation.

Cons

Not much chairmanship experience, unproven quantity in  
 political field.

George O'Leary

Born 1929. Educated Ballymena Academy, QUB (Ph.D. in medieval  
 history). Entered Northern Ireland Civil Service, 1955.  
 1974-88: Permanent Secretary of a number of Departments,  
 including Commerce and Finance and Personnel.

Since retirement from NICS numerous  
 appointments/directorships, including Chairman of Ulster Bank;  
 Chairman Northern Ireland Economic Council; Chairman Royal  
 Victoria Hospital Trust; Chairman Institute of Directors.

Best-known public advocate of "island economy" and Belfast-  
 Dublin economy.

Pros

Liberal Unionist. Very wide experience of business and public  
 sectors. Ample chairmanship experience. Enthusiastic  
 advocate of North-South co-operation.

Cons

Undoubtedly a Unionist, and while tolerant of, unsympathetic  
 to wider nationalist aspirations. Does not favour pre-ordained  
 North-South institutions. Too many views of his own to be a  
 good chairman of this type of body?

Mary Holland

Born 1936. Educated Loreto Rathfarnham and in England.  
 Award-winning journalist and broadcaster.

Pros

Articulate and imaginative; has shown sensitivity to



marginalised in both communities; early advocate of dialogue with Sinn Féin.

Cons

No background in administration/chairmanship. Possible conflict between roles as Chairperson and journalist? Regarded by many Unionists as hostile to their position, a view perhaps shared by some Southern politicians and commentators.

Thomas Finlay

Born 1922. Educated Clongowes Wood, UCD and King's Inn. Barrister; President of High Court, 1974-85; Chief Justice, 1985-94. Fine Gael T.D., 1954-57.

Pros

Would bring personal stature and gravitas to the position. Regarded as an effective administrator and as courteous. Balanced and careful.

Cons

Age? Authorship of "constitutional imperative" judgment in McGimpsey case would give Unionists propaganda weapon. Would appointment of (ex) Chief Justice as Chairman send the wrong signal about the kind of process involved (non-negotiating, non-binding discussion forum)?

Annex 2

Possible Chairs of Forum for Peace and Reconciliation

Sir George Quigley (Chairman, Ulster Bank, Northern Ireland Economic Council, Royal Victoria Hospital Trust, former Permanent Secretary of Dept of Finance and Personnel).

Dr Maurice Hayes (Former NI Ombudsman)..

Prof Loudon Ryan (ex TCD and Bank of Ireland).

Professor David Harkness (QUB historian - has chaired public bodies inc Ulster Museum)

Professor Charles Carter (economist; made submission to New Ireland Forum; former head of Northern Ireland Economic Council)

David Bleakely (Former general secretary Irish Council of Churches; Stormont minister)

Rev. Eric Gallagher (former president of Methodist Church; member of Opsahl Commission; involved in Feakle talks)

Mr John McGuckian (chairman, UTV and IDB; former chairman, IFI)

Prof Marianne Elliot (biographer of Tone; member of Opsahl)

Dr Colm O hEocha (President, UCG, chairman New Ireland Forum)

Professor Desmond Rea (JIGSA group; chairman of Local Government Staff Commission)

Mr Bob Cooper (executive chairman, Fair Employment Commission)

Dr David Kennedy (UCD business school -former chief executive Aer Lingus)

Mr Mark Hely-Hutchinson (former managing director, Guinness and Bank of Ireland)

Rev John Dunlop (former moderator of the Presbyterian Church)

Sir Ewart Bell (former Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and President of the IRFU)

David Hewitt (solicitor, Independent Assessor of Military Complaints)

Dr John Bowman (broadcaster and chairman of the Irish Association)

Dr Thomas Mitchell (Provost, TCD)

Dr Trevor Smith (Vice-Chancellor, University of Ulster)

Judge Catherine McGuinness (former Senator, successfully conducted Kilkenny incest case enquiry; active member of C o I)

Mr John Parker (former Chief Executive, Harland and Wolff)

Ms Mary Holland (journalist and broadcaster)

Mr Thomas Finlay (former Chief Justice)

Mr Michael Mills (retired Ombudsman)

Mr Douglas Gageby (ex-Editor, "Irish Times")