

CONFIDENTIAL

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Drafting Committee**Second Meeting, 9 June 1995****Summary Note**

1. The second meeting of the Drafting Committee(Realities and Principles) was held in Dublin Castle on 9 June. A list of the members present is attached. As agreed at the inaugural meeting of the Committee on 19 May, the Secretariat had prepared a first draft of the Realities section of the proposed Realities/Principles document. The meeting on 9 June was primarily taken up with a discussion of the Secretariat's draft. This note sets out in summary form the main points of the discussion.

Summary Note of First Meeting of Committee, 19 May

2. This was agreed.

Discussion of Secretariat Draft of Realities Document

3. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to this item. The Chairperson, in introducing the Secretariat draft, suggested that the discussion of it begin with general reaction, followed by an examination of the draft in a number of broad blocks, along the lines, in part, of a suggestion made by Sinn Fein. The Chairperson said that the draft represented a first attempt at a document that was balanced, credible and likely to command the widest possible spread of consensus among delegations.
4. The following paragraphs set out the broad themes to emerge in the general discussion on the draft, and the main points made on each (it will be clear that the points listed represent - in greatly condensed form - the views of individual, or groups of, delegations and not in any sense the consensual position in each case of the Committee as a whole).

Overview

5. The general sense was that the draft represented a reasonably satisfactory first attempt at what all agreed was a difficult objective - the achievement of a balanced document that every delegation could sign up to. A number of delegations, however, felt that the draft contained some serious difficulties for them - both in terms of elements it contained and did not contain - which would require addressing. Several delegations expressed the view also that the draft needed to be "tighter" and shorter.

Purpose

6. The purpose of the proposed exercise was raised by a number of delegations, with some continuing to have fundamental difficulties with the concept, while others saw it as a

valuable and useful undertaking. The following were the main points to emerge in this regard:

- What was the objective of the exercise? There was a danger that the document would be another product of a committee, to be consigned to the book-shelf and of interest to academics only. What was needed was an "action-oriented" document "which could be read by everybody" (perhaps a list of obstacles, and a list of ways of removing them).
- The document would set out the realities governing "our situation" and, once agreed, it could be presented to the unionists as the basis for beginning dialogue.
- The pre-eminent reality was the advent of peace and the unprecedented opportunity which it represented for a new beginning. That was what this exercise was about; the draft therefore needed to begin on that basis rather than with a description of the roles of the two Governments.
- The current draft was only one part of the exercise. The second part, the Principles which should govern a solution, would be more "action-oriented". The objective was a scene-setting document which would "help move things forward elsewhere".
- Realities were what one perceived them to be, so producing a document of the kind proposed was not alone going to be extremely difficult but questionable in its value.
- We should not set ourselves unnecessary obstacles. The Realities/Principles document should be seen as a contribution from the parties in this Forum to the wider process. Many moderate unionists would see it as positive and helpful. Moreover, it enabled parties to flesh out ideas about "the future" and "compromise" which had been signalled but hitherto not addressed in any detail.
- The value of the exercise lay in the opportunity it provided for achieving consensus among the parties participating in the Forum - there seemed little point in undertaking the initiative unless there was a preparedness among the parties participating to find such consensus. [Another delegation saw some difficulties with this approach on the basis that establishing a consensus among the parties who were in the Forum could serve to isolate further those who were not.]

History/British Role

7. There was a wide spread of views on the extent to which history should be rehearsed in the Realities paper - or indeed whether history should be included at all. The issue of the British role featured prominently. Views diverged also on how this area had been handled in the Secretariat draft. The following were the main points in this regard:
 - The less references there were to the past, the more likely we were to make progress. History, like "realities", also tended to be a matter of perspective. The draft contained a particular view of the historical dimension of the problem. There were others which could have with equal validity been included - in describing the polarisation that took

[The Alliance delegation did not respond directly to this suggestion at the point at which it was made; however, during a previous exchange in the discussion the sense was conveyed that, while prepared, if pressed, to undertake such a role, they would have concerns about some of its implications.] Another option was to commission an outside person - perhaps a journalist from the unionist tradition - to prepare a paper incorporating unionist views in this regard. Another approach would be to sit down with focus groups from the unionist tradition. These proposals were, however, countered by a suggestion that unionist thinking was in fact well known - it had already been clearly expounded in documents submitted to the 1992 Talks and subsequently, so the commissioning of an outside party was not necessary. On this, the point was, however, made that there may have been some evolution of unionist thinking since the ceasefires.

- Another possible means of gathering unionist views was for the Forum to hold sessions in Northern Ireland in the Autumn.
- The unionist identity had not been accurately described in the draft. The real fears of unionists related not to the South but rather to the possibility of "losing power and influence in Northern Ireland".
- Unionists had refused to engage in dialogue with their own Government on the Framework Document. On that basis, it was difficult to see how they would agree to dialogue on a document drawn up by this Forum.

Third Strand

10. There was a divergence of view between delegations about paragraph 10 in the draft on the above. The following were the main points made:

- Where was the evidence that the minority holding to this view was "growing"? In the absence of such evidence, the paragraph as drafted was problematic. The core issue was one of finding an accommodation between the two main traditions.
- There were two main traditions and each contained different "shades" of view within it. This assertion was disputed by a number of delegations, who argued that those who espoused the "two traditions only" approach seemed to have difficulty "dealing with the reality" that people who defined themselves in a different way "did exist". Regret was expressed at such an approach in the context of the need for an inclusive, open process.
- Paragraph 10 was perhaps "too strongly worded", in that it seemed to suggest that the third strand should be on a par with the two main traditions. The two traditions remained at the heart of the issue. What was true was that there was a growing number of people who wished to see politics have a different focus than solely the two traditions. The European dimension offered an opportunity in this regard, within which a "new meeting of minds" could take place.

Violence/Ceasefires

11. A number of members expressed reservations about paragraph 5 of the draft (the effects of violence). Some felt that it was too long, and that the issue should be dealt with by merging the first sentence of the paragraph - recalling the 1994 ceasefires - with paragraph 6 and deleting the remainder of paragraph 5. [It should be added, however, that another delegation felt that the latter part of paragraph 5 contained useful ideas on the negative effects of violence and should be retained.] Concern was also expressed that greater prominence had not been given to the impact of the ceasefires. In the same vein, it was felt that the draft over-stressed the role played by the two Governments in building up the peace process, with no reference to others who had been prominent in this regard.

Next Steps

12. It was agreed that prior to the next meeting delegations would forward in writing to the Secretariat their detailed views on the draft. Based on these, the Secretariat would draw up a revised draft for consideration at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

13. To enable this work to be undertaken effectively it was agreed that the next meeting would be held three weeks hence, on 30 June (rather than 23 June as originally planned). The sequence envisaged was as follows: delegations would have their written views with the Secretariat within one week (ie by 16 June); the latter would prepare the revised draft during the following week, circulating to members at the end of that period (ie by 23 June); this would leave one week for consideration of the revised draft by delegations.

Forum Secretariat
14 June 1995

Drafting Committee Meeting, 9 June, 1995

List of Attendees

Fianna Fáil	Noel Dempsey Martin Mansergh
SDLP	John Hume Sean Farren
Fine Gael	Austin Currie Sean Donlon
Labour	Brian Fitzgerald Fergus Finlay
Sinn Féin	Pat Doherty Rita O'Hare
Progressive Democrats	John Dardis Stephen O'Byrnes
Alliance	John Alderdice Seamus Close
Democratic Left	Seamus Lynch Paddy Gillen
Green Party/Comhaontas Glas	Vincent McDowell Eugene O'Shea
Senator Gordon Wilson	Gordon Wilson Aisling Maguire
Independent Deputies	Neil Blaney
Independent Senators	Feargal Quinn
Workers' Party	John Lowry Pat Quearney