

DRAFT

SDLP SUBMISSION

POLITICAL TALKS

STRAND 2

28 AUGUST 1992

1. This submission addresses issues identified in Item 6 of the agreed agenda for Strand 2 of the current political talks. Item 6 includes under 'Fundamental aspects of the problem' the following specific issues: underlying realities; identity; allegiance; constitutional.

Underlying Realities, Identity and Allegiance

2 In the SDLP's basic document submitted at the opening of Strand 1 the underlying realities as understood by the Party were carefully outlined. They have not changed and are as pertinent to the issues being addressed in Strand 2 as they were to those in Strand 1.

3. The SDLP believes that in its contemporary manifestation the ~~Northern Ireland problem~~ ^{we address} which includes relationships between the people of the whole island of Ireland, is in essence a conflict of two identities, Irish nationalist and Irish unionist, - or more precisely, the failure to devise political structures which accommodate the differences between, and allow full and mutual expression to those two identities. This has been the abiding reality since the issues were first addressed in the last century.

4. The Nationalist identity defines itself as essentially Irish. Its vision and aspiration are the creation of a new and tolerant society that unites and accommodates all traditions in a new Ireland, where nationalists and Unionists can co-exist in harmony and mutual respect. The Report of the New Ireland ^{Forum} stated that "The new Ireland must be a society within which, subject only to public order, all cultural, political and religious beliefs can be freely expressed and practised. Fundamental to such a society are freedom of conscience, social and communal harmony, reconciliation and the cherishing of the diversity of all traditions...The implementation of these principles calls for deepening and broadening of the sense of Irish identity".

5. The Unionist community, on the other hand, perceives itself as British as well as Irish. Unionists regard the Nationalist

aspiration to a united Ireland as representing a fundamental threat to their sense of identity; furthermore, they see the Nationalist ethos as pervasively Catholic and incapable of tolerance and respect for the Unionist heritage, tradition, rights and civil liberties.

Destiny
Nation
not inherent

6. The exclusivity of each tradition in terms of its definition of ~~its~~ itself and in terms its development created the circumstances and conditions in which the country's political partition could be imposed. Once effected partition merely served to reinforce this exclusivity while at the same time creating a new minority of the nationalist community living in Northern Ireland.

← each serving
part of a
broader whole.
a complex
relationship
with the
major
whole
not just
a link
between
the two

7. As the two parts of Ireland grew increasingly apart from each other in the years which followed 1921 the effects of this division were to become evident in damaging effects on the country's infrastructure, on communications, as well as on the general economic, social and cultural life in both parts of Ireland. These effects were especially evident in border regions whose development was severely arrested for many decades following partition. Details of these effects are contained in several reports specially commissioned by the New Ireland Forum.—

Itense.
8. Above all the effect of division between our two main political traditions in Ireland has been a human cost, in the lives of those lost and those injured in civil strife, but also in the bitterness, suspicion and misunderstanding that has been evident between people of these traditions.

9. In recent years change has been taking place as people throughout Ireland have sought to address the effects of division. Politically the Anglo-Irish Agreement has effected significant change because it contains a formal acknowledgement by the British Government of the legitimacy of the Irish identity of Northern Nationalists and an acceptance that any way forward has to incorporate a formal "Irish dimension". That Agreement is a formal acknowledgement and acceptance of the twin identities and allegiances of the people of Northern Ireland as being fundamental

more than
representative
of structures

political realities and, as such, they must form the basis for any new political arrangements.

10. Also as a result of that Agreement new forms of co-operation between both parts of Ireland have been made possible, many of which are directly addressing the adverse effects of partition. Significantly, a key role in fostering this co-operation is being played by the European Community to which, as equal members, the Irish and British Governments are enabled to make joint representations to ensure support for projects aimed at benefitting communities in both parts of the country.

Quigley

11. Recognising the realities summarised above and the outcome of ~~the Anglo-Irish Agreement, it must be our aim in Strand 2 to build upon the achievements of that accord by agreeing new political structures based on the self-same principles and aimed at bringing the people of Ireland closer in a spirit of mutual respect and reconciliation.~~

Experience within EC reinforces strong
commensality of interests in Ireland
within the island of Ireland -
divergence of these interests from

much to this ground has been
explored in the NIF Reform Report
referred to in Par. 7.