



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code: 2021/100/16

Creator(s): Department of the Taoiseach

Accession Conditions: Open

Copyright: National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

Paddy, Dermot, Martin. We will probably have several "shots" at a way out of this problem. What follows is a summary of what I was suggesting yesterday.

Shadow Executive - Possible Steps

Tim 17/9

1. Sinn Féin repeats its commitment to play its full part in delivering upon the Good Friday Agreement. The SF statement would go on to acknowledge that this means, not only that the various institutional arrangements will be put in place and that demilitarisation, policing and prisoners commitment etc. will be delivered upon, but also that actual arms decommissioning will be achieved. SF would also state that their ambition and aim is to have all aspects of the Agreement implemented within the timeframes provided for in the Agreement (i.e. May 2000 in effect).

- With regard to decommissioning, SF would also indicate that
 - (a) they would take forward discussions with the Independent Commission on the practical issues which will need to be resolved to enable decommissioning to take place. (b) their continuing commitment to using any influence to achieve decommissioning within the timeframe provided for in the Agreement.
- Ideally, a PIRA statement would endorse SF approach and, while re-iterating that decommissioning will be a matter for them exclusively, also indicate that they would be prepared to facilitate discussion on practical aspects of what would be involved.

2. The two Governments signal their support for the idea of progressing all aspects of the Agreement within this timeframe and, in particular, note the recognition by Sinn Féin that this will require actual arms decommissioning within that period.
3. D. Trimble notes that a timeframe for actual decommissioning has now been signalled by SF [and that work would proceed on associated practical issues.] He would also note, however, that there is no indication as to when exactly the actual decommissioning of arms will begin and the fact that Sinn Féin have



signalled that PIRA clearly require greater certainty about the implementation of the Agreement as a whole before they can make a more specific commitment on the beginning of actual decommissioning. In these circumstances he, for his part, would signal that he is not in a position to commit himself to a specific date by which he would be prepared to participate with Sinn Féin representatives in a fully competent Executive Committee. He would be prepared to proceed with the Transitional Arrangements provided for in the Agreement, including the Shadow Executive (so that progress on the implementation of the Agreement as a whole including decommissioning will not be retarded), but will reserve his position on the issue of movement beyond Transitional Arrangements until he is more satisfied about Sinn Féin's commitment to deliver upon all of its commitments. He would equally acknowledge, however, his willingness to make that move at an early stage in the event of their being some decommissioning. He would indicate that he shares the view that all parties should work towards as short as possible a timeframe for full implementation of the Agreement.

4. On the foregoing basis the Shadow Executive is quickly established.

Comments:-

[The above suggestion has the disadvantage that everything remains in "transitional" mode much longer than was envisaged. If Sinn Féin wish to defer actual decommissioning until issues of concern to them are "nailed down" i.e. prisoners, demilitarisation, policing etc., this will effectively mean that such a transition will not become possible until the latter half of 1999 at the earliest. However it should also mean that -

- (a) at least some progress can still be made on most of the issues that need to be addressed - no real progress will be possible if the current impasse is allowed to stand
- (b) parallel decommissioning ("incrementalism"), to which SF is adamantly opposed would be avoided but only at the price of

making full implementation of the Agreement dependant on largescale decommissioning nearer the end of the process.

- (c) members of the Executive-to-be will begin to work together and become accustomed to what the working of Government entails;
and
- (d) the possibility of "fast-tracking" the system would be preserved.

T.D.
17
5

