



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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~~Sec Gallagher~~

RECEIVED 29 SEP 1998

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Meeting between David Trimble and Séamus Mallon, 28 September 1998

1. Séamus Mallon gave me a brief read-out last evening on his meeting yesterday with David Trimble. Overall, Séamus felt that it was a difficult meeting and, although conducted on low-key, polite terms, no particular progress was achieved in regard to the current impasse on the Shadow Executive/Decommissioning.
2. Séamus told him at the outset that there was no chance actual decommissioning could be delivered before the formation of the Shadow Executive. Trimble disagreed, saying that "London thinks it will happen". He questioned Séamus' reading of the situation. Séamus argued that what Trimble was doing in postponing the formation of the Shadow Executive was precisely what Sinn Féin were doing on decommissioning - using a technicality of the Agreement to prevent progress.
3. Séamus told me that he tried "gently" to broach the possibility (as suggested in our draft paper) of an informal Group, drawn from the parties, working with Trimble and himself in preparing the ground on North/South, in advance of an inaugural meeting of the Shadow Council. Trimble would not agree to such an exercise collectively with Séamus, but suggested that something like this could be done "singly".
4. Regarding their own co-ordination arrangements, Séamus suggested that they should meet each Monday to discuss the week ahead and agree a media handling plan. They should also seek to ensure that "direction was filtering

back down to civil servants from them, rather than the other way around, as is the case at present". Séamus said that Trimble accepted these suggestions, although he is not particularly confident that they will hold up in practice.

5. I told Séamus that we were picking up from journalistic circles that David Trimble feels that he has no room to manoeuvre between now and major party meetings he has towards the end of October (Annual Conference on 24 October, and a party Executive meeting shortly afterwards); the sense was that he would have greater scope after that. Séamus acknowledged that possibility, but saw difficulties "for the rest of us" in the interim.

#### **Gerry Adams**

6. Séamus was called yesterday also by Gerry Adams seeking a meeting. They agreed to meet early next week.

#### **Comment**

7. Clearly, the best aspect of yesterday's meeting was the fact that it was held and passed off in non-controversial terms. Séamus recognises that the relationship is going to continue to be a bumpy one for the foreseeable future, particularly until the current difficulties regarding the formation of the Shadow Executive are resolved. Séamus' proposal of a meeting each Monday would seem valuable in terms of managing the relationship and, hopefully, this, at least, can be attempted.

T O'Connor  
29 September 1998

cc: PST; PSM; PSMS  
Mr. Teahon; Mr. Dalton; Dr. Mansergh; PSSG  
Ambassadors Washington & London; Joint Secretary  
Counsellors Anglo-Irish