



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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SECRET

Shadow Executive etc.

"Plan B"

Paddy,

1. Following yesterday's meetings in London, it now looks highly unlikely that the October 31st date (for the Shadow Executive etc.) will be met. We must, therefore, begin to put something else in place so as to maintain a reasonably credible level of momentum. Par. 4 below is an expansion of what I've already mentioned in broad outline i.e. what I've been calling a possible "Plan B".
2. I feel that all concerned - including PIRA - have invested too much in the process at this stage to let it all slip. Consequently, I think that they are likely to welcome (rather than resist) some way of keeping things going.
3. While I would like to be proved wrong, I don't think that PIRA will decommission in the short term - and that they will not do so, at all, unless the "prize" is quite substantial. I don't think that the promise of "Shadow" structures constitutes a sufficient prize. It may be that, if they are given a little more time and can see an immediate prospect of formal and fully competent structures (early in the New Year) they would be more likely to be more forthcoming on the subject of decommissioning (they can hardly, I suppose, be less forthcoming than they are now!)
4. The following are some possibilities for the period ahead:-
  - Both Governments acknowledge that the failure, so far, of the parties to reach an accommodation on decommissioning, and thereby meet the October 31st deadline, is a setback. However, given the underlying will of all concerned to implement the Agreement and the enormous public support for that goal, what is required, now, is a set of effective working

arrangements which will ensure that progress towards the formal establishment of a fully competent Executive and North South Institutions, (early in the New Year) is maintained. [Part of the thinking, here, is to underplay the importance of shadow structures and suggest that the real goal is to have competent structures as soon as possible].

- Without prejudice to any eventual decisions that may be reached on the composition of the new Executive, First Minister and his Deputy have decided to invite the parties to nominate representatives to a series of Working Groups who will have the task of examining in detail the requirements for the formal establishment and effective operation of Ministries to deal with a range of issues which have been mentioned as possible areas for Ministerial responsibility. The Working Groups could, by agreement, co-opt members with relevant expertise outside of the Assembly. They would also have staff and other necessary support to discharge their tasks as quickly and effectively as possible. [The basic idea, here, is to keep as many people as possible busy, in a reasonably credible way, in preparing for the future structures].
- The Working Groups will consult as widely as they consider appropriate including consultations with both Governments. They will be asked to report not later than [?].
- First Minister and his Deputy have decided also that the work of these Groups should be overseen by a Steering Committee (representatives, again, nominated by the Parties) which will have the task of collating and examining the ideas put forward of the various Groups and, on that basis, consulting with both Governments on detailed requirements for the formal establishment of a fully competent Executive (early in the New Year). The Steering Committee will also have staff and other supports necessary for it to complete its work by [?].



- In the meantime, the Decommissioning Body which has been receiving satisfactory cooperation from relevant parties - but needs more time to complete its work - will be asked to proceed with its efforts to deal with the decommissioning issue in a way that will remove it as an obstacle to the political progress that the vast majority of people North and South are so clearly anxious to achieve.

5. There are two final points:-

- (1) Clearly none of the foregoing is as satisfactory as having a Shadow Executive and other bodies etc. by 31st October but, the suggestions (or something like them) might be used as a "filler" in the (likely) event that we need a filler.
- (2) It is unlikely that D. Trimble could go along with this unless he had some signal that, in advance of the establishment of the formal Executive, SF will be prepared to be more forthcoming on their decommissioning plans - we would have to work on this with SF.

J.D. 20/10

c.c. Dermot Gallagher  
Martin Mansergh