

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
National Archives

Reference Code:	2023/154/51
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.

CONFIDENTIAL

M. Whelan
16. 2. 2000

M. Kiernan

SEEN BY TAOISEACH

SDLP Meeting with Government, 15 February 2000

1. The SDLP, especially Séamus Mallon, are in difficult and worried mood since last Friday. The old paranoia about their being sidelined by the focus on Sinn Féin and the UUP has come to the surface again. It is heightened by the progressive radicalisation of the nationalist community following on Mandelson's suspension move on Friday, and the resultant fear of serious electoral damage to the party down the road.

2. The strong party view, therefore, is that the institutions must be restored immediately. If necessary, this should be done by the two Governments taking the situation by the scruff of the neck and acting decisively.

3. The Taoiseach and Minister might emphasise our determination to get the institutions back up and running at the earliest possible date. We want to see the primacy of politics being restored, and with it the full potential of the political skills of the SDLP being realised - as was beginning to happen within the Executive, where the role of Séamus and his colleagues was quite outstanding.

4. Today's meeting (and dinner) underlines the central relationship between the party and the Government. Likewise, we wanted to see the SDLP being present at tomorrow's meeting in Downing Street, and are very happy that Hume and Mallon will be attending.

©TSCH/2023/154/51

Media

5. It would be important that the Taoiseach and Minister joined the SDLP team (Hume, Mallon, McGrady, Durkan, Farren, Rogers) for a press presentation - say between the meeting and dinner.

Minister's meetings in Belfast

6. A short note on the Minister's meeting with the UUP is attached.

7. As regards the Sinn Féin meeting, Adams and McGuinness took a very hard line. They made it clear that the present situation was disastrous and that they were very unlikely to take part in a review. They emphasised that the responsibility for all this lay with the Secretary of State, and he now needed to act urgently to put the situation right.

8. At the end, Adams agreed that he would try to reach out to Trimble when he met him the following day (Tuesday), though one would not be sanguine about this meeting.

9. At the meeting with the PUP, Ervine and Hutchinson said that, in their view, there were two weeks in which to get the institutions back; after that, it would be next to impossible to do so, and the situation would be deeply worrying.

Dermot Gallagher
15 February 2000

©TSCH/2023/154/51