

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Confidential

Meeting with David Campbell, 8 November

I met with Campbell in Stormont. Much of what he had to say was similar to the views conveyed to the Taoiseach on 2 November by himself and Ken Maginnis and is not repeated here.

Trimble had to impose sanctions on Sinn Féin to survive at the Council. They accept this puts a strain on the Agreement and makes it more difficult for the IRA to decommission but the alternative would have been a Donaldson victory. Genuine re-engagement by the IRA with de Chastelain, which would allow him to report progress towards decommissioning, would enable Trimble to lift the sanction. They want to do this as soon as possible. If that does not happen Trimble will not sign the papers for the Martin McGuinness NSMC meeting on 24 November.

Donaldson has been damaged by his numerous failures to defeat Trimble, most recently at the Council. People like Martin Smyth were hiding behind Donaldson urging him on. However, while Donaldson is allowed many failures one failure could destroy Trimble's leadership. If genuine re-engagement with de Chastelain can be secured, in a way which would give assurance on eventual decommissioning, a further confrontation in January may be avoided. This would strengthen Trimble for the general election. Without re-engagement the anti-Trimble faction will have another go in January and Campbell fears they might win.

Campbell accepts the sincerity of Ahtisaari and Ramaphosa and the significance of the dumps they visited. Their visit was helpful. Ken Maginnis was impressed when he met them. However, many in their party remain unconvinced and the potential of the

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second inspection was largely lost because of its timing.

He has doubts about the sincerity of Adams and Sinn Féin and wondered if Adams wants to let Trimble be defeated. He claimed that on a number of occasions Trimble had asked Adams to take a certain line whereupon Adams left the meeting and his party did exactly the opposite of what was asked of them.

The Trimble Mallon relationship is a very difficult one except on the day to day business of the Executive. He described their relationship as one where Trimble tries to talk to Mallon, the latter preaches and ends up saying he will think about what Trimble has said. On the Sinn Féin side de Brún is distant and difficult but they can work with McGuinness.

On Policing he said serving RUC officers have largely accepted the need for change and have no difficulties with the changes being proposed. Some of the older officers and many retired officers and their families, particularly the bereaved or relatives of the injured, are more attached to the RUC name and symbols.

The ordinary unionist has no interest or knowledge except in relation to the changes in the name and the symbols. The proposal "agreed with" the British Government on the name is merely a fig leaf. Most people, including himself, have always referred to the police and never to the RUC. He couldn't understand why there is opposition to the crown and the harp which represent the two states and to the flying of the Union Flag. He said they can't take any more changes to the Policing Bill.

They had been toying with the idea of a mini review of the Agreement to get over present difficulties. Trimble had raised this with Adams who was against it. He understood we are not in favour.

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He wondered could a Clinton visit be used to help advance decommissioning. While he would not exaggerate the influence of Clinton he seemed to have in mind in a very tentative way that the IRA (and the loyalists?) might make a gesture involving product under the auspices of Clinton if the latter makes a visit in December. I expressed caution.

Finally, Campbell repeated that Trimble set great store by his relationship with the Taoiseach and said the measured and solid approach of the Minister of Foreign Affairs is recognised.

Dáithí O'Ceallaigh
9 November, 2000

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