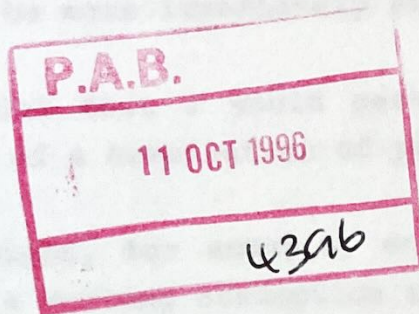


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DESK IMMEDIATE

FROM: D A LAVERY
CENT SEC
11 OCTOBER 1996



PS/PUS(L&B)	- B
PS/Sir David Fell	- B
Mr Thomas	- B
Mr Steele	- B
Mr Bell	- B
Mr Ray	- B
Mr Watkins	- B
Mr Beeton	- B
Mr Hill	- B
Mr Maccabe	- B
Mr Perry	- B
Miss Bharucha	- B
Ms Mapstone	- B
Mr Jagelman	- B

Handwritten: L11/10

Mr Stephens- B

BREAKING OUT OF THE IMPASSE

1. Thank you for sending me a revised draft of your paper under cover of your minute of 10 October to Mr Thomas.
2. I think that the revised draft is very good and sets out a useful menu of options for Ministers to consider.
3. In reading the current draft I was struck by the fact that not all of the five main groups of options you address are necessarily mutually incompatible. Rather, it seems to me that we could usefully deploy various permutations of these options in order to tailor a package which might just meet the requirements of the UUP and the Irish Government. Therefore (and I am conscious that this is not a particularly helpful suggestion at this late stage in the drafting process), an alternative way of presenting this material might be to set out a menu of options which might be combined.
4. Of the three principal options (ie options (b) - (d)), it seems to me that the idea of 'parking' decommissioning is likely to be presentationally easier than would the alternative of making Sinn

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Fein a 'closing offer'. The downside of the latter approach is that it closes the door on Sinn Fein and leaves the field to the men of violence for the immediate future. I would have thought that in the aftermath of Thiepval the idea of parking decommissioning would be likely to be more immediately attractive to the UUP and the Irish.

5. I think that I would personally prefer to see us testing the viability of a combination of your options (b) and (c).

6. We might, for example, envisage that we should proceed on the basis of a working assumption that Sinn Fein will not be joining the process and that we should, therefore, agree to 'park' decommissioning. However, we would do so on the basis of a clear explanation of the conditions which would apply should Sinn Fein decide to join the process later. The building blocks of this might well be the following:

- a delay of, say, four weeks (as suggested by the Irish) during which the unequivocal nature of the ceasefire would be assessed by the Governments;

- following an invitation from the Secretary of State to join the Talks, Sinn Fein would enter what I have referred to as a procedural 'airlock' (much as described in paragraph 27 of your paper); and for decommissioning to be completed. I think this would be important in trying to sell this option to the UUP.

- there would then be a pause in the negotiations if, by that stage, the arrangements on decommissioning had yet to be put in place - I think it will be essential for the Unionists that we align the recommencement of the substantive negotiations with the availability of the arrangements on decommissioning;

- in the meantime, and beginning as soon as possible, the Governments should publish the draft legislation on decommissioning and also a worked-up scheme on decommissioning (much as requested by the UUP).

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7. I tend to the view that something of this nature might just do the trick. *these comments on what is clearly a very good paper are helpful.*

8. I have also some more specific comments on your draft paper, taking the paragraphs seriatim.

Paragraph 1 of your paper is very gloomy - possibly realistically so. However, I was struck by the contrast between this assessment and the tone of David Hill's Gameplan for next week. Would there be a case for lightening the gloom just ever so slightly?

In paragraph 7, the reference to option "(d)" should, of course, be to option (e).

In paragraph 9, perhaps the word "claiming" would be better than "stressing"?

In paragraph 25 (i), would there be a case for flagging-up the apparent willingness of the Taoiseach to consider proceeding without Sinn Fein? His speech to the Dail contained some remarkable material along these lines.

In paragraph 27, I would suggest adding another sub-heading which refers to using the time provided by the 'airlock' to allow work on the arrangements for decommissioning to be completed. I think this would be important in trying to sell this option to the UUP.

In paragraph 31, in the second tiret, I am not sure that the reference to the Governments "taking appropriate action" in the event that decommissioning did not begin within seven months amounts to much more than a hollow threat. Is this really credible?

The optimism of paragraph 36 seems to contrast slightly with the gloom and apparent despair of your paragraph 1.

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[Signed DAL]

D A LAVERY

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