

ANNIE - CARMEN EMANUEL THIS (C.T.)

ALTERNATIVES TO BE EXPLORED

Assumptions:

A negotiating void exists when an attempt has been made at settlement but it fails and there is no closure.

Such voids are dangerous because the parties may begin to question the underlying value of the Agreement itself.

What is needed then, is a partial agreement that will keep the Assembly doing valuable work, until one of two things happens: Sinn Fein puts arms beyond use on its own or the Ulster Unionist Party accepts Sinn Fein in the Executive without decommissioning. These changes of position will not be accomplished by force.

The Women's Coalition, by virtue of its statements on Hillsborough, will want to be clear about which parts of the Declaration are acceptable. The Governments may also expect an alternative solution.

The most desirable solution, formation of the Executive with an element of voluntary decommissioning, may be beyond reach at this moment. Other alternatives, including the shadow Executive, may also be beyond reach right now because of a lack of trust among the parties.

Elements of an Agreement

The elements of this agreement might consist of:

- a statement that there is agreement among all parties that "decommissioning should take place within the timescale envisaged in the Agreement, and through the efforts of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning" (Hillsborough)
- a review of all of the elements of the Agreement that have gone into place and the positive things accomplished under the Agreement (Hillsborough)
- the development of the Operation of the Assembly, particularly paragraphs 8, 9, and 10 of the Agreement. The Secretary of State should obtain approval of the parties to the Agreement to exercise d'Hondt to pick the Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs. ✕
- No Executive would be formed at this time. The Northern Ireland Civil Service would continue to act in the Executive function. ○
- The Civic Forum should be established to provide a consultative mechanism to the Assembly.

- Convene the North-South Ministerial Council using only the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister and proposals generated by the Assembly Committees. This is not perfect but it will start a cross-border process. See paragraph 8 p.12 of the Agreement.
- Convene the British-Irish Council using only Assembly Chairman, if possible.