Jonathan Powell – Financial Times (Excerpt)

What I really object to however is the casual vandalism of the Northern Ireland peace process, something a previous generation of British politicians on both sides spent decades constructing. Dominic Cummings’ tweets reveal how little regard Johnson had for the Good Friday Agreement when it came to signing up for the Withdrawal Agreement. The prime minister continues to play politics with the peace process by using the DUP as a battering ram in negotiations with the EU. Having marched Jeffrey Donaldson, the DUP’s leader up to the top of the hill, Johnson is now going to have to find a way to march him down again without humiliation and the risk of losing votes to his right. Donaldson will remember that Johnson left his predecessor, Arlene Foster, standing at the altar with disastrous consequences for her leadership.

The threat Brexit posed in Northern Ireland was always more political than one of returning to the Troubles. But if Donaldson goes ahead with his threat to pull out of the power-sharing executive, then it will be exceedingly hard, if not impossible, to put the institutions up again in the foreseeable future. All of this is complicated by the Unionist fear of Sinn Féin winning the elections next year and taking the first minister position. That will lead to prolonged political crisis, reduced support for the devolved institutions and probably increased support for a united Ireland.

For the sake of the peace process and the British economy, let’s hope Frost is really just bluffing yet again.