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“ P R E S S R E L E A S E ”

DUBLIN DECISION 'DISAPPOINTING' SAYS ALDERDICE

Alliance Leader, Dr John Alderdice, has described as 'disappointing, but not altogether surprising' today's decision by the Irish Government **not** to suspend official contacts with Sinn Fein.

Dr Alderdice said:

"I find rather feeble, the Irish Government explanation, that it needs to continue to have official contacts with Sinn Fein in order to have the benefit of their assessment of the likelihood of an IRA cease-fire. It would be more honest to admit that they cannot abandon the current failed strategy until they have constructed a new strategy.

I have been saying for some time that the Hume-Adams proposition was no longer credible. I say this, as someone who has engaged in extensive talks with Sinn Fein. The Peace Process was not based on an analysis which I shared, but I made every effort to try to make it work for the good of all our people. I found that Sinn Fein was not prepared to compromise, and after many months there was no change in their position. They call on everyone else to take risks for peace, but show no appreciation of anyone who does. They have no understanding of the position of others outside of their own community, and even now seem oblivious of the offence that they cause to everyone else by their support for murder.

The only way to make clear our abhorrence of their position, is to act, by way of refusing normal political meetings, while continuing to challenge their arguments, and their immoral support for terrorism.

I hope that this lesson will soon be appreciated by the Irish Government. If not, they must be aware that others may soon choose to follow the republican return to violence."

