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“ P R E S S R E L E A S E ”
12 December 1997

Alderdice calls on Trimble to meet Adams

Speaking at the Forum for Political Dialogue in Belfast this morning, the Alliance Leader Lord Alderdice has called on the Ulster Unionist Leader David Trimble to meet with Gerry Adams and Sinn Fein.

Speaking in the adjournment debate, John Alderdice said:

“I can understand the reaction of Unionists to yesterday’s meeting between Gerry Adams and the Prime Minister, but I think that their position of refusing to meet with Republicans is wrong.

“I have met with Gerry Adams many times during the two cease-fires, and would like to be able to say that having done so I have detected a genuine willingness to compromise. In fact however I have not detected a willingness to meet the Alliance Party half-way, let alone meet Unionists half-way. But that is why it is important to meet. Meeting them face-to-face allows me to speak with certainty about their position.

“If David Trimble wants to be able to accuse Gerry Adams of not being realistic, and be believed by nationalists, he should meet with Adams face-to-face.

“If the Republican movement returns to the use of violence they must not be allowed any excuse to justify it. By refusing to meet with Adams, Unionists in general, and David Trimble in particular, are giving Sinn Fein yet another stick with which to beat them.”

John Alderdice can be contacted via the **Press Officer, Richard Good, on 0468 151972 (mobile) or 01426 245779 (pager).**