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Peace cannot be prerequisite for progress on North, says Adams

THE president of Sinn Féin, Mr Gerry Adams, said yesterday in Belfast that what was required in Northern Ireland was a process that effectively removed the causes of conflict and allowed for total demilitarisation.

In a statement, Mr Adams said: "The initiative which John Hume and I have taken offers the opportunity to construct a peace process. It is a serious initiative aimed at creating the conditions in which peace can develop and be sustained."

"This is a problematic and difficult task. Our initiative is not aimed at short-term 'quick fixes'. It is much more serious and ambitious than that."

"It is not aimed merely, as some commentators and sections of the media are suggesting, at bringing an end to the IRA's campaign."

"What is required is a process which effectively removes the causes of conflict and allows for a total demilitarisation of the situation."

"Peace cannot be a prerequisite for such a process. Peace is the desired and optimum result of this process."

"John Hume and I have made

this clear in our statement of April 24th when we declared 'that the most pressing issue facing the people of Ireland and Britain today is the question of lasting peace and how best it can be achieved'."

"One of the consequences of our initiative to date has been that Irish public opinion and political debate has been focused on the potential for a real peace process. As part of this politicians and others in Ireland and Britain have had to review their positions, in some cases in a positive way."

"However, there is no evidence of any positive response from the British government. In an RTE interview today Garret Fitzgerald draws attention to the reality that this initiative cannot succeed unless the British support it."

"He went on to say '... there is no echo from the British side that this is acceptable to them...'"

"I have been saying this for some time and I believe it is a matter which deserves much more attention."

"To date, the British government have been downright rude in their public utterances. The reaction of John Major and Pat-

rick Mayhew to the present initiative has been arrogant, offensive and, most worryingly, extremely short-sighted."

"Their comments do not display any trace of the vision or political courage so necessary to break the cycle of conflict in this country. Survival and self-preservation, rather than peace in Ireland, appears to be their priority."

"Last Friday John Major spent three minutes dealing with Ireland in his address to the Conservative Party conference. He could have initiated a new era of politics in Ireland and between Ireland and Britain and responded positively and openly to the opportunities created by the peace initiative now developing in Ireland. He did not."

"Instead we were treated to the outdated and arrogant rhetoric of British imperialism in which Major restated the failed policies of unionism, of partition and repression. Not one original thought emerged."

"There was nothing to offer any hope of progress. His references to Ireland were designed to secure his own short-term political fortunes by pandering to the prejudices of the right wing of his

own divided party and to the demands of the unionist MPs upon whose support he is increasingly dependent."

"As has so often happened in the past the interests of the Irish people were sacrificed to the short-term survival of a British politician."

"Patrick Mayhew's response has been similarly negative and arrogantly dismissive of the political aspirations of the majority of the Irish people. His insistence that the Stormont talks process is not dead, despite all the evidence to the contrary, is little more than a self-delusion."

"His attitude does a disservice to all the people of the North who, as recent polls have shown, recognise the need to move out of his political cul-de-sac and towards a real resolution of this conflict."

"John Major and Patrick Mayhew need to review their negative attitude if we are to make headway. They need to make it clear that they are for peace and not, as is obvious so far, against peace."

"It is not good enough for them to hide behind the tired old failed rhetoric of the past. We need to look to the future."

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