

Joint statement

THE following is the text of a joint statement by Mr. John Hume and Mr. Gerry Adams:

A meeting between us held on Saturday, April 10th, in our capacities as party leaders of the SDLP and Sinn Féin has given rise to media coverage, some of which was ill-informed or purely speculative.

We are not acting as intermediaries. As leaders of our respective parties we accept that the most pressing issue facing the people of Ireland and Britain today is the question of lasting peace and how it can best be achieved.

Everyone has a solemn duty to change the political climate away from conflict and towards a process of national reconciliation which see the peaceful accommodation of the differences between the people of Britain and Ireland and the Irish people themselves.

In striving for that end we accept that an internal settlement is not a solution because it obviously does not deal with all the relationships at the heart of the problem.

We accept that the Irish people as a whole have a right to national self-determination. This is a view shared by a majority of the people of this island though not by all its people.

The exercise of self-determination is a pre-condition for agreement

between the people of Ireland. It is the search for that agreement and the means of achieving it on which we will be concentrating.

We are mindful that not all the people of Ireland share that view or agree on how to give meaningful expression to it. Indeed, we do not disguise the different views held by our own parties.

As leaders of our respective parties we have told each other that we see the task of reaching agreement on a peaceful and democratic accord for all on this island as our primary challenge.

We both recognise that such a new agreement is only achievable and viable if it can earn and enjoy the allegiance of the different traditions on this island, by accommodating diversity and providing for national reconciliation.

We are reporting our discussion of these matters back to our respective parties. They have fully endorsed the continuation of this process of dialogue.

We will be picking up on where the talks between our parties ended in 1988 and reviewing the current political situation.

As at that time we engaged in a political dialogue aimed at investigating the possibility of developing an overall political strategy to establish justice and peace in Ireland.

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political dialogue aimed at investigation