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**Social Democratic & Labour Party**  
*Páirtí Sóisialta Daonlathach an Lucht Oibre*



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**Strict Embargo: 12.00 noon, 18<sup>th</sup> July 1997**

## **JOINT STATEMENT BY JOHN HUME MP, MEP, LEADER OF THE SDLP AND THE SINN FEIN PRESIDENT GERRY ADAMS**

The SDLP Leader John Hume and the Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams met last night to review their efforts to restore the peace process. In a joint statement following their meeting they indicated that they believe considerable progress has been made and said they were optimistic that outstanding obstacles to inclusive negotiations in a peaceful atmosphere could be removed.

In a joint statement Messrs Hume and Adams said:

"In our first joint statement in April 1993 we acknowledged that the most pressing issue facing the people of Ireland and Britain today is the question of a lasting peace and how it can be achieved and committed ourselves to addressing this issue. This has been our primary focus. It is our view that inclusive negotiations are the only way of reaching agreement and achieving a just and lasting peace for all the people of this island. We regret that, despite our collective efforts, inclusive and meaningful negotiations were not put in place and that the unprecedented opportunity created by the IRA's cessation of August 1994 was wasted. Our principle concern is that this dreadful mistake is not repeated.

At our meeting last night we reviewed progress in removing the obstacles, erected by the previous British government, to an inclusive and meaningful negotiations process. These obstacles have been used tactically to prevent progress in the talks process at Stormont. We welcome the moves that have been made to remove these obstacles by the new Irish and British governments.

A just and lasting settlement will only be achieved if it is based on principles of democracy and equality and has the allegiance of both traditions.

Such a solution requires change, political and constitutional. It is for the Irish and British governments, in consultation with the parties, to co-operate to bring this about in the shortest time possible and to legislate accordingly.

Our primary objective remains the achievement of a just and lasting peace for all the people of this island. We are committed to our continuing dialogue and to co-operation between our parties and others to bring this about. We reiterate that this process offers no threat to any section of the people of this island. Our objective is agreement and reconciliation.

It is our view that the peace process can be restored and that with political will on all sides that we can move towards a new political agreement. There is a heavy onus on both governments, and particularly the British government, to respond positively and imaginatively both in terms of the demilitarisation of the situation, particularly in dealing with the issue of prisoners, in urgently addressing the equality agenda and in assisting the search for agreement among the people of this island"

Conall Mc Devitt (SDLP Director of Communications)



John Hume MP MEP Party Leader    Seamus Mallon MP Deputy Leader    Eddie McGrady MP Chief Whip

*Member of the Party of European Socialists and Socialist International*

