

DRAFT STATEMENT

Speaking in West Belfast on 15 February, shortly after the Canary Wharf bomb, the Sinn Féin President said :

" It is my clearly stated objective to bring an end to all armed actions, to end the war and to take the gun out of Irish politics."

He also stated that "Irish republicans want peace".

At an Easter Commemoration in Derry on 7 April, Mr. Adams stated that :

"The people of our island have the right to peace". In his Ard Fheis speech on 23 March, he told us that : " For our part Sinn Féin stands for peace." Again, he told us on this occasion that Sinn Féin "believe in the resolution of conflict through negotiation."

He also stated that: "The objective reality is that peace in Ireland can only be achieved through honest dialogue and democratic negotiations based on equality. This is not a military problem. It is a political problem which was militarised by the British. It needs a political solution."

In the light of these remarks, will Mr. Adams now tell us what part so-called armed struggle has to play in all of this ? He has said on many occasions that Sinn Féin is prepared to take risks for peace. Is it too much of a risk for Sinn Féin to disavow armed struggle ? Is it too much for them to condemn the killing of Garda McCabe - too much of a risk for them to condemn the IRA bombing of Manchester ?

Mr. Adams criticised the British Prime Minister in his Ard Fheis speech for embracing the rhetoric of peace-making but avoiding the real challenges.

Today, I challenge Mr. Adams to tell us clearly and unambiguously whether or not Sinn Féin support what the IRA call their armed struggle.