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# Sinn Féin

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The following is the text of a statement issued to our office. 18/12/94

Is Major saying the peace process is over?

Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams speaking in Belfast tonight on the eve of the second meeting between Sinn Féin and British government representatives has expressed "concern at the recent statement by John Major <sup>on</sup> the decommissioning of IRA weapons".

Mr Adams said:

"Remarks in recent days by, among others former Dublin Taoiseach Albert Reynolds and Proineas De Rosca of Democratic Left, are evidence of growing concern at the British government's stance on the issue of IRA weapons.

"This concern arises from John Major's efforts to impose a precondition on talks with Sinn Féin and his assertion that IRA weapons must be decommissioned. I totally reject any preconditions being placed on Sinn Féin voters.

"I agree with John Bruton when he said today in the Sunday Tribune; 'It is important to resolve this, not to get into a stand off about it'.

"Sinn Féin is not the IRA. Sinn Féin does not speak for nor, in any way, determine the actions of the IRA. Sinn Féin is a separate and entirely different organisation, a reality recognised and publicly acknowledged by the British government most directly following the banning of the UDA on August 10th 1992 when both Sir Patrick Mayhew and Michael Mates drew a clear distinction between Sinn Féin and the IRA.



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Sinn Féin has consistently argued that the peace process needs to confront the reality that there are a large number of armed groups, British loyalist and republican, involved in this conflict. The existence of all of these groups needs to be resolved by an effective demilitarisation process and as part of an overall political settlement. The RUC needs to be disbanded and replaced by a police service which is acceptable and accountable to all our people. The British Army needs to be withdrawn and the consequences of the arming of the loyalist death squads by British military intelligence and of collusion with these death squads need to be dealt with.

John Major seeks to convince international opinion that he recognises and accepts the democratic mandate of Sinn Féin and the democratic rights of our electorate. He has yet to do this.

Sinn Féin does not have any weapons to dispose of. In fact, it is our often stated objective to see the removal of all guns, Irish and British, from Irish politics. The effective application, for the first time, of democratic principles, and the achievement of a political settlement on this basis, is the only way to permanently remove conflict. Mr Major must embrace this if progress is to be assured.



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...news release...

"The bllaterals between Sinn Féin and the British government will not find a solution. That is not their function. The British government should move speedily towards all party inclusive discussions where the process of demilitarisation can be properly addressed along with the need for constitutional and political change and issues of democratic rights.

"It is important to stress the import of John Major's remarks. Does he want peace? Is he saying that the decommissioning of weapons is now a precondition on further progress towards a lasting peace? Is Mr Major saying that the peace process is over?