Hume, John. (1999). 'We Must Continue the Process', statement by John Hume, MP, MEP, then SDLP leader, (26 August 1999), [PDF; KB]. Derry: SDLP. ... [24120] - [Statement]

"We Must Continue the Process" - Hume

The SDLP leader and Nobel Laureate John Hume has said that despite the tragic death of Charles Bennett, the only sensible and logical thing to do is continue with the peace process. Mr Hume was speaking in reaction to the Secretary of State's ruling that while she believes the IRA was involved in the murder of Mr Bennett, she still feels that their ceasefire has not broken down. He said that while the peace we have is imperfect we cannot allow the process to be derailed.

"It is very difficult for many people, including myself to see further deaths on our streets when we believed we had achieved peace. However we must not allow those who have never believed in the work we have been involved in to knock us off course. Charles Bennett's father called on all politicians to move the process on and not allow the death of his son to derail the whole process."

John Hume began the process of building peace when he entered into talks with the Republican movement. At the time he was bitterly criticised, but said that the objective of that process was an end to violence, followed by all party talks, leading to an agreement which would have to have the allegiance of both sides of our divided people. That has come to pass.

Mr Hume stated,

"Obviously there are going to be setbacks like the tragic and deplorable murder of young Charles Bennett, and all of the attacks on Catholic homes and property which have been taking place recently. But what is the alternative to trying to build peace? How can be build a society where we leave the gun behind us if we don't continue in the process which has yielded so much. We have had a difficult set back. Another family has had their lives shattered. But we must continue our difficult work to make sure we leave such terrible events behind us forever."

ENDS

26/8/1999