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## O'LOAN SAYS THE PAST MUST BE DEALT WITH, NOT BURIED

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SDLP North Antrim MLA Declan O'Loan welcomes a consultative group under Lord Eames and Denis Bradley to look at the past, but warns that it must not be used to bury the past.

He said, “I have called for such a group for some time. In particular I have drawn attention to the most valuable report done by Healing Through Remembering on the issue. It is a step forward to have the group established.

However I am very concerned by a lot of the language used to announce this development, especially by Peter Hain. The emphasis has been on “not living in the past”, “looking to the future”, “drawing a line”, and “moving on”. But we will only move on successfully if we build on sound foundations. This requires truth about the past to be established. We need this to construct proper relationships and to protect against repeating abuses. There are many who have a vested interest in concealing the past. This includes abuses by the state which many wish to cover up. But freedom in any society must be defended, and if we do not learn from history, we are likely to repeat it.

The financial cost of dealing with the past is a genuine issue. There are methods of investigation which cost much less than others. There will be costs, but they will be less than the eventual cost of doing nothing.”

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