



Ref: GC/09-Forum

23 July 1996

505/00491/96

Rt Hon Sir Patrick Mayhew MP
Secretary of State
Private Office
Stormont Castle
Belfast
BT4 3ST

Copy to: The Prime Minister, John Major MP

Dear Mr Mayhew

I am writing as a delegate elected under the Northern Ireland (Entry to Negotiations, etc) Act 1996 to submit my resignation from the Northern Ireland Forum.

Following recent events which followed months of diversions and delays to the political process, it is imperative that the SDLP registers the serious erosion of trust and confidence in the present process and the anger felt by nationalists and others at the capitulation of the authorities to threats of violence and subversion.

The SDLP participated in the Forum in a genuine attempt to build confidence and assist community relations. As the proceedings of the Forum confirm, neither objective has been advanced by certain unionist leaders inside the Forum and both objectives have been fundamentally damaged by the words and deeds of certain unionist leaders outside the Forum. It is in all these circumstances that I submit my resignation.

The SDLP remains committed to dialogue and we reaffirm the absolute priority for all parties and both governments to seriously and immediately engage in meaningful negotiations. The efforts of the SDLP will now be invested in re-establishing calm and the conditions in which genuine political developments can take place. It is essential that the British government makes the same investment in order to create trust and confidence in the political process.

Yours sincerely

Brid Rodgers
Upper Bann Constituency



John Hume MP MEP Party Leader

Seamus Mallon MP Deputy Leader

Eddie McGrady MP Chief Whip

Member Party of the Party of European Socialists and Socialist International

