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SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

Lord Alderdice
Alliance Party of NI
88 University Street
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27 February 1998

Dear Sohn,

I have received a number of suggestions in recent weeks about facilitating wider community involvement in the political development process in general and on some of the key issues in it in particular. They have been followed up in one case by a specific request to me to allow access to the premises at the Interpoint building at a time which would not interfere with the business of the Northern Ireland Forum and to consider making the premises generally available for similar purposes on the same basis.

The approaches are very much in keeping with my own developing interest in seeing an increase in community involvement at a practical level during the current process, in encouraging meaningful engagement and debate on the range of issues which it generates, and in enhancing understanding. I should stress, of course, that I regard this as very much complementary to rather than conflicting with the main Talks process; and that separately, in relation to the Northern Ireland Forum, I shall want to ensure that any increased use of the building does not cut across its work and day-to-day business.



I thought I should write to let you know about my view on the approaches that have been made, that I intend agreeing to a request for use of the Forum building at a time which would not interfere with Forum business, and that I am willing to consider similar requests for access to the building on their merits.

I am writing in similar terms to the other party leaders.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Marjorie Mowlam', written in a cursive style.

MARJORIE MOWLAM