

18 July 1998,

Ms Liz O'Donnell TD,
Minister of State,
Department of Foreign Affairs,
Iveagh House,
80 St Stephen's Green,
DUBLIN 2,
Republic of Ireland

You kindly sent a lovely card of good wishes for the Assembly election. As you know the results were somewhat disappointing, and, having thought a good deal in advance of the event how I might deal with the different eventualities, I did not take too long to make my decision.

After eleven long and often difficult years, and with the completion of the negotiation of the Good Friday Agreement, I came to the view that both Alliance and I had to move on to new things. When I took over I was able to refashion the party's approach. I think that this may need to be done again, but it is hard for one person to do it twice.

I think that my own abilities, such as they are, may now best be used in some ventures other than party leadership. Things remain politically turbulent of course, so nothing is yet secure, however I remain optimistic for our beloved land, and determined to continue to do all I can in my new role to continue to build a peaceful future for our long-suffering people.

Again my thanks for being in touch. It was good of you to take the trouble. I hope it is not too long before we get a chance to get together again.