



Minister of State

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You will be aware that the Government announced in the Queen's Speech that it intends to renew the provisions of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1991, by means of a Bill to be introduced early in the Session.

The Bill will largely re-enact the provisions in the 1991 Act, except for that part of the Act which contains provisions for the confiscation of proceeds of terrorist-related activities, and the additional investigation powers available for investigating matters relating to terrorist finance. These provisions will be transferred to the ordinary criminal law prior to the expiry of the current Emergency Provisions Act.

The other amendments are mostly minor in nature, and reflect experience resulting from the operation of the legislation for almost five years, while also taking into account developments in the security situation in Northern Ireland.

While the terrorist organisations remain in being with their structures in place and their weaponry still intact, the Government considers that the time has not yet come to ask Parliament to make sweeping changes to the legislative basis for dealing with terrorist crime. We have, however, sought to reflect progress towards peace in Northern Ireland, and the prospects for attaining full and lasting peace there, by reducing the lifespan of the proposed Act by some two years and by establishing a major independent review into



the future need for counter terrorism legislation throughout the United Kingdom, which is due to restart shortly.

If you would like to discuss anything in relation to the Bill prior to its introduction I would be more than happy to see you. My Diary Secretary can be contacted on Belfast (01232) 528133. I shall extend a similar invitation to other Northern Ireland party leaders and Opposition spokespersons.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Wheeler', is written over the typed name below.

THE RT HON SIR JOHN WHEELER DL MP
Minister of State for Northern Ireland