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QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

13 OCT 1997

The Rt Hon George Robertson MP  
Ministry of Defence  
Whitehall  
London SW1

*Ann George,*

REFORM OF THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM LEGISLATION AND  
FUTURE OF EXCLUSION ORDERS

Thank you for your letter of 9 October and for confirming that you are content with my proposals to publish a consultation paper on the options for permanent UK-wide legislation in the New Year. My officials will of course consult yours closely in drafting the paper.

You raise a number of points on the second half of my proposal. It may be helpful therefore if I explain that I intend to revoke all 15 exclusion orders currently in force before announcing (a) that I have done so - and (b) that I am intending to allow the powers to lapse when the PTA comes up for renewal. Having concluded with Mo that the situation in Northern Ireland is such that the maintenance of these orders is no longer necessary to prevent acts of terrorism, it would be wrong to keep the orders in force pending the powers being allowed to lapse next year.

Until the powers are lapsed and then repealed, however, they will remain available for use at any time should circumstances in Northern Ireland change and I think that they are needed. Admittedly, once the powers lapse, an order subject to affirmative resolution procedure would be required to bring them back into force; but that could be done if we thought it necessary.

You will perhaps be reassured to know that none of the current excludees belongs to any of the terrorist groups opposed to the current ceasefires.

I am sending copies of this minute to IN colleagues, Donald Dewar, Ann Taylor and Sir Robin Butler.

*Yours sincerely,*  
*Jack*

JACK STRAW

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