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11 September 2020

Dear Simon,

I am grateful to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee for its ongoing inquiry into the UK Government's legacy proposals. I am following the evidence sessions with interest, noting that they have all so far reinforced the degree of complexity involved in seeking to address legacy issues in Northern Ireland. Notwithstanding this complexity, I remain committed to arriving at a way forward on this issue which focuses on reconciliation, delivers for victims, and ends the cycle of re-investigations that has failed victims and veterans alike.

I had provisionally agreed to provide oral evidence to the Committee on 16 September. However, we are currently at an important stage of policy consideration, including sensitive engagement with key stakeholders through September. As discussed earlier this week appearing before the Committee at this time would mean that I would be unable to provide answers with the openness and clarity that the Committee would expect without risking the progress of such a sensitive issue. To proceed would therefore be frustrating for you and your colleagues. I believe it risks the Government's wider objectives of finding a way forward on this most important of issues. I therefore request that this evidence session is postponed until such time that I am able to answer more fully and helpfully.

I remain committed to working collaboratively with the Committee over the coming months and, as agreed earlier, I would be happy to use next week's session to provide oral evidence to members on the UK Internal Market Bill and NI Protocol.

Kind regards,

RT HON BRANDON LEWIS MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND