

Tuesday
8 September 2020

Volume 679
No. 96



**HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

Tuesday 8 September 2020

House of Commons

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The House met at half-past Eleven o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Virtual participation in proceedings commenced (Order, 4 June).

[NB: [V] denotes a Member participating virtually.]

Oral Answers to Questions

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

The Secretary of State was asked—

Lebanon

Philip Dunne (Ludlow) (Con): What steps the Government are taking to support the Lebanese people since the explosion in that country on 4 August 2020. [905639]

Tim Farron (Westmorland and Lonsdale) (LD): What recent discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on restarting the resettlement of refugees from Lebanon. [905650]

Royston Smith (Southampton, Itchen) (Con): What steps the Government are taking to support the Lebanese people since the explosion in that country on 4 August 2020. [905664]

The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly): Our thoughts remain with the people affected by the terrible events in Beirut. The Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and I spoke with the Lebanese President, Prime Minister and ambassador respectively. We rapidly deployed UK medical, humanitarian, military and logistics experts to support Beirutis in their response to the blast. The UK is a long-standing friend of the Lebanese people, and we were pleased to commit £25 million to help the most vulnerable.

On refugee resettlement, the resumption of arrivals remains dependent on covid-19 developments internationally and in the UK. We are not in a position to resume arrivals in the short term.

Philip Dunne [V]: I thank the Minister for that answer and for the UK humanitarian response. The Lebanese people have suffered greatly from the consequences of civil war and then failed political institutions. What is the Minister doing to help bring about a stable political settlement, to allow the people of Lebanon to restore peace and security to their lives? Will he and the Foreign Secretary consider introducing Magnitsky-style sanctions in conjunction with other key members of the international community if any political leaders are found culpable?

James Cleverly: As I say, my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have engaged at the highest levels with the Lebanese Government, and ensuring that there is political and economic stability, as well as security, is key. We support the Lebanese Government in many ways, including through the Lebanese armed forces, which recruit cross-faith and cross-community. Our diplomatic efforts go hand in hand with our humanitarian efforts. My right hon. Friend will understand that future designations under our autonomous Magnitsky sanctions regime are not something that we wish to speculate about at the Dispatch Box, but we will ensure that our support to the people of Lebanon, and Beirutis in particular, continues.

Tim Farron: Migrants are crossing the channel partly because of a lack of safe and legal routes. Refugee resettlement, including from Lebanon, is a safe and legal route, but the pandemic has understandably seen it suspended. Now is surely the time to reopen those safe and legal routes. Will the Minister take steps this week to assist the Lebanese Government in restoring safe routes to the UK for refugees?

James Cleverly: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his question. In 2015, the then Prime Minister committed to help 20,000 vulnerable refugees. As of March this year, 19,768 had been taken in by the UK, in a typical act of generosity. As I say, future acceptances will be dependent on the covid situation, which we will keep under review.

Royston Smith: Before last month's tragic blast in Beirut, Lebanon was already facing financial ruin, requiring investment from regional partners. Countries will obviously be reluctant to invest if they feel that some of their money may go to help fund Hezbollah and its activities. Has my right hon. Friend had conversations with his counterparts in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and other Gulf states about what they can do to help Lebanon in its time of need?

James Cleverly: My hon. Friend is right that the diplomatic efforts of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office go hand in hand with its humanitarian efforts. We have indeed spoken to good friends of the UK across the region about what more they can do to support the Lebanese people. I hear what he says about concerns about money going to Hezbollah, and I can assure him that the money committed by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary to support the Lebanese was targeted directly at the vulnerable people in need and did not go through Hezbollah.

Fabian Hamilton (Leeds North East) (Lab) [V]: One month on from the horrific explosion in Beirut and the subsequent collapse of the Lebanese Government, the UK Government have rightly pledged aid to support the people of Lebanon. Global leadership is urgently needed now to ensure the rapid reconstruction of the port of Beirut, to allow vital supplies and international aid to reach those in need. How are the Government planning to work with our international allies, such as France, to ensure that aid is delivered swiftly and directly to those who need it most on the ground in Lebanon and that the port can resume its vital role as a point of entry for UN aid to the whole region, including Syria, Iraq and Jordan?

James Cleverly: The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right about the importance of Beirut as a port city for the Lebanese—a traditionally internationalist and commercially minded people. On international leadership, my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary engaged very swiftly at the highest level and, in her role as Secretary of State at the Department for International Development, my right hon. Friend the Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Anne-Marie Trevelyan) engaged within days with an international group of leaders—national leaders—to co-ordinate the response. I am very proud that British expertise, including under-sea survey experts, was deployed at haste to Beirut to help with the technical support in its rebuilding programme.

Climate Change: International Co-operation

Dr Luke Evans (Bosworth) (Con): What progress the Government has made through international co-operation on tackling climate change. [905640]

Andrew Jones (Harrogate and Knaresborough) (Con): What progress the Government has made through international co-operation on tackling climate change. [905653]

Jerome Mayhew (Broadland) (Con): What progress the Government has made through international co-operation on tackling climate change. [905665]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (James Duddridge): The UK is leading by example on climate change. We are the first major economy to legislate on net zero by 2050. Globally, we have provided 33 million people with improved access to clean energy and helped 66 million people cope with the effects of climate change. As co-host of the conference of the parties and president of the G7 next year, we will bring together accelerated action on the climate change crisis.

Dr Luke Evans: With the UK being president of the climate change conference, COP26, I am really pleased to see the Government bring forward proposals that would prohibit large businesses from using products that have been grown on illegally deforested places such as in the Amazon, but what steps is the Minister's Department taking to ensure that this is a workable and successful policy?

James Duddridge: As a Government, we have worked for many years to tackle deforestation, and specifically deforestation caused by trade in unsustainable agricultural commodities, including timber. For example, in Indonesia, we have worked to improve regulations, improve independent monitoring and improve law enforcement. I am pleased to say to the House today that 100% of timber exports from Indonesia are sourced independently from audited factories and forests.

Andrew Jones: Next year, the UK will both host the UN climate change conference and assume the presidency of the G7, so does my hon. Friend agree that, at this crucial time for our foreign policy, now is the perfect

opportunity to bring together security, foreign and development work and leverage that behind tackling climate change?

James Duddridge: I do agree with the thrust of the question. The world is looking for the UK to show global leadership in one of the greatest challenges of our time. The creation of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office brings together our diplomatic and development experiences, which means that we can do more to tackle climate change. The Department and I are working very closely with ministerial colleagues to support this agenda. In particular, we are working with Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park, who is known well to Members in this Chamber.

Jerome Mayhew: If we are to achieve our goal of carbon net zero by 2050, some form of effective carbon taxation that takes account of the challenges of international trade will be necessary. Given that, what negotiations has the Department had with our European partners on the establishment of an effective system of carbon border adjustment payments?

James Duddridge: I have discussed this incredibly important and technical matter with Treasury officials. I can reassure the House that we remain a global leader on decarbonisation and recognise that, as we cut domestic emissions, it is important to ensure that that does not lead to emissions elsewhere. An active debate is under way on which interventions are going to work, and the Government are monitoring and actively engaging with those discussions.

Preet Kaur Gill (Birmingham, Edgbaston) (Lab/Co-op): To avoid scrutiny, the Secretary of State snuck out cuts of £2.9 billion from the aid budget on the day Parliament rose for the summer recess. That is around 20% of the aid budget, despite the fact that projections of an economic downturn suggested a required fall of something closer to 9%. Can the Secretary of State tell us where those cuts will come from, and how the Government will ensure that they tackle poverty and the climate crisis and deliver value for money for the British people? Will he today commit to ending the use of UK aid and investment to fund fossil fuel projects in the global south?

James Duddridge: The Government take our responsibilities very seriously. I remind the hon. Lady that we have delivered on 0.7%, but that does mean that the budget goes down as GDP goes down. In our prioritisation process, we have looked at a number of things to protect, including, in particular, the vulnerable, the bottom billion, climate, girls' education and using Britain as a force for good overall. The details of that will be presented to the House in due course.

Yemen

Paul Holmes (Eastleigh) (Con): What recent assessment the Government have made of the political and humanitarian situation in Yemen. [905641]

Alison Thewliss (Glasgow Central) (SNP): What recent assessment he has made of the political and humanitarian situation in Yemen. [905652]

The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly): The humanitarian situation in Yemen is worsening, and we are particularly concerned about the growth of famine. In addition, UK-funded modelling predicts that the number of symptomatic cases of covid-19 in Yemen could reach as many as 10 million. In response to the risk of famine, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs announced last week that we are committing a further £25 million to Yemen, and we continue to reiterate the UK's unequivocal support for the efforts of the United Nations special envoy, Martin Griffiths.

Paul Holmes: Does the Minister agree that the action this Government have taken to support those in need in Yemen will be further enhanced by bringing together our diplomatic clout and development expertise in the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office?

James Cleverly: I agree with my hon. Friend on that. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary speaks with his international counterparts about the international effort to support Yemen, and I speak with the Yemenis themselves. The best thing that can happen for the people of Yemen is for the conflict to cease, which is why diplomatic pressure is applied to that end.

Alison Thewliss [V]: Today, Oxfam campaigners are visiting the new FCDO to hand in a letter on behalf of thousands of people, including my constituents, that calls on the UK Government to stop fuelling the war in Yemen and to reverse the decision to resume arms sales licences to Saudi Arabia. Does the Secretary of State not accept the inherent contradiction between selling arms with one part of the FCDO and providing aid with the other? Does he also accept that what Yemen needs is an urgent and immediate ceasefire, rather than an escalation of this five-year-old conflict?

James Cleverly: The UK has an internationally respected and robust arms trade licensing regime. We have a close working relationship with the allies that are involved in the conflict in Yemen, to minimise civilian casualties and collateral damage. It is completely legitimate for all countries around the world to defend themselves against external aggression, and we are proud of the work we are doing to help the people of Yemen through this difficult time.

Cameroon

Alex Norris (Nottingham North) (Lab/Co-op): What recent assessment he has made of the political and security situation in Cameroon. [905642]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (James Duddridge): The Government are deeply concerned at the situation in the north-west and south-west regions of Cameroon. We are assisting humanitarian efforts, and today I can announce that we are increasing funding to the humanitarian efforts by £4.5 million, bringing the total for this year to £13.5 million.

Alex Norris: I am grateful to the Minister for his answer and for his clear commitment, as I am to the Chair of the Select Committee for his interest in this area. What is going on in Cameroon is concerning for us all, whether we are talking about the multiple hundreds

of thousands of displaced persons internally or in neighbouring countries, the more than 1 million people going hungry or the significant and continuing violence, including last month's suicide bombing. This country has a special connection to Cameroon and a special responsibility to be part of a peaceful future there, as does France. It is hard to see a future settlement that does not involve both countries, so will the Minister tell us what conversations he has had with his counterpart in France about working together to bring about a peaceful solution?

James Duddridge: That is an excellent point. I thank the hon. Gentleman for his passion on Cameroon, and I know that a number of colleagues share concerns, which the Government of Cameroon understand. We regularly engage with a number of partners, including the French and Americans, and the UN, where there have been resolutions. I intend to travel to Paris, covid permitting, in the next few months to discuss areas of mutual interest across the continent where we can work together, and Cameroon will be high on that list.

Belarus

Neale Hanvey (Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath) (SNP): What recent discussions he has had with his Belarusian counterpart on (a) democracy and (b) the rule of law in that country. [905643]

Kerry McCarthy (Bristol East) (Lab): What recent representations he has made to his Belarusian counterpart on the arrest and alleged torture of protesters by security forces in that country. [905649]

Damian Collins (Folkestone and Hythe) (Con): What diplomatic steps his Department has taken to help ensure media freedom for domestic and international journalists in Belarus. [905671]

Brendan Clarke-Smith (Bassetlaw) (Con): What recent assessment he has made of the effect of the 2020 presidential elections in Belarus on the political and security situation in that country. [905672]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Wendy Morton): The Government have been clear: we do not accept the results of the fraudulent presidential elections in Belarus. We have strongly condemned the shocking scenes of violence by the authorities in Belarus towards peaceful protestors and the targeting of journalists, including representatives of the BBC. I have raised these concerns with the Foreign Minister of Belarus, and in my statements to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe on 28 August and to the UN Security Council on 4 September. The Belarusian authorities must be held to account, and we are calling for an independent investigation through the OSCE. We support sanctions, and there must be dialogue between the people of Belarus and the authorities.

Neale Hanvey: My constituents in Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath do not view the suspension of military training to Belarusian forces as a cause for celebration. That the UK was supporting the last dictator in Europe does not square with the UK's espoused role as a

beacon of hope. Between 2018 and '20, UK armed forces provided training to 17 of the 30 countries where the FCO is particularly concerned about human rights issues. Will the Minister urgently provide me with comprehensive detail on the specific training provided to the Belarusian armed forces and full details of police and military training being provided to Turkey, Bahrain and the Philippines?

Wendy Morton: With specific regard to Belarus, the hon. Gentleman raises a very important point around defence co-operation. The UK shares a co-operative relationship with the Belarusian armed forces, including mutual learning, winter survival training, language tuition and peacekeeping, but in the light of recent events we have suspended all defence engagement with Belarus.

Kerry McCarthy: There are protesters outside Parliament today trying to draw attention to the situation in Belarus. I hope that the Minister will find time to pop out to meet them, as it is really important that we talk to members of the diaspora community here. The EU is currently drawing up a list of Belarusian officials who they will make subject to asset freezes and travel bans. Is the UK looking to do likewise, and if not, why not?

Wendy Morton: The hon. Lady makes a very important point. She can rest assured that we will, at the very least, match that list.

Damian Collins [V]: As the Minister said, two BBC journalists have had their accreditation revoked in Belarus, and we have also seen entire shutdowns of the internet in that country to stop citizens both reporting on what is happening in their country and finding out information for themselves. Does she agree that this is completely intolerable and a violation of the rights of citizens of that country? What representations have we made to the Government of Belarus that they should stop these internet shutdowns and removals of accreditations for BBC journalists?

Wendy Morton: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising this with me today. The Belarusian authorities have indeed blocked internet access for the entire country on several occasions. I have made clear through my statements at the OSCE and the UN that the democratic values and rights of the Belarusian people, including freedom of expression and media freedoms such as access to information, must be respected, and those who violate them must be held accountable.

Brendan Clarke-Smith: I know that my hon. Friend shares my deep concern about the violence we have seen to suppress the peaceful demonstrations in Belarus, and I welcome her comments so far. Can she assure me that she will continue to work with our international partners to put pressure on the Belarusian regime to stop all violence against journalists, protesters and opposition candidates, and does she share my concern over the forced deportation of such individuals?

Wendy Morton: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his question and for his interest in the situation in Belarus. I can assure him that we are supporting an independent investigation through the OSCE into the fraudulent election and the violations by the Belarusian

authorities. I spoke to Germany and the US on 18 August and France on 19 August, and I have also spoken to the Baltic states, Finland, Sweden and Poland.

Alyn Smith (Stirling) (SNP): We on the SNP Benches, and I am sure those across the House, support and salute the bravery of pro-democracy activists and call for the immediate release of all political prisoners, along with, of course, Maria Kolesnikova. I am sure that we all agree on that point.

I am grateful for the Minister's statement and I agree, as far as it goes, but I would urge her to go further. I make four concrete proposals specifically based on the rule of law. There are things we can do through the OSCE and European partners, but there also things we can do specifically. Targeted sanctions on individuals under the Magnitsky regime is something that the UK can do now. We welcome the suspension of military co-operation, but could we have an explicit statement on what it actually involves and its ramifications? Can we explore humanitarian aid to activists? Poland has given €10 million to brave activists. Can we explore sanctions against companies involved in facilitating oppression by the regime? These are concrete points that the UK can act on now.

Mr Speaker: You have two questions, so do not take so long, please—we have to get other colleagues in.

Wendy Morton: First, on sanctions, we have made it very clear that we support sanctions against those responsible for the election fraud and human rights abuses. We will work with our international partners to sanction those responsible and to hold the Belarusian authorities to account. We currently implement EU sanctions and we will continue to do so during the implementation period, and we will consider future designations very carefully, based on evidence.

The hon. Gentleman raises a number of points. I want to touch on humanitarian support and support for civil society, which will be really important. That is why we have doubled our support to independent media, human rights organisations and community groups in Belarus with an extra £1.5 million of projects over the next two years. I am sure that he will welcome that.

Mr Speaker: A brief second question from Alyn Smith.

Alyn Smith: I will be brief, Mr Speaker—my apologies. I welcome the Minister's comments. There is a lot of common ground. Will she commit to meet Belarusian activists here in the UK? My office will be happy to facilitate that.

Wendy Morton: I will undertake to get in touch with the hon. Gentleman's office to see if that can be arranged.

Catherine West (Hornsey and Wood Green) (Lab): I do hope that the Minister has a chance to meet the activists who are outside Portcullis House as we speak. There is a consensus that the bravery and determination that they have all shown during this terrible crisis has been an inspiration to us all.

I have some specific questions around election monitoring in Belarus and other countries. Have the Government cut funding for that particular function? Is there a desk officer on Belarus who speaks Belarusian? At the same

time, the Government are turning up the heat on European allies with leaked briefings that they will break internationally binding treaties, which is hardly the behaviour of a responsible Government intent on working with our allies to solve common challenges. Could we have, perhaps, great tweets but also specific action, to pull together with Europe to solve this terrible problem?

Wendy Morton: Let me be absolutely clear. The hon. Lady raises some very important points here. We are working very hard with our international partners, because we recognise the importance of doing so. As I highlighted earlier, we are working through the OSCE. We are also working to support sanctions. In terms of the support that I have from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, I have a great team of officials who are working really hard on this area, as I am sure the hon. Lady would expect and welcome.

Israel

Sam Tarry (Ilford South) (Lab): Whether he made representations to his Israeli counterpart on the full withdrawal of proposals to annex parts of the west bank during his visit to Israel in August 2020. [905644]

Rosie Cooper (West Lancashire) (Lab): Whether he made representations to his Israeli counterpart on the full withdrawal of proposals to annex parts of the west bank during his visit to Israel in August 2020. [905646]

Mary Glindon (North Tyneside) (Lab): Whether he made representations to his Israeli counterpart on the full withdrawal of proposals to annex parts of the west bank during his visit to Israel in August 2020. [905651]

Michael Fabricant (Lichfield) (Con): What assessment he has made of the effect of normalisation of relations between the State of Israel and the United Arab Emirates on regional stability and security; and if he will make a statement. [905654]

The Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs and First Secretary of State (Dominic Raab): As I made clear in my statement on 13 August, we welcome both the suspension of plans to annex parts of the west bank and the normalisation of relations between the UAE and Israel. The deal was a historic step forward between two great friends of the United Kingdom.

Sam Tarry: A week before the election in Israel, Prime Minister Netanyahu indicated he would move forward with the expansion of the illegal settlement at Efrat—an additional 3,500 homes. That plan had been previously frozen for years. It would cut off the north and the south of the west bank and is particularly problematic. Does the Foreign Secretary agree that the suspension of annexation plans should be made permanent and should not be substituted for the massive settlement expansion such as the 5,000 homes that are planned in E1 zone, which represent—in my view and that of my constituents—annexation in all but name?

Dominic Raab: I agree with the hon. Gentleman that settlements are both contrary to international law and counterproductive to peace. It is hugely welcome, first, that Israel has taken the plans off the table for the foreseeable future, coupled with the UAE deal, which is

a substantial step forward in the wider process of reconciliation and peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours.-

Rosie Cooper [V]: I welcome the Israel-UAE deal, which stops the prospect of any damaging annexation and should bring about normalisation between the two countries. What steps are the Government taking to encourage more Arab states to follow the UAE's lead and to use it as a catalyst to get lasting negotiated peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians?

Dominic Raab: I thank the hon. Lady. She is right and there can hopefully be a virtuous cycle of these normalisation agreements. I have been in touch with US authorities, including Jared Kushner when he visited London and Mike Pompeo, the US Secretary of State, and I visited Israel on 25 August, where I not only saw Prime Minister Netanyahu, Alternate Prime Minister Gantz and Foreign Minister Ashkenazi, but visited the west bank and spoke to President Abbas and Prime Minister Shtayyeh—all with a view to encouraging normalisation with the countries of the region and, now that annexation is at least off the table for the foreseeable future, encouraging greater dialogue between the Palestinians and the Israeli Government.

Mary Glindon [V]: Will the Secretary of State talk to European colleagues, particularly the Irish, with a view to taking joint action on settlement trade and on recognition to ensure the Israeli Government do not go ahead with their annexation threat in future?

Dominic Raab: I thank the hon. Lady. We do talk regularly to our E3 and wider European colleagues—we consider all the different permutations—but I think the positive here is that, through engagement and indeed through this wider process of normalisation, Israel has pulled back from those plans for annexation. That does create a window of opportunity not just with the countries of the region, but with the Palestinians themselves. My focus and the Prime Minister's focus is on trying to use that to catalyse dialogue between the Palestinians and the Israelis, which is the only route to a two-state solution, which is the only route to enduring peace.

Michael Fabricant [V]: Will my right hon. Friend join me in congratulating the United States Administration and indeed the US State Department on helping to broker this deal? I suspect he will not agree with me when I say that I think it is their pragmatic approach to say that a two-state deal is not going to happen as long as we have Hamas and Hezbollah taking the line they do, but what I would ask my right hon. Friend is: what role does he see for the United Kingdom in brokering further such peace deals between the United Kingdom and Arab states?

Dominic Raab: I thank my hon. Friend. I think he is right about the positivity of this step. We need some good news in the peace process and in the middle east, and I think the UAE deal with Israel is very positive. We are looking to and will certainly be encouraging—indeed, we have already started to encourage—others to follow suit, but also to make sure that we can engage with the Palestinians, at the level of the Palestinian Authority, to try to galvanise some dialogue between the two principal protagonists to the dispute.

Tom Tugendhat (Tonbridge and Malling) (Con): My right hon. Friend knows very well that one of the reasons for the proximity between the United Arab Emirates and Israel is the pressure put on both by the Iranian regime, and the work that his Department has done in holding the Iranian regime to account at the UN has been hugely impressive. Applying the rule of law and applying the principles of non-violable international treaty to international negotiation has been so important. Could he please tell me that the UK will read the letter of the treaty of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231, and recognise that any of the named states has the opportunity to snapback sanctions on the violating state of Iran? Will he recognise as well that those international treaties are not for interpretation, but are actually pretty clearly laid out in black and white?

Dominic Raab: I thank my hon. Friend the Chair of the Select Committee. Lawyers will always have different views on the precise permutations, but I think the position on snapback in relation to the joint comprehensive plan of action is tolerably clear. He is absolutely right also to point to the role that Iran plays not just with its own activities—those it engages in directly—but working through Hamas and Hezbollah and other proxies throughout the middle east as a source of tension and instability. We are working with all of our allies to try to make sure we limit and hold to account Iran for those activities.

Wayne David (Caerphilly) (Lab): The social and health situation in Gaza is extremely serious, especially with regard to covid-19, and recently there was a clash between Israel and Hamas. Fortunately, a ceasefire was agreed, but a concern is that it is only a matter of time before another outbreak of violence occurs. How does the Secretary of State believe that further conflict between Gaza and Israel can be avoided?

Dominic Raab: First, we need to see an end to the targeting of civilians and the firing of improvised explosive devices by Hamas into Israel. That is unlawful and totally unacceptable. I share the hon. Gentleman's concerns on the broader humanitarian situation. When I visited the west bank on 20 August, I announced £2.7 million-worth of further humanitarian assistance. Now that Israel has taken annexation off the table, it would make sense, even irrespective of the broader peace talks, for the Palestinian Authority to engage with the Israelis on finance and security co-operation in the west bank and Gaza, including in relation to being able to receive tax revenues to pay Palestinian public servants. As a confidence-building measure, given the UAE deal, that is something the Palestinians could do on their side as well.

Saudi Arabia: Human Rights Defenders

Grahame Morris (Easington) (Lab): What steps the Government are taking to support human rights defenders in Saudi Arabia. [905645]

The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly): The United Kingdom has a strong relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which allows us to have important frank discussions. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary raised human rights defenders with Saudi Ministers on his recent visit to

Riyadh, and I have raised concerns with Dr Awwad, the head of the Saudi human rights commission, as did Lord Ahmad in June.

Grahame Morris: I am pleased to hear that the Minister is having robust conversations with the Saudis, but will the UK Government publicly call on the Saudi authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the five women human rights defenders who are still being detained, including Loujain al-Hathloul, Samar Badawi and Nassima al-Sada, and for all charges to be dropped against the 13 women's rights defenders currently on trial for peaceful protest and activism?

James Cleverly: It is important that we recognise that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is taking significant steps in the right direction, and we encourage and support it to do so. The Foreign Secretary raised the release of those human rights defenders face-to-face on his visit to Riyadh just last month¹.

Poverty Reduction

Lee Anderson (Ashfield) (Con): If he will make poverty reduction the primary focus of his Department. [905647]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (James Duddridge): The Government will prioritise the bottom billion, the very poorest around the world, as part of our core mission. This is in our national interest and it will project the UK as a force for good in the world.

Lee Anderson: The UK has a proud record as a provider of aid across developing countries and has achieved significant milestones in reducing poverty abroad. However, can my right hon. Friend assure my constituents in Ashfield that this aid money will be used as effectively as possible and will not be provided to countries that spend vast amounts of their GDP on projects such as space programmes, as opposed to addressing their own poverty problems?

James Duddridge: I am happy to reassure the residents of Ashfield and beyond that reducing poverty will be at the beating heart of the FCDO. That is why we are committed to the Independent Commission for Aid Impact; that is why the Foreign Secretary has appointed Nick Dyer as the first ever envoy on famine prevention and humanitarian affairs; and that is why we have allocated a new £119 million package to look at the threat of the coronavirus and of famine more generally across the bottom billion.

Rule of Law

Sir Robert Neill (Bromley and Chislehurst) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to promote the rule of law internationally. [905648]

The Minister for Asia (Nigel Adams): Promoting the rule of law internationally is integral to the UK's global influence and to our status as a force for good. That is one of the reasons that the Foreign Secretary has commended the candidature of Judge Joanna Korner QC for election as a judge in the International Criminal Court in the December 2020 elections. The FCDO is supporting ROLE UK to provide expertise in law and justice to developing countries through its partnerships for development programme.

1. [Official Report, 15 September 2020, Vol. 680, c. 1MC.]

Sir Robert Neill: I thank the Minister for that answer, and I wish my old friend and colleague Judge Korner well in her candidature. Of course, the best way to promote the rule of law is always to adhere to it ourselves. But more specifically, will the Minister confirm that the Government will continue with the excellent ROLE UK, the rule of law expertise programme that has been run by the Department for International Development for the last five years, which has given very modest grants to enable British lawyers and judges to give pro bono advice and support to developing countries?

Nigel Adams: I thank my hon. Friend. We have greatly appreciated the enormous contribution of the pro bono work of some of the UK's best judges and legal professionals, delivered through the ROLE UK programme. This year we had to reduce its funding due to potential shrinkage in the UK economy and a decrease in the value of the 0.7% commitment. The FCDO has had to prioritise urgent and high-priority work, such as tackling climate change, championing girls' education, and UK leadership in the global response to covid-19. Although this is a significant cut, through our conversations with ROLE UK we are satisfied that we will be able to continue its good work.

UK-Egypt Relationship

Mr Richard Holden (North West Durham) (Con): What steps he is taking to strengthen the UK's relationship with Egypt. [905655]

The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly): The UK enjoys a strong relationship with Egypt, which is a key economic and security partner. We regularly engage at the most senior levels. In January, we welcomed President Sisi to London for the UK-Africa investment summit. The Foreign Secretary speaks regularly with Foreign Secretary Shoukry and I spoke with the Egyptian ambassador yesterday.

Mr Holden: I thank the Minister for his answer. Security Print Solutions in Consett, County Durham, has a long-standing contract with the Egyptian Government to provide high-quality tax stamps for tobacco products, which have seen revenues to the Egyptian exchequer rise by 121%. Egypt is in the process of developing its own facility, but in the interim, ongoing contracts remain. Will the Minister use his good offices to do all he can to work with the Department for International Trade to help SPS fight for those interim contracts and look for other long-term opportunities to protect and expand export jobs in Consett worldwide?

James Cleverly: My hon. Friend, in his relatively short time in the House, has shown himself to be a passionate defender of the businesses and people of North West Durham, and I commend him for doing so. I am aware of the case that he has raised. The ambassador and I did not speak directly on that case, but we did talk about bilateral trade relationships. I know our officials are following up on that, but I am more than happy to meet my hon. Friend directly, so he can raise the case with me.

Education of Women and Girls

Mr Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op): What steps he is taking to use UK influence to improve the education of women and girls throughout the world. [905656]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Wendy Morton): Standing up for the right of every girl to 12 years of quality education is a major priority for the Government and the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, but covid-19 is having a profound effect on the barriers girls face to education and putting them at risk of dropping out of school permanently, so a focus on girls' education is more important than ever. That is why, in response, we have adapted our education programmes in 18 countries and provided more than £10 million of new funding to support refugee and displaced children to access education.

Mr Sheerman [V]: I hear what the Minister has said, but today and this week we want the Prime Minister to stick to his agreements and promises, and he recently promised me that the Government's highest priority would be tackling the lack of education for girls worldwide. Some 15 million little girls do not even get to primary school. There is an enormous commitment from the United Nations sustainable development goals to do something about that. Can I have an assurance that the ministerial team will keep berating the Prime Minister until we get action on that?

Wendy Morton: Let us be absolutely clear: as the FCDO, we will continue to deploy the UK's diplomatic clout and world-leading development expertise to secure greater global ambition and investment in girls' education. The Prime Minister has been clear in his commitment to that.

Integrated Review of Policy

Angela Crawley (Lanark and Hamilton East) (SNP): What recent discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) international development stakeholders on the progress of the integrated review of security, defence, development and foreign policy. [905657]

Mr Tobias Ellwood (Bournemouth East) (Con): What progress the Government has made on the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy. [905661]

The Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs and First Secretary of State (Dominic Raab): The integrated review was formally launched in February 2020. It was paused because of covid and then recommenced in June. We expect it to conclude in the autumn. Ministers have met regularly. I have chaired those meetings on key themes from trade to security.

Angela Crawley: On the integrated review of security, defence, development and foreign policy, I would like to understand what specific steps the Secretary of State is taking to establish an atrocity prevention strategy to avert further identity-based violence worldwide.

Dominic Raab: I entirely agree with the hon. Lady's passion and commitment on the subject. Of course, we have already introduced Magnitsky sanctions, which allow us to target the perpetrators of human rights abuses with visa bans and asset freezes. More generally, in the context of the integrated review, one of the powerful themes is the United Kingdom's role in the world being joined up, which is why we have brought DFID and the Foreign Office together, in solving disputes, managing conflict and holding the worst perpetrators of human rights abuses to account.

Mr Ellwood: I strongly believe that the Government must be more transparent and engage with the British people as we attempt to define our place in the world and how ambitious we want to be. Let us follow the example of the confederation papers, which through consensus helped unify what the US originally stood for. Will the Foreign Secretary please publicise the threat assessment of how the world is changing and the strategic options in response that reflect the degrees of global ambition and the scale of influence we might pursue? Only then can we design the appropriate defence posture. If he takes the nation with him as we define what "global Britain" really means, there will be greater support for the upgrading of our soft and hard power tools that is so urgently needed.

Dominic Raab: I thank my right hon. Friend. I share his commitment to making Britain an even stronger force for good in the world. We have engaged far and wide. We are engaged with the Foreign Affairs Committee's inquiry on the integrated review. We are engaged with think-tanks, from the Royal United Services Institute to the Overseas Development Institute. In the other place, Baroness Sugg is chairing regular meetings with representatives of civil society, led by Bond and including Save the Children and Plan International. Those meetings are related to the covid recovery, but they also touch on the merger, both of which are key elements of the IR.

Sarah Champion (Rotherham) (Lab) [V]: The integrated review was paused in late June. It is supposed to be the most comprehensive evidence-driven evaluation of foreign policy since the cold war, so why did the call for evidence go out only in mid-August for 20 working days, and why are the sustainable development goals absent from the scope of the review? Should we assume that the outcomes are a foregone conclusion?

Dominic Raab: I thank the hon. Lady. She should not assume any foregone conclusion. It is precisely because the consultation is open that we have not stipulated any particular thing with the level of specificity she has asked for. I have explained to the House the breadth of consultation. She is right to note that it was interrupted—that was an inevitable result of covid-19—but I reassure her that we are absolutely committed, as the merger into the new FCDO shows, to bringing all our international assets and attributes together to be an even stronger force for good in the world.

Topical Questions

[905699] **Suzanne Webb (Stourbridge) (Con):** If he will make a statement on his departmental responsibilities.

The Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs and First Secretary of State (Dominic Raab): Since the last oral question session, on 25 August I visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories to press for a new dialogue and to reinforce the UK's commitment to a negotiated two-state solution. On 2 September, we launched the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to integrate our aid expertise and our diplomatic reach and to project global Britain as an even stronger force for good in the world.

Suzanne Webb: Does my right hon. Friend share my concern about the case of Ye Ming Yuen in Singapore, and will he ensure that the Government continue to raise our objections to the use of corporal punishment all over the world?

Dominic Raab: My hon. Friend is absolutely right, and our staff continue to support Mr Yuen and his family during what must be a very distressing time. I can tell her and reaffirm that the United Kingdom's long-standing global position is to oppose corporal punishment in all circumstances and to call for the consideration of alternative sentences.

Lisa Nandy (Wigan) (Lab): In the last six months, the Foreign Secretary has publicly reminded Iran, Israel, China and Russia of their obligations under international law. I agree with him, so does he agree with me and with the most senior legal official in Government, who has behaved with honour and principle this morning, that when the Prime Minister briefs that he will unilaterally tear up our international obligations under the withdrawal agreement, it undermines our moral authority, harms our national interest and makes a mockery of the Foreign Secretary's attempts to stand up for international law? Will he assure the House that he, as the Foreign Secretary, will never vote for amendments that violate our international obligations?

Dominic Raab: I obviously respect all the brilliant civil servants who work for us. I used to work as a Foreign Office lawyer myself. I can say to the hon. Lady that I am surprised she would open up this question. As we go through the uncertainty of changing our relationship with the EU, we will make sure that there is maximum certainty for businesses as regards the UK internal market, and of course we will legislate to that effect. Ultimately, we will take every measure necessary to protect the integrity of the United Kingdom and to comply with and live up to the Good Friday agreement, ensuring that it is respected. I am surprised she is not supporting that.

Lisa Nandy: The right hon. Gentleman clearly does not read the newspapers, because his own Government have been briefing the precise opposite. Let me try him on another international obligation. An international arbitration ruling determined that the UK owes a debt to Iran, which has not yet been paid. In a letter to Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe's family last week, the Defence Secretary said that the UK

"acknowledges there is a debt to be paid"

and is seeking to find ways to pay it. It is absolutely vital that the Government have a clear and agreed strategy for Nazanin, Anoosheh Ashoori and all dual UK nationals to ensure that they are brought home as soon as possible.

Does the right hon. Gentleman agree with the Defence Secretary, and if so, what steps is he now taking to resolve these heartbreaking cases?

Dominic Raab: I can tell the House that I had two conversations throughout August with Foreign Minister Zarif. We pursue all the cases of our dual nationals. The question of the International Military Services debt is a parallel issue, but we have always said that we would work to resolve that. As well as all the wider issues that have already been raised in relation to Iran, there is never an engagement, a meeting or a telephone conversation that goes by without our being absolutely clear—and I hope that the hon. Lady agrees—on the appalling and arbitrary detention of all dual nationals and calling for their immediate release.

[905700] **Crispin Blunt** (Reigate) (Con): With my right hon. Friend's much enhanced departmental responsibilities, together with Britain's current chairmanship of the 42-nation Equal Rights Coalition, he has an unprecedented opportunity to reinforce Britain's claim to leadership in advancing the freedom of all LGBT+ people around the world to be themselves. Britain also has a special responsibility to address the unhappy legacy of the laws and the culture bequeathed by imperial Britain. What measures is he considering for global Britain to take this opportunity as well as to help to address the legacy of imperial Britain?

Dominic Raab: I thank my hon. Friend and hugely welcome all his efforts in this regard. We are taking forward all these strands—from media freedom to the Magnitsky sanctions, to the work that we are doing on LGBT rights. He will know that we intend to build on our current official development assistance allocation for the strategic review on LGBT rights, which will be completed in the autumn. As a founding member of the Equal Rights Coalition of 42 states sharing the same values, in 2019 we took on the role of co-chair and we plan not only to deliver the first ever UK-led five-year action plan, committing the coalition to taking domestic and international measures on LGBT and equality issues, but to expand the ERC and, in particular, to try to draw in more participation from Asia, Latin America and Africa, for all the reasons that he mentioned.

[905703] **Chris Elmore** (Ogmore) (Lab): There is clearly a global effort to find a vaccine and treatments for people suffering from covid-19, but what representations have the Foreign Secretary or any of his Ministers made on trying to tackle disinformation on vaccines or in relation to false cures for covid-19? There really needs to be a global effort to tackle the ticking time bomb that is disinformation.

Dominic Raab: The hon. Gentleman is right to point out that the UK has a comparative advantage internationally, with research that is going on at Oxford and Imperial in pursuit of the vaccine and the leadership that the Prime Minister showed at the Gavi summit to smash all the records and get \$8.8 billion-worth of funding to ensure equitable access to the whole world. That is good for the United Kingdom—we do not want a second wave globally—and important as a matter of moral responsibility. On misinformation, we have discussed it in the G7 and plenty of other formats, and the hon.

Gentleman is absolutely right that we must be rigorous and robust in rebutting false information, particularly when it is irresponsible about something such as vaccine safety standards.

[905701] **Sir Bernard Jenkin** (Harwich and North Essex) (Con): May I draw my right hon. Friend's attention to the exchange of correspondence between our right hon. Friend the Leader of the House and me as Chairman of the Liaison Committee about the continuing scrutiny of the overseas aid budget? I welcome the fact that the Government seem to have withdrawn their proposals simply to merge the International Development Committee with the Foreign Affairs Committee. What possible justification could there be for any reduction in scrutiny by Parliament of this very substantial and complicated budget? [R]

Dominic Raab: I pay tribute to the work that my hon. Friend does as one of the leading parliamentarians and Select Committee members, and indeed, Chairs. The normal position that the Government take is that Select Committees ought to shadow Departments, but having said that, the representation is ultimately for the House to decide. I welcome all the scrutiny; he will know that we have not only affirmed the role of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact in providing scrutiny and accountability on aid decisions, but I want to review it to make sure that it is focused on what adds the most value and that its critical analysis is followed by practical recommendations.

[905707] **Wendy Chamberlain** (North East Fife) (LD): The Government embarked on and rushed through an unnecessary and expensive merger of the FCO and DFID right at the time when UK aid is needed most overseas. Despite repeated requests from my office, it appears that the Government either do not know what the merger will cost or are not willing to say. Will the Foreign Secretary confirm whether or not any estimate of merger costs was made prior to the merger's announcement in June?

Dominic Raab: First, on the issue of timing, covid has shown precisely why we need to integrate more in respect of our international endeavours. That was true in relation to the combination between research for a vaccine, the Gavi summit and the misinformation that was asked about earlier. On the cost of the merger, we would envisage that, notwithstanding our commitment to 0.7%, over the long term—over the course of the comprehensive spending review—we can make considerable savings on administrative costs as we streamline, fuse and synergise the various different aspects of the previous Departments.

[905702] **Mrs Sheryll Murray** (South East Cornwall) (Con): Does my hon. Friend think that Cornwall Council's staffed office in Brussels is a good use of taxpayers' money at this time, when the money could be spent on local services?

The Minister for Asia (Nigel Adams): As we have left the EU, it is curious to have an operation overseas. We have a global network of 280 overseas posts, which

represent all parts of the UK, including Cornwall. The decision to operate overseas is one for Cornwall Council and, ultimately, the voters of Cornwall, who I am sure will want at the next local elections to have a say on whether it is a good idea and a good use of their taxpayers' money.

[905708] **Mr Virendra Sharma** (Ealing, Southall) (Lab) [V]: This summer, I hosted the British South Asian Youth Summit, bringing together more than 150 young people from across south Asia and Britain. They discussed the future, wrote a memorandum of understanding and agreed to work together. Will the Secretary of State meet me and some of those young people to hear their proposals and offer the support of his network to the positive cause of promoting understanding and engagement in the region?

Dominic Raab: I thank and pay tribute to the hon. Gentleman for an exceptional endeavour. As we depart the EU and forge our way in the world, we ought to have stronger relationships with that part of the world. I would be very interested in receiving directly those proposals and ideas and would make sure that either I or the Minister for the region meets the hon. Gentleman and those involved.

[905704] **Theresa Villiers** (Chipping Barnet) (Con): The UN embargo on the sale of conventional weapons to Iran expires in October. Unless it is extended, Iran will no doubt have more access to weapons to use to oppress its own people and spread death and terror through proxies such as Hezbollah, so why did the UK abstain on a resolution to extend the embargo? What action is the Foreign Secretary going to take to make sure that it stays in place?

Dominic Raab: My right hon. Friend will know that the resolution that was tabled garnered only two votes in the UN Security Council. The UK's position is clear: we want to see the continuation of the arms embargo. It has to get through the Security Council, as frustrating as that may be. We have offered our good offices; indeed, had time been allowed between the original tabling of the resolution and the vote, we had offered, with the E3, to work with all the permanent members of the Security Council to try to find a compromise. Ultimately, unless the resolution can pass, it has no impact in restraining Iran.

[905709] **Afzal Khan** (Manchester, Gorton) (Lab) [V]: Nearly 80% of the Uyghur Muslim population has vanished since 2016, as a result of either detainment in concentration camps or forced disappearance. The Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales has detailed disturbing covert drone footage showing Uyghurs blindfolded and taken on to trains. In the light of that, will the Secretary of State outline what steps his Department is taking to hold the Chinese Government to account for these heinous crimes? Will he confirm today that the Government will call for an impartial international investigation into what is taking place in Xinjiang?

Nigel Adams: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his question, and he is absolutely right to raise it. We have serious concerns about gross human rights violations

being perpetrated against Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, including the extrajudicial detention of over 1 million Uyghur Muslims and other minorities in political re-education camps—as they have been referred to. We are playing a leading role in holding China to account for its widespread violations of human rights. On 30 June, the UK led a joint statement on behalf of 27 other countries at the UN Human Rights Council about the situation in Xinjiang. Finally, the Foreign Secretary has again raised Xinjiang with his Chinese Foreign Minister counterpart.

[905705] **Paul Holmes** (Eastleigh) (Con): The JCPOA—joint comprehensive plan of action—deal did not include terms relating to Iran's financing of terrorism and development of ballistic missiles. As Iran appears to have both breached its nuclear commitments and allowed the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to intervene violently across the region, does my right hon. Friend agree that a new deal addressing these issues is vitally needed?

Dominic Raab: My hon. Friend will know that, along with our E3 colleagues, we have triggered the dispute resolution mechanism for the JCPOA on the nuclear side. It has always been the case that the JCPOA did not encompass the wider destabilising activities in which Iran engages in the region through militias and proxies, and we have always been open and willing, and indeed pressing, to try to incorporate a bigger agreement. But it is also right to say that until there is scope for that wider agreement, what we have is the JCPOA, which provides the vehicle for some kind of restraint on Iran, although I accept that it has been eroded because of systemic non-compliance. We would be reluctant to move to something bigger until it is in place, and should not lose sight of what the JCPOA adds.

[905711] **Margaret Ferrier** (Rutherglen and Hamilton West) (SNP): It has been two years since President Mnangagwa took office in Zimbabwe, yet progress in human rights reform has been non-existent. In the past year alone 70 critics of the Zimbabwean Government have been abducted and tortured by security forces; what steps is the FCDO taking to engage with the Zimbabwean authorities to progress reforms and ensure that those responsible for human rights violations are brought to justice?

Dominic Raab: I share the hon. Lady's concern about the situation in Zimbabwe. We follow it carefully and engage with our international partners as well as directly with the Government of Zimbabwe. Working with our partners, we have the tools, if the evidence allows and we decide it is the right thing to do, to apply targeted sanctions on those who commit the most egregious human rights abuses.

Mr Speaker: In order to allow the safe exit of hon. Members participating in this item of business and the safe arrival of those participating in the next, I am suspending the House for three minutes.

12.33 pm

Sitting suspended.

Northern Ireland Protocol: UK Legal Obligations

12.36 pm

Louise Haigh (Sheffield, Heeley) (Lab) (*Urgent Question*): To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the UK's commitment to its legal obligations under the Northern Ireland protocol.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Brandon Lewis): We are fully committed to implementing the withdrawal agreement and the Northern Ireland protocol, and have already taken many practical steps to do so. The protocol was designed to maintain the Belfast/Good Friday agreement and the gains of the peace process, and to protect the interests of all people in Northern Ireland, and that is what this Government will do and will continue to deliver on. Throughout the last year, as we have taken steps to comply with our obligations under the protocol, we have always sought to honour both our international obligations and our commitments to the people of Northern Ireland.

The protocol itself states that it should “impact as little as possible on the everyday life of communities” and it explicitly depends on the consent of the people of Northern Ireland for its continued existence. As we continue to implement the protocol, this overriding need must be kept in mind. The Government have consistently said that people and businesses in Northern Ireland will have unfettered access to the whole of the UK market. Our manifesto made a very clear commitment to that. The approach that we will take in this legislation builds on that commitment and on the specific commitment that we made in the “New Decade, New Approach” agreement, to legislate for unfettered access by the end of the year. This has been one of the most consistent asks from Northern Ireland businesses since the protocol was agreed, and we are now moving to provide certainty.

Our approach guarantees that we will be able to deliver the objectives that we set out for implementing the protocol in a way that protects the interests of the people and the economy of Northern Ireland. We are working hard to resolve any outstanding issues through the Joint Committee and will continue to approach those discussions in good faith, but we are taking limited and reasonable steps to create a safety net that ensures that the Government are always able to deliver on their commitments to the people of Northern Ireland and in line with the protocol.

Louise Haigh: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for granting this urgent question.

This week starts a crucial period in our trade negotiations with the EU. Labour wants the Government to succeed—to secure a deal in the national interest and to protect the Good Friday agreement—so it is very welcome to hear the Secretary of State's confirmation of their commitment to the protocol. But it has been deeply concerning ahead of these talks that the Prime Minister has appeared to undermine our legal obligations and his own deal. The resignation of the Government's chief legal adviser this morning suggests that concern over the Government's approach runs to the very top. It risks jeopardising the progress of the negotiation and the chance of securing a much-needed deal.

The protocol was not foisted on the Prime Minister by Brussels, by a previous Government or by Parliament. The Prime Minister personally renegotiated it, campaigned on it, legislated for it and ratified it in an international treaty. With these latest moves, some fear that the Prime Minister is once again using Northern Ireland as a political football to suit his wider political means. We cannot forget that at the heart of this are the people and businesses of Northern Ireland who risk paying the price. For them, this is not the latest episode in a Brexit drama but a profoundly worrying moment that will shape their livelihoods, their businesses and their future. It reopens the uncertainty that they hoped had been settled, takes us backwards in negotiations and undermines trust with the European Commission.

Ultimately, this is about trust. How can the people of Northern Ireland trust this Government with the careful progress made over the past two decades when they tell them that the protocol is necessary to protect it and then suggest that the protocol undermines it? How can the British people trust a Government who swore that they had an oven-ready deal only 10 months ago and now tell them that the deal was ambiguous and contradictory? How can our partners and allies around the world trust us to enter trade negotiations on multilateral arrangements?

Will the Secretary of State confirm whether the Treasury Solicitor resigned today in response to the Government's plans to bring forward legislation that will undermine our legal obligations? Will he confirm whether a ministerial direction has been given on the internal market Bill? Will he further outline what legal advice he has seen and whether the ministerial code will be breached if MPs are asked next week to vote on provisions that will undermine those legal obligations?

There was no need for it to come to this. The elements of the protocol left to negotiate are not insignificant, but neither are they insurmountable. With trust, progress could easily have been secured. At the start of a new chapter for our United Kingdom, we cannot afford to be seen as a country that cannot be trusted. As Margaret Thatcher said,

“Britain does not renounce treaties. Indeed, to do so would damage our integrity as well as international relations.

In those interests and in the national interest, I urge the Government to stop the posturing, rediscover their responsibility and secure the deal that was promised to the people of this country.

Brandon Lewis: The hon. Lady should wait until she sees the legislation tomorrow, because I hope she will then see that we are delivering on the very promises to which she just referred. She commented on the Prime Minister's campaigning and our manifesto pledges, which I referred to in my opening remarks. The Bill, as she will see, will absolutely deliver on them.

The UK internal market legislation that we will bring forward this week delivers on our commitment to legislate for unfettered access, which Northern Ireland businesses have consistently asked us to do to ensure that we deliver certainty. The legislation will give the certainty that the people, businesses and economy of Northern Ireland have been asking for, and supports the delivery of the protocol in all circumstances, in line with the approach we set out in our Command Paper in May.

[Brandon Lewis]

The safety net that we will implement, which we will outline this week, will deliver on the commitments made in the general election manifesto. Specifically, we will implement the provision in the protocol that Northern Ireland is fully part of the UK customs territory by ensuring that goods moving within the UK will never even inadvertently have to pay EU tariffs. We will ensure that businesses based in Northern Ireland have true unfettered access to the rest of the United Kingdom without paperwork, and we will ensure that there is no confusion about the fact that, while Northern Ireland will remain subject to the EU state aid regime for the duration of the protocol, Great Britain will not be subject to EU rules in that area.

Those steps are rightly part of the UK internal market Bill, the overriding aim of which is to ensure that the UK's own internal market operates effectively, and I hope all Members will support that endeavour. The House will of course have an opportunity to debate these matters when it sees the details in full when considering the Bill. Further, the Bill will strengthen Northern Ireland's place in the UK customs territory and ensure that the UK does take back control of its laws in an organised way after 31 December—exactly as we promised in the manifesto that won a resounding victory and mandate from the people of this country at last year's election.

I cannot comment on the details of the Treasury Solicitor's resignation because I have not seen his resignation letter, but we wish him well. We will continue to work at pace with the EU in the Joint Committee, and I stress to the hon. Lady that she should not presume what the outcome of the Joint Committee will be. We continue to work with the EU on that to ensure that we can reach a fair and positive outcome for Northern Ireland. That has always been and continues to be our priority.

Mrs Theresa May (Maidenhead) (Con): The United Kingdom Government signed the withdrawal agreement with the Northern Ireland protocol. This Parliament voted that withdrawal agreement into UK legislation. The Government are now changing the operation of that agreement. Given that, how can the Government reassure future international partners that the UK can be trusted to abide by the legal obligations in the agreements it signs?

Brandon Lewis: We have worked with the EU in a spirit of good faith, and both sides continue to work in that spirit to implement the arrangements that uphold the fundamental principles that lie behind the protocol. Of course, our first priority continues to be to secure agreement on the protocol on the Joint Committee and on the wider free trade agreement, but the withdrawal agreement and protocol are not like any other treaty. They were written on the assumption that subsequent agreements could be reached between us and the EU on the detail—that is the entire purpose of the specialised Joint Committee—and we continue to believe that that is possible, but as a responsible Government we cannot allow our businesses not to have certainty for January. The reality is that the UK internal market Bill and the Finance Bill are the last legislative opportunities we have to give the people and businesses of Northern

Ireland the confidence and certainty that we will deliver what we agreed in the protocol, what we outlined in our manifesto and what we set out in the Command Paper.

Kirsten Oswald (East Renfrewshire) (SNP): The Prime Minister referred to Northern Ireland and said, “This is a good deal”, when he struck it last year. Now he seems to disagree with himself. There are U-turns everywhere, but this is something else. No wonder it is reported today that the head of the UK Government Legal Department has just quit because of the rowing back in respect of the withdrawal agreement and Northern Ireland. The internal market Bill is taking a wrecking ball to devolution. The Government are hellbent on a poor deal or no-deal Brexit—and hang the implications—but using the Bill to renege on parts of the withdrawal agreement is extraordinary and dangerous.

Can the Minister explain what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues about the impact of these plans on Northern Irish businesses and the Good Friday agreement? What advance discussions did he have with the Northern Irish Executive? I suspect the answer is: precious few. We have all seen the Government's wilful disregard for devolution and their own international reputation. Who will want to do business with a Government who cannot stick to an agreement with themselves, never mind anyone else, and who make it up as they go along, as we heard just now and as people in Scotland are only too aware?

Brandon Lewis: The hon. Lady and I have a distinct difference of opinion, because whereas the SNP want to hand powers straight back to Brussels, we, the UK Government and the Conservative party, have been clear that we want to take back those powers for the residents and citizens of the United Kingdom, and indeed we will be devolving power to the devolved authorities, as we have outlined in our discussions with those authorities, including the First Minister of Scotland just this week. This is about taking back power from the EU, as people voted for, and giving it back to the people of the UK, including the Scottish Parliament. I am just sorry that the SNP does not share the desire to see democracy exercised here in the UK.

Sir Iain Duncan Smith (Chingford and Woodford Green) (Con): I wonder if my right hon. Friend recalls that in clause 38—the sovereignty clause—of the Act that gave effect to the withdrawal agreement the Government reserved to themselves the right to make clarifications. Given that, and given that when the protocol was signed, the Government recognised that state aid rules would apply to Northern Ireland, their extension to the rest of the Great Britain is an interpretation by the EU, and the Government are quite within their rights to dispute that interpretation and use clause 38 to explain that they do not agree with that and will not implement such an agreement.

Brandon Lewis: My right hon. Friend has spoken about these issues over the last year or so and has been clear about his position, and he is absolutely right. The UK internal market Bill will make clear what will apply in January if we cannot reach a satisfactory and mutually suitable conclusions through the specialised Joint Committee and the wider free trade agreement. It is reasonable and sensible for the Government to give that certainty and

clarity to businesses and people in Northern Ireland, which in itself will ensure that we abide by and deliver on the Good Friday agreement by ensuring that there will be no borders between east and west and north and south. He is also absolutely right that Great Britain will not be subject to EU rules in a state aid area while recognising the unique position of Northern Ireland.

Hilary Benn (Leeds Central) (Lab): I am afraid the Secretary of State's protestations of innocence will not wash, because over the past two days—the right hon. Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) addressed this question—the Government have given the impression that they may not be trusted to honour obligations they have freely entered into.

I wonder whether the Secretary of State can answer a very specific question relating to the Northern Ireland protocol, which he had some trouble answering in the summer when he appeared before the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee. Will goods moving from GB to Northern Ireland be required to complete export declarations, import declarations or entry summary declarations—yes or no?

Brandon Lewis: As I assume the right hon. Gentleman knows, that forms part of the discussions that are going on in the specialist committee, between us and the EU, to deal with these issues. Our view is that the regime should be very flexible, as Michel Barnier has outlined, in terms of respecting the unique position of Northern Ireland, because those goods going from GB to Northern Ireland are, by definition, very low risk, and we must ensure that we do not end up in a situation where it is presumed that 100% of the goods going from GB to Northern Ireland are what the EU would refer to as “at-risk goods.” That would be inappropriate for Northern Ireland businesses, would drive up prices in Northern Ireland and would restrict supply to Northern Ireland. That does not fit with the protocol's outline of Northern Ireland remaining an integral part of the UK customs territory and single market.

Simon Hoare (North Dorset) (Con) [V]: At the moment, for Northern Ireland, there appears to be no certainty for businesses, and no certainty for the long-term future of the Good Friday agreement, as clearly any transporting of goods between north and south will now need to be checked somewhere and somehow. Also, in echoing the remarks of my right hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May), there appears to be no certainty for the continuity of our country as a country that keeps its word and abides by the rule of law and international obligations. What certainty can my right hon. Friend give me that the Government understand the seriousness of these issues?

Brandon Lewis: We, as a country, stand for international law and the order of the international system, and we always will. I think countries around the world are aware of that. They are equally aware that we are in these negotiations with the EU. Our focus is on concluding those in a satisfactory and suitable way in order to get a good outcome with a free trade deal, and good outcomes from the specialist committee that work for Northern Ireland. We must remember that delivering on the Good Friday agreement is not just about north-south; it is also about east-west and ensuring that there are no

borders, north-south or east-west. That is why we have made the commitment on unfettered access, and that is what we will deliver through the UK internal market Bill.

Claire Hanna (Belfast South) (SDLP): There are those in this House who say that the protocol is the problem here, when in fact the protocol is a symptom of the problem, which is four years of terrible political decision making. It is now the law and the Government are obliged to implement it in full. A Member of the House told the BBC yesterday that his party had been engaged with the Government since January to achieve the change. Given that the Government are legally bound to rigorous impartiality, and given that they have cited the peace process among their motivations, I hope that they will indicate what engagement there has been with all the parties, and whether they value better the guidance of their top legal adviser or the DUP. May I caution the Secretary of State, please, not to use the threat of a border on the island of Ireland or the hard-won impartiality of the Good Friday agreement as a cat's paw in this or any other negotiations?

Brandon Lewis: In large part, I agree with what the hon. Lady just outlined. We had a letter from her party and others yesterday, outlining the issues around the Good Friday agreement. The point is that this is also about ensuring that we continue to deliver on all the gains of the peace process in Northern Ireland, and ensuring that we are able to give Northern Ireland businesses the certainty that, no matter what happens over the next couple of months, at the very least in January they can be assured of having the unfettered access that we have promised. That is what we will set out in the UK internal market Bill, to ensure that Northern Ireland remains an integral part of both the customs union and the single market union of the United Kingdom.

We shall continue to have conversations with Northern Ireland businesses and parties, as we did around the Command Paper earlier this year, as the hon. Lady knows from the conversation that I had with the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee.

Sammy Wilson (East Antrim) (DUP): My party has voted against this withdrawal agreement. We have warned Ministers about not just the impact that the withdrawal agreement has on Northern Ireland but the foot in the door for the EU for the rest of the United Kingdom. I am pleased that we now have a Bill that—at least, according to reports—appears to deal with some of those issues. But I am disappointed to hear from the Secretary State today that we still do not know the depth and width of checks for goods coming into Northern Ireland and that we will still be left with state aid rules applying in Northern Ireland, which will stop us defending ourselves against predatory behaviour from the Irish Republic and other European countries. I want to emphasise to him that we will judge this Bill on whether it delivers on the issues that he and his Government have promised to address, in trying to undo the damage that the withdrawal agreement has caused. But ultimately, this agreement, which damages the whole of the United Kingdom—this Union splitting, economy destroying and border creating agreement—has to be changed and replaced. It can be replaced and should be replaced.

Brandon Lewis: The right hon. Gentleman has had a strong, consistent view on these issues from the very beginning. I think that there is a huge opportunity for the whole United Kingdom and businesses in Northern Ireland as we leave the European Union. I think there are big opportunities for growth in the Northern Ireland economy, including in areas such as cyber. I believe that the EU will continue to act in good faith, as we are acting in good faith, in these trade negotiations and the specialist Joint Committee to get a good, mutually beneficial outcome for the EU and the United Kingdom. We are very focused on that. That is our priority and our desired outcome. If that does not succeed, we want to ensure, through the internal market Bill, that Northern Ireland businesses have confidence and clarity about what the situation will be in January. That is a reasonable, sensible step for the Government to take, and it will deliver unfettered access.

Gary Sambrook (Birmingham, Northfield) (Con): This Government were elected on a manifesto which guaranteed that Northern Ireland would truly remain in the UK customs territory and committed that EU law would not get in the way of other elements of essential Government business. Does my right hon. Friend agree that these changes are simply delivering on that landslide winning, red wall smashing manifesto commitment?

Brandon Lewis: My hon. Friend makes a good point. We outlined very clearly—I do not think anybody can be under any misapprehension about it—our position at the general election: that we would deliver unfettered access, that we would deliver for the people of Northern Ireland and that we would continue to deliver on the Good Friday agreement. That is exactly what we are still focused on doing. We are doing that through the negotiations, but we also want to ensure that we are taking reasonable steps to be prepared for January should we need to be. We will do that in the UK internal market Bill, delivering on that manifesto pledge.

Stephen Farry (North Down) (Alliance) [V]: Any unilateral change to the very necessary protocol risks undermining the Good Friday agreement, risks a hard border returning to the island of Ireland and places Northern Ireland businesses in a very uncertain legal position. Do the Government recognise that, in the event that they make unilateral changes to and, in particular, undermine the agreement, they will reduce the prospects of a future relationship with the European Union? In particular, there will be zero chance of negotiating a trade deal with the United States under a Biden Administration and with a Democrat-controlled Congress.

Brandon Lewis: On the first part of the hon. Gentleman's question, quite the opposite—we are focused on coming to an agreement through the trade negotiations and the specialist Joint Committee, to ensure that we are able to deal with the detailed issues that were always, as set out in the protocol, to be worked out by the Joint Committee. That is exactly what the Committee is there to do. All we will be doing in the UK internal market Bill is giving clarity to the businesses and people of Northern Ireland about what happens on 1 January if that does not come to a satisfactory conclusion. I say to him gently that that is the best way to give certainty to the people of Northern Ireland.

Mr Richard Holden (North West Durham) (Con): Given the sovereignty clause, the need for certainty and clarity for businesses and the timeframe involved, does my right hon. Friend agree that it is absolutely right for the Government to use domestic legislation—the UK internal market Bill—to ensure that Northern Ireland truly remains part of the UK customs territory after the end of the transition period?

Brandon Lewis: Yes. My hon. Friend makes a hugely important point. We should be clear that the UK internal market Bill and the Finance Bill are the last two legislative opportunities for us to put into law what we will need to do if the Joint Committee and the negotiations do not come to a satisfactory conclusion. It is nothing more than that. It means that we have a sensible and reasonable position and can say to people in Northern Ireland, “If that is what happens, this is what the situation will be in January.” It gives confidence and certainty to businesses and people in Northern Ireland that we will deliver for them.

Mr Alistair Carmichael (Orkney and Shetland) (LD): What authority do we have to criticise China for not keeping her side of the bargain under the joint declaration on Hong Kong if we are seen to approach our own treaty obligations to the European Union in this way?

Brandon Lewis: As I said earlier, specific issues in the protocol were always designed to be worked out through the Joint Committee. It is right that the Government are taking reasonable, sensible and limited actions to make sure we have that certainty for people in January should the Joint Committee and the withdrawal agreement negotiations for the free trade agreement not come to a satisfactory conclusion.

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): The EU signed a withdrawal agreement and political declaration with two things at its core: it would respect the restoration of UK sovereignty, and it would work for a free trade, tariff-free agreement. Will my right hon. Friend confirm that if the EU kept its word on those two colossally important points, the problems it has created in Northern Ireland would disappear?

Brandon Lewis: This is exactly why it is important that we are clear about our intentions to ensure that we are delivering for the people of Northern Ireland. As I say, I am sure that the EU negotiating team will continue to be negotiating in good faith. Michel Barnier has said that peace in Ireland is due “thanks to the open border”, and that this process “should not and must not lead to the return of a hard border, neither on maps nor in minds.”

He is absolutely right on that and we are determined to ensure we deliver on it. I am sure that the negotiations will be able to get us to that point, but it is right that we are able to say to the people of Northern Ireland that should those not succeed, we will legislate in UK law to ensure that.

Olivia Blake (Sheffield, Hallam) (Lab): I did not hear an answer to the question put by my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Heeley (Louise Haigh), so I will ask it again: can the Secretary of State explain whether a failure to uphold international legal commitments would breach the ministerial code?

Brandon Lewis: I think I did outline earlier that, as a Minister, my focus is on ensuring that we are delivering for the people of the United Kingdom and, within that, the people of Northern Ireland. As Northern Ireland Secretary, my focus is on ensuring that we are delivering for the people of Northern Ireland, as we said we would both in the Command Paper and in our manifesto.

Sir Desmond Swayne (New Forest West) (Con): For the avoidance of any doubt, is it the case that if the EU negotiators, including those on the Joint Committee, are prepared to move forward to implement the existing agreement in a workable way, these provisions will not be necessary?

Brandon Lewis: My right hon. Friend, as often, is absolutely right; these provisions will be in the Bill to take effect if other things do not come through. I think that with both parties acting in good faith we will get to a position where these provisions become, in effect, irrelevant, exactly as he has outlined.

Stephen Timms (East Ham) (Lab): Does the Secretary of State recognise that, as others have reminded him, there would be terrible future consequences for Britain if the Government fail to abide by an international treaty they have signed? Does he recognise that—yes or no?

Brandon Lewis: As I said earlier, I absolutely recognise the importance of following international laws and the rule of law. We have a unique situation with this treaty. Listening to what some Members have been saying from a sedentary position, it seems that there is a fundamental misunderstanding here; there are items and issues in the protocol that were always designed to be worked through in the Joint Committee, because they were not able to be agreed and worked through at the time of the protocol. What we will be outlining in the UK internal market Bill is what the UK Government's position will be if that does not succeed, in order to ensure that we are delivering for the people of Northern Ireland as part of the internal and integral market of the United Kingdom.

Scott Benton (Blackpool South) (Con) [V]: This Government have been clear that they will work flat out during September to agree our future relationship with the EU. Does my right hon. Friend agree that there is no reason why these clarifications as to how the protocol is implemented should undermine our negotiations in any way whatsoever?

Brandon Lewis: My hon. Friend is right on that. Those negotiations are ongoing—they are ongoing today, in fact. As I say, I am confident that our negotiating teams and the EU negotiating teams are all focused on getting a good outcome for both our friends and partners in the EU and us in the UK, and that they will come to a solid and good conclusion. We are simply taking reasonable, limited steps to outline what the position will be if that does not succeed, but I am with him in being confident that it will.

Hywel Williams (Arfon) (PC): What assessment has the Secretary of State made of how the failure to implement the protocol in full will impact on the flow of

Northern Irish goods exported to Great Britain necessarily through the Republic of Ireland and then through the port of Holyhead?

Brandon Lewis: The purpose of the clauses we will be putting into the UK internal market Bill is to ensure that we continue to have good, free-flowing trade across the whole of the United Kingdom, including for Northern Ireland—I have mentioned the issue of unfettered access before. I hope that when the hon. Gentleman sees the clauses in the Bill that we will publish and introduce tomorrow he will see that that is a positive and sensible step.

Alun Cairns (Vale of Glamorgan) (Con): What reassurance can my right hon. Friend give that the UK internal market Bill will provide the certainty needed in Northern Ireland to ensure that it remains within the UK customs territory, and that there is no reason whatsoever that the negotiations should be detracted from or undermined by such an Act?

Brandon Lewis: My right hon. Friend is absolutely right. The clauses we will put into the Bill are very clear about ensuring Northern Ireland's place within the United Kingdom customs territory and single market. The EU has recognised that that is important, and it is a key thing that we will be delivering. There is respect for that point. Acting in good faith by both parties will, I am sure, bring us to a good and sensible conclusion to the negotiations.

Patrick Grady (Glasgow North) (SNP): We know that people in No. 10 like to move fast and break things, but I do not think we knew that that extended to the Northern Ireland protocol, with the consequences that will have for the Good Friday agreement and the devolution settlement as a whole. Does the Secretary of State accept that these are not just bits of paper, but that they affect people's lives and livelihoods? Who, once all this is broken, is going to pick up the pieces?

Brandon Lewis: I suggest the hon. Gentleman waits until he has seen the detail of the text tomorrow so that he can support us, as this is about delivering on ensuring that people in Northern Ireland stay part of the United Kingdom, regardless of whether he wishes to or not.

Mr David Jones (Clwyd West) (Con): Article 6 of the Act of Union provides, in essence, that no duties will be applied to goods passing between Great Britain and Ireland. Does my right hon. Friend agree that these are constitutional rights still enjoyed by the people of Northern Ireland, and that unless the protocol is clarified and adjusted, those rights may possibly be infringed?

Brandon Lewis: My right hon. Friend makes an interesting point. He is right in the sense that Northern Ireland is and has been an integral part of the United Kingdom for almost 100 years—as we know, next year, we celebrate the centenary of Northern Ireland. It is an integral part of the United Kingdom. The negotiations have recognised that Northern Ireland will remain part of the United Kingdom customs territory and single market. The clauses we will put in the UK internal market Bill to be published tomorrow will confirm that, regardless of the outcome of those negotiations.

Ruth Cadbury (Brentford and Isleworth) (Lab) [V]: A little over two months ago, the Government in their Command Paper defined the Northern Ireland protocol as existing

“to ensure that the progress that the people of Northern Ireland have made in the 22 years since the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement is secured into the future.”

It went on to say:

“Whilst the Protocol is in force, both the UK and EU must respect and abide by the legal obligations it contains, as well as our other international law obligations.”

Does the Secretary of State stand by that commitment, and if not, why not?

Brandon Lewis: Yes, and I suggest to the hon. Lady that paragraph 19 states:

“The Protocol is clear that nothing in it prevents Northern Ireland business enjoying unfettered access to the rest of the UK internal market. We will ensure this. As set out in *New Decade, New Approach*, we will legislate to guarantee unfettered access for Northern Ireland’s businesses to the whole of the UK internal market”.

Marco Longhi (Dudley North) (Con): Does my right hon. Friend agree that there is no indication that the UK is at this stage seeking to leave the withdrawal agreement, and that it is right and legitimate that adjustments are made so that UK courts have jurisdiction in the UK and the Northern Irish economy is protected from otherwise punitive tariffs?

Brandon Lewis: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. As I said in my opening remarks, we are still determined to deliver on the withdrawal agreement and the protocol. We hope the negotiations come to a suitable and sensible conclusion. This is purely a set of clauses that we are putting in place so that, should that not happen, we are clear about what the position will be in January and so that there are legal structures in place to be able to deliver on those issues, including unfettered access.

Ian Paisley (North Antrim) (DUP): On 20 May, the Government outlined their four key principles for supporting Northern Ireland through this process. They said that we would have unfettered access for businesses across the Irish sea, that there would be no tariffs on internal UK trade, that there would be no new customs infrastructure, and that Northern Ireland would benefit equally from the trade deals that are currently under negotiation. I hope the Secretary of State will agree that any customs arrangement that affects trade, or impacts in any way on trade between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom in either direction, is unacceptable and must be stopped. Do this Government have the mettle, or do they have a tin foil spine when it comes to standing up to our detractors in Brussels and our debtors in the Republic of Ireland? Give the people and the businesses of Northern Ireland the certainty that they deserve and let us have certainty in those four key principles.

Brandon Lewis: Our determination and desire is to be able to deliver that certainty through the free trade agreement negotiations and the Joint Committee work. What we will be outlining tomorrow in the Bill is how, if that does not succeed, we will be giving that certainty to Northern Ireland businesses about what the framework

and the legal structures will be from January to ensure that we do deliver on unfettered access. Let me just say that we are continuing to deliver on the protocol. With the issues around live animals, with the agrifoods work that we have done, with the EU settled status scheme and with other such issues, we are delivering on what we have agreed. We will continue to do that, and we will do so in good faith.

Jerome Mayhew (Broadland) (Con): The much hyped *Financial Times* story has caused understandable concern right across the island of Ireland and more widely, so can my right hon. Friend reassure the House that the measures being introduced tomorrow are solely a safety net to the work of the Joint Committee, do not in any way prevent the Government from complying with the Northern Ireland protocol in full, and do not compromise the Good Friday agreement?

Brandon Lewis: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. We are doing this in order to ensure that we can always deliver the wider objective of the protocol, which is to protect peace in Northern Ireland and the Good Friday Belfast agreement, and to do so as part of the protocol, outlining, as we did in the Command Paper, how we would deal with those issues that are still outstanding—if they are outstanding—at the end of December.

Colum Eastwood (Foyle) (SDLP): The truth is that, whatever reassurances the Secretary of State gives today, the people in Northern Ireland simply cannot trust a word that comes out of this Tory Government’s mouth. At every single turn, they have used us as a bargaining chip, as a useful tactic and as part of a cynical game. Rather than taking his steer from cosy chats with the Democratic Unionist party, will he once and for all accept that people in Northern Ireland—the majority voice in Northern Ireland—will accept nothing less than the full implementation of the protocol?

Brandon Lewis: If the hon. Gentleman looks at what we have been doing on the protocol, such as the dedicated mechanism, the settled status scheme and the live animals and agrifoods work that we have done on sanitary and phytosanitary checks, he will see that we are delivering on the protocol and delivering on what we said we would do, as we did with the rules and regulations that we passed this year, not least on victims’ pensions. We have a good track record of delivering and doing exactly what we say we want to do. One thing that we said we would do, that we outlined we would do, and that we have a manifesto pledge and a mandate to do was to deliver unfettered access for Northern Ireland businesses, and we will do that.

Sir Robert Neill (Bromley and Chislehurst) (Con): The Secretary of State has said that he and the Government are committed to the rule of law. Does he recognise that adherence to the rule of law is not negotiable? Against that background, will he assure us that nothing that is proposed in this legislation does, or potentially might, breach international legal obligations or international legal arrangements that we have entered into? Will he specifically answer the other point: was any ministerial direction given?

Brandon Lewis: I would say to my hon. Friend that yes, this does break international law in a very specific and limited way. We are taking the power to disapply the EU law concept of direct effect, required by article 4, in certain very tightly defined circumstances. There are clear precedents of this for the UK and, indeed, other countries needing to consider their international obligations as circumstances change. I say to hon. Members here, many of whom would have been in this House when we passed the Finance Act 2013, that that Act contains an example of treaty override. It contains provisions that expressly disapply international tax treaties to the extent that these conflict with the general anti-abuse rule. I say to my hon. Friend that we are determined to ensure that we are delivering on the agreement that we have in the protocol, and our leading priority is to do that through the negotiations and through the Joint Committee work. The clauses that will be in the Bill tomorrow are specifically there should that fail, ensuring that we can deliver on our commitment to the people of Northern Ireland.

Andrew Gwynne (Denton and Reddish) (Lab) [V]: I am astounded that the Secretary of State has just conceded that he is proposing to break international law. Perhaps for the first time I agree with the right hon. Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May). It is a question of trust when it comes to signing international treaties. We cannot condemn others for seemingly breaking the international rules-based order if we are prepared to do the same. It is incredibly damaging to our reputation if we are seeking to acquire trade treaties and the UK internal market Bill tomorrow seeks to disapply section 7A of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018. That would be a clear breach of our international obligations, and for that reason should he not rule it out?

Brandon Lewis: As I have said several times today, obviously our focus is on ensuring that none of these clauses is required because we are able to secure a free trade agreement through the negotiations, which are ongoing this very day in London, as well as through the work of the Joint Committee. These clauses will simply put in place reasonable and limited structures to ensure that, should those negotiations not come to a satisfactory conclusion, in January we are able to show that we are delivering unfettered access for the people of Northern Ireland and ensuring that Northern Ireland remains an integral part of the UK customs territory and single market.

Matt Vickers (Stockton South) (Con): The Prime Minister was clear yesterday that an agreement with our European friends must be made by 15 October if it is to be enforced by the end of the year. Can my right hon. Friend confirm that under no circumstances will we agree to any demands that would force us to give up our rights as an independent state?

Brandon Lewis: Absolutely. That was very clear in the votes in 2016 and the past two general elections, arguably in 2017, as well as the overwhelming mandate in 2019, bearing in mind that people, even Labour voters, were at the time voting for a party that said it would deliver on leaving the EU. I appreciate that Labour has changed its position somewhat over the past year or so. There has been a regular, clear mandate from the people of the United Kingdom that we should get on and deliver on what they asked for: to leave the European Union, to

bring back sovereignty to the UK Parliament, and, where we can—as we will be doing through the UK internal market Bill—to devolve more powers to the devolved authorities as part of the United Kingdom.

Margaret Ferrier (Rutherglen and Hamilton West) (SNP): Adam Tomkins MSP described the proposed changes to the Northern Ireland protocol as being “in breach of our international treaty obligations”.

Can the Secretary of State confirm that he agrees with his Tory colleague’s analysis, and does he accept that the UK internal market Bill demonstrates a complete failure of the negotiating strategy that gives Scotland a raw deal that it did not vote for?

Brandon Lewis: I appreciate that the nationalist party in Scotland wishes to put a border between Scotland and England. The reality is that what we are looking to do is to take powers back from Brussels. We feel that people in Scotland can exercise them better than people in Brussels. That is what we will do through the UK internal market Bill.

Mr Steve Baker (Wycombe) (Con): Is not the right way forward to reach a free trade agreement of the kind that the EU proposed to us back in the spring of 2018 and of the kind that the Government want to reach, combine it with the border arrangements set out in Prosperity UK’s excellent report—arrangements of the kind that the DUP supported—and use that to supplant the protocol? Is not the key to doing that a spirit of good will that accepts that the whole UK is leaving and has left the European Union?

Brandon Lewis: My hon. Friend, as ever, makes a really powerful point. The best way forward—this is what we are all focused on, and I am sure our partners and friends in the EU are, in good faith, as well—is to get the agreement on a free trade deal that delivers on all those issues in the right and appropriate way. I say to Members across the House that it would be wholly wrong for the UK Government not to take this approach to ensure that, should that fail, there is a safety net to ensure that in January businesses and people in Northern Ireland know that they have the confidence of a structure in place that delivers on our promises. He is absolutely right. Our focus remains on getting that positive agreement.

Christian Matheson (City of Chester) (Lab): Hon. Members across the House have talked about the importance of trust and how this will damage the trust of our European Union partners in the trade negotiations that we are currently undertaking. The timing is strange, as we head towards the crunch point for those negotiations. Was it an intentional effect or an unintended consequence that we have put this torpedo into the confidence of the European Union just as we are heading towards that point, making it much more likely that we have destroyed its trust in us and that the no-deal scenario that so many Conservative Members want to achieve is actually achieved?

Brandon Lewis: The hon. Gentleman may wish to look back in *Hansard* at what my hon. Friends and other hon. Members have said this afternoon and previously. Our desire, as I have outlined, is to get a free trade agreement, as the previous question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe (Mr Baker) specifically outlined. We are still working on that, but I have confidence

[Brandon Lewis]

that the negotiators of the UK and EU will be able to do that in the full knowledge that what we will outline in the UK internal market Bill tomorrow is a safety net should they not succeed. It is good practice for the Government to be ready for all scenarios. It would be inappropriate for us not to prepare the UK for all scenarios should those negotiations fail, but they are where our focus is and they are the way we want to go forward. I am confident that they will do so positively.

Duncan Baker (North Norfolk) (Con): As a responsible Government, the internal market Bill is simply a necessary and precautionary step to ensure that good government is maintained in the event of a no-deal Brexit. Does the Secretary of State agree that the best way to avoid the need to implement those measures is for the EU to finally get a grip and negotiate a free trade agreement that will benefit all the people of the island of Ireland?

Brandon Lewis: My hon. Friend makes a good point in that the best way forward is for us to agree that free trade agreement. I am confident that that is the EU's overriding position and focus, and that that is why it is at the negotiations. I hope that we will be able to come to a positive conclusion that will be good for people across the United Kingdom and Europe—and, from my point of view as the Secretary of State, for the people of Northern Ireland.

Wes Streeting (Ilford North) (Lab): The Conservative party manifesto described the withdrawal agreement and the Northern Ireland protocol as “a great new deal” that was “signed, sealed and ready.” It explicitly stated, “No more renegotiations.” It also promised to take our

“whole country out of the EU as one United Kingdom.”

Given that none of those things has proven to be true, and given that the Secretary of State has just conceded that the Government are proposing arrangements that would break international treaties, why should anyone at home or abroad trust a single word the Government say?

Brandon Lewis: Apart from the fact that countries around the world will look at our wider position, as I said earlier, on international law and the rule of law, for which we are a beacon around the world, if the hon. Gentleman looks back at his question, he will see that it reinforces the reason we are taking this position, which is to ensure that we deliver on the points that we included in our manifesto, where we specifically outlined the issues that are in the Command Paper published in May this year, which businesses are supportive of—businesses asked for that certainty—and said:

“We will ensure that Northern Ireland’s businesses and producers enjoy unfettered access to the rest of the UK and that in the implementation of our Brexit deal, we maintain and strengthen the integrity and smooth operation of our internal market.”

That is exactly what we will be doing in the UK internal market Bill when we publish it tomorrow.

James Sunderland (Bracknell) (Con): Does my right hon. Friend concur that this complex issue is ultimately about the good people of Northern Ireland and that any future protocols will be agreed with their best interests at heart?

Brandon Lewis: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. That has to be at the core of what we do and at the heart of that is why the concept of consent is important. It is right that we remember that for the people of Northern Ireland.

Daniel Zeichner (Cambridge) (Lab): Signing an international treaty is not a game; it is a commitment. Catherine Barnard is professor of European law at the University of Cambridge, and she warns that we agreed to a dispute resolution mechanism that could lead to heavy fines or further sanctions. What legal advice have the Government taken? If Ministers choose to ignore that advice, can the Minister spell out the consequences for those Ministers?

Brandon Lewis: As I said in response to an earlier question, our focus is on ensuring that we are delivering on the protocol or delivering on securing a free trade agreement and the discussions in the Joint Committee. That is our priority and that will ensure that we go forward in a sensible and agreed manner with our partners and friends in the European Union. The hon. Gentleman should wait and see the clauses tomorrow, which will deliver, as I have outlined, on the promises that we have made to ensure that the people and businesses of Northern Ireland have the certainty that they need should that not succeed. I am confident that it will, but should it not, it is sensible and reasonable for the Government to have that safety net in place so that people have confidence in what the situation will be in January.

Nicola Richards (West Bromwich East) (Con): My constituents and I are clear that we want our obligations to Northern Ireland to be upheld and for there to be no delays or extensions. If a deal cannot be reached with Brussels by the middle of October to ensure that we are a truly independent country, we have no choice but to walk away from the table. Can my right hon. Friend confirm that under no circumstances will the country agree to any demand that does not give us sovereignty over our laws, land, sea and borders?

Brandon Lewis: My hon. Friend makes a powerful point. When people voted to leave the European Union in 2016, they were giving us a very clear message that they wanted us to return powers and decision making to the UK Government, and that is what we are doing. We are also moving those processes closer to people directly in their everyday lives by then devolving powers, as we will outline through the process of the UK internal market Bill.

Martin Docherty-Hughes (West Dunbartonshire) (SNP): Mr Speaker,

“Whatever form it takes, Brexit cannot be allowed to imperil the Good Friday Agreement, including the seamless border between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland”.

That is a clear statement of intent from your counterpart in Capitol Hill, the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Given that they make it clear that the Secretary of State’s Government can rip up international agreements to suit their own version of Brexit or they can have a US-UK trade deal, but not both, what will it be?

Brandon Lewis: I am not sure that I quite follow the logic of the hon. Gentleman’s question, bearing in mind that his party is arguing for a border between Scotland and England; it seems more than ironic. Our top priority

will always be to preserve the huge gains from the peace process and the Belfast/Good Friday agreement. We will not do anything or take any risk that may harm that. In fact, as we will be outlining in the Bill tomorrow, we are seeking to take actions through which, should the trade negotiations not come to a satisfactory and positive conclusion, we can ensure that we are delivering on the Good Friday agreement and keeping not just peace in Northern Ireland but prosperity and economic growth for the people of Northern Ireland as part of the internal structure of the United Kingdom.

Bob Stewart (Beckenham) (Con): It seems to me that these measures for contingency planning give clarity and make sense in the case that we do not get an agreement. It would make sense for officials north and south of the border to have something they can put their hands around in case it does not work out as we hope it might.

Brandon Lewis: My hon. Friend succinctly makes an excellent point: this is about having a safety net and contingency planning. These measures will not prevent the Government from complying with our commitments. They will provide Ministers with the powers needed for the UK Government to comply with the Joint Committee's agreed decisions. As he outlined, they will provide a safety net, so we avoid activating any harmful defaults, even inadvertently, that could jeopardise the peace process or create confusion, by giving certainty about the fact that we will deliver as we said we would on unfettered access and issues that protect Northern Ireland's place in the United Kingdom.

Fleur Anderson (Putney) (Lab): With the UK at the foothills of a new era and a raft of trade negotiations ahead of us that will affect the lives of people in Putney and across the country, what message does the Secretary of State think it gives about our word that the UK is prepared to break international law at times, to override treaties and rewrite commitments that we signed up to only months ago?

Brandon Lewis: I am sure that the hon. Lady will appreciate that, as I said earlier, there are some precedents in very specific, technical circumstances. Countries around the world, including some of those that we will be looking to and are working to secure trade deals with, vary their position on international laws, as I have outlined that we will be doing in this situation. As our trade negotiations start and are ongoing, countries around the world will be looking at the UK as a country that is outward-looking and global, that believes in free trade and that wants to deliver that for the benefit of economies around the world and for the United Kingdom. I want to make sure that Northern Ireland benefits from that. The clauses that we put in the Bill tomorrow will ensure that, regardless of anything else, Northern Ireland will benefit from those kinds of trade deals.

Aaron Bell (Newcastle-under-Lyme) (Con): I thank the Secretary of State for his earlier answers to my colleagues, which have given me and my constituents in Newcastle-under-Lyme reassurance that, although we all want a deal, we will not compromise in the negotiations on the things that make our state independent. On Northern Ireland, does he agree that we need "flexible and imaginative solutions"? Those are not my words, but the words in the EU negotiation guidelines.

Brandon Lewis: My hon. Friend makes a good point. Those kinds of flexible outcomes are exactly what we need. I am sure that the negotiators on the EU side, as well as on our side, are determined to ensure that we deliver on that because that is how we get the right outcome for people across the United Kingdom. Importantly, it means that we can continue to deliver for the economy of Northern Ireland and to continue to protect the peace process.

Rachel Hopkins (Luton South) (Lab): The purpose of the protocol is to protect the Good Friday agreement. Will the Secretary of State outline what discussions he has had with parties in the Northern Ireland Assembly and with the Irish Government about the new clauses in the internal market Bill?

Brandon Lewis: Obviously, I am having conversations with party leaders, party members and indeed the Irish Government all through, but the clauses in the Bill will not be published until tomorrow. We will be having ongoing conversations with partners and colleagues on that. However, I would just say to the hon. Lady that in order to ensure we can continue to deliver on the Good Friday agreement, it is important to ensure there are no borders, north-south or east-west. That is all part of ensuring that we deliver on the Good Friday agreement. We are determined to do that. We will do that. The clauses that will be in the UK internal market Bill are important in ensuring that, even if we do not come to an agreement on the free trade agreement, and even if the Joint Committee does not come to positive conclusions on how we manage the protocol, we, the UK Government, are able to show that we are delivering on that and there will be no borders.

Dr Andrew Murrison (South West Wiltshire) (Con): In the technical note on the implementation of the Northern Ireland protocol earlier this year, the European Union suggested that its rules, quotas and tariffs might be imposed on fish landed from Northern Ireland vessels into Northern Ireland that was destined for Great Britain. That runs contrary to the Command Paper earlier this year, certainly, but does my right hon. Friend agree that it also drives a coach and horses through the Northern Ireland protocol itself?

Brandon Lewis: My right hon. Friend makes a really important point and that is one of the key areas the Joint Committee is continuing to work on. It is important that it comes to a satisfactory, sensible and positive conclusion for both parties, to ensure that we can deliver on the protocol in a way that we can all agree on in a positive way. That is the perfect outcome. That is what we are focused on and want to see achieved.

Chi Onwurah (Newcastle upon Tyne Central) (Lab): The Secretary of State knows that the north-east has traditionally sent proportionately more of its young people into the armed forces than any other region. As a consequence, we have many veterans who served during the troubles. They, their loved ones and indeed all of us are proud of the hard-won peace. At the heart of the protocol is protecting the Good Friday agreement. Is he seriously contemplating using it as a bargaining chip in a trade deal?

Brandon Lewis: If the hon. Lady looks through my answers throughout this afternoon, she will see that I have been absolutely clear that it is quite the opposite:

[*Brandon Lewis*]

we are determined to ensure that we have a structure and a situation for the United Kingdom and the people of Northern Ireland that continues to deliver on the Good Friday agreement. We are determined to ensure we do that. That is a peace that has been hard won and it must be protected and delivered in the future as well.

Alec Shelbrooke (Elmet and Rothwell) (Con): My right hon. Friend the Member for Skipton and Ripon (Julian Smith) worked tirelessly to get the Northern Ireland Assembly back up and running—something people said could not be done. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has taken out key members of the New IRA because of his commitment to peace and the hard work he is doing. He is also a very successful businessman who understands that business needs certainty moving forward. Does he agree that it is hubris in the extreme to doubt this Government's commitment to the governance of Northern Ireland, the protection of Northern Ireland and the peace in Northern Ireland?

Brandon Lewis: My right hon. Friend makes a very generous point about a number of my predecessors. They all worked hard—across this House, to be fair—in terms of the gains from the peace process. He is absolutely right that one message that consistently comes from Northern Ireland businesses across all sectors is the desire for certainty and understanding of what the situation will be for them in terms of trade, as Democratic Unionist party Members have outlined as well today, should we get to January and a free trade agreement has not been agreed. We have outlined the matter in the Command Paper and the guidance notes, which was positively received. The work we have done on the UK internal market Bill will go further to ensure that they have confidence in what the situation will be, even if we are not able to succeed in a positive outcome to those agreements and discussions of the Joint Committee.

Mr Gregory Campbell (East Londonderry) (DUP): Does the Secretary of State agree that what was used as a negotiating ploy over the first few years was the concept of a hard border on the island of Ireland, when most people should know—if they are in the real world—that it is inadvisable, unworkable and undoable? No one wants it to happen and no one is going to construct it. Will he ensure his colleagues know that we must not allow something that is not going to happen to impede the need to get something that must: a good deal?

Brandon Lewis: The hon. Gentleman makes a very powerful point, and he is absolutely right that nobody wants to see, and there is no reason for there to be, a border either on the island of Ireland or between the island of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Great Britain. We are determined to deliver on that. As I have said, the clauses in the UK internal market Bill are there as a safety net to ensure that, even if we do not reach a satisfactory conclusion to the free trade agreements, although that is something that I am sure both parties, acting in good faith, will be able to do in the coming weeks and next few months.

Rob Butler (Aylesbury) (Con): May I ask a very simple question, in case anybody is still unclear? Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is of paramount importance to protect the peace process and that, to do so, unfettered access is essential between Great Britain and Northern Ireland?

Brandon Lewis: In the spirit in which the question was asked, yes.

Jonathan Edwards (Carmarthen East and Dinefwr) (Ind): Listening to the debate today, would I be right in summarising that the oven-ready deal we were promised by the Conservative party at the general election is missing a cooking apparatus?

Brandon Lewis: I would say that the apparatus we are using is working through the Joint Committee on the free trade agreement deals and the UK internal market Bill. As anything, this is all part of a package of things that mean we are able to ensure that, when we finish the transition period at the end of December this year, companies, businesses and the people of Northern Ireland have confidence about what the situation will be in January, even if we are not able to conclude those negotiations satisfactorily.

Mr Speaker: We are now heading to Bob Blackman, who is about to land his question. [*Laughter.*]

Bob Blackman (Harrow East) (Con) [V]: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I welcome the statements made by my right hon. Friend. Clearly, we hope that there will be a comprehensive free trade deal with our friends from the European Union, negotiated in good faith. But does he agree that it would be wholly irresponsible of the Government not to take measures to ensure the integrity of the United Kingdom and to preserve the ability of Northern Ireland businesses to trade with the rest of the United Kingdom by publishing this draft Bill tomorrow, and that the Government will ensure that we preserve that integrity while always preserving the sanctity of the Good Friday agreement?

Brandon Lewis: My hon. Friend has put the situation absolutely perfectly. The Bill, as we will publish it tomorrow, as colleagues and Members across this House will see, will set out how we ensure the integrity of the United Kingdom trading markets—that customs union and the single market that has been so much a part of the United Kingdom for hundreds of years, in reality. It will ensure we are delivering on our determination to ensure we continue to see the benefits of the peace process, we deliver on the Good Friday agreement and we deliver on our promises to ensure that there are no borders, that we have unfettered access to Northern Ireland businesses, and that we deliver on exactly what we said in our Command Paper and in our manifesto.

Mr Speaker: In order to allow the safe exit of hon. Members participating in this item of business and the safe arrival of those participating in the next, I am suspending the House for three minutes.

1.37 pm

Sitting suspended.

Covid-19 Update

1.40 pm

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock): With permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to make a statement on coronavirus. As a country, we have made huge strides in our fight against this invisible killer. Today's Office for National Statistics figures show that weekly coronavirus deaths have dropped to the lowest number since mid-March, and the latest daily number of recorded deaths is three. However, we have seen a concerning rise in the number of positive cases, particularly among younger people. These figures serve as a salutary reminder that this virus is still very much with us and remains a threat, so it is critical that we maintain our collective commitment to controlling this disease.

Social distancing is the first line of defence. While young people are less likely to die from this disease, be in no doubt that they are still at risk. The long-term effects can be terrible, and of course they can infect others. Six months on, many people are still suffering chronic fatigue, muscle pain and breathing difficulties. Previously fit and healthy people have been reduced to barely being able to function. A King's College survey published today shows that 300,000 people in the UK have reported symptoms lasting for more than a month and that 60,000 people have been ill for more than three months.

I also want to address the point, which is of course good news, that the number of people who are sadly dying from coronavirus in this country is currently low. We have seen all across the world how a rise in cases, initially among younger people, then spreads, leading to hospitalisations and fatalities. In Spain, where the rise in cases started around two months ago, hospitalisations have risen 15 times since mid-July. The number of daily deaths there has reached 184. In France, hospitalisations have more than tripled in the same period.

This must be a moment of clarity for us all. This is not over. Just because we have come through one peak, it does not mean we cannot see another one coming towards our shores. But together we can tackle it, so long as we remember that, in a pandemic, our actions today have consequences tomorrow for the people we love, for our communities, and for our country. Each and every citizen has a responsibility to follow social distancing and help to stop a second peak. After social distancing, the next line of defence is test and trace. Over the past six months we have built the biggest testing system of any major European country, and one of the biggest testing systems in the world. Today, I can tell the House that we have met our target to provide testing kits to all the care homes for older people and people with dementia that have registered to get tests.

But I will not rest. We are working flat out to expand our testing capacity even further. Using existing technology, we are expanding our capacity right now, and we are investing in new testing technology too. Last week, I was able to announce £500 million for next-generation tests such as saliva tests and rapid turnaround tests that can deliver results in just 20 minutes. The ability to get rapid, on-the-spot results will significantly increase the weapons in our armoury, in our fight both against coronavirus and for economic recovery. We are rolling

out these tests right now, and plan to use them to relieve capacity constraints, to expand asymptomatic testing to find the virus and to give people the confidence that a negative test result brings.

Where it is necessary, we will not shy away from taking targeted local action. In June, I established the Joint Biosecurity Centre, to provide the best possible data analytics, using information from all possible sources. Our local action is driven by the data. We now publish daily local data on cases, so that everyone can see the data on which these decisions are taken, and this shows that our approach is working. For instance, in both Leicester and Luton, the weekly case rate more than halved during August. I want to thank the people of Leicester, including the hon. Member for Leicester South (Jonathan Ashworth), of Luton and of the other areas where we have taken local action, who have followed social distancing and helped to bring the virus under control.

Sometimes local action requires us to act fast and respond to changing circumstances. Unfortunately, after improving for several weeks, we have seen a very significant rise in cases in Bolton. Bolton is now up to 120 cases per 100,000 population—the highest case rate in the country—and I am publishing the data behind the decisions that we have taken. I must therefore tell the House that, working with the local council, we are taking further local action. The rise in cases in Bolton is partly due to socialising by people in their 20s and 30s; we know that from contact tracing. Through our contact tracing system, we have identified a number of pubs at which the virus has spread significantly. We are therefore taking the following action in Bolton, starting immediately. We will restrict all hospitality to takeaway only, and we will introduce a late-night restriction of operating hours, which will mean that all venues will be required to close from 10 pm to 5 am. We will urgently introduce further measures that put the current guidance—that people cannot socialise outside their household—into law.

I want us to learn the lesson from Spain, America and France, not to have to learn the lesson all over again ourselves through more hospitalisations and more deaths, and take this local action in Bolton. Crucially, we all have a part to play. Young people do not just spread the virus to each other. They spread the virus to their parents and their grandparents. They spread it to those they come into contact with and others who they love. I know that social distancing can be hard and that it will be extra tough for students who are starting university, but I ask them please to stick with it and to play their part in getting this virus under control.

We are also putting in place extra measures, including visitor restrictions, to restrict the spread of the virus into care homes and hospitals in Bolton. I want to thank the leadership of Bolton Council, who are doing an outstanding job in very difficult circumstances, and colleagues who represent Bolton in this House, with whom I have discussed these measures. I want to say this directly to everyone living in Bolton: I know how anxious you will be, and I know the impact that these measures will have. We are asking you to take a step back, at a time when we all just want to get on with our lives and what we love and get back to normal, but we need to take this crucial step to keep the virus at bay, because as we have seen elsewhere, if we act early and control the virus, we can save lives.

[Matt Hancock]

As well as controlling the virus using the tools we have now, we will do everything in our power to bring to bear the technologies of the future. Over the past few months, we have seen the pivotal role that technology has played in our response, such as next-generation rapid testing, machine-learning tools to help the NHS predict where vital resources might be needed, and the discovery here in the UK of the only two treatments known to save lives from coronavirus. We want to keep that momentum going, so today, we are allocating £50 million from our artificial intelligence in health and care award. That fund aims to speed up the testing and evaluation of some of the most promising technologies, because through bringing new technologies to the frontline, we can transform how we deliver critical care and services across the country.

Finally, the best way out of this coronavirus pandemic remains a vaccine. We have already announced that we will roll out the most comprehensive flu vaccination programme in history this winter. We now have agreements with six separate vaccine developers for early access to 340 million doses of coronavirus vaccines, and we will use every method at our disposal to get as many people protected as possible.

This virus feeds on complacency, and although time has passed since the peak in the spring, the threat posed by the virus has not gone away. Now, with winter on the horizon, we must all redouble our efforts and get this virus on the back foot. I commend this statement to the House.

1.50 pm

Jonathan Ashworth (Leicester South) (Lab/Co-op): I thank the Secretary of State for advance sight of his statement. There can be no question but that the rise in case numbers in recent days is deeply worrying, and I agree that this is no time for complacency, that those who suggested this could be over by Christmas were foolish, and that we should be taking every reasonable measure possible to utterly suppress this virus. It is indeed a very dangerous virus and I am pleased that he and his Department have recognised the condition of long covid—we probably need a better term for it—whereby many people get long-term conditions as a result of the virus. I am pleased about the emerging research into that.

We have been seeing the trends in young people catching the virus for some time, in Greater Manchester, and indeed in Leicester, where the lockdown was due to the trends among young people. Many have warned that we could be facing a resurgence as we move into winter.

The Secretary of State has just announced the closure of pubs and other parts of the hospitality sector across Bolton. Has that been discussed and agreed with the Mayor of Greater Manchester? Can I ask the Secretary of State a very practical question? He may not realise it, but I grew up in Radcliffe, which is next to Bolton. What happens if people in Bolton want to go for a drink and end up going to Radcliffe or Bury, or indeed Chorley—which will be of interest to Mr Speaker? Will they be allowed to travel to neighbouring areas for a drink? How will restrictions be enforced? Given the action that the Secretary of State has taken on the

hospitality sector in Bolton, is he keeping that sector under review in other hotspot areas? What guidance has he issued to pubs, restaurants and so on in those areas?

I am grateful for what the Secretary of State said about Leicester, and we have made great progress in the city of Leicester, but we still have in place the rule that people cannot congregate in private gardens with their extended family. Can I ask him again to set out the evidence for that? Can he update us on when Leicester will next be reviewed, because infection rates have come down?

Universities are set to return imminently, yet the SAGE analysis was not published until last Friday. Will the Secretary of State urgently produce a national plan for reducing transmission of the virus in the higher education sector? On schools, we have seen several outbreaks in recent days, including at the school the Prime Minister visited in Coalville a few weeks ago to promote the opening up of schools, yet the exact circumstances in which a school ought to close if a pupil displays symptoms are still unclear. In what circumstances does the Secretary of State believe a school should close?

The Secretary of State may recall that I warned him early on that one of the biggest barriers to self-quarantining would be not fatigue but personal finances. Does he accept that the Government need to go much further in helping people who need financial or housing support to self-isolate? Otherwise, he will never get on top of infections in areas characterised by low pay, child poverty and overcrowded housing. Does that not help to explain the poor record of contact tracing in these areas? In Bolton, contacts were reached in only 57% of non-complex cases; in Oldham, only 50%; in Blackburn, only 47%; in Bradford, only 43%. Nationally, only 69.4% of contacts are now reached and asked to self-isolate. [Interruption.] These are the latest statistics—his own statistics that he publishes. What is world-beating about that?

There was little explanation in the Secretary of State's statement of what has gone wrong with testing in recent days. He tells us we have capacity for about 300,000 tests a day and that about 100,000 of those are antibody tests. What is the current capacity for testing? How many PCR tests are available at the moment? Yesterday, he said no one should have to travel further than 75 miles for a test, but for many people, such as the 20% of home careworkers on zero-hours contracts, taking a 150-mile round trip for a test simply is not feasible. At the moment, it is not even possible! Last night, it was reported that there were no tests in London. People in Kent were asked to travel to Cardiff. In Denton, they were advised to visit Llandudno. In Leicester, someone was advised to head north to Edinburgh. Helpfully in Devon, people were told they need only travel 20 miles, but unfortunately that involved crossing the sea to get to Swansea. Now, I know the Secretary of State thinks he walks on water, but many of our constituents cannot.

In the Health Select Committee earlier, the Secretary of State admitted that it would take weeks to fix these problems, yet last week he was boasting of plans for 10 million tests a day as part of his Operation Moonshot. When he cannot get the basics right, never mind Moonshot—people will think he is on another planet. His testing regime has been a fiasco in recent days, yet we have had no apology from him today. Is not the core

of the problem that he did not listen to the experts? They all advised him to invest in public health teams and NHS labs. Instead, he gave contracts to outsourcing firms such as Deloitte, Serco and G4S, which had no experience in testing and tracing. He should now accept that that was a mistake and invest in public health teams.

We must do everything reasonable to suppress this virus, but in recent weeks we have had muddled messages, failed testing and ineffective contact tracing. Winter is coming, and the Secretary of State needs to get a grip.

Matt Hancock: I will certainly answer the questions posed by the hon. Gentleman, but as for his proposal to dismantle the testing system that we have built so painstakingly over the past six months using not only the NHS and PHE, but all the testing capacity of the nation, that is one that I and the British people will reject. We need to build our capacity, and we need to build on what we can do. We have built one of the biggest testing capacities in the world over the past six months, and I will reject all narrow, partisan calls to dismantle a testing capacity that is working.

Of course, with the increase in demand for tests that we have seen in the past few days, there have been challenges, which we have acknowledged, and we are working day and night to fix them. The long-term solution, using the new technologies that are coming on stream, is a critical part of ensuring that we can expand testing capacity still further.

I am afraid that the hon. Gentleman got into a bit of a muddle on contact tracing, saying that under 70% of contacts are traced. That is simply untrue and below the number that we publish weekly—we published the latest figure last Thursday.

Some of the hon. Gentleman's questions were sensible. On schools, he is quite right that having clear guidance on how we approach schools and on what schools should do in the event of an outbreak is important. That guidance has been published and sent to schools. In the first instance, of course, a school should work with their local director of public health to minimise the impact of an outbreak.

The hon. Gentleman also asked about financial support for those who have to self-isolate, and we have put that in place. We have rolled that out in areas of the north-west, and we are watching the progress effectively.

The hon. Gentleman rightly asked about Leicester, where, of course, he has both national responsibilities and a local interest. The local lockdown in Leicester has resulted in a significant drop in the number of cases, and we will take a formal review of the measures in Leicester on Thursday. I will be certain to talk to him in advance of that and take his local intelligence and views into account.

The hon. Gentleman asked for a plan for higher education. An enormous amount of work has been done with all universities to ensure that the sector can open safely in the coming weeks.

Finally, I am glad that the hon. Gentleman started his response in a constructive form in respect of the measures that we must take in Bolton. I have communicated with the Mayor of Greater Manchester and he has had a briefing from the official team—that has been offered. The statutory responsibility of course lies with Bolton

Council, with which we have been working very closely to put into place measures that in essence build on the measures that Bolton Council has been putting in place. I put on the record my thanks to those in Bolton Council—its leader, David Greenhalgh, who has been doing an excellent job, as well as the director of public health and the chief executive—because it has been a difficult challenge in Bolton.

Thankfully, what we have learnt from this sort of local action elsewhere in the country is that we do not see large-scale numbers of people travelling to other areas nearby where there is a problem. We have not seen that yet. Of course, we remain vigilant on that and on all these measures, but I am sure that the people of Bolton will understand how significant this problem is and will follow the guidance and, indeed, the new laws that we will bring in to back up the proposals we have made today.

Jeremy Hunt (South West Surrey) (Con): I thank the Secretary of State for his public recognition of the terrible symptoms that many people face many months after their coronavirus bout has ended; his words will give great comfort to the 60,000 people who have been suffering for more than three months.

On testing, it is important to recognise the step change that we have seen and the massive increase in the volume of testing that is now taking place. Will the Secretary of State give the House some sense of the confidence he has that, with the increased testing and the local lockdowns that are now being rightly pursued, we will be able to follow the low infection levels seen in South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong, and not see the increases we have seen in France and Spain and have to go back into another national lockdown?

Matt Hancock: The Chairman of the Health and Social Care Committee precisely sets out our goal. Some countries—not only in the far east but closer to home—have seen a rise in cases, especially among younger people, and taken action that has turned the curve. That is particularly true in, for instance, Belgium, which we were very worried about a month ago: the case rate came right down when Belgium put a curfew in place. We are taking local action here, and our approach to local action has been commended by the World Health Organisation.

Of course, the responsibility is on all of us. I know that this is a riff that we talked about a lot in March, April and May, as the cases were coming right down, but we all have a role to play in this, because the local action and the test and trace—actions that we take in Government and with local authorities—are only the second and third line of defence. The first line of defence, for everybody in this Chamber and all our constituents, is to follow the social-distancing advice. We will be stepping up the communications and making sure that people are reminded very clearly of the rules, and we will also be taking action to step up enforcement, to make sure that we can keep this virus under control until we can build up both the mass testing capacity and ultimately, as I mentioned in my statement, the vaccine on which the scientists are doing great work, although all vaccine work is uncertain until we get clarity from the regulators that a vaccine is safe and effective to use.

Dr Philippa Whitford (Central Ayrshire) (SNP) [V]: I agree that it is indeed critical that everyone recognises the importance of our own personal actions in controlling covid, but we also need an efficient test, trace and isolate system, the first step of which is for people to get access to a test. With UK cases having trebled over the past fortnight, demand has increased and there have been many reports of people being sent hundreds of miles to get a covid test. One of the most extreme examples was somebody in Plymouth being sent by the booking system to the test centre in Inverness.

I understand that demand varies depending on local incidence, but surely it is dangerous to have possibly infectious people travelling long distances when they are unwell and may need to use motor-services facilities on the way. Would it not make more sense to allow covid tests still to be taken locally, and just shift the samples around the UK to the labs with the greatest capacity?

While the commercial pillar 2 testing has increased dramatically since April, the

laboratories are very centralised, whereas NHS hospital laboratories are far more numerous and based within easier reach of communities. To meet the high demand that is likely this coming winter, will the Secretary of State consider additional funding to the NHS to allow the expansion of its PCR facilities and to maximise pillar 1 testing capacity?

Matt Hancock: The answer to that last question is, absolutely, yes. The hon. Lady is quite right that expanding the NHS capacity, as well as expanding the so-called pillar 2 capacity, is right. The SNP spokesperson and I sometimes have robust exchanges but on this, she is completely right. It is an “and/and together” strategy of having the pillar 2 mass testing across the board and the expansion of NHS capacity. I am working as closely as I possibly can with Jeane Freeman, my opposite number in the SNP Government in Edinburgh, to deliver that as effectively as possible right across the UK.

Sir Edward Leigh (Gainsborough) (Con): Please do not take this as unduly critical, because none of us could have done any better, but the problem for the Secretary of State—[*Interruption.*] It is easy to be wise after the event. The problem for the Secretary of State is that given the contradictory nature of advice given to people—maybe necessitated by events—fewer and fewer people are listening to him, particularly young people. I think we need a different approach. The approach of the nanny state, of ordering people about, particularly in this country, is not going to work. We have to appeal to the good sense of young people—“Stay away from grandpa and grandma. It is your responsibility.” These lockdowns and things are not going to work—it is their responsibility. And for us grandads—“Stay away from your grandchildren”. The problem is that if we order people about more and more, they stop listening. They realise the Secretary of State cannot enforce anything. He will become the emperor without clothes, and we will go backwards. We need an approach based on traditional self-reliance and to trust the people.

Matt Hancock: I understand the argument that my right hon. Friend is making. Unfortunately, we have seen this play out in other countries around the world. We have seen a sharp rise in the number of cases—in the

first instance, among younger people—and we have seen people make this argument, entirely understandably, because younger people are much less likely to die of this disease. Notwithstanding the point about long covid and the fact that young people can have debilitating long-term consequences from this disease, the problem is that the isolation of older people who are more likely, because of their age, to have very serious consequences has simply not been effective anywhere in the world. The challenge is that younger people may pass it on, for instance, to their parents, who, in turn, can pass it on to theirs. This disease is absolutely insidious in getting from person to person. In its natural state, it spreads on average from one person to between two and three others, and it doubles in the community every three to four days.

The challenge is that without widespread social distancing, as opposed to the segregation that my right hon. Friend proposed, all the evidence is that we will end up with more hospitalisations and more deaths. I would rather get ahead of this here, learning the lessons from what we have seen first in America, and then in Spain, and now, sadly, it is starting to happen in France. I absolutely take the point about the need to communicate more but I believe, with my whole heart, that we need to communicate that we all have a responsibility, including young people, and we cannot let this rip through any part of the population, because it will inevitably then get into all.

Dame Diana Johnson (Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab) [V]: Today in Hull, the prospects of getting a timely local covid-19 test are patchy. People are being sent as far away as Leeds and Withernsea, so how can it be right that local councils such as Hull City Council, with statutory public health responsibilities, are being kept completely out of the loop in sorting out local testing problems, in a system that seems all about protecting Deloitte, G4S and the noble Baroness Harding, rather than having that joined-up national and local system that safeguards public health during this pandemic?

Matt Hancock: I will do everything I can to solve the problems and the challenge of having more demand than supply in testing capacity everywhere in the country, including in Hull. However, trying to split, according to their employer, the different people who are working on this, be they in local authorities, the local NHS, Public Health England or the private sector parts of this delivery, is just not going to help—in fact, it will make the problem worse. It was a pity to hear this from the shadow Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Leicester South (Jonathan Ashworth), because he is so often a very sensible person. What we have to do instead is all work together to solve these operational problems.

Anthony Mangnall (Totnes) (Con): I congratulate the Secretary of State on the positive elements of his statement, but he will know all too well that rural communities have lived in fear in the past few months, especially during lockdown. He and the Chancellor have made a great deal of money accessible and available through the budget, but can he provide further funding for our rural healthcare network as we enter winter, not only to ramp up testing, but to deal with undiagnosed cases and operations not undertaken?

Matt Hancock: My hon. Friend makes an important point; especially in parts of the world such as the south-west, we have to make sure we get the treatment out and we get the recovery of the NHS from covid, so that we can get things going again for people who have been waiting for operations, which might have been delayed necessarily because of the pandemic. The NHS has set a goal of getting back to 95% of these elective operations and has put with it the funding to make that happen, and we have to make it happen, especially in rural communities and right across the country.

Mr Clive Betts (Sheffield South East) (Lab): The Secretary of State says that we all need to work together, and I am sure he will agree that we need to make better use of the excellence of public health officials at the local level. The director of public health in Sheffield, Greg Fell, has said to me that there are two obstacles to doing that. One, of course, is the need for more resources from the centre to enable local level activity to take place. Secondly, he says that local authorities such as Sheffield have not got full access to the data under the contact tracing and advisory service system. Currently, they have access only to the case management element of the system and not to the contact management element. That second element is made available only to authorities on the watch list. Will the Secretary of State now remove that obstacle and make sure that all authorities that really want to engage fully in this are enabled to do so?

Matt Hancock: The hon. Gentleman makes an important technical point, which I will take away and look at.

Stephen Hammond (Wimbledon) (Con): I really welcome the announcement about the increase in testing capacity, the comprehensive flu vaccination programme and, of course, the early access to coronavirus vaccines. My right hon. Friend will, obviously, have heard that there are some problems on access and availability. Will he set out his plans to overcome those operational difficulties, so that we have availability at local centres?

Matt Hancock: In the short term, we have seen a rise in demand for testing, and the capacity—the supply—has been increasing too. We had some short-term problems with contracts; before the summer, I came to the House to describe the problem with a particular contract to do with swabs and the cleanliness of the swabs. The bigger challenge is to make sure that capacity stays ahead of demand, and when demand has gone up sharply, we need to make sure that capacity expands. There are two ways of doing that. The first is more expansion of the current technology, which we are doing, both within the NHS, as the Scottish National party spokesperson correctly called for, and by using more private sector capacity—the combination of the two. The second, where we can really break through this, is with the new generation of tests, which are much, much easier, much better value for money and easier for people to use. The combination of trying to drive up capacity in the existing system, as we have been doing for months and months, and then bringing onstream these innovative new tests is what we are trying to pull off.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): The call list has the party of Mr Alyn Smith wrong—he is from the SNP.

Alyn Smith (Stirling) (SNP): Like many people in Scotland, I am a former Labour supporter and I switched to the SNP some time ago.

Mr Betts: We all make mistakes.

Alyn Smith: If I was in England, I would be, but I am in Scotland, so I am SNP.

I have much sympathy for the Secretary of State, who is doing a difficult job at a difficult time. If he is promoting a precautionary approach, he will have allies on these Benches. That said, does he agree that the exhortations from the Prime Minister to get people back into crowded transport systems, crowded city centres and congested offices is irresponsible at this time and undermines his public health messaging?

Matt Hancock: It is incredibly important that people have the confidence to know that when workplaces are covid-secure, it is safe to go to them. Trying to get through this pandemic, protecting as much as possible the education of our young people and the livelihoods of people in work, while keeping the virus under control, is a difficult and challenging balance, but it is the right balance to be attempting to strike. The hon. Gentleman might note that both the actions of the Scottish Government and the actions that we are taking locally, for instance today in Bolton, have economic consequences, and I regret that, but they are targeted as much as possible on reducing the social activity, which is where we are increasingly seeing transmission.

James Cartledge (South Suffolk) (Con): We heard further evidence from Prostate Cancer UK today of how the original national lockdown impacted detrimentally on cancer referrals and other aspects of cancer care. I entirely accept that that was unavoidable because of the necessity of protecting the NHS through the peak of the pandemic in the spring, but as we move to a new phase of hopefully local rather than national lockdowns, can the Secretary of State assure me that the NHS will do everything possible to ensure that rising numbers do not again translate into a negative impact on those with other conditions that can, after all, also be fatal?

Matt Hancock: Yes, absolutely. My hon. Friend makes an incredibly important point with which I agree wholeheartedly. The backlog that was caused by the inevitable and, as he put it, unavoidable delays to treatment in the peak has more or less halved, which is good news. So there is progress. We have changed the NHS to be split, essentially, between sites that are covid-secure and sites where there may be covid. That will help us to protect cancer treatment, as we go forward, exactly as my hon. Friend asks.

Munira Wilson (Twickenham) (LD): On 16 July, I flagged with the Secretary of State that the Academy of Medical Sciences was warning that we needed a rapid expansion of test and trace to be prepared for a second wave. He told me they were learning lessons as we go. Today, pupils and parents in my constituency are being sent as far afield as Aberdeen and Newquay for tests. They cannot get home tests. Children are back at school. Forget world-beating—what is he doing to ensure that we have a functioning test-and-trace system in place right now?

Matt Hancock: We have the largest testing system imaginable. We want to expand it further and of course there are challenges, as many Members have raised, but the imperative for people who have symptoms to get a test is important. We are trying to solve the operational problems that the hon. Lady raises.

Jane Stevenson (Wolverhampton North East) (Con): I was saddened yesterday to hear that, because of a rise in local cases, care home visits in Wolverhampton are to be severely restricted again. I have a dear friend, Felicity, who lives in a care home. Without regular visits from family and loved ones, her mental health and wellbeing has declined very noticeably over the past months. I absolutely recognise the heroic efforts of care home staff, but how can we facilitate safe family visits so that care home residents can enjoy quality of life?

Matt Hancock: My hon. Friend asks an incredibly important question with great sensitivity. The decisions over the visitor arrangements for care homes are rightly made by the care home in consultation with the local director of public health, according to the local risk. Of course I want to see as much visiting as possible and to see it done safely. That is the difficult balance that needs to be struck, not least because of the negative health impacts, both mental and physical, of the restriction of visiting to care homes. I also very much hope that, as testing expands, we will be able to use that more and more to provide for safe visiting.

Nick Smith (Blaenau Gwent) (Lab): Looking to the long term, obesity is a leading risk factor for contracting covid-19, and problems with obesity usually start in childhood. By this year, the Government were aiming to reduce sugar by 20% in the food products most popular with children, but Public Health England's 2019 review showed a sugar reduction of just 2.9%. The Government are clearly way off track. Why has the 20% ambition not been met?

Matt Hancock: I entirely agree with the premise of the question, which is that tackling obesity is critical for the long-term health of people, and that has been highlighted yet further because of the impact of obesity on the likelihood of someone dying from covid if they get it. Of course I want to see that sugar reduction. The sugar tax has had a very significant impact on the areas that it covers, and we have a wider obesity strategy that the Prime Minister set out in July to drive forward this agenda.

Dean Russell (Watford) (Con): Across Watford and the entire UK, volunteers have been going out on the frontline, helping our brave NHS workers. One group that I met recently was from St John Ambulance, and they explained to me that the red tape in place a year ago would have made it impossible for them to be able to help, and now they have been able to cut through that during the covid crisis. Can my right hon. Friend please assure me that as we move forward, that red tape will not start binding their hands again and they can continue to help?

Matt Hancock: Absolutely. My hon. Friend is quite right. There are improvements that we made in the heat of this crisis that we should never go back on. He has just highlighted one example. There are legion others.

In this House, we discuss the problems that need to be fixed. That is quite right, and often they are raised and I did not know about them in advance and I go out and fix them. That is my job, as the hon. Member for Leicester South (Jonathan Ashworth) raised with his example, but we should also note where things have gone well because of changes and be clear that we will not be going back on that.

Zarah Sultana (Coventry South) (Lab): This month, more than 1 million students are moving to university for the new academic year. I welcome the thousands who will be joining Coventry University and the University of Warwick, both of which are in my constituency. Both SAGE and Independent SAGE have warned that the Government need to get a grip and work to minimise the risk of that return to university leading to more covid-19 spreading. Will the Secretary of State work with his colleagues to support universities and to heed the recommendations of scientists, the University and College Union and the National Union of Students, including the recommendation to move to remote learning by default?

Matt Hancock: We are working very closely with the universities sector, including the two universities that the hon. Lady mentions, to make sure that we can get the universities open in a covid-secure way.

Robbie Moore (Keighley) (Con): From today, indoor gyms and dance studios can now open in Keighley, so I thank my right hon. Friend for that move, which I know is welcome to many. However, I have been contacted by many shop owners who, unfortunately, are being verbally abused when reminding customers to wear face coverings. Will he join me in calling for all to adhere to the basic rules of washing hands, wearing face coverings and social distancing?

Matt Hancock: Yes, and people will be hearing far, far more about hands, face, space. It is really simple: wash your hands, wear a face covering when you need to and keep that social distance. That is the responsibility of everybody to help us control this virus.

Tonia Antoniazzi (Gower) (Lab) [V]: The Secretary of State has had four months to respond to a letter I sent as the chair of the all-party parliamentary group on cancer, requesting a national cancer recovery plan. Of course I recognise the extreme strain that covid-19 has put on the NHS and his Department, but people living with cancer—diagnosed and yet to be diagnosed—have been left in limbo. When will the Secretary of State respond to my letter, and when will he make public his Government's national cancer recovery plan?

Matt Hancock: I will respond right away. I am very glad that the hon. Lady has raised this issue. It is something that I have been doing a huge amount of work on, along with the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St Edmunds (Jo Churchill). We have been working on it intensively and, as I say, the backlog has come down by about half, but clearly there is much more to do.

Tom Randall (Gedling) (Con): Testing is a vital line of defence against coronavirus. Although we have one of the best testing systems in the world, I appreciate that

there is much more that can be done. What steps is my right hon. Friend taking to explore the benefits of repeat population testing; and if that is effective, will he look to scale that up throughout the country?

Matt Hancock: We are looking at the asymptomatic testing of parts of the population where the virus is rife. Testing roll-out is about the prioritisation of what can be done with the capacity that we want to grow. As the capacity grows we could do more, but also it is necessary to prioritise within that capacity. It is not impossible to envisage reaching a point where everybody tests, say, weekly or more regularly, but there are very many steps along the way.

Jeff Smith (Manchester, Withington) (Lab): With the universities returning shortly, there will be lots of students moving into shared houses, so there is real concern in communities like mine in south Manchester, where there are lots of houses in multiple occupation. There is clearly plenty of good work going on to make campuses covid-secure, but the recently published SAGE advice is very thin on community spread around universities. Will he urgently provide a national plan for managing that situation by limiting transmission in communities around where students live, to include comprehensive testing at universities?

Matt Hancock: We are doing a huge amount of work on the very issue that the hon. Gentleman raises. Ultimately, when students are off campus they are citizens like everyone else—hence the focus on the social distancing rules that we all have to follow. However, he is right that we have seen the biggest rise in infections among 17 to 21 year-olds, many of whom will be going to university in the next few weeks.

Nicola Richards (West Bromwich East) (Con): I thank the Secretary of State and his team for their tireless work throughout the pandemic. Last week, I had the pleasure of visiting the Kuumba centre in West Bromwich, where I met Patricia and her team to hear about their passion for helping the local BAME community get through this difficult time, including by providing mental health support to the local area and some junior doctors. What further support can he make available to similar organisations that are supporting the community and are heroes on the frontline of the NHS?

Matt Hancock: This is another important question about how we can provide support locally, especially in the west midlands, where it is so important, especially with cases rising, not only that we have the national response that we are discussing in this Chamber, but that we ensure that the local community, which my hon. Friend supports so effectively, can get the support it needs. I am happy to write to her with details of the extra funding that we have put into her area and to discuss with her what more might be done.

Holly Lynch (Halifax) (Lab): I appreciate that we must keep a very close eye on infection rates and respond quickly and effectively. The Government say that they are listening to local leaders on the local restrictions, yet the very clear data-led recommendation from myself and Calderdale's leaders last week was for the restrictions to be lifted in Halifax, with a continued focus on test and trace and the incredibly effective targeted community work that has been undertaken by

Calderdale Council. Now that Calderdale has significantly lowered infection rates in areas that do not have the restrictions, can the Secretary of State tell me when Halifax will see those restrictions lifted and what else needs to happen to make that a reality?

Matt Hancock: We look at the issue of restrictions in Halifax every week. Calderdale has seen a fall in the number of cases; it is an example of a local lockdown being effective. I was really pleased that we were able to take some parts of the local authority area out of the restrictions 10 days or so ago now, and it was very good to be able to make that progress. I accept that we had to leave Halifax in the restrictions and I look forward to working with the council and with the hon. Lady and other local colleagues. We shall consider the matter again this Thursday.

Greg Smith (Buckingham) (Con): The scaling of testing has been an incredible achievement over the summer, and I heard from many constituents who were able to get same-day tests with results in as little as 12 hours. However, in recent days I have had a number of cases of constituents unable to get timed testing or being asked to travel an unacceptable distance. I welcome my right hon. Friend's commitment to further scaling testing capacity, especially by embracing new technology; but what assurances can he give Buckinghamshire residents that that will be a rapid scaling, and that they will be able to get local and quick tests?

Matt Hancock: My hon. Friend is exactly right—we are going as fast as we can. I recognise the importance of this. There was spare capacity earlier in the summer. We have maintained the turnaround times—they are very rapid—but there have been challenges in the last couple of weeks because of that increase in demand and some of the operational issues that we have discussed. He is right to raise this, and he has raised it with me privately before. There is no one more assiduous in putting forward the needs of their constituents than my hon. Friend, and I will keep him posted on how much we can expand testing in Buckinghamshire.

Chris Stephens (Glasgow South West) (SNP): On a similar point to the one raised by the hon. Member for Leicester South (Jonathan Ashworth), can the Secretary of State tell us what advice and guidance his Department is issuing to employers that are trying to use covid-related absence to trigger points for absence management interviews and to remove occupational sick pay? We saw recent attempts by IKEA, which then dismissed the trade union representative who had the temerity to tell trade union members what their employer was up to. Will he condemn those employers that are trying to use covid-related absences to remove occupational sick pay and the like?

Matt Hancock: The hon. Gentleman raises a point that I know the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is looking at. Of course, returning to a covid-secure setting is safe and the right thing to do, and that is a matter between the employer and employee, but people must follow employment law. After all, as an employer, that is their statutory duty.

Miriam Cates (Penistone and Stocksbridge) (Con): We have seen incredible advances by the UK's scientific community throughout the pandemic, and it is great

[*Miriam Cates*]

news that scientists at the University of Sheffield are joining the UK Coronavirus Immunology Consortium to undertake research that we all hope will lead to an effective vaccine. Until we have that vaccine, we have to take seriously the threat of a rapid rise of the virus again. Does my right hon. Friend agree that, with cases on the rise, we must not hesitate to use local lockdown measures such as the ones in Bolton, to ensure that increased infection rates in the young do not lead to increased hospitalisations in the older population?

Matt Hancock: That is spot on. The logic that we have seen repeated in country after country is that a sharp rise among younger people leads inexorably to a rise in the number of hospitalisations and deaths, even though it is not the younger people who tend to get hospitalised, but others who catch it from them. It is really important that we get that argument across, so that everybody feels the necessity to follow the social distancing rules that are incumbent on us all.

Hilary Benn (Leeds Central) (Lab): I think the Secretary of State has got the message about the need to sort out the testing problem, not least to help councils such as Leeds that are working really hard to limit the increase in cases. I hope he will join me in paying tribute to the public health team and the council for the great efforts they are making. He knows that local contact tracing is the most effective. I understand that the figures in Leeds for contacts are in the high 90s when it is done locally, as opposed to a lower figure when done by the national system. Given the position in Leeds, can he commit to provide more support and resource to local contact tracing in the city, to help try to prevent a further increase in the number of cases?

Matt Hancock: We are absolutely putting more resources into that local end of the contact tracing, but I stress that it is one system. I think the right hon. Gentleman has made the same category error as the hon. Member for Leicester South (Jonathan Ashworth). If we count contact tracing results from institutional settings within the local categorisation, of course the number of contacts that we reach is higher—for instance, in a care home it is very easy to reach 100% of contacts, by the nature of the setting. The hon. Member for Leicester South, who is also a very sensible fellow, tried to make that comparison, and it is not quite fair—it is not comparing apples with apples.

Mr Mark Harper (Forest of Dean) (Con): The Secretary of State is right to warn against complacency, and perhaps it would be wise to remind people that we are in this for the long haul. My I ask him a question about testing? The director of testing for NHS Test and Trace has confirmed that we have testing capacity at all our testing sites, but that there is a critical pinch point in the laboratories. My director of public health, who is excellent, and a number of her colleagues in the south-west would prefer that, rather than artificially limiting access to testing sites and home testing kits, we ensured that people could take those tests locally and managed the pinch point at the laboratory end of things, because that would improve public confidence in getting testing. Is that something that my right hon. Friend could take

away and look at? If he cannot do that, can he at least give me a good reason that I can take back to her about why that is not possible?

Matt Hancock: I entirely understand the point, and I can see the argument that is being made. The challenge is, since lab capacity is what we need more of, that if we take more swabs locally and send them in to the lab, we need to have the lab capacity to be able to turn them round. Otherwise, we get a much slower response, which means that we are not getting back to people fast enough for them to be able to act. That is the nature of the challenge, and the answer is more lab capacity, which is what we are driving through.

Ms Angela Eagle (Wallasey) (Lab): In Wirral, there has been a sudden, sharp rise in covid-19 infections, with yesterday's figures standing at 33 infections per 100,000. What extra assistance can the Secretary of State promise to my local authority, which is fighting hard to suppress this outbreak? On Test and Trace, if he does not want a reorganisation of Test and Trace because he thinks it will slow down progress, can he tell us why he is reorganising Public Health England in the middle of this dangerous pandemic?

Matt Hancock: Well, of course I am improving the public health responses by bringing together different organisations. I am not sure that the hon. Lady is doing anything other than—[*Interruption.*] Well, I am not going to query her motives, because we have worked together, at the start of this crisis especially. On her question about the Wirral, absolutely, we are vigilant in looking at the Wirral. That will be reconsidered in the Joint Biosecurity Centre silver meeting tomorrow and in the JBC gold on Thursday. Part of the improved data that we have now, compared with a few months ago, means that we will be able to pinpoint where the problem is and, working with the council, make recommendations on what action needs to be taken.

Dr Julian Lewis (New Forest East) (Ind): Can my right hon. Friend explain to the House exactly what are the main reasons behind the fact that although the level of infection often continues to rise, the numbers of deaths is now so absolutely small?

Matt Hancock: My right hon. Friend asks an important question, and the first answer is that there is a lag between people catching the disease and the statistics for new cases and those who sadly die. The second is that this most recent rise has been predominantly, although not entirely, among younger people, who are much less likely to die. However, the danger is that they will pass it on to others and it will spread more broadly into the community. So it is important to act on these cases even though, thankfully, the current number who are dying is small.

I will try to give a better answer. Let me put it this way. If we were to wait until we saw the number of deaths rising before we took action, there would already be many people who had caught the disease and who would end up hospitalised and unfortunately die of coronavirus. We have to act before that happens and before the disease spreads to those who may die from it, because the alternative is that we will inevitably see the number of deaths rise.

Peter Dowd (Bootle) (Lab): Given covid, the Health Secretary said it was “mission critical” to prepare the NHS for the winter, as he unveiled the biggest flu vaccination programme in history; that is very Trumpian, I have to say. In the light of the lockdown delay, the PPE debacle, testing and tracing chaos—we could not get tested yesterday in my borough, with 300,000 people in it—not to mention, I will remind the Secretary of State, the 40,000 people already dead from covid on his watch and that of the Prime Minister against, and he is quite happy to compare internationally, 9,400 in Germany, why should we have any confidence in this bungling Government’s ability to get the flu vaccination programme in shape for this winter?

Matt Hancock: We are going to have the biggest flu vaccination programme in history. I think the hon. Gentleman simply has not taken into account the action that was taken to protect the NHS in the crisis, building a capacity for testing that is bigger per head of population than any other major European country. This country is the only country in the world that has discovered treatments that reduce people’s likelihood of dying from coronavirus. I think he should get onside with what this country is doing, not keep squabbling from the sidelines.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck (South Shields) (Lab): The Government and the Secretary of State have messed up. The result has been loss of life and an economy in tatters. It is little wonder that my home, South Shields, is now seeing a rapid spike in cases, and we are approaching a potential lockdown that will irrevocably devastate us. Instead of just pointing the finger at our young people, will he take some responsibility and explain what extra direct support he is going to give us locally to help us stop this spread?

Matt Hancock: I regret the tone of the question. I think it is far better for everybody if we all work together. I know the hon. Member and the hon. Member for Bootle (Peter Dowd) seem to have taken the attitude that it is better to have brickbats thrown across this House, but I think the public would expect us to work together—to work together for the benefit of South Shields and to work together for the benefit of the north-west. I am very happy to meet her to discuss the situation in South Shields and see what we can do to try to tackle the problem, and it is better to do that together.

Jerome Mayhew (Broadland) (Con): My right hon. Friend has identified that our response to covid is about personal responsibility, but it is made much harder when the young have the lure of socialising and the risks are substantially borne by unseen others. However, in my view, the young are just as civic-minded as all the rest of us, but it is a complex message, so what is the communication strategy to get that message over effectively to our young people, particularly when access to Parliament TV seems unaccountably low?

Matt Hancock: It is so important that we explain to everybody that they have a responsibility to “hands, face and space”—to their social distancing. The two critical messages for younger people who may think that this is not a disease that affects them are, first, that they can transmit this disease and cause great harm or death to their loved ones, but, secondly, that nobody is

immune from this disease. The long-term impact of covid—so far, we have seen this with 60,000 people who have suffered for more than three months—can be devastating, and that can happen to anyone.

David Linden (Glasgow East) (SNP): The credit checking company TransUnion has had difficulty issuing home testing kits to people because they are not on the public electoral register. We know that, for good reason, some people are not on the public electoral register, perhaps due to fleeing domestic violence or abuse. Can I ask the Secretary of State if he will go away and have a look at this, and see what he can do to make sure that everybody can get a home test, regardless of whether they are on the on the public electoral register?

Matt Hancock: I am very happy to look at this point. Of course, we do have to verify the identity of people who are asking for home testing kits, and there have to be protections against fraud, and we take advice from the National Cyber Security Centre on that, but I will look at the point the hon. Member raises.

Mrs Maria Miller (Basingstoke) (Con): May I commend my right hon. Friend on the swift action that he takes, and the way in which he comes before this House on a regular basis to update us? I think that is important, as are the lessons that are being learned from other countries. In his statement, he actually announced something as well as the lockdown in Bolton, which is that his current guidance regarding people in high incidence areas socialising only with those in their own households will be turned into law. That is presumably to strengthen enforcement. Could he take a moment to explain what that will mean in practice and whether there be an impact on venues that may be required to be part of that enforcement process, and when does he intend to bring that before the House for discussion?

Matt Hancock: That measure is specifically in Bolton, which has brought into place at a council level the guidance that people should not socialise outside their households. We will be turning that into law in Bolton. Of course, we keep all those sorts of things under review nationally, but to be absolutely clear, the measure that I announced today was specifically with respect to Bolton. I also thank my right hon. Friend for her kind words—I do my best.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Slough) (Lab): We are still not fully over the Dominic Cummings cross-country drive farcical fiasco, yet day after day, we are faced with a string of embarrassing Government U-turns, which not only demonstrate incompetence, but further erode public trust and confidence in the Government at a time when we most need it to overcome the virus. To get on message, what discussions is the Secretary of State having with the Prime Minister to ensure that the next time he makes a public statement, it will not be followed by yet another excruciating and embarrassing U-turn?

Matt Hancock: The hon. Gentleman does better when he does not take the Labour party handout notes.

James Daly (Bury North) (Con): I pay personal tribute to my right hon. Friend. Bury has been under restrictions for six weeks, and both he and his team have

[James Daly]

been a constant source of support not only to me and the leader of the council but to the people of Bury through this difficult time.

I agree with everything that the Secretary of State said, but I would welcome his views on this point. One challenge being faced in my constituency is childcare. We are in a situation where many people are looking to get back into work. Many grandparents look after children, but they are struggling because they remain in the bubble that we have in Bury, which is one person to another household, and many of them still live together. They are asking whether the bubble can be extended to two people per household to allow them to provide emotional, practical and social support to their family at this difficult time.

Matt Hancock: I understand why grandparents in Bury and across the country want to see that happen. The challenge is that the support bubbles are there primarily so that when people are living on their own, they can get that emotional and mental-health support from having some people with whom they can closely communicate, whereas a couple living together have each other for that.

The challenge in terms of childcare is that although children rarely experience any negative impacts of covid, they can transmit the disease. Grandparents are typically at risk if they are over about 70, so we are quite cautious about encouraging them to look after their grandchildren, because of the problem of transmission. That is the challenge that we are trying to address, but I understand why people want to see that.

Barry Gardiner (Brent North) (Lab): On 3 July, the Secretary of State said that asymptomatic testing in residential care homes would give staff the confidence to continue their work. Yesterday, the Transport Secretary said that Public Health England now believes that asymptomatic testing might capture only 7% of those infected, leaving 93% of those infected to go about their business. If asymptomatic testing is as confidence-building as the Secretary of State says, and if a care home is a goose and an airport is a gander, why is the sauce of asymptomatic testing not good for both?

Matt Hancock: The question is about the timing of the tests. The proposal for care homes is for repeat asymptomatic testing. As I said in my statement, we have sent test kits out to eligible care homes. The challenge for asymptomatic testing at the border is that if we do it just once, that does not give confidence. The proposal on which we are working with the industry is for a way to do that with repeat testing to test that people have not later developed symptoms that they might have been incubating previously.

Sara Britcliffe (Hyndburn) (Con): In recent weeks, my constituency of Hyndburn and Haslingden was removed from local restrictions. I wish to put on record my heartfelt thanks to all of my community as they are why we have now fallen in line with the national picture. I would also like to thank everybody in the Department and the Secretary of State for being so responsive

throughout, but can he please press that local resilience forums and local outbreak management boards set out and publish the criteria used to make their decisions for areas moving to higher or lower levels of restrictions, so that the decision making is fair, consistent, transparent and justifiable to constituents?

Matt Hancock: I will absolutely take forward the proposal that my hon. Friend rightly makes. She has been an unbelievably hard-working and assiduous voice for her community in Hyndburn. We have had a lot of contact during a difficult period and I want to join her in paying tribute to the people of Hyndburn who have followed social distancing and brought the case rate right down. It is another example of local action that has worked, but we must remain vigilant because, of course, east Lancashire, close as it is to Greater Manchester, is an area where we have seen a lot of cases, including, as I have said today, in Bolton. None the less, she has done her area and constituents proud in the way that she has represented them and made the case for them during this very difficult period.

Liz Saville Roberts (Dwyfor Meirionnydd) (PC): From 6 pm today, Caerphilly will become the first area of Wales to enter a local lockdown. Does the Secretary of State agree that Wales urgently needs more financial powers to support people affected by these necessary precautions?

Matt Hancock: I shall speak to my opposite number in the Welsh Government about that suggestion. I know that taking local action, whether in Caerphilly in Wales, in and around Glasgow and Aberdeen in Scotland, or, of course, in parts of England, which is my responsibility when it comes to local action, we only take this action with a heavy heart and when it is necessary.

Wayne David (Caerphilly) (Lab): As the Secretary of State has just indicated, he is aware of the situation as it is developing in Caerphilly in my constituency, but will he give a commitment to work as closely as possible with the Welsh Government to ensure that they are effective in dealing with this situation?

Matt Hancock: Yes, I absolutely will. The UK Government and the Welsh Government working together is incredibly important. We have weekly calls, and Vaughan Gething and I speak and are in contact regularly. I support the action that he has had to take, as I say, with a heavy heart, but it is necessary action. My message to the people of Caerphilly, who are so ably represented in this House, is that this action and following the stricter local rules are absolutely critical to getting this virus under control locally, to protecting people themselves and to protecting their loved ones.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): I would like to thank the Secretary of State for his statement today.

Before I take the point of order from Maria Miller, I ask those leaving the Chamber to please do so with care and in a socially distanced way.

Virtual participation in proceedings concluded (Order, 4 June.)

Point of Order

2.52 pm

Mrs Maria Miller (Basingstoke) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. In Foreign Office questions today, a number of Members raised the plight of the people of Belarus. Indeed, yesterday we saw the remaining opposition leader, Maria Kolesnikova, kidnapped. I welcome the Minister's updates in questions, but it is no substitute, Mr Deputy Speaker, for a proper debate on this issue and, indeed, on a range of others, so can you advise me on how we can reinstate Westminster Hall debates? It really strikes me that there is no reason why those debates cannot start up so that we can have more of an opportunity for this Parliament to play its full and proper role, not just in domestic affairs, but in international affairs as well.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): I thank the right hon. Lady for her point of order and for giving advance notice to the Chair. I can understand her anxiety. There are a number of issues, including Belarus, that people would like to raise in this House, and it is up to the Government to provide time in this Chamber. We get that with Backbench Business debates, which, of course, we have an example of later this week. None the less, I do understand her anxiety, and, indeed, as far as Backbench Business is concerned, there will always be more demand than there is supply. If we understand rightly from the Leader of the House, the intention is to bring back Westminster Hall from 5 October. That was the plan and that is what we hope will happen in order for more Members to get more opportunities to raise the issues that are important to them and their constituents.

BILL PRESENTED

NON-DOMESTIC RATING (LISTS) (No. 2) BILL

Presentation and First Reading (Standing Order No. 57)

Mr Secretary Jenrick, supported by the Prime Minister, Michael Gove, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary Alok Sharma, Simon Clarke and Jesse Norman presented a Bill to make provision to change the dates on which non-domestic rating lists must be compiled; and to change the dates by which proposed lists must be sent to billing authorities, the Secretary of State or the Welsh Ministers.

Bill read the First time; to be read a Second time tomorrow, and to be printed (Bill 174) with explanatory notes (Bill 174-EN).

2.55 pm

Sitting suspended.

White Goods (Registration)

Motion for leave to bring in a Bill (Standing Order No. 23)

2.57 pm

Yvonne Fovargue (Makerfield) (Lab): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to require retailers to register white goods at the point of sale to facilitate product recall; and for connected purposes.

My Bill has a simple aim: to make the registration of white goods compulsory at the point of sale. Registration is essential because without a data bank of contact details manufacturers are unable to get in touch with buyers when things go wrong and a recall is necessary for repair or replacement, and, as we all know, things do go wrong.

According to the estimates by the charity Electrical Safety First, which firmly supports my Bill, faulty electrical products are responsible for over 7,000 domestic fires a year. In England alone over the last five years, 33 house fires a day were caused by white goods. The dangers of non-registration are real, and they were made stark in the recent Whirlpool recall scandal, where a potentially dangerous fault was discovered in certain Hotpoint and Indesit washing machines. As so few of the appliances were registered, the manufacturer, Whirlpool, was only able to make contact with 40% of customers for a recall, and then only after many months of a big, expensive campaign. The recall response rates are normally about 10% to 20%. Thankfully, nobody died or was maimed, but about 80 fires were directly attributable to that electric fault alone, many of which would have been preventable had the manufacturer been able to get in touch with the consumer easily.

The fact is that very few customers register their appliance under the current voluntary system, and that includes many of us in this place. I did a simple straw poll among colleagues last week, and found that not one single person could say, hand on heart, that they had registered every appliance that they had ever bought with the manufacturer. Hon. Members know the scenario; we take the registration card home with every intention of filling it out and sending it off, but we never do. Compulsory registration would deal with lethargy at a stroke. It would also deal with the fact that some people are put off from registering their goods because they worry about their privacy. People have bitter experiences of handing over contact details and then being bombarded with telephone sales pitches or requests to take part in umpteen bogus household surveys. My Bill deals with that by making it a requirement that the details contained in the registration documents can be used only for recall purposes, meaning no marketing and no customer loyalty information and nothing would be given to the manufacturer unless there was a recall.

We do give our details to retailers already, however, because we usually need to arrange the delivery of bulky goods. In the case of online purchases, we always give our details to a manufacturer, so all that really needs to happen is for information to be collected systematically and provided to a manufacturer if there is a recall. We need a body to hold the information centrally, of course, and to provide oversight, and I am open to discussions around who that could be. Currently, electrical goods recalls are the responsibility of a local

[Yvonne Fovargue]

authority, and they are not dealt with by a centralised body, because no such body—something like the Food Standards Agency—exists in the UK. However, it could be a role for the new Office for Product Safety and Standards, which is set up to deliver consumer protection. But that can be discussed.

My Bill would cover white goods, so we are talking about washing machines, tumble dryers, fridges and freezers, cookers and dishwashers, but I would add microwaves because, although not strictly white goods, they are not wired into a domestic property's electrics and are not considered to be that portable. All such appliances exhibit an increased risk of fire when compared with small appliances such as hair dryers or irons.

I fully admit the Bill would not cover every eventuality. For example, it does not deal with white goods bought second hand, including through online marketplaces, and that is a problem area. The Government will hopefully publish their online harms Bill, which aims to make the internet a safer place for our citizens, and there could be scope within that legislation to protect consumers in the second-hand electrical market. However, I want to find a way of capturing all white goods sold and resold, perhaps through the use of a product passport to track goods throughout their life. It would be good to talk to Ministers about that, but for now the Bill needs to be simple and to the point.

The compulsory registration of white goods has widespread support from both consumer groups and the industry, and we can capture that data at the point of sale. I stress that the only data captured would be the delivery address, not who pays for it, because I am sure we have all paid for others. For example, I pay for my mother's goods because she does not understand "that internet" as she used to tell me. The appliance is delivered to a property, so holding that information would make sense, and retailers will already have that information because they deliver the goods.

The fact is that this a common-sense Bill. It takes the onus to register white goods off the consumer and puts it on to the retailer and manufacturer, where it belongs. We would undoubtedly see fewer electrical fires in homes, fewer injuries, less damage and less need to chase people and remind them of model numbers. Who knows the model number of their washing machine? Who knows where to look for the model number of the washing machine? Before the Whirlpool recall, who knew that Indesit appliances were made by Whirlpool?

There are lots of barriers for people to overcome when there is a recall, and my Bill would be good not only for the consumer, but for the reputation of the retailer and the manufacturer. That is why I hope that this matter can be looked at seriously in the future.

Question put and agreed to.

Ordered,

That Yvonne Fovargue, Sir David Amess, Carolyn Harris, Patricia Gibson, Julie Elliott, Lilian Greenwood, Gill Furniss, Andy Slaughter, Rosie Cooper and Judith Cummins present theus Bill.

Yvonne Fovargue accordingly presented the Bill.

Bill read the First time; to be read a Second time on Friday 16 October, and to be printed (Bill 175).

Extradition (Provisional Arrest) Bill [Lords]

Considered in Committee (Programme Order, 22 June)

[MR NIGEL EVANS *in the Chair*]

The Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr Nigel Evans): Before I ask the Clerk to read the title of the Bill, I should explain that, in these exceptional circumstances, although the Chair of the Committee would normally sit in the Clerk's Chair during Committee state, in order to comply with social distancing requirements I will remain in the Speaker's Chair although I will be carrying out the role not of Deputy Speaker but of Chairman of the Committee. We should be addressed as Chairs of the Committee rather than as Deputy Speakers.

Clause 1

POWER OF ARREST FOR EXTRADITION PURPOSES

3.6 pm

Sir Iain Duncan Smith (Chingford and Woodford Green) (Con): I beg to move amendment 1, in page 1, line 6, at end insert—

'() Nothing in this Act changes the effect of any rule of law or any enactment in force before the date on which this Act is passed in relation to extradition requests by or on behalf of—

- (a) the People's Republic of China, or
- (b) the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China."

This amendment is intended to ensure the provisional arrest arrangements proposed under this Bill do not apply to extradition requests from China and/or Hong Kong.

The Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means: With this it will be convenient to discuss the following:

Amendment 2, in page 1, line 6, at end insert—

'() The power to make further amendments under this Act may not be used to make any provision in relation to—

- (a) the People's Republic of China, or
- (b) the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China."

This amendment would prevent the power to make amendments under this Bill being used in relation to China and/or Hong Kong.

Amendment 7, in clause 1, page 1, line 6, at end insert—

'() The power to make further amendments under this Act may not be used to make any provision in relation to the United States of America."

This amendment would prevent the power to make amendments under this Bill being used in relation to the USA.

Clause stand part.

Amendment 3, in clause 2, page 1, line 13, at end insert "except in relation to extradition requests by or on behalf of—

- (a) the People's Republic of China, or
- (b) the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China."

This amendment would preclude the exercise in respect of China and/or Hong Kong of the powers under the Extradition Act 2003 in relation to British overseas territories, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man, in relation to any changes made by this Bill.

Amendment 8, page 1, line 13, at end insert “except in relation to extradition requests by or on behalf of the United States of America.”

This amendment would preclude the exercise in respect of the USA of the powers under the Extradition Act 2003 in relation to British overseas territories, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man, in relation to any changes made by this Bill.

Government amendment 11.

Clause 2 stand part.

New clause 1—*Annual statement on provisional arrests*—

(1) The Secretary of State must, at the end of the period of 12 months beginning on the day on which this Act is passed, lay before both Houses of Parliament a statement setting out how many individuals have been arrested under provisions within this Act.

(2) The statement must include a list of each incident broken down by protected characteristics of each person arrested, as defined in section 4 of the Equality Act 2010.

(3) The Secretary of State must lay before Parliament a report in similar terms covering each subsequent 12 month period, within six months of that period ending.”

This new clause would require the Secretary of State to lay a statement setting out how many individuals have been arrested under provisions within this Act, broken down by characteristics of each person arrested.

New clause 2—*Review of the Act*—

(1) The Secretary of State must appoint a person to review the operation of the provisions of the Extradition Act 2003 as amended by this Act

(2) That person may, from time to time, carry out a review of the provisions of this Act and must send a report on the outcome of such a review to the Secretary of State as soon as reasonably practicable after completing the review.

(3) A review under subsection (2) may, in particular, consider operational effectiveness

(4) The person appointed under subsection (1) must carry out and report on the first review before the end of the period of 12 months after the day on which this Act is passed.

(5) On receiving a report under this section, the Secretary of State must lay a copy of it before Parliament as soon as the Secretary of State is satisfied that doing so will not prejudice any criminal proceedings.”

This new clause requires the changes made by this Act to be kept under review, and the first review of the Act to be carried out within a year of its being passed.

Government amendment 12.

Amendment 16, page 3, leave out lines 22 to 24 and insert—

(4) The “designated authority” is the National Crime Agency.”

This amendment would define the “designated authority” as the National Crime Agency.

Amendment 4, page 3, line 36, at end insert—

() Regulations under subsection (7) may not add the People’s Republic of China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China as a specified category 2 territory.”

This amendment would preclude the exercise in respect of China and Hong Kong of the proposed power under section 75B(7) of the Extradition Act 2003 to add to the list of specified category 2 territories under Schedule A1 on whose authority a valid extradition request may be made.

Amendment 9, page 3, line 36, at end insert—

() Regulations under subsection (7) may not add the United States of America to the list in Schedule A1 of specified category 2 territories.”

This amendment would preclude the exercise in respect of the USA of the proposed power under section 75B(7) of the Extradition Act 2003 to add to the list of specified category 2 territories under Schedule A1 on whose authority a valid extradition request may be made.

Government amendments 13 and 14.

Amendment 17, page 6, line 42, leave out “Liechtenstein” and insert “All the Member States of the European Economic Area”

This amendment would allow for all EEA Member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden) to be inserted into new Schedule A1.

Amendment 10, page 7, leave out line 2

This amendment would remove the USA from the proposed list of specified category 2 countries to which the provisions of this Bill will apply.

Government amendment 15.

Schedule stand part.

Sir Iain Duncan Smith: I rise to speak to amendment 1, but with it are a whole bunch of other amendments that I have tabled alongside my hon. Friend the Member for Isle of Wight (Bob Seely) and the hon. Member for Rotherham (Sarah Champion). I had intended when I originally tabled them to speak on the basis that the Government needed to act, but since then they have acted—and that is never a bad thing. Although I, with my colleagues, may well have provoked the Government to act, I still want to speak, because things are happening at the moment which mean, I hope, that the Government will pay full attention to further action that may be required, stretching across extradition and into sanctions.

I thank the Government for finally agreeing to rule out the extradition arrangements with Hong Kong, but it is worth noting what has been going on since the imposition of the national security law, which is now making the lives of many in Hong Kong a misery. More than that, they now fear very much indeed not only for their lives but their liberty in a way that none of us here, I sometimes think, could possibly imagine—what it is like to live in such an environment.

We have a historical relationship with Hong Kong, and we have a legal right, under the Sino-British treaty, to have an opinion and view on what is happening in Hong Kong. No matter what the Chinese Government may say, that is our right in international law. The imposition of the national security law runs counter to that arrangement—that treaty. On that basis, the Government have acted correctly in cutting off any potential problem that may arise as a result of the use of the extradition agreement—but there is more, even now, as we speak. Quite recently, we have seen action against a number of people who have done nothing other than use the kind of rights that we would take for granted in this House. Jimmy Lai, the owner of the largest pro-democracy publication in the city, has been charged with undermining the state. There have been arrests of young activists, some of which we have seen on television, but others go on. There have been media posts and people holding blank pieces of paper at protests. People have been arrested in shopping malls for sedition. The targeting of Hong Kong activists overseas is going on apace and gathering pace, as is retrospectively applying

[*Sir Iain Duncan Smith*]

the law to supposed crimes that took place before it even came into force, which I find remarkable—perhaps I should not, but I do.

There are then all the elements that the UK Government will find themselves having to deal with, and I believe all the devolved Administrations are united in this sense as well. The evidence around censorship is really quite astonishing. References to the Tiananmen Square massacre have now been removed from all textbooks and all materials that might say anything at all about it—they are simply blanked out. There is a new cultural revolution, with teachers and students being asked and encouraged to spy on each other. If somebody says the wrong thing, or something that is considered the wrong thing, or if someone is remembered to have said the wrong thing, all such talk invokes the use of the security law. There is a new national security centre in Shenzhen to re-educate those who do not comply. Benny Tai, the organiser of the yellow umbrella protest, which is a peaceful movement—I stress that these are all peaceful movements—was fired from his teaching post at a university simply because he was party to that movement. The censorship of university content is now gathering pace, as they are filleting out anything that references any concerns or issues around the nature of China, and even its historical nature.

The latest issue that should concern the Government completely is that we are now seeing problems for journalists from the free world. I say the free world because it is not just a western issue; it is an issue of all those who believe in rights and freedom around the world, whether they be in the far east or in the west. *The New York Times* has to relocate its staff, completely—lock, stock and barrel—to Seoul after the visa renewal of a senior journalist was rejected; the threat was clearly there that the rest would follow. A senior journalist at the *Hong Kong Free Press* had their visa rejected. The Foreign Correspondents' Club in Hong Kong described the trend as a weaponisation of visas by China. We even saw on the news the other day that the Australians are being heavily targeted—brutally targeted—and not only with sanctions; their journalists are now having to flee the country. In fact, two journalists who were due to leave were stopped from leaving and ended up in the consulate. They have now finally left, but the authorities wanted to question them for writing stuff of which they did not approve.

The whole point of this issue then comes into focus. It is the co-operation of the Chinese officials that I find perhaps the most galling. In the announcement by Chief Executive Carrie Lam that they were postponing the LegCo elections that were due to take place on Sunday 5 September—the weekend just gone—she cited covid cases as a reason for the delay. I have heard a few excuses in my time but that one really did take the biscuit, because so many other countries have had elections, both local and national, even during the covid saga. It is also worth pointing out that the Hong Kong rate of infection is lower than pretty much any of the countries that have held elections already. The idea that they can latch on to covid as some kind of excuse for cancelling elections had nothing to do with the reality; the reality was that they did not approve of the opposition and

wanted to stop the election so that they had time to make sure they arrested the key elements so that they would never be able to stand. Many members of the opposition have fled here to the UK and I have met and seen them.

There are two points, really, that dismantle the whole process. I made the point earlier that a number of countries—dozens, I think—have held elections. It is part of the total crackdown and acquiescence with what is in essence an illegal process going on in Hong Kong. That brings me to the next phase. The Government are right to have reacted and to have ceased the extradition procedures, but yet more needs to be done. I like to think this is something that unites us all. The sanctions that come from the Magnitsky amendments need seriously to be deployed by the Government. When I was most recently in the Chamber for exchanges on this issue, the Foreign Secretary said that the Government would review other actions that need to be taken with regards to Hong Kong, and that they would take it as the situation develops. The situation has been developing. It has been developing at a pace which, if my right hon. Friend the Minister for Security will forgive my saying, is faster than the Government or the Foreign Office seem to be able to move. We have nothing to lose anymore by holding back. It is not as if the Chinese Government are going to turn around and thank us, because they already think that we have caused problems, so my answer is: let us get on with it.

The deterioration of the situation has accelerated over the summer, and the US Government have already sanctioned Hong Kong and Chinese officials responsible for the implementation of the new law and for human rights abuses. I urge my right hon. Friend and the Foreign Secretary, who is not here, to move on to that and listen to Nathan Law, who fled directly after the Hong Kong Government did not agree to him standing. Others have also had to flee, and they have all called for those sanctions to be applied. I hope that the Government will listen to people whose lives have been under threat and whose families are still in Hong Kong and yet are brave enough to call for such sanctions, knowing full well that that might bring further problems for them.

3.15 pm

A related issue is the excessive and expensive visa fees under the present Government policy for BNO passport holders, which could be prohibitive for those who wish to get passports. We have been generous in opening up and saying that individuals with BNO status who wish to get passports will have the right to get them and to travel to the UK if necessary, but we have then put another problem in their way, and we do not make it easy for them. It is surely not right that potential British passport holders should have to face these fees. BNOs are allowed to serve in our armed forces but are not yet able to become British nationals without paying a large cost. I hope that the Government will think about suspending those fees, to encourage these people—particularly young ones—to take advantage of what is essentially a lifeline. Many of the people I have met who have fled Hong Kong have spoken of their difficulties in obtaining these passports. I know that this is not directly my right hon. Friend's responsibility, but I hope he will raise it with the Foreign Office, so that it can give its blessing.

The last point I want to make is an important one. We know about all the businesses that have been kowtowing to the Chinese Government, many of them in a shameful way, apologising, excusing and saying that it is somehow all about restoring order, despite the terrible abuses taking place. I will not go through them all, but I want to raise one that has recently been discovered. It appears that Disney worked with the security services in Xinjiang region—the place where the Uyghurs have suffered the most appalling abuse. It is those very security services that have been responsible for the forced sterilisation of Uyghur women. It is those very security services that have been rounding up those who have not co-operated and sending them to re-education camps, which have turned into labour camps, because they are now giving what I would call slave labour to companies situated in China.

That is appalling, and it is an illustration of what has been going on in China. I am astonished that, no matter all the news there is at the moment, the broadcast news have been pretty quiet on this issue. It is high time that we made a fuss about it. We should be the leaders on this issue. This country has a responsibility to Hong Kong and has a right to speak out. It is shameful that those companies turn a blind eye and act as apologists for a regime that brooks no dissent, is intolerant and is now arresting people for the most minor new offences that have nothing to do with normal law.

The situation is deteriorating fast. This Government need to pick up the pace, after having agreed to the extradition procedures being lifted. I urge the Government with all my heart to put China right up there as a priority, no matter all our domestic rows and arguments, which are important. The freedom of people faced with the imposition of dictatorial regimes should always be our No. 1 cry. We should speak out when others are not able to have the freedoms that we take for granted in this House. If we do not speak out for them, who will?

Mr David Davis (Haltemprice and Howden) (Con): Let me start by agreeing entirely with what was said by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Sir Iain Duncan Smith); he has argued forcefully that we should not extradite to China and Hong Kong, giving powerful humanitarian and human rights reasons, and he is right on every count.

Our extradition arrangements with the United States are not anything like as divisive as those with China and Hong Kong, but they remain deeply imbalanced and can lead to serious miscarriages of justice. As it stands, the Bill would allow individuals in the United Kingdom who are to be extradited to a list of specified countries to be arrested without a warrant. My amendments 7, 8, 9 and 10 would remove the United States from that list of countries, and I shall speak to those amendments now.

The Government say that they need the powers in this Bill because of suspects getting away if they are “encountered by chance” and it is not possible to arrest them without applying to a judge for a warrant. For hundreds of years in this country we have woken judges and magistrates up in the middle of the night to do precisely that: to carry out a police action, be it a search or an arrest. We do not bypass normal legal protections when a domestic suspect might get away, so why is this

necessary in respect of individuals facing extradition? The Home Office’s own impact assessment of these new powers says that, with or without them,

“suspects are highly likely to be before the court in any event when the requesting state confirms that the suspect is at large in the UK.”

So one has to wonder why the provision is needed at all.

The methodology used in the impact assessment supporting the Bill is both opaque and bogus. It is too long to go into here, but I recommend that if Members want a confusing way to go to sleep, they should read it—it is completely useless. Even so, it asserts that the proposed change would result annually in just

“6 individuals entering the CJS more quickly than would otherwise have been the case.”

That is just six individuals a year in the criminal justice system, out of the more than 100,000 criminals we deal with in this country every year, and for that we are giving away a fundamental legal protection for the innocent, as well as for anybody else.

The Bill’s explanatory notes try to justify the legislation on the basis that it is similar to powers introduced by our European neighbours, such as Spain. Let me give the House one example of that in operation. Members will know the name of Bill Browder, who campaigned on behalf of Sergei Magnitsky, the man who died in Russian imprisonment; in effect, he was killed by the Russian state. The Russians put out a red notice through Interpol for Mr Browder, and the Spanish Government executed it. Right enough, a judge subsequently released him, but I ask the House to think how Mr Browder would have felt, sitting in a Spanish prison considering the prospect of being extradited to be imprisoned in Russia and put into the hands of the people who had killed Magnitsky. These things are not without price.

As for other European countries, a number of them have absolute embargoes on extraditing their own citizens to anybody outside the EU, for reasons that I will come to in a second, but which in essence relate to a lack of trust in other countries’ justice systems.

The Bill’s impact assessment states:

“Under the proposed new power, the police could arrest a suspect who was wanted for extradition by a trusted partner country”.

The Bill defines such a country as

“those who respect the international rules based system”—

broadly speaking, although not entirely, the United States does that—

“and whose Red Notices and Criminal Justice Systems the UK trusts”.

We like to think of the US justice system as similar to our own, but recent high-profile cases have highlighted just how wrong that is and how we cannot trust the system with the interests of British citizens.

When the 2003 extradition treaty and the associated Bill were introduced, they were sold to the House on the basis that they would be used principally for paedophiles, murderers and terrorists. I was shadow Home Secretary at the time and I remember it vividly. I remember the leader of the Conservative party at the time accepting it on those terms, because he thought it was in the interests of the country. But the people we are extraditing to the

[Mr David Davis]

United States are mostly white collar businessmen who pose no danger to United Kingdom citizens, or indeed United States citizens.

Mr Andrew Mitchell (Sutton Coldfield) (Con): My right hon. Friend is making a characteristically sensible and robust speech. Does he agree that at the moment the international rules-based system is under great pressure but matters hugely to all of us? Is the case of the United States not an example of a totally asymmetric approach to extradition and will that asymmetry not be seen by people in Britain as most unfair and as bringing the whole process into disrepute?

Mr Davis: My right hon. Friend is right on several counts, and I will elaborate on the unfairness in a second, but he is right also to highlight something else, which is that international rules-based systems work only if everyone sees them treating all countries and their citizens identically. If they do not do that, they fall down. An American exceptionalist approach, therefore, destroys the systems we are trying to uphold. So there is an interesting philosophical point in his intervention, as well as the moral one that I will major on.

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that when these measures came in quite a number of us on the Opposition Benches were uneasy about the asymmetry and unfairness? It is good to see him reviewing the matter at this late stage.

Mr Davis: My right hon. Friend is exactly right, and I was one of those, although at that time I was not allowed to say so. It was not the first time I have been overruled by my boss, and it will not be the last.

Since 2007, the United Kingdom has surrendered 135 UK nationals to the United States, 99 of them for non-violent offences. Over the whole period of the Act, 80% of the offences have been non-violent. So much for terrorism, murder and paedophilia! To put it another way, there have been only three violent offences per year requiring extradition to the United States.

The US deliberately uses its extradition arrangements to cast a wide legal net around the business world, seeking to be judge, jury and executioner for global commercial deals and aims. The Home Affairs Select Committee's 2012 reported concluded that the United States

“has the power to reach out around the world and—provided there is a very, very tenuous connection with the US—it generally has the power to prosecute.”

Or as the distinguished extradition lawyer, Robert Dougans, puts it:

“The Department of Justice effectively uses criminal extradition as a lever for US interests in commercial matters, which is not what it is for.”

This has been shown in case after case, such as those of Ian Norris, the chairman of Morgan Crucible; the NatWest three; Christopher Tappin; and a number of others, including, most recently, Dr Mike Lynch.

How does it work? Once a person extradited from the UK arrives in the US, they are treated as guilty from the moment they land. They face invasive strip searches—that is exactly how it sounds—and they are electronically tagged. They are kept in appalling conditions completely

alien to the British justice system. They are shackled and perp-walked into and out of court in front of television cameras and paparazzi, so that the US Department of Justice can claim a PR victory at the expense of the presumption of innocence.

Some of the people extradited sit in court facing allegations dressed head to toe in orange prison garb. They are then faced with enormous pressure from the US authorities to agree to a plea bargain. They are told that if they plead innocent they will face decades in these appalling conditions but if they plead guilty they will face a much lighter sentence in an open prison, with possibly half of it served back here in the UK. As the case is held in America, very often witnesses from the UK will not appear, because they themselves fear incarceration. That has certainly happened in some current cases. A massive 97% of cases are settled by plea in the United States. For a foreigner, unprotected by the US constitution, that is not a justice system; it is a very effective but not at all fair prosecution system. It is not justice.

Much of this would be better if the accused were tried in Britain, completely sidelining the need to extradite at all. The NatWest three, for example, were British citizens and their alleged crime was in Britain against a British company; at worst, they should have been tried in front of a British court, but the British authorities did not see them as having a case to answer. However, the extradition treaty does not recognise this. Anyone caught in this system faces an asymmetric and unbalanced treaty process. Unlike in the US, a person in the UK has no right to insist on probable cause before being extradited. The 2011 Joint Committee on Human Rights report called this a lack of reciprocity in the treaty, and it has resulted in the US surrendering only 11 individuals to the United Kingdom since 2007, while 135 have gone the other way. Since the United States is roughly five times bigger than the UK, this is an effective disparity of 50 in risk of extradition.

3.30 pm

Mr Mitchell: It is not just a case of lack of reciprocity. The people in the NatWest case, which my right hon. Friend mentioned, had no case to answer according to the British authorities, yet in spite of that they were extradited. That is an appalling abuse of their human rights.

Mr Davis: My right hon. Friend is exactly right. Interestingly, in their case human rights were not used as a defence mechanism, whereas in another case the only thing that stopped Gary McKinnon being extradited was the implementation of the human rights law. My right hon. Friend is right more generally, too; they did not have a case to answer in a normal justice system, but they gave in and confessed to guilt rather than face 30 years in a grim high-security Texan prison, never seeing their families again, which is what this would have amounted to. That illustrates where the disparity lies, and why it is so unfair.

The US Government also have much greater discretion in refusing extradition requests. Under the Extradition Act 2003, the Secretary of State “must”—the word is “must”—issue a certificate for extradition. The equivalent US code states that the Secretary of State “may” order the person to be tried. Of course, there is no stronger

demonstration of this than the case of Anne Sacoolas, the person responsible for the tragic death of Harry Dunn. In Ms Sacoolas's case the US Secretary of State used this discretion—I think in the view of most in this House, wrongly—to prevent her extradition. The Dunn family may now have to settle for a wholly unsatisfactory virtual trial of Anne Sacoolas, because our extradition arrangements have failed to give them proper justice.

That is just the latest example of how the completely lopsided treaty allows US citizens to evade justice while exposing United Kingdom citizens to miscarriages of justice. The Prime Minister himself has recognised this imbalance. At Prime Minister's questions on 12 February he said:

"I do think that elements of that relationship are unbalanced, and it is certainly worth looking at".—[*Official Report*, 12 February 2020; Vol. 671, c. 846.]

Due to the scope of the Bill, my amendments would not rebalance the extradition arrangements with the US, but they would prevent, in a very small way, further facilitation of further miscarriages of justice. It would be a tiny improvement in a system that requires an entirely radical rewrite, so I am only moving them as probing amendments today.

The simple truth is—I make this point very firmly to my right hon. and very old Friend the Minister for Security, who is sitting on the Treasury Bench—[*Interruption.*] He is older than you think. I say to the Minister that this really needs, in the words of the Prime Minister, a rethink. I do hope that the Government will rethink this treaty and ensure that in future when we extradite British citizens to any other justice system in the world, that justice system will work as it is supposed to, and give them what is in the title: justice.

Mary Kelly Foy (City of Durham) (Lab): This is an important Bill. We need an extradition system that ensures that UK law enforcement agencies are supported in apprehending dangerous criminals in order to keep the public safe, both in Britain and abroad. This Bill helps facilitate the extradition of those who have committed serious crimes abroad, and all of us in this House can support that.

However, it is vital that this Bill includes the necessary safeguards. The amendments, both from the other place and those put before the House today, share common themes of transparency, fairness and support for parliamentary scrutiny; these are values that every Member should hold. It is right that the Bill compels the Government to consult with the devolved Administrations and non-governmental organisations before adding or removing a territory, as well as confirming to Parliament that the territory does not abuse Interpol red notices. That amendment promotes dialogue and discussion among relevant parties, respects the role of the devolved Administrations and ensures a level of transparency that is necessary in Government. It is difficult to see how any reasonable Government could object to that. Moreover, given the trouble that the Government have had with carrying out consultations before making major decisions, it is important that such a measure is included in the Bill. If any Member needs evidence of that, I refer them to the former Department for International Development.

The second amendment carried in the other place, which mandates that territories can only be added to the extradition process individually, is designed to increase

both transparency and scrutiny. If we allow territories to be added when grouped together, there is a real risk that a country with a problematic human rights record could be included alongside countries that respect human rights. Considering the Government's vocal support for a Magnitsky Act to deter human rights abuses, it would be somewhat hypocritical to oppose an amendment that has the same purpose.

Furthermore, by considering whether to add a territory on its own merits, we are not only ensuring that those countries do not abuse Interpol red notices, we are also adding a further layer of parliamentary scrutiny to the process. The House should seek to support additional scrutiny, not limit it. It is therefore disappointing, if not surprising, that the Government seem set on opposing these common-sense safeguards. As well as the amendments passed in the other place, it is important that this House further strengthens the Bill. Given that the legislation includes increased law enforcement powers with the purpose of keeping the public safe, it is right that the House should be able to see the effectiveness of those measures. Compelling the Secretary of State to update the House annually on the number of arrests made would help to achieve that. For the same reason, it is important that the Act is kept under regular review by this House. Again, that would strengthen Parliament's role while ensuring the measures are working as intended.

Finally, although the Bill rightfully updates our extradition process with territories such as New Zealand and Canada, it is clearly wrong that there is still uncertainty regarding our justice and security arrangements with members of the European Union. Many of those states are some of our closest allies, while a potential lack of access to the real-time European criminal databases will undoubtedly affect the ability of UK law enforcement agencies to protect the public. It is concerning that the Government have yet to adequately address that point.

While the Bill should be supported by the House, it is not perfect and there are gaps and uncertainties that still exist within it. The Opposition amendments seek to fill and strengthen the Bill and ensure that it is fully effective, while also aiming to increase transparency and co-operation. I urge Members to support the Opposition amendments today and to protect the amendments agreed to in the other place.

John Redwood: Two very important principles should be in all our thoughts when framing extradition legislation. First, there is the imperative to make sure that where someone has committed a serious and violent crime, such as a terrorist offence or murder or some other such crime, in the United Kingdom and has escaped abroad, we have arrangements so that we can pursue justice against them through co-operation with countries around the world. We should also have very much in our mind the issues that my right hon. Friend the Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis) drew to the attention of the House. We should be very concerned about innocent people in our country who may be the object of extradition requests or demands from countries abroad to take them into justice systems that are not up to the standards of our own, or not the kind of thing we would want an innocent person, particularly, to have to approach, only to see justice not done in those countries if we have undertaken such extradition matters. I echo my right hon. Friend's request that we need to look again at how the US relationship is working. This was

[John Redwood]

sold to the House some years ago on the basis that it would be targeted on those criminals we could all agree about—the terrorists, rapists and murderers who were committing violent crime—and it is of concern for us to discover that that has not been its main use at all.

I hope the Minister will share with the House his thoughts on what arrangements we will move towards with the other European countries now we have left the European Union. There may be a move to put all European Union, or European economic area, countries under these provisions, but we should definitely look at the different standards of justice system in those countries. While many of our European friends have excellent justice systems that we would be very happy with, there are very variable standards throughout the European continent. Given that we are rethinking our foreign policy and our position in the world generally, this is a good opportunity to look at them one by one and to ask whether some of them are below the standards we would expect and whether they have not made good use in the past of the very widespread powers granted to them under the European arrest warrant.

When I was preparing for this debate, one set of figures I saw in a commentary was for the period from 2010 to 2018. It said that over that period, continental countries had used the European arrest warrant eight times as often as we had used it for criminals, or alleged criminals, that we needed to undertake it for in our courts, so it has been asymmetric. In part, that is because there are many more people on the continent than there are in the United Kingdom, but it also tells us something about the seriousness of the offences that they are interested in for extradition.

I am pleased to see that there is some recognition in the legislation that extradition should be reserved for more serious offences. One does not want a complex and expensive system such as this to be used for a lot of minor offences. The Government have chosen to define it as something that is an offence in the United Kingdom and which would command a prison sentence of three years or more in the event of somebody being found guilty. I think that is a good start, because one of the features of the European arrest warrant that many people did not like was that somebody could be extradited under it from the United Kingdom for something that was not actually an offence in the United Kingdom. That did not seem a very fair system or proposal.

I hope the Minister will share with us some of his thoughts on what would be an appropriate list of European countries and whether they should just slot into the proposals that we are debating today. I think I am happy with the list of countries that we are being asked to endorse, with the caveat that we need to look at the American relationship in the way that my right hon. Friend the Member for Haltemprice and Howden suggested. I fully understand that now is not the afternoon to try to make dramatic changes to that and why he has tabled only a probing amendment. We are asking the Government about that, but there are big issues here that we would like them to review.

Alexander Stafford (Rother Valley) (Con): It is a pleasure to speak on a Bill that is so crucial to the security of our country and the safety of our citizens.

The extradition Bill plugs the capability gap that currently exists whereby the police become aware of a person who is wanted by a non-EU territory but are unable to arrest them without obtaining a warrant from a court first. Due to the delay, the suspect may abscond to avoid justice or to commit further crimes, this time in the UK. It is not a point of debate that we all want to see those who perpetrate such serious crimes brought to justice, wherever they may be. Furthermore, the people of Rother Valley do not want foreign criminals exploiting loopholes in our system to commit further crime in our communities. This Bill enables British police to quickly and efficiently arrest suspects without warrant for the purpose of extradition. It is similar to the powers that already exist under the European arrest warrant and will apply to a small number of countries with legal systems that are equally as rigorous and robust as ours.

3.45 pm

Much has already been said about the aim and substance of the Bill, so I wish to turn the Committee's attention to the amendments tabled for our consideration. Amendment 15, tabled by the Minister for Security, my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (James Brokenshire), allows for the territories listed in new paragraph 3A to be inserted into new schedule A1. Those territories are for the most part member states of the European Union. As we heard in the other place, the Bill is not a move to replace the European arrest warrant or to second guess the Brexit negotiations. It does, however, seem prudent to list the territories in new schedule A1, just in case we do lose access to the EAW. If other arrangements are made, the paragraph will be repealed at the end of 2021, which is a good thing. I certainly support such a measure and I follow with interest the Norway or Iceland-style fast-track extradition security partnership that the Government are currently considering to replace the EAW.

The sole aim of the Bill is to enable the arrest of a suspect wanted by a trusted non-EU country. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Liechtenstein and Switzerland are models of good judicial practice and fairness, but also will be some of our key partners going forward. In addition, the highly respected National Crime Agency must be satisfied that a valid request has been made, that such a warrant or conviction exists and that the offence is a serious one.

Given that, I note with concern the Opposition's new clauses 1 and 2, which would require the Secretary of State to lay a report before Parliament giving a breakdown of extraditions. That would be required every 12 months, and the new clauses demand a list of each incident broken down by the protected characteristics of each person, as per section 4 of the Equality Act 2010. There is no reason to think that extraditions under the Bill would be any different from those under the European arrest warrant, not least because of the high confidence we have in the legal systems of the category 2 territories. The new clauses tabled by the Opposition are needlessly bureaucratic and would place an onerous burden on the Secretary of State for little benefit.

I am interested in exploring the amendment in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Sir Iain Duncan Smith) that would prevent the application of the Bill to the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong. I am pleased that

the Government are supporting such an amendment. After the PRC's interference in Hong Kong's internal affairs and Beijing's undermining of Hong Kong's common law system, we should not consider extradition requests from those territories.

Conversely, while recognising the valid points made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis), I fundamentally disagree with excluding the United States from the list of permitted territories. The US for all its flaws, is our greatest friend and ally. It values liberty and due process above all else. To exclude the United States would be manifestly wrong and would send the wrong message to its Government.

I support the Bill and the Government's amendments. In the words of Max Hill QC, the Director of Public Prosecutions:

"this Bill strikes the right balance between ensuring sufficient human rights safeguards and delivering the capabilities that the police and CPS require in order to safeguard the public".

That is exactly what the people of Rother Valley and the United Kingdom want us to do.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): First, I thank the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Sir Iain Duncan Smith) for setting the scene so very well. When he referred to the persecution of the Uyghur Muslims, I was tempted to intervene on him to put on record my concerns about the brutality, violence and outright criminality that the Chinese Government are committing against their own people. It abhors everything that is decent, and it underlines the fact that we cannot do it on our own. The right hon. Gentleman knows that, but we can do it in conjunction with other countries as well. That goes part of the way to setting the scene, but we have to recognise that we must work with others to make things happen.

It is nice to see the Minister of State in his place again. He is doing double-duty in this Chamber. He did it last night, and he is back again for more. My goodness, he is some Minister. It is very pleasant to see him in his place.

I welcome the opportunity to make some comments. The UK has extradition arrangements with more than 100 territories around the world. That partnership is essential not only to ensure that criminals are properly processed, but also to ensure our need to extradite, and that the ability to do so is subsequently reciprocated. However, it is right and proper that the Secretary of State announced in July an end to the Hong Kong extradition treaty in the light of the imposition of the new security law in Hong Kong by Beijing that is a serious violation of the country's international obligations. I welcome the statements that the Secretary of State has made in this House on the matter.

I am not sure whether Members have had the chance to check today's press, but it contains the story of a 12-year-old child who was arrested in Hong Kong by three burly police officers, if I can say they that are burly—ever mindful of their size; they were certainly in excess of five times the strength of the child. The child was out getting paints for her school classes, but was perceived to be a protester. The actions of the Hong Kong police were totally outrageous, as they have been with everyone, but that event in particular concerns and rankles me greatly.

I declare an interest as chair of the all-party parliamentary group on international freedom of religion or belief. I am aware of and very disturbed by the treatment of those who do not fit the mould of how the Chinese believe things should be done. The treatment of Uyghur Muslims in particular has been in the news of late. I have spoken about the issue before and the APPG has been reporting on it for some time. The thought that the extradition treaty with the Hong Kong Government could mean the inhumane treatment of many people extradited to China after a pause in Hong Kong is quite simply frightening, and it is absolutely right that the Secretary of State took the steps that he did.

It is not only the persecution of the Uyghur Muslims; there is also persecution of Christians, who have had their churches desecrated and attacked, and their right to worship monitored and restricted. In addition, people of the Falun Gong belief have been systematically used for organ transplants, sometimes on a commercial scale. China has been guilty of all the worst crimes in the world against those who do not fit the form that it wants them to. I wholeheartedly agree with the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green and unfortunately do not see enough steps on human rights in the legislation, although I am quite sure that the Minister will give us some reassurance on that.

It is essential that we get this legislation right and fulfil our moral obligations. The right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis) referred to moral obligations, which I think we all have. There are duties that we have the capacity to alter and change as is necessary. I fully condemn any Government who carry out any human rights abuses or the persecution of religious minorities and ethnic groups. I am concerned about the lack of human rights safeguards in this legislation. The background information from the Library refers to the discussion of the Bill in the other place, referring to the lack of human rights safeguards as well as

"the use of wide regulation-making and Henry VIII powers; the lack of specific criteria or safeguards to be applied when adding Category 2 territories to the specified list in the future...the integrity of the Interpol red notice system; the impact of losing access to the EAW, and what other measures might be necessary to mitigate against those risks".

Perhaps the Minister will give us some clarification on those matters.

I am all for trade deals and for working in partnership, but not at the expense of lives. As furious as those who are removed from our treaty list may be, doing the right thing may mean doing the difficult thing. Sometimes the difficult thing is the moral and right thing to do, and this legislation must be given the freedom to do those things. I welcome the Government's commitment to legislate to change, and we will all support the introduction of the Magnitsky Bill that the Secretary of State has mentioned.

I am a great admirer of America, and not just because I go there on holiday every two or three years. I love the American people. I love the escapism that America has and I am proud of my Ulster Scots foundation, history and tradition. I am pleased to say for the record that 18 Presidents of the United States of America have Ulster Scots ancestry, which tells us something about the part of Northern Ireland that I come from—that we can produce 18 Presidents of the United States of America.

[*Jim Shannon*]

It tells us that they were fine presidents, by the way, and that the history of the United States comes from here and other countries in the world.

I am aware that our extradition policies may not be equally reciprocated, and when it comes to our dealings with the USA, that should be taken into account. Therefore, when I saw the amendments tabled by the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden that highlight the US situation—others Members have spoken on this—they gave me pause and should give the Committee great pause for thought about what they do. We all know the cases—I do not need to say them again; other hon. Members have referred to them—that are in my mind and in the media spotlight, and are therefore important.

There have been various examples. Indeed, this year, our Prime Minister was open enough to admit that it might be appropriate to characterise our relationship on extradition as lopsided; I think that tells us all about the position between the UK and the USA. It has been well argued that the current legislation and the 2003 treaty require the UK to meet a higher evidential threshold—I understand that—than the US before extradition will be ordered. It is abundantly clear that we must take steps to rectify that in the Bill and I am pleased that that seems to be the case. Again, however, perhaps the Minister will give us some clarification on that.

I also ask the Minister about contact with the local Administrations—the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly—to which the hon. Member for City of Durham (Mary Kelly Foy) referred. Will the Minister confirm that those talks and discussions have taken place and that the regions' full input is part of the deal?

It seems that there are certain nations that allow us to give but do not reciprocate at the same level. The National Crime Agency must have the ability, under the authority of this legislation and the Secretary of State, to make changes to ensure that if we are at pains to help others to bring home criminals to be accountable for their crimes, we get at least the same level of help when it comes to our own criminals.

Hailing as I do from Northern Ireland, as other hon. Members will remember—I have said it in the past but I want to put it on the record—it was disheartening to see men and women who carried out terrorist activities and left people with unspeakable loss, pain, injury, hurt and lives that would never be the same wandering about in the Republic and living their lives in defiant freedom. Some of those who carried out some of the worst atrocities have walked around the Republic of Ireland in comparative safety and sanctuary for some time.

Those who killed my cousin Kenneth Smyth and his friend Daniel McCormick on 10 December 1971 escaped across the border and have never been held accountable for their crimes, so hon. Members can understand how, 49 years later, I feel quite concerned. I have lived my life knowing that murdered criminals unrepentantly live their lives in freedom just miles across the border from their dreadful deeds, and it is something that I would wish on no one.

The basic principle of our extradition treaty must be that we will help others to get criminals off the streets, but the underlying pin that holds it together must be

that the moral duty, to which the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden referred and to which I believe we all adhere, and the duty to human rights are premium. The Bill is our opportunity to get that right.

I welcome some of the tidying up that has been done by Committee members, whose input and commitment I also welcome. A lot of work has taken place to get us this far, but again, I ask for the Minister's assurance that he believes that our human rights obligations are fully enshrined in this legislation, not simply for today's globe, but future-proofed for our ever-changing world.

Caroline Nokes (Romsey and Southampton North) (Con): I appreciate the opportunity to speak briefly in this afternoon's important debate. There have been some excellent contributions from hon. and right hon. Members, and it is always a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon). Many Members have rightly highlighted the positives in the Bill, but they have also drawn attention to some of the perceived negatives. I echo the comments of the hon. Gentleman when he said that we have a strong history of doing the right thing and doing the lawful thing, even when there is perhaps an imbalance in relationships, which we occasionally see. However, I wish to approach the Bill from a slightly different perspective.

4 pm

I do not expect my right hon. Friend the Minister for Security to comment in detail on the issues that I raise; it would be extremely unfair to expect him to do so, but in every extradition case, whether the person is a criminal or not, at heart there is an individual, whose human rights must be protected. In that vein, I draw to the Minister's attention the case of my constituent, Jonathan Taylor, who is fighting extradition on an Interpol red notice, because his case highlights some of the issues and examples that have caused my right hon. Friend the Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis) to express so passionately his fears as to what could happen to individuals who, at the end of the day, are British citizens and our constituents.

I do not expect the Minister to comment in detail, but Mr Taylor is currently on bail in Croatia, where he is fighting an extradition notice from Monaco. I note that Monaco is not included in any of the changes made to the Bill, and I do not seek to bring in anything that might be considered out of scope, but I wonder whether the Minister might be tempted to comment on the reasoning behind that.

I have quite correctly, as Mr Taylor's constituency MP, raised his case with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. I know that Members from all parts of the House have highlighted that case, because Mr Taylor is a whistleblower. I seek reassurances from my right hon. Friend the Minister for Security this afternoon that in cases where whistleblowing is involved, the individual who has done the right thing and provided evidence to jurisdictions as far-flung as the United States, Brazil and the Netherlands should not find themselves caught up in a Kafkaesque nightmare where it is they who are held responsible and find themselves fighting extradition to foreign countries when they have done nothing wrong.

In this case, the whistleblower is being pursued by Monaco, which leaves him in an extremely vulnerable position. That is causing great anxiety to himself and to

his family—hence the need to raise these concerns with reference to the Bill as it comes before the House today.

In this country, we seek to protect whistleblowers. Legislation laid down in 1998 and in 2013 does exactly that. I seek reassurance from the Minister that nothing in the Bill will undermine those protections for British citizens who find themselves caught up in such a situation. I acknowledge that Mr Taylor's case is not strictly applicable to the Bill, but it is pertinent, and it would have been remiss of me not to use this opportunity today. So I have done so; I have highlighted a very real situation that is of massive concern not only to my constituent but to other British citizens. Many others will be in similar situations. They are seeking to oppose their extradition to countries that are giving every appearance of pursuing a political rather than a judicial agenda.

Joanna Cherry (Edinburgh South West) (SNP): I rise to give my party's support to the amendments in the names of the right hon. Members for Chingford and Woodford Green (Sir Iain Duncan Smith) and for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis). I should also say that the Scottish National party supports the official Opposition's new clauses 1 and 2, which seem eminently sensible.

The Scottish National party fully supports reasonable measures to keep our citizens safe from those who have committed serious crimes furth of this country, and we fully support working with international frameworks to do so. Indeed, that is one of the reasons why we, and the majority of people in Scotland, were so keen on the security and justice co-operation afforded through our membership of the European Union, and why we voted for its continuance repeatedly and are so sad to see it go.

To return to the amendments, it is important to remember that, in addition to a duty to protect the safety of our citizens, this Government and this Parliament have a duty to uphold international human rights standards. We should be loth, therefore, to do anything to permit extradition to regimes that do not uphold the right to a fair trial, free speech or freedom of expression. Many of our constituents are extremely concerned about human rights abuses in China, particularly in respect of the Uyghur Muslims. These and other human rights abuses are indicative of a regime that is very far indeed from putting the same store by human rights as we do. Many of our constituents have watched with horror as the situation in Hong Kong has unfolded and as the brutal suppression of pro-democracy activists continues. The hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon) referred to the footage of a 12-year-old girl being subject to a violent arrest at a pro-democracy protest—I am sure we are all very grateful to those brave enough to film that footage and get it out to the rest of us. I very much want to associate myself with the comments of those who are very keen to impress on the Minister—I am sure he is alive to this—the importance of not making it any easier for human rights-denying regimes to get their hands on their citizens who have sought refuge in these islands.

Let me turn now to amendments 7 to 10 in the name of the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden. I share his concerns about the unbalanced extradition arrangements that we have with the United States of

America. There is a lot that could be said about those today, but I will not go into it in detail because it is beyond the scope of this Bill to redress that imbalance. None the less, I am very grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for raising it, and I wish to impress on the Government as we move forward, particularly given the nature of the current President of the United States of America, that we should be looking afresh at these unbalanced extradition arrangements, particularly when we see the outcome of a number of high-profile cases at the moment.

I want to turn now to the Government amendments. I am keen to know from the Minister—I realise that we have received a letter from him in the past hour or so, but I have not had time to digest its contents properly—just exactly why Government amendment 15 is now seeking to include EEA countries in proposed new schedule A1. Is this the start of our growing and perhaps inevitable recognition that, when we leave the transition period at the end of this year, there will not be any replacement for the European arrest warrant? If that is so, it is a most regrettable state of affairs, and one that is of great concern to my colleagues in government in Edinburgh and also to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service in Scotland and to Police Scotland. An update on exactly what is going on here would be very much appreciated, particularly as the Solicitor General told us on Second Reading that this Bill was not about the European arrest warrant. If that has changed, we really deserve a full explanation of why it has changed and where we are in the negotiations in that respect.

I wish to oppose Government amendments 13 and 14. Government amendment 13 removes a provision that was inserted in the other place imposing certain conditions about a consultation assessment and requiring reports on the making of regulations under section 74B(7) of the Extradition Act 2003. I very much regret that the Government are attempting to remove these additional safeguards. I regret in particular the Government's determination to remove the obligation to consult the devolved Governments before adding, removing or varying reference to a territory. I very much fear that this deletion is indicative of the Government's lack of good will towards the other Governments of these islands. It will come as little surprise to viewers in Scotland that the Government will do anything they can to get out of any obligation to take account of public opinion in Scotland or the views of Scotland's elected representatives. In that respect, I urge them to think again, because, as was said in the other place, the devolved institutions can be a source of "valuable information" relevant to changes that might be proposed in relation to individual territories. Although extradition is a reserved matter, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament have responsibility for justice, policing and prisons, and their views ought to be considered. Furthermore, many members of the Scottish Government and Parliament have expertise in relation to human rights and a particular interest in human rights aspects of territories that the British Government might seek to add.

That brings me to the deletion of any obligation to consult non-governmental organisations. I have already spoken about how central human rights must be to our decision as to whether to add any territories to these provisions. NGOs will have direct experience or information

[*Joanna Cherry*]

in relation to the human rights position on the ground of a particular country or territory, which can only aid Government decision making and, importantly, parliamentary scrutiny.

Finally, I support what the hon. Member for City of Durham (Mary Kelly Foy) said about the unfortunate deletion of the obligation to do this territory by territory, with one statutory instrument per territory, rather than rolling up a number of them into one. As was said in the other place, by exiting the European Union, we have made ourselves as a state “vulnerable to pressures” in the context of seeking trade agreements. If we have one statutory instrument per territory, it is much more likely to be identified on the Floor of the House where such undue pressure has been brought to bear. I will leave it at that for now.

Conor McGinn (St Helens North) (Lab): It is always a pleasure to see you in the Chair, Dame Rosie, and to follow the hon. and learned Member for Edinburgh South West (Joanna Cherry), with whom I have shared many assignments on the Floor of the House and in Committee on these matters. I rise to speak to new clauses 1 and 2 and amendments 16 and 17, in my name and those of the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Home Secretary.

There is a slight irony in the fact that we are discussing a Government Bill designed to strengthen international law just a matter of hours after we heard from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland at the Dispatch Box that the Government intend to break international law in relation to the withdrawal agreement. I want to put on record how good it is to see the Minister for Security in his place. I thank him for the co-operative and courteous way in which he has worked with me over the last number of months since I was appointed. I would expect no less from a person of his calibre, but it is very much appreciated.

We have heard a serious tone in the debate. As a relatively new Front Bencher, it is quite daunting to follow the speeches of such distinguished and senior parliamentarians as the right hon. Members for Chingford and Woodford Green (Sir Iain Duncan Smith), for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis) and for Wokingham (John Redwood). We also heard from the hon. Member for Rother Valley (Alexander Stafford) and the esteemed Chair of the Women and Equalities Committee, the right hon. Member for Romsey and Southampton North (Caroline Nokes), as well as my hon. Friend the Member for City of Durham (Mary Kelly Foy), who shows that there are still a few reds left in the red wall, thankfully. We also heard characteristically dignified words from my friend, the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon).

This Bill seeks to fill a gap—notably, the situation where UK law enforcement becomes aware of someone wanted by a non-EU territory but is unable to arrest them without first seeking a warrant. The risk that the Bill seeks to address is that a wanted person may abscond or even reoffend before they can be detained. We acknowledge the context, the arguments and the safeguards set out by the Government on Second Reading, and we have carefully considered the comments made by the Director of Public Prosecutions and others. We

also believe that the scrutiny and refinement of the Bill during its passage in the other place has significantly improved and strengthened it.

We have approached the Bill in a constructive spirit, with a determination to work across the House to get important legislation right for the protection of all our citizens. It is critical to ensure that serious criminals—some of whom, let us not forget, are wanted abroad for the most heinous crimes—are arrested and swiftly brought to justice before the opportunity arises for them to reoffend or abscond. We fully accept that, in a world where criminals increasingly respect no national borders or boundaries, we must work to achieve our overriding priority to keep the British public safe in collaboration with our international partners. However, important amendments have been tabled, and I hope that the Government will listen carefully to the points raised on both sides of the House, to ensure that we build the strongest, most robust and fairest legislative framework for our extradition process.

New clause 1 would require the Secretary of State to lay a statement setting out how many individuals have been arrested under provisions in the Act, broken down by the characteristics of each person arrested as set out in section 4 of the Equality Act 2010. This would ensure that Parliament receives the information and facts to enable us to fulfil our duty in scrutinising the effectiveness and impact of this Bill, and in particular to know to whom it is being applied. First, it is important to understand how many people this is applied to, which will enable us to understand the breadth and reach of the provisions in this Act and to compare its effectiveness with current provisions, and secondly, it is equally important that we understand to whom it is being applied.

4.15 pm

The purpose of the Equality Act was to protect people from discrimination on the basis of nine protected characteristics. In a situation such as requests for extradition, when we are responding to requests from other jurisdictions, we do not have any way of recognising whether these requests are forming any patterns or disproportionately affecting any group of persons. If our own equalities legislation is to have any meaning or to be effective, it is vital that we at least have the evidence and the data before this House to analyse the effect of these extradition provisions on protected groups. We therefore request that this information is published to enable this analysis so we can more effectively understand the impact of the Bill.

New clause 2, in my name and that of my right hon. and hon. colleagues, requires a change made by this Act to be kept under review and the first review of the Act to be carried out within a year of its being passed. Again, this is an important part of making the legislation better, because we live in a permanently changing world, where both international relations and the issues of crime and security are fluid and constantly evolving.

Moreover, there remain concerns from many areas about the approach of several countries to the use of Interpol red notices, as we have already heard. In February last year, the European Parliament published a study that examined abuse by some states of Interpol’s notice system to persecute human rights defenders, civil society activists and journalists in violation of international standards of human rights. The study acknowledged

that the reforms implemented in 2015 have improved the situation. However, abuses of the Interpol system against individuals, including journalists, continue because there is still a lack of established rules and procedures to govern the vetting process and adherence to Interpol's constitution.

It is of the utmost importance that we in this House have the opportunity to finesse or refine this legislation in respect of extradition, so that weaknesses in existing systems are not exacerbated by any vague legislation coming from this House. It is important that this is regularly evaluated. As in our new clause 1, it is only through comprehensive access to good information and evidence that we can truly understand the impact and effectiveness of this important legislation.

John Redwood: The hon. Gentleman is making a very good point. Has he done any study of the impact of the European arrest warrant and whether that has had adverse consequences in the way that he thinks Interpol does?

Conor McGinn: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his intervention, and I will come to the European arrest warrant and that point very shortly.

I hope the Minister recognises the importance of these new clauses to the effectiveness of the Bill, and responds accordingly.

On Government amendments 12 and 16, which define the designated authority as the National Crime Agency, we recognise that and are pleased to see that the Government have tabled an amendment to that effect. I have no doubt that this will give an important sense of clarity and purpose to those brave men and women working in the National Crime Agency and their operational partners, whose efforts, let us not forget—right at this moment, in fact—do a great deal to keep the public safe and secure. The role of the designated authority is fundamental to the success of the legislation, given that it will be carrying out the functions of certifying requests. However, can I ask the Minister to confirm to the House that powers of redesignation, if ever necessary, will be open to scrutiny by both Houses of Parliament, because I think he will appreciate that that is an important issue for future oversight?

We feel that Government amendment 13 seeks to undo the valuable amendment made in the other place by my hon. Friend the noble Lord Kennedy of Southwark. It received support from all sides in the other place, and it requires certain key conditions to be satisfied before the Secretary of State can add, remove or vary reference to a territory. That amendment was reasonable, proportionate and practical, and it should present no problem for the Government, so I am not quite clear why the Minister is seeking to undo the good work done by the noble Lords in the other place.

Nothing in the Lords amendment stops the Government doing what they want to do; it simply ensures a proper process of consultation and assessment, which any major changes to a framework of this significance should undergo. Where the proposal is to add a territory, it requires a statement confirming that the territory does not abuse the Interpol red notice system. The first part of the amendment places a requirement on the Secretary of State to consult on the merit of the change, and there are two groups in the consultation proposed here: first,

the devolved institutions; and secondly, NGOs and civic society. As the Bill currently stands, after consultation an assessment has to be laid before Parliament outlining the risks of the proposed changes and confirming that where the proposal is to add a territory, it does not abuse the Interpol red notice system. It is my contention that that should remain in the Bill.

In a similar vein, we will also be defending the amendment made in the other place by Baroness Hamwee, which the Government are attempting to remove by means of their amendment 14. The Bill as it now stands requires each order to add, vary or remove a territory under new schedule A1 to contain no more than one territory. There is of course nothing to prevent the Government from laying several instruments, each relating to one territory, at the same time, so there should not be any delay to process. Each country will have differing characteristics and varying degrees of compliance, so grouping them could result in the waving through of some territories with questionable human rights records purely because to fail to do so would jeopardise a potentially urgent extradition agreement with another country. Each country will have varying levels of compliance and different approaches to issues of human rights and criminal justice, and this is important because while we agree with legislating on the basis of those currently specified as trusted partners in this Bill, we should not leave the door open. We intend to defend the inclusion of this clause as a safeguard for the effective application of this legislation.

We have tabled amendment 17 to allow all European economic area member states to be inserted in new schedule A1, and we note that the Minister has made a similar proposal in Government amendment 15, but, frankly, the lack of progress on the justice and security talks with the European Union gives us a great deal of concern, and 31 December is approaching with no positive signs of agreement on these hugely important issues. I ask the Minister: is he concerned about our losing access to the capabilities afforded by the European arrest warrant? We on this side of the House are clear that any loss of capability, regardless of whether it is mutual, would have disastrous implications for UK law enforcement's ability to identify and question suspected criminals and thus keep our country secure.

I refer the Minister to comments made in February 2019 by Deputy Assistant Commissioner Richard Martin, the UK law enforcement lead for Brexit and international criminality, in relation to the loss of the European arrest warrant and the Schengen Information System, and the potential implications for policing of no deal. He said:

“Every fallback we have is more bureaucratic, it is slower”.

He said that while policing was “not going to stop” and would still meet the threat,

“we will be much more limited than we currently are”.

He went on to say:

“If something takes two or three times as long as when you were doing it before, that's probably another couple of hours maybe you are not back on the streets”

and not being visible doing your core role. Such an outcome would be not only undesirable but unacceptable.

Specifically on extradition, we know that the UK and EU falling back on prior arrangements in the 1957 Council of Europe convention would complicate proceedings

[Conor McGinn]

and add needless delay. That is not my assessment but that of the previous Conservative Government and their former Prime Minister, the right hon. Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May). We entirely accept that the Bill's scope relates solely to the powers conferred on UK law enforcement, so I would like to ask the Minister exactly what the Government are doing to ensure adequate levels of reciprocity in future extradition arrangements, particularly if we lose the powers we presently enjoy under the European arrest warrant and other such mechanisms.

I will turn briefly to the amendments tabled in the names of the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green and other colleagues. I listened carefully to the powerful speech the right hon. Gentleman made today about the admirable work he has been doing on this issue over previous months, which is wholeheartedly supported by those of us on this side of the House. We welcomed the Government's decision to suspend the extradition treaty with Hong Kong, which will offer much needed assurance to the Hong Kong diaspora and pro-democracy activists. It is important that the UK works with democratic partners around the world to ensure a co-ordinated international response that enables holders of the British national overseas passport, pro-democracy activists and the people of Hong Kong to travel without fear of arrest and extradition. The Government must not waver in their commitment to the people of Hong Kong, and we will support them in their endeavours if that is the case. I look forward to hearing the Minister's assurances.

I also acknowledge the work of the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden and his amendments. I stressed before that we acknowledge that the Bill's scope relates predominantly to powers of arrest conferred on UK law enforcement, not the extradition process itself, but we need to do all we can to ensure levels of reciprocity when it comes to our extradition agreements, not least with our most trusted partners. It is not acceptable that we are not able to bring those wanted for serious offences to justice here in the UK because they are elsewhere when the reverse would be perfectly possible. That is all too often the case, because for an extradition agreement to have any value—this goes to the heart of the right hon. Gentleman's point—British citizens must believe that their Government will support and stand up for them and uphold the integrity and equivalence of any agreement. I hope the Minister will take those arguments seriously.

In conclusion, we have, as always, sought to be a constructive Opposition during the progress of this Bill, and our amendments today serve only to strengthen and improve the legislation, building on the cross-party work done in the other place.

The Minister for Security (James Brokenshire): It is a privilege and pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Dame Rosie. I thank all right hon. and hon. Members across the House for their contributions during the course of this thoughtful debate, and I recognise and appreciate the support for the principles that are enunciated within a short Bill with a defined purpose.

I thank my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Sir Iain Duncan Smith), and I will come to his amendments and his important points

in relation to Hong Kong. I will also address the comments of my right hon. Friend the Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis)—my long-standing friend—on extradition. Indeed, he and I have debated such points over many years, and he will remember the changes that were brought about on things such as forum bars and where the right forum actually is. I can certainly say to him that we will always keep our extradition arrangements under review.

I thank the hon. Member for City of Durham (Mary Kelly Foy) for her challenges, and I will come to them during my contribution. Turning to my right hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (John Redwood), there are obviously issues around the EU and how we negotiate and how we use the freedoms that we now hold as an independent state. I hope to explain further the negotiations in relation to the EU, which are very much extant. I also thank my hon. Friend the Member for Rother Valley (Alexander Stafford) for his support and for so clearly setting out the purpose of the Bill.

The hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon) made several wide-ranging points, underlining why we have extradition to hold up our justice system and to ensure that those who need to be brought to justice are, including in significant cases that touch so many of our constituents. On that note, I appreciate the comments of my right hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Southampton North (Caroline Nokes). We are clearly aware of the constituency case she highlighted, and we are working with our colleagues at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office in connection with the case. It is important in that context to highlight how we approach such matters, ensuring that appropriate standards are met and applied, and she sought to underline certain issues. I will not comment on the detail of the individual case she raises on behalf of her constituent Jonathan Taylor, but I say to her that this Bill does not change the role of the court or the Secretary of State in relation to a person's extradition or any of the existing safeguards in the Extradition Act 2003. No individual will be extradited if the request is politically motivated—that touches on the broader point she was seeking to highlight, and I can give her that assurance.

4.30 pm

The purpose of the Bill is to create an immediate power of arrest for UK law enforcement when it first encounters extradition fugitives in certain circumstances. It introduces a new power of arrest by amendment to part 2 of the Extradition Act 2003, makes necessary consequential amendments and provides a power to make further consequential amendments by regulation. I appreciate the warm and generous comments made by the hon. Member for St Helens North (Conor McGinn) about the broad support for the Bill, and I thank him for his kind personal comments, too. I wish him well and look forward to many discussions in the future on a range of issues straddling security, organised crime and, more broadly, the extradition matters we are touching on today.

Currently, we do not have an equivalent power to arrest to that under the European arrest warrant for extradition purposes for those wanted by non-EU countries. Instead, our police have to apply to a UK court for an arrest warrant before they can arrest fugitives wanted by those countries. By creating the power to arrest certain suspects immediately, without obtaining a warrant first,

we are ensuring that if the police come across an individual wanted by a specified country whose systems we trust, they can arrest them. That prevents any risk that such a person might pose to the public here in the UK if they are left on the streets and the risk that they may abscond and not be brought to justice. It is important to express it in these terms; this Bill is about the protection of our citizens in this country. It is a determination that we make that this is an important right and power for our police to have, bounded by appropriate safeguards, of course. We know that some fugitives wanted for extradition can sometimes come to the attention of the police through a chance encounter, which is why the ability to arrest a suspect immediately is an operational necessity. That power is created by this Bill.

Bob Stewart (Beckenham) (Con): When the police make one of these immediate arrests, how long do they have before they have to allow the suspect to go?

James Brokenshire: My hon. Friend makes an important point about safeguards. He will see that the arrested individual will need to be before a judge as soon as practicable after arrest. That is one of the safeguards that I wanted to highlight, as it underpins this Bill. The new arrest power, in the prescribed circumstances, is the only change—this is another important point to stress—to current extradition law and practice that is introduced. It is designed to bring a wanted person into extradition proceedings under part 2 of the Extradition Act in an expedited way, without changing the likelihood of successful extradition. It does not change the current legislative framework, nor any of the process for the extradition proceedings themselves. The Bill is purely about shifting the point at which the police can intervene and arrest a wanted person. It in no way reduces the safeguards that must apply to any subsequent extradition proceedings considered by the court or the Home Secretary. Judicial oversight will continue as it does now after any arrest. The courts will continue to assess extradition requests as they do now, to determine, for example, whether extradition would be compatible with the individual's human rights or whether the person would receive a fair trial. If they would not, extradition would be barred.

The Bill includes five main safeguards. It applies only to certain specified countries. Countries with a poor human rights record or those that have abused Interpol systems could not be considered suitable for this provision. The addition of any countries would require the consent of both Houses, and it only applies to sufficiently serious offences; the power will only be available in relation to offences that would be criminal in the UK for which an offender would receive a prison sentence of at least three years and which is a sufficiently serious form of that offence to justify arrest.

The designated authority must be satisfied that arrangements are in place to ensure that requests made by the country concerned are made on the basis of an underlying warrant or a conviction. Also, as I have indicated, the arrested individual will need to be brought before a judge as soon as practicable after arrest, and the power does not alter extradition proceedings in any other way and does not interfere with the court or the Secretary of State's role in extradition proceedings.

I hope that that sets out quite clearly the importance of the safeguards. I know that some Members raised the issue of Interpol. I stress that the UK continues to

work with Interpol to ensure that its rules are robust, effective and complied with. It is notable that the former chief constable of Essex was recently made the executive director of policing services for Interpol—the most senior operational role in that organisation—and a UK Government lawyer has also been seconded to Interpol's notices and diffusion taskforce to work to ensure Interpol rules are properly and robustly adhered to by Interpol member states.

I turn to Government amendments 11 and 15, which provide a contingency to keep an important current law enforcement protection for the UK public in place after the end of the transition period, whatever the outcome of the current negotiations. As the House knows, the negotiated outcome we are seeking with the EU would create a warrant-based system based on the EU's surrender agreement with Norway and Iceland. The purpose of amending the Bill in this way at this time is to ensure the continuation of relevant arrest powers, should that prove necessary. Amendment 11 is a consequential amendment that will ensure that amendment 15 will be commenced only if we do not have in place new extradition arrangements with the EU at the end of the transition period. If an agreement is reached, these provisions will not need to come into effect. This is simply a contingency, and the provisions also provide a contingency in the event that we do not agree new extradition arrangements with Norway and Iceland to maintain the arrest power currently available by virtue of the EU-Norway-Iceland surrender agreement.

Opposition amendment 17 covers similar ground, although framing it in EEA terms. I hope the hon. Member for St Helens North will appreciate that we should approve participants on a state-by-state basis, which he would probably acknowledge, and that is therefore why we think the better approach is to name countries individually.

On the progress of the negotiations on law enforcement and criminal justice, I think there is a good degree of convergence in what the UK and the EU are seeking to negotiate in terms of operational capabilities. We will keep working to bridge the gap where differences remain. There is still an agreement to be had and we will continue to work hard to achieve it.

Government amendment 12 specifies the National Crime Agency is to be the designated authority for this legislation. The designated authority is the agency that will have the task of certifying that the international arrest alerts conform to the right criteria for them to carry the new power of provisional arrest. The drafting is future-proofed, as it allows for the designated authority to be changed by regulation should the need arise. We have taken that approach as the direct alternative to using secondary legislation on this occasion, to ensure the best use of parliamentary time. The amendment therefore represents a change of process rather than policy and is reflected by Opposition amendment 16. I hope that the Opposition will recognise, because of the future-proofing arrangements, that this is an improvement to the technical approach they would take.

Government amendment 13 will overturn one of the two changes made in the other place. Statutory requirements are added for the Government to consult on the merits of adding, removing or varying a territory from the Bill with the devolved Administrations and relevant interested stakeholders. Throughout the passage of the Bill, we

[James Brokenshire]

have been clear in our commitment to ensuring that Parliament can scrutinise any decision to bring a new country in scope of this power in exactly the same way as Parliament does in relation to the Extradition Act. To that end, the Bill mandates that the addition or removal of any territory is by the affirmative resolution procedure. This gives Parliament the right to scrutinise in detail such proposals and to accept them or, indeed, reject them.

It is important to stress that while extradition is a reserved matter, relevant officials are engaged in regular discussions with their counterparts in the devolved Administrations and law enforcement agencies who operate right across the UK to collaborate on operational policy and ensure the effectiveness of our extradition system. Indeed, such discussion and consultation has already taken place in relation to the Bill and the amendments. Of course, given that any countries being added would be subject to the affirmative procedure, there will be opportunities for Parliament to probe the extent to which the views of the devolved Administrations and other organisations have been sought. Therefore, we believe that there is no need to add this provision to the Bill.

Amendment 14 would overturn the second provision altered in the other place, which provides that the removal or addition of a country must use a single statutory instrument. Any additions will be dictated by the will of Parliament, not by an unusual process such that this would impose. If a country is proposed that Parliament does not agree should be specified, then the regulations will be voted down in the normal way. We judge that that remains the rightful process.

Turning to amendments 1 and 2 in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green, I am grateful to him for the way in which he has approached this and for the important points that he and other Members have made. It might be useful to set out the measures the Government have taken in dealing with the situation in Hong Kong since the amendments were tabled. As the Committee will be aware, because of the new national security legislation in Hong Kong, the Government have indefinitely suspended the 1998 UK-Hong Kong agreement on the surrender of fugitive offenders—our extradition treaty. As a result, the Government will not deal with extradition requests sent by Hong Kong to the UK under that treaty. We are also creating a new bespoke immigration route for citizens from Hong Kong to come to the UK, reflecting the unique and unprecedented circumstances in Hong Kong and the UK's historical and moral commitment to British nationals overseas citizens.

I pay tribute to my right hon. Friend and Members across the House who have brought this issue to the House in ensuring that we stand with the people of Hong Kong. This Government have demonstrated our absolute commitment to the people of Hong Kong. Any changes to the Bill in the form of these amendments would not change our extradition relationship with Hong Kong, as I think my right hon. Friend has recognised. However, the points that he has made are very powerful, and I know that colleagues in the Foreign Office will equally have recognised them. We will certainly keep this issue under careful review.

In relation to the amendments tabled by my right hon. Friend the Member for Haltemprice and Howden, I would reiterate that the purpose of this Bill is to rectify a policing capability gap, to better protect the public. I recognise that he perhaps makes his points within a broader purview and that his amendments were probing and there are other issues that he might like to return to on another day. The US is just one of the UK's extradition partners, and the legal processes in each of those jurisdictions will be different. He has been a champion of the important liberties that this Government seek to protect in relation to each and every extradition case that goes to the UK courts. I recognise and respect the approach that he takes. While we take a different view on these issues of imbalance, he will recognise some of the previous reviews that have looked at these issues in seeing whether that imbalance does exist. As I have indicated, we keep all our extradition arrangements under review, and I look forward to continuing this conversation with him in the weeks and months ahead.

I am also grateful to my right hon. Friend for rightly drawing attention to the case of Anne Sacoolas. Harry Dunn's death was a terrible tragedy. We have every sympathy with his family for their tragic loss and share their desire to ensure that justice is done—a point that the Prime Minister himself has reaffirmed in the last few days.

Finally, I turn to new clauses 1 and 2. Throughout the passage of the Bill, there has been considerable cross-party consensus on its aims and measures, alongside the robust scrutiny that I have come to rightly expect from this House. New clause 1 would require the publication of an annual statement on arrests. The National Crime Agency already keeps data and publishes statistics on arrest volumes in relation to part 1 of the Extradition Act. It does that without having been required to do so by primary legislation. We have no doubt that it will similarly do so in respect of arrests under this new arrest power, as this is sensible operational practice. While I have some sympathy for the new clause, I am not persuaded of the necessity of a statutory obligation at this time. I hope that we will be able to review this as that information is published.

4.45 pm

I hear what the hon. Member for St Helens North said in relation to new clause 2, which I think has been tabled as a probing amendment, on the issue of a review. Again, we believe that there is sufficient transparency. This House will no doubt have the chance to assess the operation of the Bill, through the normal post-legislative scrutiny. For those reasons, we are not minded to accept the new clause, although we recognise the need for constant challenge through this House. I am grateful for the amendments that have been tabled and the informed debate that we have had.

Sir Iain Duncan Smith: I have listened carefully to my right hon. Friend and, given the nature of what the Government have already undertaken since the amendments were tabled by my right hon. Friends and I, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 1 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 2

EXTENT, COMMENCEMENT AND SHORT TITLE

Amendment made: 11, page 1, line 16, at end insert

‘, but paragraph 3A of the Schedule may not be commenced so as to come into force in relation to a territory before that territory is a category 2 territory for the purposes of the Extradition Act 2003.’—
(*James Brokenshire.*)

This amendment is consequential on amendment 15 and provides that the amendments that are to be made by amendment 15 to Schedule A1 to the Extradition Act 2003 (inserted by paragraph 3 of the Schedule to the Bill) cannot be brought into force in relation to a territory before the territory is designated as a category 2 territory for the purposes of that Act.

Clause 2, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedule

POWER OF ARREST FOR EXTRADITION PURPOSES

Amendment made: 12, page 3, line 22, leave out from beginning to end of line 24 and insert—

‘(3A) The “designated authority” is the National Crime Agency.

(4) The Secretary of State may by regulations amend this section so as to change the meaning of “designated authority”.’—
(*James Brokenshire.*)

The Bill currently provides for the Secretary of State to designate the “designated authority” in regulations. This amendment instead provides, on the face of the Bill, that the National Crime Agency is the designated authority and confers a power on the Secretary of State to amend new section 74B to designate a different authority.

Amendment proposed: 13, page 3, line 37, leave out from beginning to end of line 2 on page 4.—(*James Brokenshire.*)

This amendment leaves out a provision inserted in the Lords imposing certain conditions relating to consultation, assessments and reports on the making of regulations under new section 74B(7).

The Committee divided: Ayes 333, Noes 241.

Division No. 87]

[4.48 pm

AYES

Adams, Nigel	Bhatti, Saqib
Afolami, Bim	Blackman, Bob
Ahmad Khan, Imran	Blunt, Crispin
Aiken, Nickie	Bone, Mr Peter
Aldous, Peter	Bottomley, Sir Peter
Allan, Lucy	Bowie, Andrew
Amess, Sir David	Bradley, Ben
Anderson, Lee	Bradley, rh Karen
Anderson, Stuart	Brady, Sir Graham
Andrew, Stuart	Braverman, rh Suella
Argar, Edward	Brereton, Jack
Atkins, Victoria	Bridgen, Andrew
Bacon, Gareth	Brine, Steve
Bacon, Mr Richard	Bristow, Paul
Badenoch, Kemi	Britcliffe, Sara
Bailey, Shaun	Brokenshire, rh James
Baillie, Siobhan	Browne, Anthony
Baker, Duncan	Bruce, Fiona
Baker, Mr Steve	Buchan, Felicity
Baldwin, Harriett	Burghart, Alex
Barclay, rh Steve	Burns, rh Conor
Baron, Mr John	Butler, Rob
Baynes, Simon	Cairns, rh Alun
Bell, Aaron	Campbell, Mr Gregory
Benton, Scott	Carter, Andy
Beresford, Sir Paul	Cartlidge, James
Berry, rh Jake	Cash, Sir William

Cates, Miriam	Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
Caulfield, Maria	Glen, John
Chalk, Alex	Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
Chishti, Rehman	Graham, Richard
Churchill, Jo	Grant, Mrs Helen
Clark, rh Greg	Grayling, rh Chris
Clarke-Smith, Brendan	Green, Chris
Clarkson, Chris	Green, rh Damian
Cleverly, rh James	Griffith, Andrew
Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse	Griffiths, Kate
Colburn, Elliot	Grundy, James
Collins, Damian	Gullis, Jonathan
Costa, Alberto	Halfon, rh Robert
Courts, Robert	Hall, Luke
Coutinho, Claire	Hammond, Stephen
Cox, rh Mr Geoffrey	Harper, rh Mr Mark
Crabb, rh Stephen	Harris, Rebecca
Crosbie, Virginia	Harrison, Trudy
Crouch, Tracey	Hart, Sally-Ann
Daly, James	Hart, rh Simon
Davies, David T. C.	Hayes, rh Sir John
Davies, Gareth	Heald, rh Sir Oliver
Davies, Dr James	Heapey, James
Davies, Mims	Heaton-Harris, Chris
Davies, Philip	Henderson, Gordon
Davis, rh Mr David	Henry, Darren
Davison, Dehenna	Higginbotham, Antony
Dinenage, Caroline	Hinds, rh Damian
Dines, Miss Sarah	Hoare, Simon
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan	Holden, Mr Richard
Docherty, Leo	Hollinrake, Kevin
Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.	Hollobone, Mr Philip
Donelan, Michelle	Holloway, Adam
Dorries, Ms Nadine	Holmes, Paul
Double, Steve	Howell, John
Dowden, rh Oliver	Howell, Paul
Doyle-Price, Jackie	Huddleston, Nigel
Drax, Richard	Hudson, Dr Neil
Drummond, Mrs Flick	Hughes, Eddie
Duddridge, James	Hunt, Jane
Duguid, David	Hunt, rh Jeremy
Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain	Hunt, Tom
Dunne, rh Philip	Jack, rh Mr Alister
Eastwood, Mark	Javid, rh Sajid
Edwards, Ruth	Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
Ellis, rh Michael	Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias	Jenkinson, Mark
Elphicke, Mrs Natalie	Jenkyns, Andrea
Eustice, rh George	Johnson, Dr Caroline
Evans, Dr Luke	Johnson, Gareth
Evennett, rh Sir David	Johnston, David
Everitt, Ben	Jones, Andrew
Fabricant, Michael	Jones, rh Mr David
Farris, Laura	Jones, Fay
Fell, Simon	Jones, Mr Marcus
Fletcher, Katherine	Jupp, Simon
Fletcher, Mark	Kearns, Alicia
Fletcher, Nick	Keegan, Gillian
Ford, Vicky	Knight, rh Sir Greg
Foster, Kevin	Knight, Julian
Francois, rh Mr Mark	Kruger, Danny
Frazer, Lucy	Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
Freer, Mike	Lamont, John
Fysh, Mr Marcus	Largan, Robert
Gale, rh Sir Roger	Latham, Mrs Pauline
Garnier, Mark	Leadsom, rh Andrea
Ghani, Ms Nusrat	Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Gibb, rh Nick	Levy, Ian
Gibson, Peter	Lewer, Andrew
Gideon, Jo	Lewis, rh Brandon

Lewis, rh Dr Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Loder, Chris
Logan, Mark
Longhi, Marco
Lopez, Julia
Lopresti, Jack
Lord, Mr Jonathan
Loughton, Tim
Mackinlay, Craig
Macleane, Rachel
Mak, Alan
Mangnall, Anthony
Mann, Scott
Marson, Julie
May, rh Mrs Theresa
Mayhew, Jerome
McCartney, Jason
McCartney, Karl
McVey, rh Esther
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, Johnny
Merriman, Huw
Metcalfe, Stephen
Millar, Robin
Miller, rh Mrs Maria
Milling, rh Amanda
Mills, Nigel
Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
Mohindra, Mr Gagan
Moore, Damien
Moore, Robbie
Mordaunt, rh Penny
Morris, Anne Marie
Morris, David
Morrissey, Joy
Morton, Wendy
Mullan, Dr Kieran
Mumby-Croft, Holly
Mundell, rh David
Murray, Mrs Sheryll
Murrison, rh Dr
Andrew
Neill, Sir Robert
Nici, Lia
Nokes, rh Caroline
Norman, rh Jesse
O'Brien, Neil
Offord, Dr Matthew
Opperman, Guy
Paisley, Ian
Parish, Neil
Pawsey, Mark
Penning, rh Sir Mike
Penrose, John
Percy, Andrew
Philp, Chris
Pincher, rh Christopher
Poulter, Dr Dan
Pow, Rebecca
Prentis, Victoria
Pursglove, Tom
Quince, Will
Randall, Tom
Redwood, rh John
Rees-Mogg, rh Mr Jacob
Richards, Nicola
Richardson, Angela
Roberts, Rob
Robertson, Mr Laurence
Robinson, Gavin
Robinson, Mary

Rosindell, Andrew
Ross, Douglas
Rowley, Lee
Russell, Dean
Rutley, David
Sambrook, Gary
Saxby, Selaine
Scully, Paul
Seely, Bob
Selous, Andrew
Shannon, Jim
Shelbrooke, rh Alec
Simmonds, David
Skidmore, rh Chris
Smith, Chloe
Smith, Greg
Smith, rh Julian
Smith, Royston
Solloway, Amanda
Spencer, Dr Ben
Spencer, rh Mark
Stafford, Alexander
Stephenson, Andrew
Stevenson, Jane
Stevenson, John
Stewart, Bob
Stewart, Iain
Streeter, Sir Gary
Stride, rh Mel
Stuart, Graham
Sturdy, Julian
Sunderland, James
Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Syms, Sir Robert
Thomas, Derek
Timpson, Edward
Tolhurst, Kelly
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, Michael
Tracey, Craig
Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
Trott, Laura
Truss, rh Elizabeth
Tugendhat, Tom
Vara, Mr Shailesh
Vickers, Martin
Vickers, Matt
Villiers, rh Theresa
Wakeford, Christian
Walker, Sir Charles
Wallis, Dr Jamie
Warburton, David
Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles
Webb, Suzanne
Whately, Helen
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whittaker, Craig
Whittingdale, rh Mr John
Wiggin, Bill
Wild, James
Williams, Craig
Williamson, rh Gavin
Wood, Mike
Wragg, Mr William
Wright, rh Jeremy
Young, Jacob
Zahawi, Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:
James Morris and
Maggie Throup

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Ali, Tahir
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
Amesbury, Mike
Anderson, Fleur
Antoniazzi, Tonia
Ashworth, Jonathan
Barker, Paula
Beckett, rh Margaret
Begum, Apsana
Benn, rh Hilary
Betts, Mr Clive
Black, Mhairi
Blackford, rh Ian
Blackman, Kirsty
Blake, Olivia
Blomfield, Paul
Bonnar, Steven
Brabin, Tracy
Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
Brennan, Kevin
Brock, Deidre
Brown, Alan
Brown, Ms Lyn
Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
Bryant, Chris
Buck, Ms Karen
Burgon, Richard
Byrne, Ian
Cadbury, Ruth
Cameron, Dr Lisa
Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Carden, Dan
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Chamberlain, Wendy
Champion, Sarah
Chapman, Douglas
Cherry, Joanna
Clark, Feryal
Cooper, Daisy
Cooper, Rosie
Cooper, rh Yvette
Cowan, Ronnie
Coyle, Neil
Crawley, Angela
Creasy, Stella
Cruddas, Jon
Cummins, Judith
Daby, Janet
David, Wayne
Davies, Geraint
Davies-Jones, Alex
Day, Martyn
De Cordova, Marsha
Debbonaire, Thangam
Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
Docherty-Hughes, Martin
Dodds, Anneliese
Dorans, Allan
Doughty, Stephen
Dowd, Peter
Duffield, Rosie
Eagle, Ms Angela
Eagle, Maria
Eastwood, Colum
Edwards, Jonathan
Efford, Clive
Elliott, Julie
Elmore, Chris
Eshalomi, Florence
Esterson, Bill
Evans, Chris
Farron, Tim
Farry, Stephen
Fellows, Marion
Ferrier, Margaret
Fletcher, Colleen
Flynn, Stephen
Fovargue, Yvonne
Foxcroft, Vicky
Foy, Mary Kelly
Furniss, Gill
Gardiner, Barry
Gibson, Patricia
Gill, Preet Kaur
Glindon, Mary
Grady, Patrick
Grant, Peter
Gray, Neil
Green, Kate
Greenwood, Lilian
Greenwood, Margaret
Griffith, Nia
Gwynne, Andrew
Haigh, Louise
Hamilton, Fabian
Hanna, Claire
Hanvey, Neale
Hardy, Emma
Harman, rh Ms Harriet
Harris, Carolyn
Hayes, Helen
Hendrick, Sir Mark
Hendry, Drew
Hill, Mike
Hobhouse, Wera
Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
Hollern, Kate
Hopkins, Rachel
Hosie, Stewart
Howarth, rh Sir George
Huq, Dr Rupa
Hussain, Imran
Jardine, Christine
Jarvis, Dan
Johnson, Dame Diana
Johnson, Kim
Jones, Darren
Jones, rh Mr Kevan
Jones, Ruth
Jones, Sarah
Kane, Mike
Keeley, Barbara
Kendall, Liz
Khan, Afzal
Kinnock, Stephen
Kyle, Peter
Lake, Ben
Lavery, Ian
Law, Chris
Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
Linden, David
Lloyd, Tony
Long Bailey, Rebecca
Lucas, Caroline
MacAskill, Kenny
Madders, Justin
Mahmood, Shabana
Maskell, Rachael

Matheson, Christian	Reynolds, Jonathan
Mc Nally, John	Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
McCabe, Steve	Rimmer, Ms Marie
McCarthy, Kerry	Rodda, Matt
McDonald, Andy	Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
McDonald, Stewart Malcolm	Saville Roberts, rh Liz
McDonald, Stuart C.	Shah, Naz
McDonnell, rh John	Sharma, Mr Virendra
McFadden, rh Mr Pat	Sheerman, Mr Barry
McGinn, Conor	Siddiq, Tulip
McGovern, Alison	Slaughter, Andy
McLaughlin, Anne	Smith, Alyn
McMahon, Jim	Smith, Cat
McMorrin, Anna	Sobel, Alex
Mearns, Ian	Spellar, rh John
Miliband, rh Edward	Stephens, Chris
Mishra, Navendu	Stevens, Jo
Monaghan, Carol	Stone, Jamie
Moran, Layla	Streeting, Wes
Morden, Jessica	Stringer, Graham
Morgan, Stephen	Sultana, Zarah
Morris, Grahame	Tami, rh Mark
Murray, Ian	Tarry, Sam
Murray, James	Thewliss, Alison
Nandy, Lisa	Thomas, Gareth
Newlands, Gavin	Thomas-Symonds, Nick
Nichols, Charlotte	Thompson, Owen
Nicolson, John	Thomson, Richard
Norris, Alex	Thornberry, rh Emily
O'Hara, Brendan	Timms, rh Stephen
Olney, Sarah	Trickett, Jon
Onwurah, Chi	Turner, Karl
Oppong-Asare, Abena	Twigg, Derek
Osamor, Kate	Twist, Liz
Osborne, Kate	Vaz, rh Valerie
Oswald, Kirsten	Webbe, Claudia
Owatemi, Taiwo	West, Catherine
Owen, Sarah	Western, Matt
Peacock, Stephanie	Whitehead, Dr Alan
Pennycook, Matthew	Whitford, Dr Philippa
Perkins, Mr Toby	Whitley, Mick
Phillips, Jess	Whittome, Nadia
Phillipson, Bridget	Williams, Hywel
Pollard, Luke	Wilson, Munira
Powell, Lucy	Winter, Beth
Qureshi, Yasmin	Yasin, Mohammad
Rayner, Angela	
Reed, Steve	
Rees, Christina	Tellers for the Noes:
Reeves, Ellie	Bambos Charalambous and
Reeves, Rachel	Jeff Smith

Question accordingly agreed to.

Government amendment 13 agreed to.

The list of Members currently certified as eligible for a proxy vote, and of the Members nominated as their proxy, is published at the end of today's debates.

Amendment proposed: 14, page 4, leave out lines 3 and 4.—(James Brokenshire.)

This amendment leaves out a provision inserted in the Lords preventing regulations under new section 74B(7) adding more than one territory at a time to the list of territories in new Schedule A1.

Question put, That the amendment be made.

The Committee divided: Ayes 333, Noes 244.

Division No. 88]

[5.7 pm

AYES

Adams, Nigel	Ahmad Khan, Imran
Afolami, Bim	Aiken, Nickie

Aldous, Peter	Davies, Dr James
Allan, Lucy	Davies, Mims
Amess, Sir David	Davies, Philip
Anderson, Lee	Davis, rh Mr David
Anderson, Stuart	Davison, Dehenna
Andrew, Stuart	Dinenage, Caroline
Argar, Edward	Dines, Miss Sarah
Atkins, Victoria	Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Bacon, Gareth	Docherty, Leo
Bacon, Mr Richard	Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
Badenoch, Kemi	Donelan, Michelle
Bailey, Shaun	Dorries, Ms Nadine
Baillie, Siobhan	Double, Steve
Baker, Duncan	Dowden, rh Oliver
Baker, Mr Steve	Doyle-Price, Jackie
Baldwin, Harriett	Drax, Richard
Barclay, rh Steve	Drummond, Mrs Flick
Baron, Mr John	Duddridge, James
Baynes, Simon	Duguid, David
Bell, Aaron	Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
Benton, Scott	Dunne, rh Philip
Beresford, Sir Paul	Eastwood, Mark
Berry, rh Jake	Edwards, Ruth
Bhatti, Saqib	Ellis, rh Michael
Blackman, Bob	Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
Blunt, Crispin	Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
Bone, Mr Peter	Eustice, rh George
Bottomley, Sir Peter	Evans, Dr Luke
Bowie, Andrew	Evennett, rh Sir David
Bradley, Ben	Everitt, Ben
Bradley, rh Karen	Fabricant, Michael
Brady, Sir Graham	Farris, Laura
Braverman, rh Suella	Fell, Simon
Brereton, Jack	Fletcher, Katherine
Bridgen, Andrew	Fletcher, Mark
Brine, Steve	Fletcher, Nick
Bristow, Paul	Ford, Vicky
Britcliffe, Sara	Foster, Kevin
Brokenshire, rh James	Francois, rh Mr Mark
Browne, Anthony	Frazer, Lucy
Bruce, Fiona	Freer, Mike
Buchan, Felicity	Fysh, Mr Marcus
Burghart, Alex	Gale, rh Sir Roger
Burns, rh Conor	Garnier, Mark
Butler, Rob	Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Cairns, rh Alun	Gibb, rh Nick
Campbell, Mr Gregory	Gibson, Peter
Carter, Andy	Gideon, Jo
Cartledge, James	Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
Cash, Sir William	Glen, John
Cates, Miriam	Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
Caulfield, Maria	Graham, Richard
Chalk, Alex	Grant, Mrs Helen
Chishti, Rehman	Grayling, rh Chris
Churchill, Jo	Green, Chris
Clark, rh Greg	Green, rh Damian
Clarke-Smith, Brendan	Griffith, Andrew
Clarkson, Chris	Griffiths, Kate
Cleverly, rh James	Grundy, James
Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse	Gullis, Jonathan
Colburn, Elliot	Halfon, rh Robert
Collins, Damian	Hall, Luke
Costa, Alberto	Hammond, Stephen
Courts, Robert	Hancock, rh Matt
Coutinho, Claire	Harper, rh Mr Mark
Cox, rh Mr Geoffrey	Harris, Rebecca
Crabb, rh Stephen	Harrison, Trudy
Crosbie, Virginia	Hart, Sally-Ann
Crouch, Tracey	Hart, rh Simon
Daly, James	Hayes, rh Sir John
Davies, David T. C.	Heald, rh Sir Oliver
Davies, Gareth	

Heapey, James
 Heaton-Harris, Chris
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hughes, Eddie
 Hunt, Jane
 Hunt, rh Jeremy
 Hunt, Tom
 Jack, rh Mr Alister
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Jenkyns, Andrea
 Jenrick, rh Robert
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kearns, Alicia
 Keegan, Gillian
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Knight, Julian
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Langan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Levy, Ian
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Brandon
 Lewis, rh Dr Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Loder, Chris
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia
 Lopresti, Jack
 Lord, Mr Jonathan
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackinlay, Craig
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 Marson, Julie
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 McVey, rh Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, Johnny
 Merriman, Huw

Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria
 Milling, rh Amanda
 Mills, Nigel
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morrissey, Joy
 Morton, Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Mundell, rh David
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Parish, Neil
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Philp, Chris
 Pincher, rh Christopher
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, Victoria
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Mr Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Roberts, Rob
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Robinson, Mary
 Rosindell, Andrew
 Ross, Douglas
 Rowley, Lee
 Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Sambrook, Gary
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Simmonds, David
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, rh Julian
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, Dr Ben
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John

Stewart, Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Streeter, Sir Gary
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Tracey, Craig
 Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
 Trott, Laura
 Truss, rh Elizabeth
 Tugendhat, Tom
 Vara, Mr Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Wakeford, Christian

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
 Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Antoniazzi, Tonia
 Ashworth, Jonathan
 Barker, Paula
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Begum, Apsana
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Betts, Mr Clive
 Black, Mhairi
 Blackford, rh Ian
 Blackman, Kirsty
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Bonnar, Steven
 Brabin, Tracy
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brock, Deidre
 Brown, Alan
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Bryant, Chris
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burgon, Richard
 Byrne, Ian
 Cadbury, Ruth
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Champion, Sarah
 Chapman, Douglas
 Cherry, Joanna
 Clark, Feryal
 Cooper, Daisy
 Cooper, Rosie
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Cowan, Ronnie
 Coyle, Neil

Walker, Sir Charles
 Wallis, Dr Jamie
 Warburton, David
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Webb, Suzanne
 Whately, Helen
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John
 Wiggin, Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Gavin
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Jeremy
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Maggie Throup and
James Morris

NOES

Crawley, Angela
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cryer, John
 Cummins, Judith
 Daby, Janet
 David, Wayne
 Davies, Geraint
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Day, Martyn
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Dorans, Allan
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Duffield, Rosie
 Eagle, Ms Angela
 Eagle, Maria
 Eastwood, Colum
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Evans, Chris
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Fellows, Marion
 Ferrier, Margaret
 Fletcher, Colleen
 Flynn, Stephen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Gibson, Patricia
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Glindon, Mary
 Grady, Patrick
 Grant, Peter
 Gray, Neil
 Green, Kate

Greenwood, Lilian
Greenwood, Margaret
Griffith, Nia
Gwynne, Andrew
Haigh, Louise
Hamilton, Fabian
Hanna, Claire
Harvey, Neale
Hardy, Emma
Harman, rh Ms Harriet
Harris, Carolyn
Hayes, Helen
Hendrick, Sir Mark
Hendry, Drew
Hill, Mike
Hobhouse, Wera
Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
Hollern, Kate
Hopkins, Rachel
Hosie, Stewart
Howarth, rh Sir George
Huq, Dr Rupa
Hussain, Imran
Jardine, Christine
Jarvis, Dan
Johnson, Dame Diana
Johnson, Kim
Jones, Darren
Jones, rh Mr Kevan
Jones, Ruth
Jones, Sarah
Kane, Mike
Keeley, Barbara
Kendall, Liz
Khan, Afzal
Kinnock, Stephen
Kyle, Peter
Lake, Ben
Lavery, Ian
Law, Chris
Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
Linden, David
Lloyd, Tony
Long Bailey, Rebecca
Lucas, Caroline
Lynch, Holly
MacAskill, Kenny
Madders, Justin
Mahmood, Shabana
Maskell, Rachael
Matheson, Christian
Mc Nally, John
McCabe, Steve
McCarthy, Kerry
McDonagh, Siobhain
McDonald, Andy
McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
McDonald, Stuart C.
McDonnell, rh John
McFadden, rh Mr Pat
McGinn, Conor
McGovern, Alison
McLaughlin, Anne
McMahon, Jim
McMorrin, Anna
Mearns, Ian
Miliband, rh Edward
Mishra, Navendu
Monaghan, Carol
Moran, Layla
Morden, Jessica

Morgan, Stephen
Morris, Grahame
Murray, Ian
Murray, James
Nandy, Lisa
Newlands, Gavin
Nichols, Charlotte
Nicolson, John
Norris, Alex
O'Hara, Brendan
Olney, Sarah
Onwurah, Chi
Oppong-Asare, Abena
Osamor, Kate
Osborne, Kate
Oswald, Kirsten
Owatemi, Taiwo
Owen, Sarah
Peacock, Stephanie
Pennycook, Matthew
Perkins, Mr Toby
Phillips, Jess
Phillipson, Bridget
Pollard, Luke
Powell, Lucy
Qureshi, Yasmin
Rayner, Angela
Reed, Steve
Rees, Christina
Reeves, Ellie
Reeves, Rachel
Reynolds, Jonathan
Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
Rimmer, Ms Marie
Rodda, Matt
Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
Saville Roberts, rh Liz
Shah, Naz
Sharma, Mr Virendra
Sheerman, Mr Barry
Siddiq, Tulip
Slaughter, Andy
Smith, Alyn
Sobel, Alex
Spellar, rh John
Stephens, Chris
Stevens, Jo
Stone, Jamie
Streeting, Wes
Stringer, Graham
Sultana, Zarah
Tami, rh Mark
Tarry, Sam
Thewliss, Alison
Thomas, Gareth
Thomas-Symonds, Nick
Thompson, Owen
Thomson, Richard
Thornberry, rh Emily
Timms, rh Stephen
Trickett, Jon
Turner, Karl
Twigg, Derek
Twist, Liz
Vaz, rh Valerie
Webbe, Claudia
West, Catherine
Western, Matt
Whitehead, Dr Alan
Whitford, Dr Philippa
Whitley, Mick
Whittome, Nadia

Williams, Hywel
Wilson, Munira
Winter, Beth
Yasin, Mohammad

Tellers for the Noes:
Jeff Smith and
Bambos Charalambous

Question accordingly agreed to.

Government amendment 14 agreed to.

The list of Members currently certified as eligible for a proxy vote, and of the Members nominated as their proxy, is published at the end of today's debates.

Amendment made: 15, in schedule, page 7, line 2, at end insert—

'3A In Schedule A1 (as inserted by paragraph 3), at the appropriate places, insert

"Austria";
"Belgium";
"Bulgaria";
"Croatia";
"Cyprus";
"Czech Republic";
"Denmark";
"Estonia";
"Finland";
"France";
"Germany";
"Greece";
"Hungary";
"Iceland";
"Ireland";
"Italy";
"Latvia";
"Lithuania";
"Luxembourg";
"Malta";
"The Netherlands";
"Norway";
"Poland";
"Portugal";
"Romania";
"Slovakia";
"Slovenia";
"Spain";
"Sweden".

3B Paragraph 3A is repealed at the end of 2021 if, or to the extent that, it has not been brought into force before the end of that year.—(*James Brokenshire.*)

This amendment would allow for the territories listed in new paragraph 3A to be inserted into new Schedule A1. If or to the extent that new paragraph 3A is not brought into force before the end of 2021, new paragraph 3B provides for new paragraph 3A to be repealed at the end of that year.

Schedule, as amended, agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker resumed the Chair.

Bill, as amended, reported.

Bill, as amended in the Committee, considered.

Third Reading

5.25 pm

James Brokenshire: I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

[James Brokenshire]

I thank hon. and right hon. Members from all parts of the House for their scrutiny of the Bill, and I am grateful to everyone who has contributed to the debate in Committee today and on Second Reading before the recess. Bills that relate to extradition are not always the easiest, and I thank all Members for their really informed and stimulating interventions and amendments that have helped to shape and inform the Bill.

There is no doubt that important contributions were made by many and, as ever, the scrutiny that this House provides continues to test and improve the legislative programme that the Government seek to pass into law. All of us on these Benches benefit from the work of officials from the Home Office. I also pay tribute to the officials in the Public Bill Office and all those who have supported the Bill's passage.

The Bill is designed to bring a wanted person into extradition proceedings in an expedited way without in any way changing the likelihood of successful extradition or the legal process itself. It is about ensuring that our police have the right powers to keep the public safe and bring those who may flee justice before justice as appropriate. The extension of police powers in limited circumstances specifically to protect the public does not in any way interfere with the ensuing extradition process. It is about how suspects enter that process and minimising the risk that a wanted person evades justice. There are powerful public policy reasons and benefits to ensuring that those wanted for extradition for serious criminal offences enter the extradition process as quickly as possible, and that UK laws do not create the possibility of impunity for those accused or convicted of such offences.

I thank Members from across the House for their support of the principles of this Bill today and for making amendments and proposals that will ensure that we can continue to keep UK citizens safe. Throughout its passage, the Bill has not lost sight of our ultimate aim, which is to provide UK police officers with the arrest powers that they need to keep up with the challenges of trans-national crime—crime that is often organised and that often has more than one victim in more than one country. This law will prevent fugitives responsible for such crime continuing to evade justice through an operational loophole, which puts the public at risk. This Bill closes that gap. I am pleased that we have been able to reach a position of broad consensus on all the Bill's provisions, and I very much appreciate not only the support, but the scrutiny that has been applied through its passage today and previously, and therefore commend the Bill to the House and commend the positive effect that I believe it will have to protect the public.

5.28 pm

Conor McGinn: I echo what the right hon. Gentleman said in thanking his departmental officials who, alongside the Minister himself, have been courteous and helpful in providing us with information and briefings throughout. I also thank the officials in the Public Bill Office for their diligent work and assistance in helping the official Opposition and our colleagues across the House to scrutinise the Bill.

I do not intend to detain the House long. We had a good and wide-ranging debate on Second Reading and the Bill has had good scrutiny in Committee on the

Floor of the House today. We are disappointed, but not entirely surprised, that the Government did not accept our amendments, but we will not be opposing the Bill on Third Reading.

We have always said that we accept the need for comprehensive legislation to address the gap that currently exists for UK law enforcement prior to extradition proceedings. We hope that the Bill will assist in closing that and help to keep the British people safe. We are determined to ensure that serious criminals who make their way to our country or commit offences in other countries cannot rest easy on our streets and evade the full force of law, and we believe that the Bill will help to achieve that.

In conclusion, we discussed in Committee the need for an extradition agreement to have integrity and that for it to have value, British citizens must believe that their Government will support and stand up for them and uphold the said integrity of any agreement. We have talked a lot about reciprocity, but I also want to talk about credibility. I say gently to the Minister that the credibility around international agreements and international law is not given in isolation, and it ill behoves the Government, on something as sensitive as this, to talk about wilfully breaking international law. I hope that he and his colleagues will consider that in relation to other matters. However, on the substantive matter of this Bill, we will not divide the House this evening.

5.31 pm

Joanna Cherry: I was remiss earlier in not welcoming the Minister back to his place, and I thank him for his courtesy, as always, in keeping me apprised of his intentions in relation to this Bill. The Scottish National party supports the principles behind it and we support reasonable measures to assist in tackling transnational crime, provided the importance of protecting human rights is respected. As I said earlier, the SNP fully supports working with international frameworks to keep our citizens safe. That is one of the reasons why we and the majority of people in Scotland were so keen on the security and justice co-operation afforded through our membership of the European Union, why we voted for its continuance repeatedly, and why we have been so sad to see it go.

I will not divide the House on the Bill, but I regret the Government's refusal to countenance an obligation to consult the devolved when adding, removing or varying a provision in relation to a territory. The devolved Government in Scotland have a real interest here given the devolution of criminal justice, and as I said, I think it indicates the lack of respect from this Government about the impact of the devolved settlements on our constitution that no consultation has been forthcoming. It is also perhaps an indication of ignorance of the fact that Scotland's separate legal system is protected not just by devolution, but by the Act of Union. I have recently expressed concerns about a potential breach of article 19 of the treaty of Union by the Government's proposals in another field of law, in relation to judicial review. To pick up on what was said by the hon. Member for St Helens North (Conor McGinn), who speaks for the official Opposition, it seems now that the treaty of Union is not the only international treaty that the Government are bent on breaching, and I add my voice to his.

It is extremely shocking to see a Government Minister stand at the Dispatch Box and confirm that the Government intend to breach international law. I am sure that as I speak, the Law Officers who advise the Government—the Attorney General, the Solicitor General and the Advocate General, the UK Government’s Law Officer in Scotland—will be very carefully considering their position, as will, I am sure, the Lord Chancellor, who is bound in terms of the constitution Act to respect the rule of law. I look forward over the coming days to seeing what the British Government’s Law Officers have to say about their and, indeed, the Lord Chancellor’s position in relation to a Government that promise on the Floor of this House to break an international agreement and international law.

This seems to be one of the many unfortunate consequences of our leaving the European Union and, as I said, it was notable that the Government sought to amend the Bill today to provide for the situation that there will be no replacement for the European arrest warrant when we exit the transition period at the end of the year. This is a most regrettable state of affairs. It seems that this Government intend to pilot the United Kingdom into a period of lawlessness. For those of us who wish to see Scotland take a different path and who are rather sick of being lectured about how inappropriate that is, this course of lawlessness is most to be regretted.

5.34 pm

John Redwood: We had a good debate earlier today, but I hope the Minister will come back to this House ere long on a couple of important issues explored in the earlier debate. The first is the protection of British citizens who are the object of one of these extradition requirements once we have entered into these agreements. My right hon. Friend the Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis) made a powerful speech about how we need to look carefully at the conditions offered to people when they are taken abroad on charges, particularly as they may be innocent and particularly when the most serious offences that most of us had in mind when these extradition regimes were drawn up may not be involved. We all wish to keep our country safe and we all understand that we need reciprocal agreements to do that. We wish such agreements to be used to pursue those who are violent and commit the most serious crimes, but we need to think about how this can be extended and how in certain jurisdictions where we have extradition agreements people may not be accorded the same decent treatment we would want to accord somebody who has been charged with a crime but who may, in the end, prove to be innocent.

We also need to come back to how we are going to handle our extradition arrangements with other European countries. We are still not sure how that might work out, and we fully understand that it is still the subject of various discussions and negotiations. It is entirely prudent to make some provision today. However, some of us think that if there is to be no European arrest warrant when we have completed our so-called “implementation period”, that could be an opportunity for us to have a better and more suitable system, because the European arrest warrant had features that were not to this country’s liking and there was an element of compromise in it, as there has to be. I hope that we will therefore have some greater guidance on what might materialise.

As two other speakers in this Third Reading debate have referred to a topical issue that goes a bit wider than this Bill, perhaps I may also be permitted briefly to do that. I have not heard or seen anything that implies that this Government wish to break the law or the international treaty. I have seen everything to say that this Government take very seriously section 38 of the European (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020, which was the assertion of sovereignty, and it was a fundamental proposition of the political agreement and the withdrawal agreement, which the EU willingly entered into, that British sovereignty was going to be assured and central, just as it was central to that agreement that there would be a free trade agreement. If there can be a free trade agreement, the other legal issues fall away.

One did need to correct that wider point, but, in conclusion, this Bill is a necessary one. There are issues arising from it that could warrant further thought and treatment. I hope this Government will take the advantage of that thought which our leaving the EU can provide to look again at how in the longer term we have a good judicial relationship—a co-operative relationship—with the EU that is fair to both sides and to any innocent people in Britain who may have to stand trial abroad.

5.38 pm

Jim Shannon: I wish to make a few quick points. I said to the Minister in the Lobby what a pleasure it is to see him in his place and looking so well. I told him that I do not think I have seen him looking so healthy in a long time. He asked me how my constituency was and I told him that it is getting more beautiful every day—he knows that, as I do. I am pleased to see him back, just as I am pleased to see the shadow Minister, the hon. Member for St Helens North (Conor McGinn). He and I have been good friends for a long time. We might have a difference of political opinion on some things, but we agree on a lot of important things in this House, on behalf of our constituents, and it is good to do that. The DUP supported the Bill and voted with the Government, and Bill has now been passed and moves on to its next stage. The Government and the Minister have given a commitment to speak up for those around the world. The right hon. Members for Chingford and Woodford Green (Sir Iain Duncan Smith) and for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis), and indeed myself and others, spoke about human rights abuses around the world. The human rights angle of the Bill perhaps does not put in place everything we would like to see, but we are pleased to see things moving forward. Around the world, people are suppressed, persecuted and abused; hopefully, the Bill will make people accountable and we can use this law for that purpose.

Today, our Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland—I always love saying that, by the way, because we are better together; the hon. and learned Member for Edinburgh South West (Joanna Cherry) might have a slightly different opinion, but I do not think we disagree too much—have made it clear that if someone does something wrong, they will be caught, and that there is a moral obligation to speak up. The House has supported the Government and the legislation they have brought forward, but we also have a moral obligation. It is important that all of us in this House speak often about this important moral

[Jim Shannon]

issue: people cannot just do something wrong and get away with it. Legally and morally, the House has made the right decision.

I would love to see, as I have said previously, the Chinese Government being held accountable in a court of law—under moral law and legal law around the world—for what they do to others. There are many other countries like them, but this country and our Government have acted correctly.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time and passed, with amendments.

5.41 pm

Gavin Robinson (Belfast East) (DUP): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Just over three years ago a constituent, Mr Glynn Brown, came to my office to indicate that his son Aaron, an adult with special needs and a resident of Muckamore Abbey Hospital, had been assaulted. He was concerned not only that his son had been assaulted, but that it had taken two weeks for the medics on whom he relied for care to speak to Mr Brown. After contacting the Department of Health, I remember getting a chilling phone call one month later that indicated that the assault of Aaron Brown was not isolated and that it would take some time to uncover all that was going on at Muckamore Abbey Hospital.

In the intervening period, the Police Service of Northern Ireland has discovered 1,500 separate incidents of criminal abuse of adults who were under the care of our health trust. I raised this issue in the Chamber a number of times during the period when Stormont was not sitting. I have campaigned for a public inquiry alongside the families involved and their relatives. I wanted to make this point of order to put on record my gratitude at the fact that today a public inquiry has been granted. We will get the truth and families shall get justice for the most heinous abuse that their loved ones have faced under the care of our state.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's point. He knows, as the Chamber does, that it is not a point of order for the Chair, but I fully understand why he wanted to take this opportunity to put that important piece of information on the record. He has had a very good reaction to it from those present in the Chamber.

Business without Debate

DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)).

PENSIONS

That the Pension Protection Fund (Moratorium and Arrangements and Reconstructions for Companies in Financial Difficulty) Regulations 2020 (S.I., 2020, No. 693), dated 6 July 2020, a copy of which was laid before this House on 6 July, be approved.—(Eddie Hughes.)

Question agreed to.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): With the leave of the House, we shall take motions 4 and 5 together.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)).

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION (ELECTRICITY)

That the draft Electricity and Gas etc. (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020, which were laid before this House on 22 June, be approved.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION (ENERGY)

That the draft Electricity and Gas (Internal Markets and Network Codes) (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020, which were laid before this House on 6 July, be approved.—(Eddie Hughes.)

Question agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)).

PUBLIC HEALTH

That the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No.3) Regulations 2020 (S.I., 2020, No. 750), dated 16 July 2020, a copy of which was laid before this House on 17 July, be approved.—(Eddie Hughes.)

Question agreed to.

PETITION

Palliative care at Primrose Terrace, Jarrow

5.44 pm

Kate Osborne (Jarrow) (Lab): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker—[*Interruption.*]

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): No, we should not be surprised; the hon. Member's timing was absolutely perfect—to the second.

Kate Osborne: Thank you again, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by more than 13,500 of my Jarrow constituents.

The petition states:

The petition of residents of the constituency of Jarrow.

Declares that it is vital that high quality, compassionate palliative and end-of-life care is accessible across the country; further declares that each person who is nearing the end of their life should feel safe in the knowledge they will receive the very best care and be supported to die peacefully and painlessly; notes that in the Jarrow constituency, St Clare's hospice collapsed into insolvency in January 2019 after more than 30 years, leaving the borough without an end-of-life care facility; and further notes that a petition requesting to keep palliative care at the Primrose Terrace site in Jarrow, rather than setting up an alternative site elsewhere within the borough, has received 13,500 signatures.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urge the Government to support the NHS South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group in reopening the St Clare's hospice site at Primrose Terrace, Jarrow.

And the petitioners remain, etc.

[P002595]

History Curriculum: Black History

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—(Eddie Hughes.)

5.46 pm

Theresa Villiers (Chipping Barnet) (Con): Madam Deputy Speaker,

“There were Africans in Britain before the English came here.”

That is the opening line of Peter Fryer’s monumental book “*Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*”. Black and minority ethnic communities have roots in this country going back nearly two millennia. Among the Roman legions guarding Hadrian’s Wall in the third century AD was a unit recruited in north Africa. In 210 AD an African soldier serving in Carlisle went down in history as brave enough to make fun of the visiting emperor, Septimus Severus, who was at the time pretty much the most powerful person on the planet. In 1901 remains were discovered in York of a high-status woman living around 350 AD, born in Britain but likely to have been of north African descent, and forever known as “ivory bangle lady” for the ornaments buried with her. More recently, the remains of a young black girl were found in North Elmham near Norwich dating back to the Saxon era around the year 1000. A small black community appears in the account books of the court of King James IV at Holyrood shortly after 1500, and John Blanke was a black musician who performed for Henry VIII.

In past centuries, long before Windrush and the modern era, history records black British people as sailors, soldiers, teachers, craftsmen, retailers, nurses, writers, actors, singers, farm workers, entrepreneurs, vicars and chefs and in hundreds of other occupations. But from the late 1500s, of course, the majority of black people who came to live in this country were domestic servants, many initially brought here as slaves.

It is estimated that in the 245 years between the first British slave trading voyage and abolition in 1807, British ships carried around 3.4 million enslaved Africans to the Americas. The appalling depravity and cruelty of the triangular trade makes it one of the greatest crimes against humanity ever committed. It is true that there were brave and principled men and women in this country who campaigned for many years for an end to this abomination, including many who served proudly here in this Parliament, and it is also true that after the Abolition Act came into effect, the British Navy was prominent in stopping slavers who tried to carry on; but it is none the less a matter of national shame that the transatlantic slave trade was allowed to endure for so long, with involvement from across the British establishment, including MPs, the monarchy and the Church.

I am afraid that, even with the slightly extended time that we have available, the time is short to begin consideration of the complexities of the legacy of empire and colonialism, but I am in no doubt that those wishing to understand Britain today need an understanding of its colonial past.

Sir Peter Bottomley (Worthing West) (Con): I am very glad that my right hon. Friend has brought this subject to the House and I would normally speak if I could, but I spoke yesterday so I will not. Can she

confirm that when slavery was abolished, compensation did not go to those who had been enslaved, but to the owners?

Theresa Villiers: I can confirm that, and it is astonishing, by the standards of our own values, that that was the decision that was made, and even more astonishing that the Government were still paying off that debt in 2015. I do not think there are any words to describe the devastation of the impact that the slave trade had.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): I congratulate the right hon. Lady on bringing this subject forward for debate; it is certainly timely. Does she not agree that history must be told in its entirety and factually, and not to fit any changing narrative; and that we can and must learn from all periods of history, whether it is dressed up prettily or is just the ugly truth? Educating our people should and must happen; I believe that is the way forward.

Theresa Villiers: I do agree with that, and of course, coming as the hon. Gentleman does from Northern Ireland, he understands the emotional resonance that the history of controversial events in our past still has. I know that he and colleagues in the Northern Ireland devolved institutions have worked hard to try to ensure that this decade of very sensitive and politically charged centenaries has passed off peacefully. I very much hope that that continues as we move towards the centenary of partition and the creation of Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State. It is a reminder of how history is so relevant to our outlook on so many issues today, whether that is the subject of this evening’s debate or those centenaries in Northern Ireland.

We also need to understand that the racism and injustice that black and other ethnic minorities were subjected to in this country’s history was pervasive; it was often violent; it lasted for centuries; and its legacy continues to have an impact today. Even a cursory understanding of black history provides a reminder that the values that we are rightly proud to espouse in this country—that everyone should be entitled to equal concern and respect, whatever their ethnicity and from wherever their ancestors might have come—were the result of very long, and sometimes very bitter, struggles, and that many steps forward were strongly opposed at the time, including in Parliament.

The time available for this debate does not enable us to do any kind of justice to the richness of the story of the lives of black British people over so many hundreds of years.

David Simmonds (Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner) (Con): Does my right hon. Friend welcome the fact, as I do, that when we look at the guidance that was published by the Department for Education on the inclusion of black history within the wider context of the curriculum, we see that it sets out an expectation for schools that the complexity and richness and the dark side of these different campaigns that have been run, which my right hon. Friend has highlighted in her speech, are explored, and that that is done in a way that reflects the local context of the school, the children who are hearing about it and the heritage from which they come, and also the knowledge and expertise of teachers as to how that can be set in the wider context both of the community and of events of today?

Theresa Villiers: I do welcome that, and I very much look forward to the Minister's exploring those issues in more detail. I particularly agree with my hon. Friend that in looking at black history, yes, we need to focus on the injustice and the dark episode of the slave trade, but we also need to celebrate the incredibly positive contribution of black and minority ethnic communities over the years.

Taiwo Owatemi (Coventry North West) (Lab): Does the right hon. Lady agree that we should ensure that the regional history of black Britain, particularly those who have contributed to our proud, shared history in the west midlands, is part of the national curriculum? We should recognise how black Britain helped to build my city of Coventry into what it is today—from its manufacturing expertise to its car-building might and our enviable arts and culture.

Theresa Villiers: I think the hon. Lady is right. It is so important that we celebrate the phenomenally positive contribution of black British people over the centuries. Highlighting that in the classroom in the curriculum is incredibly important. That is why I am honoured to have been able to secure a debate on this really important subject today. I welcome the fact that suddenly the interest in black history has grown considerably. Who would have thought a few years ago that we would see people protesting on the streets and campaigning via those demonstrations for a better understanding of black history in the classroom? This is an opportunity for the Government to seize.

David Simmonds: On that point, does my right hon. Friend agree that it is particularly important that, when that history is being explored, especially with young people, we are able to do it fully in context? I represent a London constituency with more than 100 first languages and an incredible diversity of backgrounds among all my constituents, and it is important to recognise that black history is part of that wider and complex history of the United Kingdom. The local context, and ensuring that everybody appreciates the context of their background within that wider community, is important. Schools, councils and other community organisations need the flexibility to respond in a way that reflects local diversity.

Theresa Villiers: My hon. Friend makes a very good point. It is really important to have the flexibility for schools to reflect local circumstances. I am sure that is something that the Minister will agree on as well.

Richard Graham (Gloucester) (Con): I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for hosting this debate on such a topical issue. It happens, by glorious coincidence, that the Gloucester History Festival, which I founded 10 years ago, has just started—it is our 10th anniversary. Because necessity is the mother of invention, this year the festival will be largely a virtual, digital event. For those who are particularly interested in black history, the advantage of that is that a number of events will be live-streamed and available on our website free of charge.

If my right hon. Friend does not object, I would highlight that on 13 September there will be a brilliant talk on African Europeans by Olivette Otele, and on 14 September a talk on 100 Great Black Britons by Patrick Vernon and Angelina Osbourne. Those are just

two of the great talks that will highlight some of the great contributors to our own story, which involve people of all colours and all nations. If that is something that can flow through our little history festival into cities across the country, that can be stimulated to do something similar and realise that the diversity of today's populations is an echo of contributions across the ages, we will all benefit and our children and grandchildren at schools likewise. It is such an important aspect of our story. I am grateful to my right hon. Friend.

Theresa Villiers: I am delighted to have been able to give my hon. Friend a platform to advertise his local festival. It is a good reminder that black history is not just for October and is not just about London—it is something that can command interest and engagement right across the country. I welcome the contributions of hon. Members who are making the point that getting more black history into the curriculum really does matter.

Helen Hayes (Dulwich and West Norwood) (Lab): I am grateful to the right hon. Lady for giving way and for securing this very important debate. Does she share my concern that the content on black history currently available within the national curriculum is taught to fewer than 10% of students? It is vital that every child being taught in British schools, whatever their background and heritage, can say with pride, "Our history is British history", and that makes reform essential. Will she join me in calling on the Minister to do what he has so far been unwilling to do, which is to meet with a group of passionate young people from my constituency who really just want to tell him why this matters so much to them?

Theresa Villiers: The Minister's diary is of course a matter for him, but I very much agree that I would like to see every child in school in this country learning black history. It is an important opportunity to try to take that agenda forward, and I will certainly make that appeal to the Minister. I think that is important because I love history, and I believe that black history is a fascinating subject to study, but I also believe that every child should learn black history in the classroom so that every child growing up in this country knows that the presence of black people here is not some 20th century novelty.

Most important of all, I want more black history to be taught in the classroom because I want children from BAME communities to understand that people of colour have been a crucial part of our island story for very nearly 2,000 years. I want them to know that it was not just William Wilberforce who campaigned to abolish the slave trade, but such people as Olaudah Equiano, who had themselves been enslaved but who achieved freedom, fame and success against incredible odds and adversity. I want them to know about Ignatius Sancho, who in 1782 was the first black writer in prose to be published in this country. I want them to know about Tom Molineaux, the boxer and former slave who should have been the England heavyweight champion in 1810, if he had not been unfairly robbed of the title by an underhand trick. I want them to know about John Kent, who became the first black police officer as far back as 1837. I want them to know about thousands of soldiers from Africa, the Caribbean and India who fought and died for this country in two world wars.

Taking the Indian subcontinent as just one example, 1.27 million men served in the British Army in the first world war, including in the blood-soaked killing fields of the western front and Gallipoli. More than 2.5 million men from the area now covered by India, Pakistan and Bangladesh volunteered for service in world war two, producing the largest volunteer army in history.

David Simmonds: I am very proud of the fact that in the predecessor constituency to the one I have the privilege of representing, William Wilberforce had his London home. He lived there when he was campaigning in this House for the abolition of slavery, although he was a Member of Parliament from Hull. He was a resident of a house called the Chestnuts. That is very much celebrated locally, but will my right hon. Friend expand on the remarks she has made about the complexity of this representation in our curriculum? The guidance covers everything from slavery as something where, in the country that is now the United Kingdom, we saw empires taking people, through to the role of Britain in the abolition of that trade. It also talks about the incredible positive contribution that so many black Britons have made throughout our history and identifies the complexity of those relationships in the context of empire; again that is strongly reflected in the guidance to schools. Does she also agree that in an incredibly diverse city like the one where we are both privileged to be Members of Parliament, the ability for teachers to take that guidance and translate it back so that those children get their education very much in context is a vital part of how our society responds to this debate today?

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): Order. I should just point out for the record that there is plenty of time and there are very few people here, and that was a very interesting intervention from the hon. Gentleman, but it was rather long and I do not want to create a precedent. There is a difference between an intervention and a mini speech.

Theresa Villiers: Thank you for that guidance, Madam Deputy Speaker. I welcome my hon. Friend's point. It is important that teachers are engaged in this process and have the flexibility to explore the complexities. As he says, the history of empire is one of the most complex. There are undoubtedly gravely negative aspects of the history of colonialism but there are some positives as well, and it is important for people to be able to explore that within the history curriculum.

My outlook on life was profoundly shaped by the history that I learnt in school, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank two inspirational teachers—Valerie St Johnston and Gillian Blyth—who taught me. My study of history has greatly influenced the way I think, the way I write, and the way I analyse problems and challenges. I very much doubt that I would have achieved the political office that I have been privileged to hold were it not for the rigorous intellectual grounding that those two very gifted teachers gave to me.

I can well understand why changes to the history curriculum have been a key demand from many who took to the streets earlier this year to protest about inequality and racism, or who took time to email their Member of Parliament. In diverse, complex, multi-ethnic Britain, we need far more people to understand that we have a diverse, complex, multi-ethnic past. It is not

possible to understand modern Britain without an understanding of its past. As the eminent US historian, David McCullough, put it:

“History is who we are and why we are the way we are”, and as Marcus Garvey once said:

“A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.”

I call on the Minister to announce plans to give black history a much more prominent place in the school curriculum. I call on him to embrace the enthusiasm that we have seen on our streets for the study of black history, so that we can give future generations a better knowledge and understanding of how we came to be the nation that we are today.

6.7 pm

The Minister for School Standards (Nick Gibb): May I start by congratulating my right hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet (Theresa Villiers) on securing this debate, and on her interesting, well researched and compelling speech? She is right, of course—and I am sure that there is no one in this House or the country who disagrees—that the 245-year slave trade was, in her words, depraved, cruel and an abomination. But as the Secretary of State said in June, this country also has a lot to be proud of and children should learn all aspects of it—the good and the bad. Time and again, this country has made a difference and changed things for the better right around the world, and we must teach about the contributions from Britons of all ethnicities, both men and women, who have made this nation the great nation that it is today.

The Government believe that all children and young people should acquire a firm grasp of history, including how different events and periods relate to each other. That is why it is compulsory for maintained schools from key stages 1 to 3, and why academies are expected to teach a curriculum that is as broad and ambitious as the national curriculum. The national curriculum that we inherited in 2010 had been stripped of knowledge, with a heavy focus on vague concepts such as skills of learning. The Government therefore embarked on significant reforms to the national curriculum, with the aim of restoring the importance of subject knowledge in all its complexity and fascination. In 2014, the new, more ambitious, knowledge-rich national curriculum came into force in England, and from 2015 we introduced more rigorous GCSEs.

Tom Hunt (Ipswich) (Con): Would the Minister agree with me that, if we do look at putting a greater emphasis on black history, there should be a clear focus on doing so to promote greater unity and a sense of shared Britishness, and that we should be slightly cautious that we do not promote more separateness?

Nick Gibb: My hon. Friend makes an important point about not being divisive with our curriculum and, indeed, with schools' ethos in general. The Government have strongly promoted the study of history to the age of 16 by including GCSE history in the English baccalaureate measure for all state-funded secondary schools in England. With the introduction of the EBacc, we have seen entries to history GCSE increase by a third since 2010. The reformed history curriculum includes teaching pupils the core knowledge of our past, enabling pupils to know and understand the history of Britain

[Nick Gibb]

from its first settlers to the development of the institutions that help to define our national life today. It also sets an expectation that pupils ask perceptive questions, sift arguments and develop perspective and judgment.

The curriculum does not set out how curriculum subjects or topics within the subjects should be taught. We believe that teachers should be able to use their own knowledge and expertise to determine how they teach their pupils and to make choices about what they teach.

Richard Graham: My right hon. Friend is making a powerful point about the changes made to the curriculum and the way in which teachers can interpret it to bring alive the points required. Does he agree that there is a huge opportunity in each locality for teachers to work with local civic trusts, local history festivals and so on to develop activities that bring alive some specific items? For example, visiting the Roman wall in Gloucester brings Roman history alive and seeing how the civil war damaged a church gives an idea of what being under siege was like 377 years ago. Such things can be more joined up with encouragement from the Department.

Nick Gibb: I agree with my hon. Friend. I think the gist of what he is saying is, “Please attend the Gloucester history festival, coming soon to a town near you.”

Teachers have freedom over the precise detail, so they can teach lessons that are right for their pupils, and they should use teaching materials that suit their own pupils’ needs. At the same time, the teaching of any issue in schools should be consistent with the principles of balance and objectivity, and good history teaching should always include the contribution of black and minority ethnic people to Britain’s history, as well as the study of different countries and cultures around the world. The history curriculum has the flexibility to give teachers the opportunity to teach across the spectrum of themes and eras set out in the curriculum.

Helen Hayes: I am grateful to the Minister for giving way, but there is a problem with the approach he describes. Without resourcing, guidance and encouragement from Government, teachers will for very good reasons keep on teaching the content that they have always taught. My 14-year-old daughter is learning the same history that I studied 30 years ago. We will not see progress in this area, and we will not see our children being taught a more rounded, inclusive and truthful version of British history, unless the Government demonstrate some leadership and offer some guidance and resource for teachers to teach new content. That leadership needs to come from the centre.

Nick Gibb: While I take on board the hon. Lady’s important point—in fact, some of the things she said can be applied to other elements of the curriculum—we do believe in autonomy and in trusting professionals. She highlighted in her earlier intervention the proportion of young people taking up the option of studying “Migration, Empires and the People” in the AQA history GCSE, and she was right to point out that it is about one in 10. I expect more and more schools to consider offering that option to their pupils, particularly given the publicity that she and others have given to the issue. She may also be interested to know that the exam board

Pearson is currently developing a study option on migration in Britain and, subject to Ofqual approval, it will also provide more choice to schools.

To support that, the curriculum includes a number of examples that could be covered at different stages, drawn from the history of this country and the wider world. Examples include, at key stage 1, teaching about the lives of key figures such as Mary Seacole and Rosa Parks. The key stage 2 curriculum suggests that teachers could explore the Indus valley, ancient Egypt and the Shang dynasty of ancient China as part of teaching on early civilisations. It also calls for study of a non-European society, with examples including Mayan civilisation and Benin in west Africa from 900 to 1300 AD.

At key stage 3, as part of the teaching of the overarching theme of Britain from 1745 to 1901, topics could include Britain’s transatlantic slave trade, its effect and its eventual abolition, and the development of the British empire. Key stage 3 also requires teaching of at least one study of a significant society or issue in world history and its interconnections with other world developments, with examples including Mughal India from 1526 to 1857, China’s Qing dynasty from—as I am sure you know, Madam Deputy Speaker—1644 to 1911 and the USA in the 20th century.

The Department sets out that GCSE history specifications produced by the exam boards should develop and extend pupils’ knowledge and understanding of specified key events, periods and societies in local British and wider world history and of the wide diversity of human experience. The GCSE in history should include at least one British in-depth study and at least one European or wider world in-depth study from the three specified eras. There is significant scope for the teaching of black history within those eras. As I said, two exam boards—OCR and AQA—provide options to study migration in Britain and how this country’s history has been shaped by black and minority ethnic communities in the past.

Many of the issues discussed by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet and Members intervening on her can be taught in other curriculum subjects. As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, pupils should be taught about different societies and how different groups have contributed to the development of Britain, including the voices and experiences of black and minority ethnic people. Across citizenship, English, PSHE education, arts, music and geography, teachers have opportunities to explore black and minority ethnic history further with their pupils, helping to build understanding and tolerance.

The UK has a tremendous history of standing up for freedom and tolerance around the world, from Magna Carta and Oliver Cromwell’s readmission of the Jews to the Royal Navy’s five-decade campaign against the slave trade, which captured hundreds of slave ships and freed 150,000 Africans. Black and minority ethnic Britons have played a fundamental part in our island’s story, from black Tudors to the Commonwealth soldiers who served with such distinction in two world wars. It is right that our current curriculum ensures that children have the opportunity to learn about them in school. At the same time, schools must be mindful of their duty of political impartiality under the Education Act 1996. Teaching should be inclusive, not divisive, as my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Tom Hunt) said, and the curriculum must never be co-opted to promote a narrative that is extreme or one-sided.

Polling earlier this summer from Policy Exchange's history project, chaired by the former chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Trevor Phillips, found that 69% of people rightly believed that UK history as a whole was something to be proud of, while only 17% thought it was something to be ashamed of. Similarly, large majorities were found to be in support of retaining statues of our great heroes, such as Sir Winston Churchill and Admiral Nelson, as well as national memorials such as the Cenotaph. As the Prime Minister has said, we should not be embarrassed about our history, and we should celebrate and honour it. At the same time, we should celebrate the voices of those who may not have been heard as strongly in the past.

Helen Hayes: I am grateful to the Minister for giving way again. I just want to ask him, as I asked the right hon. Member for Chipping Barnet (Theresa Villiers), whether he will meet a group of young people from my constituency who are campaigning on this issue and are desperately keen to have a conversation with him about their own experiences and why this is so important. They want every young person in this country to be proud of the contribution that their communities of heritage played in the history of this country, but that content is so often absent. Will he meet them?

Nick Gibb: If the hon. Lady will forgive me, at the moment we are in the middle of a covid crisis: we are focused on tackling the issues of GCSEs and A-levels, the autumn season and next year's summer exams, making sure that schools are reopened safely—getting people back into school, back into study and back into catching up on lost education—and all the other issues that relate to tackling the covid crisis that is confronting this country and the Government. Department officials have actually, though, discussed black issues with a number of organisations, and we do welcome the profile given to the importance of teaching about the contribution of black and minority ethnic people to Britain's history by bodies such as the Runnymede Trust, The Black Curriculum, Fill in the Blanks, and many other groups and individuals over the years.

On tackling discrimination and intolerance in our schools, I first want to say that there is no place for racial inequality in our society or in our education system. The Department for Education is committed to

an inclusive education system that recognises and embraces diversity and supports all pupils and students to tackle racism and have the knowledge and tools to do so. We are funding several anti-bullying programmes that encompass tackling discriminatory bullying—for example, the Anne Frank Trust's Free To Be programme, which encourages young people to think about the importance of tackling prejudice, discrimination and bullying. Our preventing and tackling bullying guidance sets out that schools should develop a consistent approach to monitoring bullying incidents and evaluating the effectiveness of their approaches. It also points schools to organisations that can provide support with tackling bullying related to race, religion and nationality.

In addition, effective holocaust education supports pupils to learn about the possible consequences of antisemitism and other forms of racism and extremism and to help reduce the spread of antisemitism and religious intolerance. The Department supports schools', pupils' and teachers' understanding of the holocaust by providing funding for the Holocaust Education Trust's Lessons from Auschwitz project and University College London's Centre for Holocaust Education. Additionally, in October 2018 the Chancellor announced £1.7 million for a new programme in 2019-20 to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Bergen-Belsen by British troops. Within and beyond the national curriculum, schools are required to promote fundamental British values actively, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect for and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

I am grateful to my right hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet for raising these important matters. I welcome the opportunity to set out how black history is already supported within and beyond the national curriculum. I am confident that our schools will continue to educate children to become tolerant, culturally and historically knowledgeable citizens who embrace the values of modern Britain.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): What an interesting debate! That is not always the case on the Adjournment.

Question put and agreed to.

6.22 pm

House adjourned.

Members Eligible for a Proxy Vote

The following is the list of Members currently certified as eligible for a proxy vote, and of the Members nominated as their proxy:

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy	Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Ms Diane Abbott (Hackney North and Stoke Newington)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	Stephen Farry (North Down)	Alistair Carmichael
Tahir Ali (Birmingham, Hall Green)	Chris Elmore	Marion Fellows (Motherwell and Wishaw)	Patrick Grady
Dr Rosena Allin-Khan (Tooting)	Chris Elmore	Stephen Flynn (Aberdeen South)	Patrick Grady
Tonia Antoniazzi (Gower)	Chris Elmore	Vicky Foxcroft (Lewisham, Deptford)	Chris Elmore
Mr Richard Bacon (South Norfolk)	Stuart Andrew	Mr Mark Francois (Rayleigh and Wickford)	Stuart Andrew
Siobhan Baillie (Stroud)	Stuart Andrew	George Freeman (Mid Norfolk)	Theo Clarke
Mr John Baron (Basildon and Billericay)	Stuart Andrew	Mike Freer (Finchley and Golders Green)	Stuart Andrew
Margaret Beckett (Derby South)	Clive Efford	Marcus Fysh (Yeovil)	Stuart Andrew
Scott Benton (Blackpool South)	Stuart Andrew	Sir Roger Gale (North Thanet)	Caroline Nokes
Sir Paul Beresford (Mole Valley)	Stuart Andrew	Preet Kaur Gill (Birmingham, Edgbaston)	Chris Elmore
Jake Berry (Rossendale and Darwen)	Stuart Andrew	Dame Cheryl Gillan (Chesham and Amersham)	Stuart Andrew
Mhairi Black (Paisley and Renfrewshire South)	Patrick Grady	Mary Glindon (North Tyneside)	Chris Elmore
Bob Blackman (Harrow East)	Stuart Andrew	Mrs Helen Grant (Maidstone and The Weald)	Stuart Andrew
Kirsty Blackman (Aberdeen North)	Patrick Grady	Peter Grant (Glenrothes)	Patrick Grady
Mr Peter Bone (Wellingborough)	Stuart Andrew	Neil Gray (Airdrie and Shotts)	Patrick Grady
Andrew Bridgen (North West Leicestershire)	Stuart Andrew	Jonathan Gullis (Stoke-on-Trent North)	Mark Fletcher
Ms Lyn Brown (West Ham)	Chris Elmore	Andrew Gwynne (Denton and Reddish)	Chris Elmore
Richard Burgon (Leeds East)	Zarah Sultana	Fabian Hamilton (Leeds North East)	Chris Elmore
Conor Burns (Bournemouth West)	Stuart Andrew	Ms Harriet Harman (Camberwell and Peckham)	Chris Elmore
Ruth Cadbury (Brentford and Isleworth)	Chris Elmore	Sir Oliver Heald (North East Hertfordshire)	Stuart Andrew
Dan Carden (Liverpool, Walton)	Chris Elmore	Sir Mark Hendrick (Preston)	Chris Elmore
Sir William Cash (Stone)	Stuart Andrew	Mike Hill (Hartlepool)	Chris Elmore
Sarah Champion (Rotherham)	Chris Elmore	Simon Hoare (North Dorset)	Fay Jones
Douglas Chapman (Dunfermline and West Fife)	Patrick Grady	Wera Hobhouse (Bath)	Alistair Carmichael
Rehman Chishti (Gillingham and Rainham)	Stuart Andrew	Mrs Sharon Hodgson (Washington and Sunderland West)	Chris Elmore
Feryal Clark (Enfield North)	Chris Elmore	Adam Holloway (Gravesham)	Maria Caulfield
Damian Collins (Folkestone and Hythe)	Stuart Andrew	Sir George Howarth (Knowsley)	Chris Elmore
Rosie Cooper (West Lancashire)	Chris Elmore	Nigel Huddleston (Mid Worcestershire)	Stuart Andrew
Ronnie Cowan (Inverclyde)	Patrick Grady	Dr Neil Hudson (Penrith and The Border)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Geoffrey Cox (Torrington and West Devon)	Alex Burghart	Imran Hussain (Bradford East)	Judith Cummins
Neil Coyle (Bermondsey and Old Southwark)	Chris Elmore	Dan Jarvis (Barnsley Central)	Chris Elmore
Stella Creasy (Walthamstow)	Chris Elmore	Mr Ranil Jayawardena (North East Hampshire)	Stuart Andrew
Tracey Crouch (Chatham and Aylesford)	Caroline Nokes	Dr Caroline Johnson (Sleaford and North Hykeham)	Stuart Andrew
Janet Daby (Lewisham East)	Chris Elmore	Dame Diana Johnson (Kingston upon Hull North)	Chris Elmore
Geraint Davies (Swansea West)	Chris Evans	Alicia Kearns (Rutland and Melton)	Stuart Andrew
Martyn Day (Linlithgow and East Falkirk)	Patrick Grady	Barbara Keeley (Worsley and Eccles South)	Chris Elmore
Marsha De Cordova (Battersea)	Rachel Hopkins	Afzal Khan (Manchester, Gorton)	Chris Elmore
Thangam Debbonaire (Bristol West)	Chris Elmore	Sir Greg Knight (East Yorkshire)	Stuart Andrew
Allan Dorans (Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock)	Patrick Grady	Ian Lavery (Wansbeck)	Kate Osborne
Nadine Dorries (Mid Bedfordshire)	Stuart Andrew	Chris Law (Dundee West)	Patrick Grady
Jackie Doyle-Price (Thurrock)	Gagan Mohindra	Andrea Leadsom (South Northamptonshire)	Stuart Andrew
Philip Dunne (Ludlow)	Jeremy Hunt	Clive Lewis (Norwich South)	Rosie Duffield
Mrs Natalie Elphicke (Dover)	Maria Caulfield	Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger (Bridgwater and West Somerset)	Stuart Andrew
Florence Eshalomi (Vauxhall)	Chris Elmore	Tony Lloyd (Rochdale)	Chris Elmore
Sir David Evennett (Bexleyheath and Crayford)	Stuart Andrew	Julia Lopez (Hornchurch and Upminster)	Lee Rowley
Michael Fabricant (Lichfield)	Stuart Andrew	Mr Jonathan Lord (Woking)	Stuart Andrew
		Kenny MacAskill (East Lothian)	Patrick Grady
		Rachael Maskell (York Central)	Chris Elmore
		Karl McCartney (Lincoln)	Stuart Andrew

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Stuart C. McDonald (Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East)	Patrick Grady
John McDonnell (Hayes and Harlington)	Zarah Sultana
Anne McLaughlin (Glasgow North East)	Patrick Grady
John Mc Nally (Falkirk)	Patrick Grady
Ian Mearns (Gateshead)	Chris Elmore
Mark Menzies (Fylde)	Stuart Andrew
Stephen Metcalfe (South Basildon and East Thurrock)	Stuart Andrew
Edward Miliband (Doncaster North)	Chris Elmore
Carol Monaghan (Glasgow North West)	Patrick Grady
David Morris (Morecambe and Lunesdale)	Stuart Andrew
Dr Kieran Mullan (Crewe and Nantwich)	Jacob Young
James Murray (Ealing North)	Chris Elmore
Ian Murray (Edinburgh South)	Chris Elmore
John Nicolson (Ochil and South Perthshire)	Patrick Grady
Dr Matthew Offord (Hendon)	Rebecca Harris
Guy Opperman (Hexham)	Stuart Andrew
Kate Osamor (Edmonton)	Nadia Whittome
Dr Dan Poulter (Central Suffolk and North Ipswich)	Peter Aldous

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Lucy Powell (Manchester Central)	Chris Elmore
Yasmin Qureshi (Bolton South East)	Chris Elmore
Christina Rees (Neath)	Chris Elmore
Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg (North East Somerset)	Stuart Andrew
Ellie Reeves (Lewisham West and Penge)	Chris Elmore
Naz Shah (Bradford West)	Chris Elmore
Mr Virendra Sharma (Ealing, Southall)	Chris Elmore
Mr Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield)	Chris Elmore
Tulip Siddiq (Hampstead and Kilburn)	Chris Elmore
Dr Ben Spencer (Runnymede and Weybridge)	Stuart Andrew
Jo Stevens (Cardiff Glasgow Central)	Chris Elmore
Sir Gary Streeter (South West Devon)	Stuart Andrew
Mel Stride (Central Devon)	Stuart Andrew
Julian Sturdy (York Outer)	Stuart Andrew
Alison Thewliss (Glasgow Central)	Patrick Grady
Gareth Thomas (Harrow West)	Chris Elmore
Emily Thornberry (Islington South and Finsbury)	Charlotte Nichols
Jon Trickett (Hemsworth)	Olivia Blake
Karl Turner (Kingston upon Hull East)	Chris Elmore
Dr Philippa Whitford (Central Ayrshire)	Patrick Grady

Written Statements

Tuesday 8 September 2020

HOME DEPARTMENT

Police Covenant for England and Wales

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): Our outstanding police deserve the upmost respect, support and recognition. Brave officers put their lives on the line every day to keep us safe, demonstrating remarkable courage, sacrifice and public duty.

They face extraordinary pressure as they protect the people they tirelessly serve from terrorists, serious violence and exploitation. Their families too often fear for their safety or are left to pick up the pieces when something goes wrong.

From day one, this Government have put our world-class police first and prioritised their wellbeing. That is why we have committed to introducing a police covenant in England and Wales to recognise the exceptional job our frontline officers do in unique and challenging circumstances.

We are determined to give our police the enhanced support they need, so I have accelerated work on this pledge to protect both them and their loved ones. Our commitment to ensuring our police have the recognition they deserve is absolute, so this covenant will be enshrined in law. This will leave no room for doubt, creating a statutory duty to do more to support our police.

Police officers and staff are uniquely placed to tell me what they need, so I am today publishing the report on the consultation on what the police covenant should look like. This sets out our recommendations for the implementation of the covenant.

The Government response is available on www.gov.uk. A copy of the consultation will also be placed in the Libraries of both Houses. I would urge anyone connected with policing to read the response and consider how they might support the covenant.

Our outstanding police embody public service and do not hesitate to run towards danger to keep us safe. Nothing is more important than ensuring they have the support, protection and recognition that they need to do their extraordinary job. The implementation of the covenant is the first step in delivering on our promise to recognise that.

I thank Members for their continued engagement on this important issue.

[HCWS438]

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Covid-19 Update

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock): On 26 March 2020, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 came into force, imposing restrictions on people's movements and gatherings, and requiring the closure of

certain retail and public premises, in the interest of public health in light of the coronavirus pandemic. These regulations were revoked and replaced by the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2020 on 4 July. Further regulations were introduced in localised areas to tackle the spread of coronavirus in hot spots. The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Leicester) Regulations 2020 came into force on 4 July 2020, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford) Regulations 2020 came into force on 1 August 2020, and Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions on Gatherings) (North of England) Regulations 2020 came into force on 5 August and was amended to the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (North of England) Regulations 2020 15 August.

Following a review of the Leicester regulations, Bradford and Blackburn regulations and north of England regulations, I have now made further amendments to each regulation to ease the restrictions contained within them, which came into force on 8 September 2020 through the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford, Leicester, and North of England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020.

As part of the changes to these regulations, the easements made elsewhere in England on 25 July will also now apply to the areas covered by the Blackburn and Bradford regulations and Leicester regulations. In addition, the easements made elsewhere in England on 15 August will now also apply in the areas covered by the Blackburn and Bradford regulations and North of England regulations, with the exception of the area of Bolton metropolitan borough council.

As of today, settings and businesses including indoor swimming pools, indoor fitness and dance studios, indoor gyms, sports courts and facilities will be able to reopen in Leicester and the areas covered by the Blackburn and Bradford regulations. In addition; casinos, skating rinks, bowling alleys, indoor play areas including soft-play areas, and exhibition halls and conference centres—which guidance will clarify to be for trial events only—will be able to reopen in the areas covered by the Blackburn and Bradford regulations and the North of England regulations apart from the area of Bolton metropolitan borough council.

Finally, guidance has been changed in areas covered by the Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford regulations to facilitate piloting Government endorsed sports in sports stadia and business event pilots in conference centres and exhibition halls; the resumption of socially-distanced indoor performances; the resumption of wedding and civil partnership receptions of up to 30 people; and relaxing the remaining restrictions on certain close contact services

In Leicester and the areas covered by the Blackburn and Bradford regulations and north of England regulations, some restrictions remain in place on household mixing and gatherings.

Publicly available Government guidance on gov.uk is being updated to ensure it fully corresponds with the amended regulations.

[HCWS439]

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Affordable Housing

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick): Coronavirus has highlighted to us all the importance of having a safe home to call our own. I believe that everyone should have a decent place to live. I am committed to increasing the supply of affordable homes to rent and buy, providing more people with access to safe, secure and good quality housing.

Today I am announcing the details of the £12.2 billion investment in affordable homes and that Homes England will be publishing the prospectus for the new affordable homes programme this week. This new programme is the biggest single funding commitment to affordable housing in 10 years. The programme will unlock a further £38 billion in public and private investment in affordable housing.

A new £11.5 billion affordable homes programme will be delivered over five years from next year (2021-2026), providing up to 180,000 new homes across England, should economic conditions allow. This new programme includes £9.5 billion of new funding agreed at Budget and £2 billion previously announced for long-term strategic partnerships with housing associations. The money announced at Budget also included £700 million we will be spending on new affordable homes through the existing affordable homes programme 2016-22, which will continue to deliver new homes up to 2023.

I have also published the Government response to the “Making home ownership affordable” discussion paper that confirms the new model for shared ownership, which will be more consumer-friendly, fairer and easier to access.

The new affordable homes programme

Investing in future affordable housing is particularly important at this unprecedented time in order to support people across England, as well as the economy. Through this new programme I am giving housing associations and local authorities the means to continue to deliver affordable housing in the coming years, with the first homes to be delivered from next year.

The £11.5 billion programme will deliver up to 180,000 homes, should economic conditions allow. It will include a wide range of affordable homes of different tenures to support people in different circumstances and stages of their lives. It is my ambition that approximately 50% of the new homes will be available as affordable home ownership under the new model of shared ownership, helping even more people to realise their ambition of owning their own home. In addition, more housing association tenants will be able to become homeowners through the new right to shared ownership.

The remainder of the programme will deliver homes for discounted rent, including affordable and social rent. Social rent level are typically 50 to 60% of market prices and funding for these homes will be available to housing providers across England, to help those in the greatest need, and 10% of delivery through this programme will be used to increase the supply of much needed specialist or supported housing.

This Government are passionate about levelling up, and that includes increasing the supply of housing where it is desperately needed. This programme will deliver homes right across England. I have given £7.4 billion to Homes England to deliver affordable homes outside London. This is over £2 billion more than the amount given under the previous affordable homes programme, underlining the Government commitment to level up. I have also offered the Mayor of London £4 billion to help with acute housing challenge in London. Negotiations with the GLA about what they will deliver in return for the funding are still ongoing.

The new shared ownership model

Shared ownership has so far helped thousands of people buy their own home. Today I am announcing reforms that will be introduced as part of the new programme that will make it easier for more hard-working people and families to access and then progress to full ownership.

I listened to the views of the respondents to the “Making home ownership affordable” discussion paper published last year, and have built on the proposals outlined to set out a refined and expanded set of changes to the shared ownership model.

The new shared ownership model will reduce the minimum initial ownership stake from 25% to 10%, making it easier to save a deposit to get your foot on the ladder of home ownership. The new model will also make it easier and more manageable to increase your stake in the home, as shared owners will be able to staircase in smaller instalments of as little as 1%, down from 10%.

To further support new shared owners, I have also introduced a 10-year “repair-free” period during which the shared owner will not have to pay repairs or maintenance costs. This will help to bridge the gap between renting and home ownership. This change will prevent new shared owners being hit with repairs and maintenance bills and better support them to put money aside towards buying more of their home.

Finally, I will also improve the experience of shared owners wishing to sell their home. Through the new model shared owners will be able to take control of the resale process from the landlord at an earlier point, giving them greater influence over the sale.

These measures will apply to all new shared ownership homes delivered through the new affordable homes programme and we will also set an expectation that the standard model is used for shared ownership delivered through the planning system.

The right to shared ownership

In addition to the above reforms, today I have also confirmed that the vast majority of new rented homes delivered through the new affordable homes programme will provide tenants with the right to shared ownership. This will give tenants the opportunity to purchase a stake in their home if they wish to do so, and access all the benefits of the new shared ownership model.

My announcements today will support the Government commitment to increasing housing supply and support people from all backgrounds to realise their ambition to own a home.

ORAL ANSWERS

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**not later than
Tuesday 15 September 2020**

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White Goods (Registration) [Col. 538]

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Bill presented, and read the First time*

Extradition (Provisional Arrest) Bill [Lords] [Col. 540]

Considered in Committee; as amended, further considered; read the Third time and passed

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