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New barriers between Northern Ireland and rest of UK should be firmly resisted by the Government

Dec 7, 2017

Posted in: General, Europe

Ulster Unionist Party Leader, Robin Swann MLA, Jim Nicholson MEP and Party Chairman, Lord Empey have written a joint letter to the Prime Minister to make clear that any measures that would create new barriers between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom would directly contradict the Belfast Agreement and should be firmly resisted by the Government.

The full text of the letter is below:

STARTS

The Rt Hon Theresa May MP,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London,
SW1A 2AA.

7th December 2017

Dear Prime Minister,

The events in Brussels on Monday and subsequent media fallout were alarming. The sense of confusion over what had been agreed, when it had been agreed and by whom it had been agreed was palpable and is extremely worrying.

As talks progress we feel that clarity is needed on “regulatory alignment” - particularly if such alignment would apply to Northern Ireland and not the rest of the United Kingdom. As it stands, such an arrangement would endanger the constitutional status of Northern Ireland. It would mean Northern Ireland having no control or even oversight over the decision making process. We would be implementing regulations and directives not from Westminster, but from Brussels where we would have no democratic representation or input into formulating the legislation. Northern Ireland would have no MEPs, and

would not be represented at the Council.

We fear that in these circumstances, some may assume Dublin would speak for Northern Ireland in Brussels. This would represent a clear breach of the Belfast Agreement and the principle of consent. Throughout this negotiation process, the European Union has been keen to stress the need to protect the Belfast Agreement. Any measure that would create new barriers between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom, or leave Northern Ireland represented only by another Member State in Brussels, would directly contradict that aim and should be firmly resisted by the Government.

Yours sincerely,

Robin Swann MLA, Leader, Ulster Unionist Party

Jim Nicholson, MEP for Northern Ireland

Lord Empey of Shandon, Party Chairman, Ulster Unionist Party

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