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IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

18 November 1981

Dear Principal Private Secretary

I have the honour to enclose the text of a statement made in the Dáil yesterday by the Taoiseach on the murder of the Rev. Robert Bradford MP, of which the Prime Minister may wish to be aware. The Dáil passed a vote of sympathy with the family of the Rev. Bradford and observed a minute's silence.

Yours sincerely

Eamon Kennedy

Eamon Kennedy
Ambassador

The Principal Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
No 10 Downing Street
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Statement made by the Taoiseach, Dr. Garret FitzGerald, TD in the Dail on 17 November, 1981 on the death of the Reverend Robert Bradford, MP

Before we begin our normal business I would like to refer to the brutal murder, by the Provisional I.R.A., of the Reverend Robert Bradford, MP in Belfast on Saturday last. His death and that of Mr. Ken Campbell, Caretaker at the Finaghy Community Centre, are part of a calculated series of atrocities committed in recent days. I know all the people we represent share the sense of sorrow, anger and outrage felt by the people of Northern Ireland in recent days.

The killing of an elected representative of the people calls for particular condemnation in the strongest possible terms and serves to remind us of the real objectives of the organisation responsible. The IRA has once again shown its utter contempt for human life and for the democratic process which it has recently sought to distort for its own ends. Its true attitude to democracy and freedom was summed up by a recent statement of an IRA spokesman who, when asked by an interviewer for a foreign newspaper about the wishes of the people in this part of the country concerning an aspect of reunification, replied - "we call the shots. We don't really give a damn what they want".

The first clear objective of the killers of Mr. Bradford was to incite vengeance among Loyalist extremists and thus to expose once again to murderous retaliation the innocent among the most vulnerable community in this island, the Catholics of Northern Ireland. This has already begun to happen. The sectarian killings of Belfast and Lurgan are a direct and intended result of the Provisionals' campaign of recent weeks, a campaign itself trenchantly described last Saturday by John Hume as one of "sectarian genocide" directed against Protestants.

I join with those brave and responsible leaders, clerical and lay, in Northern Ireland who have said to the Unionists and Loyalists: Do not become the prisoners of the provisional IRA's strategy, do not respond as they have intended and planned that you should do - in anger and in a manner that could escalate violence to new levels of horror and ultimately undermine your rights and liberties.

The Rev. Mr. Bradford had, for some time, considered an attempt on his life to be a strong possibility. It is a tribute to his courage that he did not flinch from that danger.

On behalf of the House I would ask you, Ceann Comhairle to extend our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Bradford and her family.