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A: INTRODUCTION

The murder by the IRA, of the South Belfast MP, Rev Robert Bradford, on 14 November, and its aftermath, dominated the period which was also marked by several other murders of members of the Security Forces. Ian Paisley called for a Day of Action on 23 November to protest against the continuance of the Anglo-Irish studies and inadequate security in the Province, and announced the setting-up of a "third force".

B: POLITICAL

2. Mrs Thatcher made a statement to the House of Commons on 10 November about her recent talks with the Taoiseach. Ian Paisley (DUP leader) interrupted the proceedings from a side gallery by calling the Prime Minister "a Traitor and a liar" before leaving hastily. Inside the Chamber other Unionists condemned the talks. Jim Molyneaux (UUP leader) suggested that the ordinary people of the Province were experiencing a sense of betrayal which no explanation or denial could remove, while Jim Kilfedder (UPUP) called the moves "a significant first step towards easing Northern Ireland out of the United Kingdom, and as such a betrayal of the Ulster people's birthright". However Gerry Fitt (Independent) welcomed the developments and suggested that the establishment of an inter-Parliamentary body should be treated with a sense of urgency.

3. As decided at the 6 November summit, the Anglo-Irish Joint Studies were published on 11 November. Hugh Logue (SDLP) was welcoming and regarded "the potential areas for co-operation as even greater than those referred to in the report". Seamus Lynch (WPRC) was disappointed, and said that the studies were long on rhetoric and short on practical proposals that would substantially improve the lot of working people in either Britain, the Republic or Northern Ireland. Unionists reacted predictably, Peter Robinson commenting that the Government had clearly embarked upon "a programme of carefully chosen and implemented stages to push Northern Ireland into the hands of our age-old enemies in the Irish Republic".

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4. The Rev Robert Bradford, MP for South Belfast, was murdered by PIRA on 14 November whilst attending his regular constituency surgery at Finaghy community centre. The caretaker at the centre was also shot dead, ending a week of violence in which 3 members of the Security Forces had already been murdered by the IRA. The murder brought shocked reactions throughout the Province. Paisley blamed the Prime Minister, saying "her treachery at the London summit has encouraged the IRA in their ruthless and bloody campaign". The Secretary of State called for calm, describing the murder as "a deliberate attempt by evil men to cause ... further community tension leading in turn to counter-terrorism". He emphasised the need to "avoid falling into this cynical trap" and asked the people not to let justifiable anger be vented on other equally innocent people.

5. Paisley, along with his DUP colleagues Peter Robinson and John McQuade, was escorted from the House of Commons by the Sergeant-at-Arms on 16 November when they were suspended for five days by the Speaker for continually interrupting the proceedings and heckling Mr Prior following the tributes to Mr Bradford. In an interview outside Paisley said the people of Northern Ireland now had no other option "but to make the Province ungovernable".

6. In her speech at the Lord Mayor's banquet at the Guildhall that night the Prime Minister echoed Mr Prior's call for calm: "Revenge is no policy. Hatred gives birth only to hatred. Reconciliation is the path to peace."

7. The funeral service for Mr Bradford took place at Dundonald Presbyterian Church on 17 November, while at the same time impromptu memorial services were held throughout the Province. On arrival at the church the Secretary of State was jostled by angry loyalists. In the address the officiating minister, Rev Roy Magee, called for the Security Forces to be allowed to take the initiative and "end the war" and was applauded when he advocated the re-introduction of the death penalty. Mr Prior, who was again abused when he left the church, said afterwards that his main concern had been for the Bradford family who had to endure such behaviour on such a sad occasion.

8. Paisley announced on 18 November that his planned "Day of Action" for Monday 23 November would go ahead despite announcements by the Secretary of State of extra security measures including the putting of the RUC on full alert and the drafting in of the Spearhead Battalion. Paisley called for a

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complete stoppage of work from midday, tractor and car cavalcades to converge on all major towns, and a protest demonstration to be held at 8.00 at Newtownards Town Square, when units of his "Third Force" would be paraded. Jim Molyneaux called on the same day for Paisley to postpone his "Day" until the effect of the new security measures could be seen, and spoke of his own Party's plans for an auxiliary force which would aid the security forces by collecting information and "do more than merely demonstrate in large numbers in predominantly loyalist areas". Mr Prior commented the same day that extremists on both sides were fostering a crisis of confidence in Northern Ireland: there was no place for any "private armies" whose weapons were "intimidation and violence against the community".

9. Paisley later enlarged on his plans, saying that the "Third Force" would have legally-held firearms, would be styled on the old Ulster Special Constabulary, and would be able to set up road blocks and search buildings. They would "not be directed against the Roman Catholic community but against the IRA and Mrs Thatcher". He also announced that all DUP councillors would be withdrawing from councils and hinted that he would be calling for VAT, tax, rent and rates strikes. Mr Prior warned the following day that the British Government would not be dictated to by "Protestant bully-boys" and said there was no question of the North becoming ungovernable.

10. It was announced on 20 November that the UUP would hold their own service at Belfast City Hall at noon on the "Day of Action". The following day Harold McCusker MP (a senior UUP figure) indicated that at the same time he would be addressing a meeting of shipyard workers organised by the ULCC (the co-ordinating body for the Loyalist paramilitaries). At a meeting also held on 21 November Paisley announced that he had launched an attempt to bring all the unionist parties into a common front.

11. The SDLP held their eleventh Annual Conference in Newcastle on 13-15 November, the two major political events being the leader's address from John Hume, followed by the principal constitutional debate on a resolution from the Party Executive which affirmed that a lasting settlement in the North was only possible "in the context of a new basis to Anglo-Irish relations which accepts Irish unity" and called for "the removal of

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the constitutional guarantee to Unionists" and "the inclusion in the current Anglo-Irish discussions of consideration of the political institutions necessary for a new Ireland North and South". Despite some prior debate in the Party Executive about the wisdom of sponsoring a call for the removal of the guarantee after the Taoiseach had specifically accepted it in the 6 November communique, the resolution stood, and was overwhelmingly passed. John Hume in his address indicated satisfaction with the current Anglo-Irish process: "our long-standing policy on the way to promote agreement in Ireland has at last been adopted by a British Government". On the guarantee, he felt it should be removed as an urgent priority so that Unionists would see the necessity to "face reality ... and negotiate the future with us and the British and Irish Governments". He added however "For our part we would insist that the results of such talks would have to be ratified in two separate referenda, one in the North the other in the South. That is more of a guarantee of your [Loyalists]' right than the cold and increasingly inconvenient device of the '73 Act. The principle of consent will be truly respected."

C: INTERNATIONAL

12. On 17 November the Dail stood in silence as a formal mark of respect for the Rev Robert Bradford. (Formal tributes are normally reserved for Dail members and international statesmen.) The Taoiseach, Dr FitzGerald, in condemning the murder said: "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." He called for Unionists "not to respond as [the IRA] 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". Mr Haughey (Fianna Fail leader) also paid tribute.

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Northern Ireland Office

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