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## NORTHERN IRELAND Information Service

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5 November 1991

Attached is a copy of a statement made in the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Peter Brooke MP, on Monday, 4 November 1991 following the explosion at the weekend at Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast.

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I regret to have to tell the House that a bomb planted by the Provisional IRA exploded in Musgrave Park Hospital at 3.53pm last Saturday, killing 2 soldiers and injuring 11 other people, among them a 5 year old girl and a baby of 4 months. The murdered soldiers were Warrant Officer Philip Cross of the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) and Driver Craig Pantry of the Royal Corps of Transport. Two of those wounded have very grave injuries. I am also sorry to report that early on Sunday morning in a separate incident a young man was found dead in West Belfast in a car which had earlier been seen in suspicious circumstances and pursued by police; this incident is being investigated by a senior police officer and the Independent Commission for Police Complaints (ICPC) has been asked by the RUC to supervise the inquiry. I know that the House will join me in extending sympathy to the families of all those killed and injured.

The bomb which the IRA left in the hospital is estimated to have contained 20lb of Semtex. It was part way along a service tunnel between 2 hospital buildings: one - the Withers Block - containing orthopaedic and childrens' wards, and the second wards and other medical facilities administered by the RAMC for the benefit of servicemen and their families and some civilians. I must stress that this building is not, as the IRA have callously and cynically claimed, an operational military base - rather, like the

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rest of the Musgrave Park complex, it is purely and simply a hospital, dedicated to healing and the relief of suffering. The nearest security force base is more than a quarter of a mile away and was manifestly not the target of the attack.

In addition to the deaths and injuries, the blast from the explosion caused severe damage to both buildings. In particular, a newly refurbished children's ward in the Withers Block was damaged, with debris falling on a father who was nursing his baby daughter. Other children in that ward were immobilised in traction. So far 97 operations due to have been performed early this week have been cancelled and 80 out of the 200 National Health Service beds in the hospital have been rendered unusable and damage totalling at least £1/4 million has been caused.

I am sure that the whole House will join me in utter condemnation of this appalling attack. But the cynical depravity of this outrage - of placing a bomb that was inevitably going to cause massive damage to a National Health Service hospital and was intended to kill medical staff when it exploded, and which only by great good fortune did not cause many more deaths and injuries - must surely mark one of the lowest points in the IRA's inglorious history. I reject all attempts to justify this attack. Let there be no doubt that it has shown the IRA in its true colours. It was an attack on the whole community - on sick children and their parents, on old people whose much-needed operations will have to be delayed, on the medical staff who devotedly care for them, and on the security forces who will continue to defend the community and to bring terrorists to justice. Such attacks will not deflect the

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Government or the security forces from doing their duty in seeing  
these evil men who want to destroy all that is best in our  
community. The horrible nature of this attack only underlines that  
these are the sort of people whom all democrats oppose.

Just as the emergency services and the staff at Musgrave Park  
Hospital reacted with superlative speed and dedication to allay the  
effects of this atrocity, so the security forces - to whom I pay the  
warmest of tributes - will continue with vigorous and impartial  
professionalism to defend the community and to bring suspected  
terrorists to justice.

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