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DRAFT PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT

With permission, Mr Speaker, I should like to make a <sup>JOV</sup> Statement about two incidents involving the savage murders on 1 May of three Royal Air Force personnel serving in RAF Germany.

Shortly after 1 a.m. local time on Sunday, 1 May, an attack was made with an automatic weapon on three Royal Air Force personnel sitting in a private car near the King George public house at Roermond in the Netherlands close to the border with the Federal Republic of Germany. Senior Aircraftsman Ian Shinner, a Gunner with 16 Squadron of the Royal Air Force Regiment based at RAF Wildenrath was killed, and his companions, SAC Lewis and SAC Garth were injured.

Very shortly afterwards a powerful bomb destroyed a car in the car park of the Baccus discotheque in Nieuw-bergen, killing Senior Aircraftsmen John Baxter and John Reid, both serving at RAF Laarbruch, and seriously injuring SAC Andrew Kelly, their companion.

The Provisional Irish Republican Army have admitted responsibility for these atrocities.

Mr Speaker, the whole House will join me in sending our condolences to the *relatives of the dead and injured and* condemning this further manifestation of the callous barbarism to which the IRA and its supporters and sympathisers are prepared to stoop. The victims were off-duty, non-operational, in civilian clothes and they were in the Netherlands for purely

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recreational purposes. They posed no threat to anyone and their murder is nothing short of a crime against decency and humanity. Immediate steps have been set in hand by the Netherlands Police to identify and trace the culprits. The British authorities are in close touch with the Netherlands <sup>+ German authorities</sup> Police and members of the Metropolitan Police are assisting the Netherlands Police at the latter's request.

Our security procedures are kept under constant review and extensive measures are already in hand to guard against terrorist attacks of this kind. All Service personnel, wherever they are serving are reminded continuously of the need for vigilance and of the wisdom of taking appropriate precautions in the light of the threat. We have already taken steps to strengthen still further the security of British forces in Germany and the Netherlands in the immediate aftermath of these attacks and we are considering what further security measures might be appropriate in the longer term, both there and elsewhere. Other British overseas representatives are also maintaining a high state of vigilance at the present time.

But the fact remains that, even given the murders and injuries to which our Servicemen have been subjected this last weekend, normal life for our Servicemen-and indeed for all other British representatives overseas - must continue as far as practicable. They, like we, must be able to enjoy the benefits of the way of life which they are dedicated to maintain on behalf of the nation as a whole.