



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

6 February 1981

*Dear Ms. Bradley,*

Thank you for your letter of 22 January. I understand the depth of distress and anger which you feel at the murder of Sir Norman and Mr. James Stronge, both as friends of you and your husband, and also as generous and public spirited members of the community throughout many years. I know that these emotions are felt strongly by many in Northern Ireland and Great Britain who knew and worked with both men.

I share your sadness and revulsion at the deaths of Sir Norman and his son. But I do not share your pessimism about terrorism along the border. As you say, I have been there. I know that groups of terrorists are still able to exploit the long stretches of lonely and isolated countryside through which the border runs, in order to murder, injure and cause destruction. I have also seen the skill, patience and grinding hard work of the RUC and the Army which are concentrated on preventing these attacks and on arresting those who have carried them out in the past. The Chief Constable and the GOC have the full support of this Government behind their efforts.

A great deal is being done to thwart terrorists in whatever part of Northern Ireland they remain active. The Chief Constable and the GOC are not wedded to particular operational patterns. They adopt varied tactics suited to the threat in particular areas.

/In the wake

*JMP*

In the wake of the murders at Tynan they are looking to see where they can make further refinements and improvements. The Secretary of State is actively encouraging them in this, since he is anxious that all possible protection should be provided.

Let me, finally, assure you that it is no part of the Government's policy to encourage people in border areas to leave their homes. I know from Humphrey Atkins that he certainly did not advocate such a course of action when he met members of the Ulster Unionist Party during the Conservative Party Conference last autumn. What he did stress was the value of cooperation between neighbours and the importance of their keeping in touch with the security forces, for whom protection of those in border areas is a main priority, as problems arise.

Yours sincerely  
Margaret Thatcher

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Councillor Mrs Hazel Bradford.