



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Statement by the Tanaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs,

Mr. Brian Lenihan TD, Adjournment Debate, Dail Eireann,

11 November 1987

A Cheann Comhairle,

There can be no member of this House who does not share the profound sense of horror at the latest atrocity by the men of violence in Enniskillen last Sunday - a sense of horror which is shared by all decent Irish men and women. There can be no question but that those who planned and perpetrated this act did so in the clear knowledge that many civilians would be attending the ceremony and would be killed or maimed. We all recognise something obscene in the fact that this attack was planned and carried out on a day on which many ordinary Irish men and women had gathered to commemorate those of their families and friends who had died in two World Wars.

This outrage is the latest and most horrific example of the pattern of violence of the IRA - a pattern which shows clearly their contempt for the sanctity of human life and for a sense of human decency. I can only hope that this barbaric act will once and for all show the suffering, tragedy and utter futility of the campaign of violence in Northern Ireland.

We have these last few days witnessed not alone a shared sense of outrage but also a great wave of sympathy for the victims of Enniskillen and their families. Who could not but be moved by

the dignity and Christian compassion of Mr. Gordon Wilson on the death of his young daughter, Marie.

What possible justification can there be for this act of barbarism? The utter cynicism displayed by the Godfathers of violence in their subsequent excuses clearly demonstrates, if such still needed to be demonstrated, the immorality of this futile campaign of violence.

The Taoiseach in his statement last Sunday made clear the feeling of anger and revulsion which all decent Irish men and Irish women feel towards those who planned and executed this criminal act. He also made clear that those responsible must be repudiated utterly and that no effort would be spared to ensure that they are brought to justice. I want to take this opportunity to repeat that message to the paramilitaries. We will not allow them to tear apart the fabric of our society with their campaign of violence which has heaped one heinous crime on top of another. Every effort will be made to ensure that these people are brought to justice and there will be the fullest cooperation between the security forces North and South of the border to this end.

We have all seen in recent days the dignified grief showed by the people of Enniskillen as they bury the victims of this atrocity. It is indeed fitting that the people of this part of the island should, at this time, show their sympathy in a suitable dignified manner. This morning both the Taoiseach and

I took the opportunity to join with many others in signing the Book of Condolences opened by Dublin Corporation. I know that a number of other local authorities have expressed their sympathy in a dignified and fitting manner.

It is in the Irish tradition to pay respect at times like this in our churches. The Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, has arranged a memorial service for the Enniskillen victims which will be held on Sunday next at 3.30 p.m. in St. Patrick's. The preacher at this service will be the Right Reverend Dr. Brian Hannon, Bishop of Clogher, in whose diocese is Enniskillen. I would like to take this opportunity to announce that the Government will be represented and I would suggest that members of the Oireachtas may wish, where possible, to attend. I believe that many members of the public will also wish to show their abomination of violence and their respect for the victims of the bombing of Enniskillen and their sympathy and sense of solidarity with their families by attending the service at St Patricks and other services which are being arranged by all Christian denominations. In Enniskillen itself the Most Reverend Dr Joseph Duffy, Bishop of Clogher, will address the congregation at St Michael's Church, at mass tomorrow evening.

A Cheann Comhairle, these lines from the celebrated Northern Poet, John Hewitt, are appropriate.

This land we stand on holds a history
so complicated, gashed with violence,
split by belief, by blatant pageantry
that none can safely stir and still feel free
to voice his hope with any confidence.

A tragedy so awful as that of Enniskillen may hold one ray of
light - that the people North and South, those with religion
and those with none, even the bombers themselves, will join
together to banish bigotry and violence from our hearts and
allow us all to voice our hope with confidence.