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(13)

**WARRINGTON BOMB**

COMMENTS BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE, SIR PATRICK MAYHEW, WHEN INTERVIEWED BY QTV ON THE WARRINGTON BOMBING AND ITS AFTERMATH: STORMONT CASTLE, MONDAY 22 MARCH 1993

**Question**

Secretary of State, first of all, do you think that this attack, this atrocity in Warrington is a watershed with the tragic death of the 3-year-old child. Do you think that there will be demands, inevitable demands on the Government to do much more to root out these terrorists as a result of this?

**Secretary of State**

I think that it has hit the imagination and the conscience of the public in a way that nothing else has done. I hope that it has done the same to the IRA and those who tolerate them. Everything is being done here in Northern Ireland and in Great Britain to catch terrorists and to bring them to justice. What we need is more help for the police. Every time something like this happens there is somebody who knows a bit about it. There are people who know that something is likely to happen. What I say to them is - how many more children's faces are going to be blown away; how many more young children are going to be killed, because you have not brought yourself to tell the police what you know.

**Question**

Do you think it will fuel demands to encourage that debate, to stimulate the overall debate, to promote the idea of a British withdrawal.

**Secretary of State**

Oh, that would be an extraordinary result and if they don't know that the British people respond with ever greater determination to this kind of outrage they don't know anything at all. I sometimes have felt that they must be in ignorance of that fundamental fact about British people. It is a fundamental fact and you will find from

Warrington, I feel quite sure, as we find here in Northern Ireland, an absolute determination to bounce back, to grit the teeth, to carry on with ordinary life. People in a democracy and certainly in the British democracy never give way to force let alone foul and revolting violence of this kind.

#### Question

Do you think that the Irish in Britain are now under enormous pressure as a result of this attack and, if so, what do you think that you could say to English people in England that would in some way take the heat off the Irish population?

#### Secretary of state

Well I think that attacks upon people because they are Irish or attacks on people because they are British or any other kind of -ish are absurd and very wrong. It would be very wrong if Irish people were to be attacked by reason of this revolting crime carried out by the IRA. The IRA are not acting on behalf of Irish people. Think of the Irish people and the contribution that they have made to our country for example, in war as in peace. To behave like that is to behave like the IRA and I am certain that that's not going to happen because people in our country are not only wise but they are fair.

#### Question

But doubtless people across the water will say that these terrorists who carried out those attacks came from this part of the world and they will ask you because you are a Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what it is you are doing to bring these people to book?

#### Secretary of State

That is a very different question and the IRA know very well of the nature of the opposition that is mounted against them. We don't hear unfortunately on the media anything like enough about the successes that the RUC have had last year - over 400 people were charged with terrorist offences; something like 90 people were charged with murder in terrorist crimes and time and time again the RUC score successes

against these people, even over this last weekend. Very significant successes have been scored by the RUC, but of course more could be done, and that needs greater support from people who tolerate the IRA to the extent of not telling the police what they know. That's my message to people. Do not tolerate people who are capable of behaving as evilly and as foully as these people have done.

#### Question

But surely in response to an atrocity like this and in response to the various atrocities in Northern Ireland the time is now right to turn round and say to the security forces: You're hands are unleashed, go and get those responsible?

#### Secretary of State

Those who speak like that must answer this question. What is tying the hands of the security forces; what is it you want to see done that is different in character from what is being done at the moment. I find no answer to that question except when people are actually frank enough to say: "Well, actually what we mean is that security forces should act outside the law". Now that is not something that I will tolerate, it is not something that the security forces would themselves tolerate and it should never be advocated. This country stands for the rule of law and it is faced with a challenge to the rule of law of very grave dimensions. We must not abandon our own determination that our own forces stay within the law, because if we were to do so we reduce ourselves then to the level of the people whom we are opposing and nothing would please them more. Now this is not to say that nothing more can be done. If the death of this little boy Jonathan, and if the maiming of the 12-year-old boy, and if the injuries to these 58 people in the shopping centre, shopping on Saturday, is to achieve anything it is going to achieve this, I believe, that people are going to ask themselves: "How much longer can I go on, not telling the police what I know about this kind of thing being planned in future. How much longer can I go on justifying in my conscience, not telling the police what I know about something that had happened in the past."

**Question**

Will Warrington and various other terrorist atrocities that have taken place in the past six months, a year, figure on the agenda tomorrow for the Anglo-Irish Conference?

**Secretary of State**

I am sure they will.

**Question**

And what do you think the Irish Government would contribute in that debate?

**Secretary of State**

The Irish Government is as bitterly opposed to the IRA as the British Government. Of that I have no doubt. People in the South of Ireland similarly, of that I have no doubt. These are people who are a tiny, tiny fraction of the people living in this island and they are regarded with equal revulsion North and South of the border within this island. I have no complaint about lack of co-operation. I am very grateful for the co-operation which exists between the Garda and the RUC. Of course there are ways in which with experience the two forces can work even better together and every time we meet in the Conference we explore ways in which that happens. The two Heads of the Police Forces are present on each occasion. Very good relationship between them as there is between the two forces and each time we explore ways in which better co-operation can be achieved and I am sure we shall do that tomorrow.

SECRETARY OF STATE AND DICK SPRING PRIOR TO AIGC - 23 MARCH 1993

Question

I presume you will be discussing the bomb in Warrington?

Dick Spring

It was appalling. It was an outrage in fact and something which the Irish Government is very shocked at.

Question

Will the Irish Government be sending a representative to the funeral?

Dick Spring

The Irish Government will be represented at the funeral and we will be discussing those matters and it's obviously subject to the family's wishes.

Question

What sort of level will that be?

Dick Spring

That has to be decided. We have a Dublin meeting in fact this afternoon.

Question

Sir Patrick, the first time that the Irish Government has been represented at a funeral .....

Dick Spring

I can't speak for previous years. I think we have been represented in the past, but certainly there is a sense of outrage - which I have not experienced before - in relation to the death of this child. I have to say there's a terrible sense of anger in the South at what's happened and it does not represent the views of Irish people.

Question

Sir Patrick, what do you think the police forces can do to prevent the kind of thing which happened?



Secretary of State

I think that co-operation is the best means by which the two police forces can bear down upon these evil people and I am very glad to be able to say in the presence of the Tenuiste that co-operation has never been closer. I think we both agree that this meeting today is evidence of the value of regular meetings between the two Governments, each Head of the police force is here, the Commissioner is here, the Chief Constable of the RUC is here and it shows how very valuable it is that there are regular and frequent meetings of the kind that we're going to have today, and I am sure these are matters that are going to be discussed.

Question

Will you be attempting to get the Talks restarted, Mr Spring?

Dick Spring

obviously we both have an interest in getting Talks restarted and we're going to have a wide-ranging discussion on all of the issues and all the matters we want to talk about between us.

Question

Do you think it's possible?

Dick Spring

Well I think we're both optimists ultimately.

Secretary of State

That's right. We both want to see the Talks resumed and that's one of the areas we shall be talking about.