

EMBARGOED UNTIL 3.00PM 2 JUNE 1988

#### PUTTING THE INTERNATIONAL SQUEEZE ON TERRORISM

Alliance Party Leader, Dr John Alderdice, giving the opening address at an International Seminar on Terrorism organized by the Centre d'Etudes Liberal European and being held on Thursday 2 and Friday 3 June in Belfast, will say:

It is a very great pleasure, and an honour for me, on behalf of the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland, to welcome you to Belfast for this very important and worthwhile seminar. Liberals and Democrats have always regarded the use of Terror, whether by the state or by minority groups, as a direct threat to the freedom of the individual and of all civilized values. During the twentieth century, but especially during the last twenty years the use and practice of terrorism has changed dramatically. Leading figures in our national and international communities have become the prisoners of their own security needs, because of the threat of assassination, but perhaps even more menacingly, members of the security forces, official functionaries and even private individuals have been the victims of hijackings, skyjackings, kidnapping and bombings. The impact of these atrocities has been greatly increased by the news coverage available through the mass media, and terror groups have quickly realized the potential of these new tools.

It is tragically appropriate that this seminar should be held in Belfast. Although during the last few years the scourge of terrorism has affected all our countries, the endemic violence of Northern Ireland has become without doubt one of the most chronic and disturbing wounds on the otherwise increasingly robust and thriving body of the European Community.

Even now there are still those in Northern Ireland, whose minds are so fixed on the past, that they maintain the fond belief that terrorism in this province can successfully be combatted by measures which apply only to the United Kingdom or more parochially still to Northern Ireland alone. Whatever merit such a view might have had in the 1880's we must all realize that in the 1980's the tentacles of international terrorism have spread far and wide. Finance, arms and support come from many places and for many reasons. Arms finds in Northern Ireland and in the the Republic of Ireland in recent months have strongly suggested that Libya is supplying material both to loyalist and to republican paramilitaries. If this is the case it must be clear that such support is not niaively motivated by a simplistic notion of Irish nationalism. It can only be understood as a deliberate attempt to destabilize Northern Ireland within the context of a broader assault on Britain and her partners in the Western Democracies.

For many years we have known of the close and mutual connections between Irish terrorists and other international terror groups. They have shared their knowledge and expertise, and have lent support to each other. More recently



we have seen the Provisional IRA turn to the European mainland to murder three members of the British security forces whilst they were off-duty and relaxing in the Netherlands, and of course we must not forget the detailed plans to create an Enniskillen-type massacre in Gibraltar. The fight against Irish terror gangs, must involve not just the security forces of the the United Kingdom, nor even just cooperation with our near neighbours in the Republic of Ireland. The seizure by the French authorities of enormous quantities of arms on a ship bound for Ireland demonstrates more eloquently than a host of arguments, the profound value of international cooperation and vigilance. Throughout Europe, and particularly throughout the European Community, we must combine together to put the international squeeze on the terror-mongers in our midst.

This task is all the more urgent as we move towards 1992 and the implementation of the Single European Act. As European Liberals and Democrats we support the concept of the internal market because of its enormous social, political and economic benefits, but we must not forget that there are major implications for the fight against terrorism. A single market without barriers means the free movement of all sorts of goods, including arms. The reduction of controls at our national borders in order to facilitate the free movement of our people for work and for recreation, also means a more free environment for those more malevolent individuals and groups who would plot mischief and carry out deeds of violence. It is no longer possible to advocate a simple policy of building a ring of steel around our national boundary, so we must move our European anti-terrorism cooperation into a higher gear. Our security forces must freely share information and intelligence with each other. Known terrorists must be tracked throughout the Community. Technology must be fully exploited and to be effective we must try to ensure commonality or at least mutual compatibility. There should be increasing cooperation on joint briefing and training exercises for officers involved in anti-terrorist duties, and legislation in relevant areas, most especially in extradition should ensure that there is no hiding place, no respite, for the terrorist, and no unnecessary technical difficulty for the legitimate forces of law and order, acting, as they must always and in every circumstance act, within the law. We must also try to ensure that the news media continue to function as a free, questioning and investigative medium, however, the press must continually be vigilant that it does not become the unwary tool of the purveyors of fear and misery. Terrorism is not only hungry for propaganda but also needs large amounts of money. In recent years terrorist organizations in Ireland have become heavily involved in racketeering and organized crime in order to raise funds. We have increasing evidence that these activities are not now confined to Ireland, and I believe that it is important we will be paying attention during our meeting to finding ways of cutting off financial support to the godfathers of violence.

In all of this, we must never lose sight of the purpose of security. The framework of legislation and the forces of law and order are there to protect individuals, so that they can be free to live their lives in fulfilment and in peace. It is possible to create a society so secure that the terrorist cannot function, but such a society would be so repressive that the citizen would not have the freedom to live his or her life. Our freedom in Western Europe was

bought with a great price, and there is a price for the maintenance of that freedom now that it is under threat from the terrorist. But no protection can be absolute and complete, whilst still being compatible with the vital rights and freedom of the individual. As over the next few days we review the growth of terrorism in Europe, as we consider the responses by governments and by society to the phenomenon, and as we look to the kinds of measures which we may need to adopt for our own protection, we must never lose sight of the fundamental values of freedom, justice and individual dignity, upon which, as Democrats, our whole political vision is based.

I believe that this meeting is a most timely consideration of the dilemmas posed by international terrorism, and I welcome you all most sincerely. We have a very distinguished panel of experts and academics to help us, and we have representatives of many of our member states. Some of you have come great distances and you are doubly welcome for that. I look forward to the papers and to the formal and informal discussions during the meeting. I am sure that we will make useful progress in our deliberations. We also intend to publish our proceedings in order that the value of the meeting may be more widely extended.

Finally may I say that although we have before us a most serious subject, do not suppose that you can come to Northern Ireland and not enjoy yourselves. I and my colleagues look forward to getting to know you and to enjoying your company over the next few days. The organizers, I know, have arranged for hospitality and entertainment during the evenings, and I trust that you will not only be welcomed, but that you will feel welcome, and that you will thoroughly enjoy your time with us.