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Address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr.
Garret FitzGerald, at the Memorial Service for the
late Ambassador, Mr. C.T.E. Ewart-Biggs, in
St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, on Wednesday,
28th July, 1976.

Embargoed until 11.00 a.m.

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou thinkest thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death ...
Why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more. Death, thou shalt die.

He came to Ireland as a guest, and a friend. At the personal request of the Prime Minister of his country, he undertook the task of representing the United Kingdom in Ireland, at a time when the relations between our two countries are of singular importance to both. He brought with him a conviction of the evil and futility of violence and a dedication to the task of strengthening the links that bind our peoples together in the face of the common threat to both. He also brought a belief that cynics may mock, but true statesmen rightly maintain, that between governments and peoples, as between individuals, truth and honesty provide the only sure foundation for a solid and lasting relationship.

We in Ireland welcomed Christopher and Jane Ewart-Biggs with instinctive warmth, recognising their informed goodwill, their absolute sincerity, their quality as people, and an element of humour and indeed gaiety which struck an instant chord amongst all who met them here.

For myself, from the moment I first met him in Oxford four short weeks ago, I looked forward to a personal and diplomatic relationship which I knew would be positive and constructive, open and uninhibited. I knew that, given the problems that exist at times in the relations between

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our two countries, we were bound to have some difficult encounters, but I knew also that such momentary difficulties - always to be seen in any event in the wider context of the profound common interests of Ireland and Britain - would be eased by the kind of relationship that we would be able to establish between us.

The shock, and for us the shame, of his murder, and of that of Judith Cooke, have had profound effects for all of us. No doubt the perpetrators calculated, with their unflinching lack of insight or understanding, that Anglo-Irish relations would be severely weakened, perhaps permanently damaged, by such an atrocity. That the opposite has been the case is now evident to all. Our two peoples, whose pasts have been so closely linked for ill and for good throughout eight centuries, have confounded our common enemy by responding to this tragedy with a deepened sense of our close interdependence, and of our common interest in combating violence and averting anarchy. Politicians, press and people in our two islands have instinctively understood the trap set for them by evil men, and have been drawn closer together in the aftermath of this murder.

Perhaps for the first time the Irish people have been brought to appreciate fully those qualities of dignity, calm and restraint on which Britons rightly pride themselves. Perhaps for the first time also the British people have understood the depth of abhorrence of violence that animates our people.

Whatever ill-conceived and twisted objective the perpetrators of these murders may have had in mind, it was certainly not the outcome that we observe. For they have brought about a strengthening of the ties that link Ireland with Britain in friendship, and a re-animation of our joint and unequivocal determination once and for all to destroy this conspiracy against freedom and against life - which in Northern Ireland has already wrought such universal tragedy.

The tragedy of this moment in Ireland touches all. It touches the young - the young like Judith Cook, courageous, talented, attractive. The promise of her generation is a prey to those who respect neither age, nor frailty, nor sex, nor youth, in their urge to destroy those whom they seem in their blindness to conceive only as impersonal symbols, never as living people. What kind of world can they be dreaming of, in which living vital people like Judith have no place, save in the grave?

Christopher Ewart-Biggs brought to this country a total commitment against this callous insensate violence, a belief in truth and peace. He could not have conceived that within two brief weeks of his arrival he would have made, at the cost of his own gallant life, a unique contribution to the aims he sought to serve - a contribution which, had he lived, he would have dedicated himself to achieving by the slower process of diplomatic action. His widow and children, to whom every Irish heart goes out at this moment, can hope at least that in this way his death has not been in vain.

Ireland, shamed by the deeds of men with minds twisted by the myths that for too many in this country have displaced history, will not forget this moment.

We ask Christopher's family for their compassion. We are grateful that his widow, generous of spirit as he was, has found the courage and charity to understand and to maintain the full dedication of her husband's commitment to peace in this island. We can humbly learn from her.

I am honoured, and through me I believe the Irish people for whom I speak are honoured, that she should have asked me to address you at this, for her, most tragic moment. I do so on behalf of a country which with one mind and heart offers her its love and sympathy.