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The Inter-Departmental Unit on the North of Ireland, in compliance with the Taoiseach's instructions of last week, considered major aspects of the Northern situation having a bearing on a settlement. The Unit prepared five separate papers which are in this folder. These are:

A. Reformulation of the British Guarantee
B. New Northern Administration
C. Council of Ireland
D. New policing arrangements for Northern Ireland
E. Action by the South.

Obviously the subjects of the various papers are inter-related and an attempt is made to set out the more important inter-relationships. However, the number of possible over-all "package" solutions is very great and it is considered that a revision of the various papers will be necessary when the shape of a possible over-all solution becomes clearer.

At the same time it seems clear that any acceptable settlement must contain the following basic elements:

1. A system to govern the North equitably for the immediate future; no unionist hegemony within that system.
2. Acceptance for the time being of the continuance of the Union
3. A real prospect of Irish unity eventually with provision for progress by agreement towards it.

19 December, 1972.