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9th January, 1972³Taoiseach's meeting with Secretary-General at
10a.m. on Tuesday, 9th January, 1973

My meeting with the Secretary-General commenced at about 10:10a.m. and continued until 11:20a.m. At the outset the Secretary-General welcomed me and immediately expressed his interest in the Northern Ireland problem. He told me of the sympathy the United Nations have with us and of his hope for a satisfactory solution.

I gave him an in depth survey of the situation as I now saw it. I gave him a broad outline of the Green Paper, with particular reference to the "Irish dimension" and the possibility of the formation of a Council of Ireland. I referred back to the original concept of the Council of Ireland in the 1920 Government of Ireland Act and explained to him why this did not develop. I informed him that, on the basis of the survey of the situation contained in the Green Paper, the British Government proposed in a month or so to publish a White Paper in which it was expected they would propose what they saw as the solution of the Northern Ireland problem. I explained to the Secretary-General that we regarded the formation of a regional administration in Northern Ireland as necessary in present circumstances but that I hoped it would be formed under the PR system and that this method of election would be extended into the executive. I said that of

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itself this would not be satisfactory unless there was inbuilt into the system of voting at all levels of administration a means whereby Unionist domination would not reassert itself. I then referred in more detail to the Council of Ireland and said that we would be willing to participate in such a Council but that, since the Green Paper spoke of the need for any arrangements to be made in relation to Northern Ireland to be "acceptable to and accepted by" the Irish Government, we should be privy to the arrangements being made for the setting up of such a Council. I told him that it was our view that the terms of reference of this Council should not be restricted, that the Council should be open ended and that it should be capable of evolution. In other words that it should be seen to be a means that could contribute to ultimate unity. I felt that initially the Council might undertake functions pertaining to social and economic harmonisation between the two parts of Ireland and that in this respect the implementation of a regional policy, consistent with the regional policy of the EEC, could be a tangible function of this Council in its initial stages.

I spoke to the Secretary-General about United Nations intervention, as we had proposed through Dr. Hillery in 1969 and in other respects subsequently e.g. border observation, and he reiterated the limitations imposed on the United Nations by the

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Charter. At this point, however, I said that I thought that any future developments, in relation to and following the publication of a White Paper, would be a matter for both Governments, that is the United Kingdom and Ireland as well as the communities in Northern Ireland.

I concluded this part of our discussion by saying that, unless the British Government now approached the whole problem in a realistic and courageous way, unless the settlement that they would propose had the ingredients and the possibility of reunification, it would be unacceptable to the majority of the people of Ireland, particularly to the minority in Northern Ireland and that, therefore, the current situation would be likely to recur in the future, and in greater intensity, if real progress were not seen to be possible.

We then turned to world problems in which the United Nations were interested; concerning Cyprus and here the Secretary-General reiterated his appreciation of the Irish contribution to the solution of this problem; the Middle East, and particularly the Suez proximity talks. The Secretary-General told me of his hope about the solution of the Bangladesh problem, of the Viet-Nam conflict and finally we discussed Ireland's entry to the EEC. Dr. Waldheim expressed his support for the enlargement of the

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Community saying that regional cooperation of this kind is
complementary
supplementary to the work of the United Nations.

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