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Meeting between the Taoiseach, Mr. Cosgrave,
and the British Prime Minister, Mr. Wilson,
in London, on 5th April, 1974.

1. The Taoiseach called on Mr. Wilson at 11 a.m. and they had a private talk for about 40 minutes. A record of this private talk is being made separately. The Tánaiste, Mr. Corish, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs then joined the meeting. On the British side the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Mr. Callaghan, and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mr. Rees, joined Mr. Wilson. Also present were the following:- On the Irish side, the Ambassador in London (Dr. O'Sullivan), Mr. D. Nally and Mr. M. Mac Conghail (Department of the Taoiseach) and Mr. C. Whelan (Department of Foreign Affairs): and on the British side the British Ambassador in Dublin (Sir Arthur Galsworthy), Mr. Philip Woodfield and Mr. R. Seaman (Northern Ireland Office) and Lord Bridges (Cabinet Office).

2. Mr. Wilson invited the Taoiseach to run over the ground they already had covered in their private talk. The Taoiseach said he expressed the view that Sunningdale should be signed quickly. The Council of Ireland could then be established which would mean that the police authorities linked with the Council could be brought into operation. This would enable the minority in the North to identify with the police. As regards security on the border, our deployment of police was 50% higher than it was five months ago. The Law Enforcement Commission was expected to report within the next week with a recommendation for extraterritorial arrangement. Once this was done legislation could be passed very quickly. The

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number of cases of fugitive offenders was actually quite small: some 20 or 21 people out of a total of 31 in respect of which we had received requests, the remainder being either in the North or imprisoned for other offences. Under the extraterritorial arrangement we would have the same provisions as in the case of murder charges under the 1861 Act which had recently been reactivated. Apart from all this there were regular meetings of police chiefs and their subordinates which were taking place fortnightly or weekly in some cases.

3. Mr. Wilson confirmed that what had been said by Mr. Rees ^{the} in the House of Commons the previous day during the Northern Ireland debate and in the earlier meeting with Mr. Faulkner represented Government policy. They supported the Northern Ireland Constitution Act, the Assembly, power-sharing in the Executive and the Sunningdale agreement, and they intended to stand by all these. At the same time they had to take into account morale in Northern Ireland after the General Election. The morale of Mr. Faulkner's supporters should improve following the statement which Mr. Rees had made regarding a four years life for the Assembly. He hoped that this would be a trump card against the efforts of the hard-line Unionists to bring down the Assembly. There was bipartisan support in the House of Commons for the continuation of Government policy in these matters. As regards the new wave of violence by the Provisionals they probably considered that it was the right time to make a new push. The impression had insidiously been spread that the General Election represented a reversal of the

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Assembly vote but the Executive was doing a good job and it was now a question of moving forward to sign Sunningdale. He had talked with both Gerry Fitt and Faulkner. Faulkner's position, and that of the Alliance too, required further reassurance in the area of security. Faulkner was looking for results in the handling of violence, the Law Enforcement Commission and physical co-operation on the border. Could we ensure that there would be early movement on law enforcement through the extraterritorial solution? We must not lose momentum because of the Easter recess. Would it be possible to get the report before Easter?

Mr. Woodfield said that their information was that one of the Irish members was not at present available. To them, it seemed that extradition was the best solution.

4. The Minister for Foreign Affairs pointed out that the Commission would be meeting in London on 8 and 9 April and it ^{to be} was hoped that they would be prepared to stay on until Thursday 11 April in order to sign the report. He would further check the position regarding one member of the Irish side who, it was suggested, might not be available to sign the report before Easter. He added that it was not helpful to have the British side pushing extradition as the solution. Mr. Wilson said that the agreement on extraterritoriality seemed a good step forward. Mr. Rees said he had one comment: extradition was preferred on the British side and extraterritoriality was therefore second best. The Minister for Foreign Affairs summarized the views of the members on both sides, as they had

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at this stage get bogged down into questions of presentation but should concentrate on bringing out a positive recommendation in the area in which they could agree. Mr. Rees said that the Commission was independent and the views on the British side were not inspired. The "lawyers" were sticking strongly to their views that they were independent. He referred to the difficulty about witnesses in the extraterritorial solution. The presentation of the recommended method was in his view important. The Minister for Foreign Affairs said that reciprocal legislation would be necessary to provide extraterritorial jurisdiction on both sides of the border. This was agreed.

5. Mr. Rees went on to say that the recent series of bombings in Belfast, Bangor and other centres had caused great anger. There was a public reaction which suggested that the bombing had something to do with the fact that there was now a Labour Government. So far as border security was concerned, what mattered even more than the action now being taken on both sides of the Border would be grass-roots co-operation. He referred to the shooting incident in the Lifford/Strabane area some weeks ago. Mr. Wilson said that the Taoiseach had referred to meetings by the police chiefs and had said that the Council of Ireland would enable much closer security co-operation to be undertaken. He enquired as to the prospects of a Ministerial Meeting which had been raised in the letter of 20th March from Mr. Rees to Dr. FitzGerald. The Minister for Foreign Affairs explained that the role of our Army was different from that of the British Army in the North. A further difficulty arose from the apparent difficulties in liaison between the British Army and the RUC.

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This was important for co-operation. As regards improved communications and technical matters, these were possible and could be discussed. Mr. Rees said that the recent incident regarding the shooting of two soldiers by the RUC was due to an administrative accident and not an operational mix-up. He referred again to suspicion of the new Labour Government in the North. The new campaign of violence was intended, first to test the will of the Labour Government, and second to bring down power-sharing. Mr. Wilson said that this was to some extent inevitable but they had to be very careful. All the real trouble in the North began after the change of Government in June 1970. He was not suggesting that what had happened then was deliberately brought about by the change in Government but action had been taken - i.e. Falls Road conference - which would not have happened had the Government not changed.

6. The Minister for Foreign Affairs suggested that we should work out a timetable moving towards the signing of Sunningdale. This would include the Law Enforcement Commission report to be followed by an announcement of legislation on both sides on extraterritoriality. The Ministerial meeting on security might then take place. Such a meeting should be public rather than secret, both because it was not realistic to believe that full secrecy could be maintained and also because in any event publicity would be important from the point of view of Northern opinion. At the same time the British Government should be pressing Faulkner to agree to the date for the formal signing. As regards the meeting on security, this should be a political meeting, the Ministers to be accompanied by civilian advisers.

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Mr. Rees said that it would be useful to have defence and police experts alongside in order to have technical advice available. The Taoiseach said that the Minister for Justice might meet the Secretary of State and that the "experts" should remain "outside the door" and their presence should not be publicized. We would have police, rather than army, representation.

7. The Taoiseach then enquired, if all this were done, how soon could the agreement be signed. Mr. Rees replied the sooner the better but we must bring Faulkner along with us. Some of his supporters were now saying "All is lost. The party is finished". More defections were expected. He suggested that the Taoiseach should continue talking to Faulkner. He thought these would be good tactics while the Law Enforcement Commission proposals and security arrangements would be going forward. Mr. Rees also stressed the need for further meetings on the functions of the Council of Ireland. The Minister for Foreign Affairs pointed out that the officials had already reported on the proposed functions. There was to have been a further inter-ministerial meeting on the 'residue' of disagreement on functions but Faulkner was unwilling to have one following the General Election result. When should they now meet? Timing was important.

8. Mr. Rees said that security was a must before moving on to signing the agreement. Something must come out of Dublin on this. In the course of his recent talks in Belfast he had formed the strong impression that people in the North do not like Englishmen (or for that matter,

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Welshmen) telling them what to do. The Executive and the Irish Government must reach agreement. There was another major factor. What would be the first steps taken by the Council of Ireland as regards the Council's functions and machinery? Was the Council to be small on functions, with a fully designed structure initially or what? The Minister for Foreign Affairs said that Faulkner must first say how much he was prepared to agree to on functions. There had been no substantial doubt on structure expressed at Hillsborough. Mr. Wilson said that the establishment of the Council could encourage and help security and the Minister for Foreign Affairs referred to the police authority link as important. Mr. Rees said that Faulkner now wanted to water down the Council in order to be able to sell it to his supporters. One of the points he had raised was where it would meet. Would it be in Armagh? Were we proposing the full Council structure from the beginning with the Council of Ministers meeting and their decisions published. The Minister for Foreign Affairs said that there was already basic agreement that there would be executive functions. This was confirmed at the Hillsborough meeting. The Taoiseach said that they had made an agreement and everybody should carry it out. Mr. Woodfield of the Northern Ireland Office said that at the time of the formal signing it must be made absolutely clear what the functions are to be. The Minister for Foreign Affairs said that it was important to settle the functions sufficiently in advance so that Faulkner can say what they would be when the date of the formal conference is announced.

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If Faulkner is to be pressed to agree to the announcement of date, there must be agreement on the functions before the announcement is made. Mr. Rees said that it was important for the Irish Government to keep talking to Faulkner and to explain the position on functions and structures, including such matters as the meeting place for the Council. The Taoiseach said that Faulkner had been moving from one thing to another to avoid fixing the date for the formal signing and the Minister for Foreign Affairs said that he was now opposing executive functions although he had agreed at Hillsborough that they should consider a report from officials defining functions for the Council. The officials had drawn up a number of lists of functions defined for executive action, executive decision and for harmonization and consultation. There was also a list of functions on which agreement was not reached among the officials. These included matters such as animal diseases and institutions of science and art. There was a need to fireproof Faulkner but we must be able to move forward at the same time.

9. Mr. Callaghan said that Faulkner must be made to jump the hurdle. He has got to go on or otherwise he is finished. You can't go around Aintree twice. He must be made to take jumps and if necessary would have to be pushed. There were a number of matters that would be useful for the Council of Ireland to take up such as tourism and the development of the North-West. The Taoiseach said that Faulkner was not^w proposing that there should be different structures for the Council of Ireland. Mr. Wilson said that he could not have

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There were grave doubts that the SDLP would hold on if Sunningdale were renegotiated. Mr. Rees said that providing 4 years for the Assembly was one thing but if sufficient numbers of Faulkner's supporters defect, power-sharing will come down. Faulkner would not have another chance. If he falls flat on taking the first jump, the race is off. Mr. Wilson said that there will be no race at all if he does not take the first jump. Mr. Rees said that Faulkner could be down to only one as an Assembly majority. Bradford could defect and bring a considerable number with him. Other likely defectors were MacLachlan, Morgan and Kirk. His position as a junior partner to the SDLP in the Executive would in any case be very difficult. Outside the Assembly he was losing his support even among the Unionist women, as a result of the recent bombing campaign. He had been publicly and vulgarly abused in the streets of Belfast about his "Republican friends" and what they had brought about. Mr. Callaghan enquired whether, even if Faulkner got everything he wanted as regards security and the extra-territorial jurisdiction, would he go on? If he refused to sign Sunningdale would the Official Unionists take him back? Mr. Rees said there was no chance of that. If there is to be no power-sharing, they were all back to square one. In that event one could not ignore public opinion in Great Britain.

10. Mr. Wilson said that he did not think that any reliable poll had yet been taken but, in his view, public opinion on the issue of Northern Ireland at present could be summed up in the phrase "pull out and let them cut each other's throats".

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At present there was strong bi-partisan support in Parliament. Pym and Whitelaw were fully engaged in maintaining this. It was terribly important that the two front benches should keep together on Northern Ireland policy. Danger would arise if any attempt were made to make Northern Ireland an issue in a new General Election. Heath had seemed to be "playing hooky" after the last election with the offer of the Whip to the Anti-Sunningdale Unionists. Whitelaw, Pym and Carr seemed to have put a stop to that but he did not know what Carrington's position had been. So far as the Labour Government were concerned they remained firm on the bi-partisan approach. If there was a return to direct rule, the issue of the soldiers serving in the North could well bring about an "agonising reappraisal". Mr. Rees said that it was noticeable that among new Conservative Members in the House of Commons there was little interest in the North and many would support getting out. Heath himself, however, was firm. Mr. Wilson said that there were two other anxieties. First, the SDLP would have nothing to live for in a direct rule situation. Second, the reversion to direct rule would be against a different psychological situation than before. What hope would there be in finding a further solution? It would seem that all hope would then be destroyed. Mr. Callaghan said that the Taoiseach had delivered an awful lot on status but the question now being asked was what did he do to prevent "my shop" or "my home" on the Shankhill from being blown up. The Tánaiste said that there was nothing that we could do to help as regards violence in Belfast. Mr. Wilson suggested that Border security was important to Protestants and more could be done in getting across

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our actions with a view to appealing to Protestant sentiments. Although there was no guarantee that Border security on our part would help to reduce violence in the North, the individual on the Shankhill Road would feel better. Mr. Callaghan added that, in that event, Sunningdale will be seen as helping. The Minister for Foreign Affairs pointed out that, in fact, the Border was not an important element in the campaign of violence which was basically indigenous. There was a propaganda campaign based upon an emotive reaction. The Government in Dublin had not thought it desirable to refute this directly so as not to call Faulkner a liar. What was involved here was the exploitation of a myth and all concerned must now demythologise this myth. Mr. Callaghan said that the violence was basically indigenous but that it was a highly emotional issue. Mr. Rees said that there was substance in it to the extent that the bombing emanated from people there supported by organizations in the South. When he asked Unionist groups who came to talk to him what they would do to solve the problem all he got was gut reaction like "shoot everybody on sight". There was a general belief that all the gelignite used for the bombs in the North comes from the South. Some believe that everything comes from the South. The Minister for Foreign Affairs said that these sort of remarks and statements must be dealt with. The truth must be brought home to the people in the North. If Dublin denied such statements, they won't be believed. The British Government must "come clean" - he was critical of the last Government in this matter. Mr. Wilson said that whatever can be done within limits will be done. It was important that whatever we were doing should be seen to be done. They were faced with a "tightly knit group

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of politically motivated men" - a sort of Parnell in reverse group. If we can together depoliticise the situation it would help. Stan Orme was doing useful work in this direction.

11. Mr. Callaghan said that, as he saw it, there were three things that must be done. One was to get Faulkner to sign Sunningdale but in order to get him to do so Sunningdale must be seen to have a security benefit for the North and that means dealing with the Border. The third point was that responsibility for dealing with indigenous violence must be placed on the people in the North. Mr. Rees agreed but placed greater emphasis on the Border. All the violence that happens is seen as being done by "your representatives". "They are either your nationals or they use your flag and so it is believed as coming from you". The Minister for Foreign Affairs said that these were myths but myth is in itself a fact and must be dealt with. The Irish Government were prepared to move quickly on extra-territoriality and the meeting of Ministers on security but, in turn, the British Government must say that the security problem is not a Border issue. Mr. Callaghan said that the order of priorities should be: first, get the Border right; second, sign Sunningdale. Mr. Wilson said that the announcements on extra-territoriality and the Ministerial meeting might be published on the same day. Time was not on their side. Faulkner must be made to take the first jump. Weeks of delay in these matters could only weaken the situation. The Taoiseach agreed that the longer the signing was put off the worse the situation will become. Mr. Wilson said that an important question was whether he could sign without the breakup of the executive. The Minister for Foreign Affairs said that the functions must be decided without delay. Mr. Rees said that functions could be decided but that Faulkner was concerned about Ministers meeting in a symbolic place such as Armagh. Was it proposed that there should be some great edifice to replace

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Stormont to house the Council of Ireland? It was very important to be clear in advance as to the extent to which co-operation will take place.

12. Mr. Wilson then suggested the following stages in timing:

- (1) The Law Enforcement Commission report and the ministerial meeting on security to be announced.
- (2) Quickly afterwards, the meeting to agree on functions.
- (3) The announcement of the date of the formal conference.

It was important to have the functions decided before the formal signing date was announced. The Taoiseach said that simultaneously the agreement to sign Sunningdale must be announced. The Minister for Foreign Affairs said that it was important that there should be pressure from the British Government to get Faulkner moving since pressure from Dublin was counterproductive. Mr. Wilson enquired whether there was any reason why the Law Enforcement Commission report could not be made public during the Easter recess. It was agreed that it should be published after Easter which was an emotive period. Mr. Wilson said that in that case, with the Law Enforcement Commission report available at Easter to be published in the following week, the joint meeting on security could then be announced. At the second stage the meeting on security and the functions meeting between North and South could take place almost simultaneously. The third stage, the announcement of the formal date for ratification would then follow. The Minister for Foreign Affairs then suggested that

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there should be a private agreement in advance about the date for the formal signing. Mr. Wilson suggested that the date was beginning to emerge. Mr. Rees said that this would depend on how quickly the two earlier stages could be concluded. The Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that legislation on the Law Enforcement report could be introduced on the 23rd April when the Dáil resumed and could be enacted within a couple of weeks. The Taoiseach said that, in that case, they could aim for the formal conference to take place in May. Mr. Rees urged caution against making assumptions. It was important to get the Law Enforcement report and to have it implemented. The Minister for Foreign Affairs said that it was therefore essential to push the Law Enforcement Commission for an immediate report and the British Government could help here.

13. Mr. Rees returned to discussion on Border security. He said that there had been 44 incidents in one recent week. They must feed into the talks on co-operation what exactly they were trying to do. The Taoiseach said they must stick to reality rather than to myths. There had been 108 deaths in the North from violence associated with political motivations in the past six months. Of these 18 had taken place in Border areas and 12 of these 18 occurred in the Crossmaglen area. The Minister for Foreign Affairs referred to two documents which had been received almost at the same time the previous day. One was a letter from the Counsellor in the British Embassy which claimed that the Crossmaglen area was fully patrolled. The other was a report from the Department of Justice regarding an incident which clearly demonstrated the need for security action in that area.

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We cannot control security in the North. Mr. Rees said that there were different approaches in method between the RUC and the Army and in the area in question the police cannot engage in patrolling because they would all be killed. The Minister for Foreign Affairs said that this was a case of men stopping vehicles without any action being taken by the security forces even two hours after they had been notified by the Garda Síochána. On the South side of the Border every road was being patrolled but it was impossible for the Irish patrols to cope with 'no go' areas on the other side. Mr. Wilson said that these matters could be dealt with at the ministerial meeting. He saw progress in security developing as a result of both the proposed ministerial meeting and co-operation under the Council of Ireland.

14. The Tánaiste asked what the British Government were going to do about Faulkner who had now said that he did not want the Council of Ireland unless it was completely watered down. Account must be taken of the SDLP position in such an event. Furthermore Sunningdale had been sold to the Irish people as representing a Council of Ireland with executive functions. Mr. Wilson said that, as he had stated at the beginning of the meeting, they were all committed to Sunningdale. What they had been discussing was finding some means of giving reassurance on security to get Sunningdale ratified. They must avoid producing a situation in the Executive which would lead to its break up. At the same time Faulkner must be made to take the necessary jumps that lay ahead. Only by that means could they reduce the number that he would later have to

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take. The Minister for Foreign Affairs said that, so far as we were concerned, the Police Authority Bill would be ready for introduction after Easter. Mr. Rees said that it was important to get some civilian policing in the North and to get the Northern Irish to undertake security responsibilities themselves. At present their attitude to the British Government was: "You get on with it. It was you who took away the RUC". The searches by the Army were continuing but they must get back to a situation of handing security back to the police. The Taoiseach emphasised the importance of the police identification through the Council of Ireland.

15. At this point Mr. Wilson suggested that other matters might be considered at lunch. In the meantime the officials concerned could draft a statement for the Press. The discussion at lunch did not bring out any further views of substance. At its conclusion the draft Press statement was considered and amended. The essential question which gave rise to most discussion on the draft was whether Border incidents were not insignificant in relation to the general violence in the North. The British Government representatives present were not prepared to accept that it should be said in the Press statement that Border violence was of subordinate or minor significance. The reference in the press release to this point is based upon a draft suggested from the Irish side and this amendment was accepted by Mr. Wilson. The text of the agreed press release is attached, together with the original draft from the British side.