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<b>Reference Code:</b>	2002/8/481
<b>Title:</b>	Copy note from the United Kingdom Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe, stating that a public emergency exists in Northern Ireland that warrants allowing the Northern Ireland government exercise powers of detention and internment.
<b>Creation Date(s):</b>	20 August, 1971
<b>Level of description:</b>	Item
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	2 pages
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of the Taoiseach
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S.18650<sup>B</sup>9th September 1971.

The following statement has been issued by the Government Information Bureau on behalf of the Taoiseach:-

I have read with considerable interest Mr. Harold Wilson's 12-point plan for dealing with the situation in Northern Ireland. Certainly his proposals accord with the view I have frequently stated that the time is ripe for a re-examination of the Stormont structures as a means of ensuring that a permanent monopoly of power does not lie with one section only of the community. Mr. Wilson, it seems to me, has tackled this problem in a straight-forward manner and his proposals deserve to be studied in detail.

Mr. Wilson supports the establishment of an all-Ireland Council consisting of parliamentarians from Dublin and Belfast. If the functions of the Council were limited to debate it would lack prestige. I think that further consideration needs to be given to the question of whether functions, perhaps in the economic and social fields, could be given to such a Council.

I fully endorse Mr. Wilson's suggestions in regard to the withdrawal of firearms' licences and very strict control in the future over the private possession of firearms in the North.