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Interview with the Irish Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Noel Dorr, 'The World at One', BBC Radio 4

25 May, 1982

Q : We asked the Irish Permanent Representative to exactly explain/what he wants the Security Council to approve at its meeting today.

Ambassador Dorr : Ireland has made a proposal to try to bring an end to the conflict and to try to get the effort made by the Secretary-General over recent weeks back in business but it's something more than a 72 - hour ceasefire. The proposal has three parts really : first, a 72 - hour suspension of hostilities by both sides, second, within that period the Secretary-General would make contact with both parties and work out the details for a more permanent ceasefire including, possibly, the idea of U.N. observers to monitor it and thirdly, and in the more long-term, he would continue his negotiations with a new mandate. So the proposal has really three parts and is not simply for a 72 - hour ceasefire.

Q : This would allow the Argentines to consolidate their forces, though, wouldn't it?

Ambassador Dorr : No, it's a very short time and it's a simple first step but the proposal, as I've said, has three parts and the 72 - hour period would simply be a period within which the details of a lasting ceasefire would

be worked out.

Q : But can I put it to you that this comes at a very bad time for the British because just when their forces are engaged in a major offensive you're asking for a breathing space which would, in effect, ruin many of those efforts?

Ambassador Dorr : The thing is, in any conflict there are times when one side is on the initiative and times when the other is on the initiative. One has to hope that a proposal for something like this comes at a time when both sides can accept it. The alternative is to allow the fighting continue and to have no proposal at all for a ceasefire and negotiations for a settlement on the table. We thought it very important that the Security Council, which is debating the issue, should have what I would call the most reasonable and practical ceasefire proposal put before it in the hope that both sides could accept it as a basis for stopping the fighting.

Q : Well, if the Republic is looking for a peaceful settlement of all this, why didn't it in fact support sanctions because, I mean, at the moment you're asking for a ceasefire to get peace but the proposal of sanctions to get peace wasn't supported by your country?

Ambassador Dorr : Ireland did support and join in the Common Market, or EEC sanctions on 10 April. At that time the

context was sanctions as part of diplomatic and political pressures in order to avert a conflict and we joined in those sanctions on 10 April. They were, of course, temporary in nature and were due to expire unless renewed on 17 May, but by the time early May came, these sanctions were seen in a different context, they were now part of a war. We joined in them as something which was, we hoped, going to avert war so when it came to their renewal Ireland and now, I believe, Italy have reconsidered the context.

Q : Of course the United States plays a crucial role in all this. Have you any indications whether they would support your proposals?

Ambassador Dorr : We just don't know. We have put forward our proposal yesterday, obviously we've talked with all members of the Council, I repeat all members of the Council, have tried to explain to them what we have in mind and looked for support for it. At this stage we are waiting to see what the result of that will be and I really can't tell before today's meeting.

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