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DRAFT NOTES ON CONVERSATION OF THE
TAOISEACH WITH PRESIDENT NIXON

March 16, 1971

The conversation which was scheduled to last a half an hour extended to about an hour and twenty minutes.

2. The conversation started off about Northern Ireland. The Taoiseach explained the situation there to the President and said that the suggestion that he, the Taoiseach, was seeking to get support for the Government's Northern Ireland policy from President Nixon was exaggerated as reported from St. Louis. As the Taoiseach had said in St. Louis the British Government were quite committed to a programme of reform. The Irish Government would welcome anything that would keep the British Government up to this. The Taoiseach got the impression that the President was not completely well informed about the true facts of Northern Ireland. The Taoiseach gave the President a resumé of the situation there.

3. They then spoke about Vietnam; then on limitation or armaments. He seemed to attach much importance to the latter question. He sees something good possibly coming out of the Vienna Conference.

4. Turning to the Middle East, President Nixon said they could not tell the Israelis to do as the Americans wanted them to do, but the Americans could use their influence with the Israelis to have the Israelis not break the ceasefire.

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Similarly, the Russians could not tell the Egyptians what to do, but the Russians do not want to have another war and would, in general, use their influence so that the Egyptians would not break the ceasefire.

5. Regarding Vietnam, the President was guarded. He said that they could not say that by such-and-such a date there would be complete withdrawal. He said, however, that by the Fall of this year he expected that the North Vietnamese would feel that it would be time to talk, not perhaps about finishing the war, but about some related measures such as the prisoners of war problem. The United States had to keep the announcement of a date for finishing hostilities as a trump card.

6. Regarding E.E.C., the Americans were quite interested but concerned about seeing anything like a closed shop growing up in relation to agriculture. The Americans had been telling the British and others not to shut out the American 5% of agricultural produce. While wanting to see Europe strengthened, the United States did not want to see the erection of barriers by Europe against the rest of the world.

7. In talking about economic matters, the Taoiseach told the President about inflation and what was being done in Ireland to control it. The President said that he thought this would be a good year for the United States economy and that next year would be a better one.

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8. Reverting to Northern Ireland, President Nixon said that they (the Americans) did not want to get involved but that the Taoiseach could say to the Press that the Americans were not only interested but concerned and happy to see the matter solved.