

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Irish Prime Minister Ahern (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Ahern

Notetakers: Doug Bayley, Robin Rickard,
Don Cheramie and Jim Smith

DATE, TIME July 1, 1999, 8:08 - 8:13 p.m. EDT
AND PLACE: Jack Kent Cooke Stadium,

Prime Minister Ahern: Hello, Mr. President. How are you doing?
(U)

The President: Bertie, how are you? (U)

Prime Minister Ahern: Not too bad at all. Thanks for all your
time over the last few days. I know you have been in tough
talks with these difficult people. (U)

The President: What about this latest proposal Tony talked
about? Have you run it by Sinn Fein? (U)

Prime Minister Ahern: Yes. I was talking to them as of half an
hour ago. I think the difficulty is the 12th of August will not
work for them with July and August being the marching season.
They will not be able to sell that to their units but they have
committed themselves now to decommission. They need to
strengthen their position a little. The statements Tony and I
put out tomorrow should be as strong as possible in what we can
say, but I don't think there is any possibility they will say
they will do something by the 12th. (U)

The President: What about moving the whole thing back some?
(U)

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Prime Minister Ahern: Yes, I think if we can get some leeway and move it back a bit. (Ø)

The President: They need it. Trimble said he can't stand more than six weeks with no first act. What if you put up the government in the middle of August? That would give them until the first of October to decommission. Do you think that framework might work? (Ø)

Prime Minister Ahern: I think the framework will work but if we put up the 15th of August it might jeopardize selling it to their guys. (Ø)

The President: Tony wanted me to call Trimble and push the generic idea tonight but I didn't want to talk to him until I talked to you first and I can't talk to Gerry until you have put this to him. Are you going to talk to him about it tomorrow? (Ø)

Prime Minister Ahern: I will talk to Gerry the first thing in the morning. (Ø)

The President: I really should not call him until tomorrow. (Ø)

Prime Minister Ahern: The question with Sinn Fein is, now they have it clear in their minds and are going to convince the IRA to do an act of decommissioning before Christmas. The real question is how quickly they will do that. I think from their point of view as soon as they nominate someone to the Chastelein Commission the better. That is not as quick as mid-August. At the same time, we don't want to put a new date that creates frustration and creates a new deadline. We have to get something agreed that automatically happens provided they have decommissioning. Gerry Adams is worried about getting ahead of the IRA because there would be more problems than it is worth. I think John Hume feels, I've spoken to him, that Sinn Fein has not got that far in its statements. They could push themselves a bit further. It is the old story. How far can you push them? If they could give us another sentence that would give it credibility. They really have to give us something. I think you could give them another sentence to make it that much firmer. (Ø)

The President: That it is really going to work. (Ø)

Prime Minister Ahern: Exactly. Otherwise we get into a difficult marching season again. Did you talk to Trimble? (S)

The President: Yes, but I have not talked to him yet on this. Maybe I should wait until morning to talk to him and Gerry in closer proximity. (S)

Prime Minister Ahern: That would be wise. We will meet at 8 o'clock in Belfast to finalize the words. So maybe as soon as we got that done we should get that sent to your people right away. (S)

The President: 8 o'clock a.m.? (S)

Prime Minister Ahern: 8 o'clock our time. (S)

The President: I will have my guys wake me at 2 o'clock our time. I would like to call them both at the same time. (sound of cheering in background) Do you know where I am? I am at the World Cup Women's Soccer Game and we just scored a goal to tie Germany. (S)

Prime Minister Ahern: You go and enjoy it, Bill. (U)

The President: OK. Goodbye. (U)

Prime Minister Ahern: God Bless. (U)

-- End of Conversation --