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Secretary - General I'm returning
To see he
4-8-98

Ms McLaughlin
4/8/98

**Telephone conversation between
the Taoiseach, Mr. Bertie Ahern, T.D.
and the British Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair
Monday 6 April, 1998**

RECEIVED
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M.K.

Friday, 31 July

PM Hallo

T Hallo

PM Hi Bertie

T Tony, how are you

PM I'm fine but I'm desperate for my holiday

T Here's your friend

PM And we haven't had a Summer here at all.

T No

PM Terrible

T It is absolutely disastrous, this week it's just been torrential rain here
and it's lashing rain now and the weather for the next four or five days
is rain.

PM We've not had a Summer at all, its terrible. I think they're blaming it on
the Government.

T Well its natural we get blamed anyway

PM So anyway, now, when are you off then Bertie.

T I'm off tomorrow.

PM You're off tomorrow too.

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- T Tomorrow.
- PM Now then this is what I think the essential problem we face. I mean we're managing to get over, we've managed to get through the Drumcree thing with a bit of help from tragedy I'm afraid but we have. The two problems that I foresee are these. We've got, as I was saying to you when we spoke before, to get this Adams Trimble thing together. Mo has spoken to Gerry Adams and I mean, you know, he and Trimble are going to have to do some thinking but when we come back we're going to have to bang their heads together and really get them to do something.
- T Yeah I think so
- PM If they don't then Trimble's position is definitely weakening in the Unionist community at the moment and he needs to regain the initiative. Now I think he can regain the initiative but he does need to do that and we've got this continuing problem, you know, the punishment beating that ended in that chap dying.
- T Yeah, yeah
- PM It was obviously pretty unfortunate. Now we've ridden through it but it just emphasised again how potentially weakened Trimble's position is unless he can be seen to be taking this process forward. I think if he does then his position will strengthen again.
- T Yeah the public will move with him I think if he does this.
- PM Yeah, so what we really need to do is to put, you know, all the pressure we can, I mean I will obviously put pressure on Trimble to be reasonable but I mean Adams has got to deliver something on the decommissioning front and something on the war is over front if we're to get through the next stage of this.
- T Yeah I agree with you totally. We also need ^{the} ~~our~~ resident group^s just to play ball a little bit more which we're trying hard to get them to do that.

- PM** Yeah I mean its as ever very, very difficult to get everyone to be sensible but I mean he really does need to know that. Now the second problem is the degree to which Adams' own position is in difficulty because of any seepage to the 32 county people. What's your
- T** Well I don't think there's anything new on it. We, our security people sometimes, like yours, I think overstate the position but even when we check it out they obviously have somewhere close to a hundred people. The quality of them I think are probably, you know, good enough in that they have an awful lot of the wrong people from our point of view but they don't seem to be overly active and there are some of them, there are some of the key people who are hanging around but they're not doing an awful lot and the surveillance is showing that they're not. Now there's a hard core that of course never stop, never have stopped, you know, and they're, well at least as long as it doesn't numerically get too big it means we can keep a good eye on it.
- PM** Yeah
- T** There's always the worry of course that somewhere along the way somebody slips you but I think our guys feel fairly happy that they, you know they're keeping a handle on it.
- PM** Yeah, I see. What do you think the prospects are of getting Adams to really move on this decommissioning stuff?
- T** Well I think he's you know, my feeling we have to try and get him to, he has to do something to help Trimble. There was a meeting with our people last week where McGuinness wasn't really doing much to move but I'm going to keep on the pressure and as you know we're, we're leaving out, I said we would leave out another few guys in June or July. I know I've left it to the last day but at least I'm keeping my word and on the basis of me keeping my word I think they have to do something for us and have to do something for the whole process
- PM** Yeah
- T** so I mean he just has to find some way of doing it and there's an awful lot of support for him for doing something too. I mean there's a lot of people feel that that's what he should do
- PM** Yes so he's not as it were taking on the whole of this show in order to do it.

- T** No he's not. I mean I don't, I mean earlier on I would have said to you there are things that he has to do that are very difficult but I mean I don't see it that way now. I think that they have a lot of cards built up and they have this guy who was killed, no matter how it happened or didn't happen, he was killed. I let them know bluntly my views about all of that and you know we're still honouring everything so I think they have to bloody well do something in return quite simply.
- PM** Okay, all right Bertie. Well let's, we'll keep that strategy up really and I'll see them when I come back from holiday.
- T** Okay. In terms of the legislation, I means that's gone okay has it, the Settlement Bill, that finishes up today?
- PM** Yes it has, I mean we've had our problems but actually we've managed to get it through pretty much and I don't think there's a problem with it, with it now. We should have that pretty much together
- T** Okay
- PM** And, you know, so I mean we're really delivering too, so
- T** Yeah I know, everything is moving, everything is moving on. Well listen we'll keep in touch Tony, enjoy yourself. I hope you get a bit of suntan.
- PM** Yeah well that's what I'm aiming for. Are you staying in Ireland ?
- T** I'm staying here for a while. I tell you if the weather doesn't change I kind of have a plan B.
- PM** Very wise.
- T** If the weather doesn't improve over this week I might just beat it off.
- PM** Well I'm already
- T** I've decided to take a few days rain, but I'm not going to take too much

PM No I'm desperate to get a bit of Summer.

T Yeah

PM Okay Bertie

T Okay Tony

PM All the best.

T Have a good time.

PM Have a good time and I'll speak to you when we get back.

T Check with you then.

PM Yeah thanks a lot, bye.

T Bye.