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Extract from interview with Mr. Brian Farrell RTE

29 May 1984

Mr. Reagan : actually I would be going even if I were not a candidate. It is'nt part of an election process but I'm accepting an invitation which was first made by former Prime Minister Haughey and repeated by your present Prime Minister FitzGerald when he was here. But there is another reason, a personal reason why I am going also. I have known I would be going one day because up until I became President I had no knowledge of my fathers family beyond him and his parents. He was orphaned at less than 6 years of age so he had no knowledge of his family roots. I must say the people of Ireland, the Government of Ireland have been very kind and generous and I found when I arrived here in this job that they had gone to great lengths and had traced our family roots and found that Ballyporeen is the locale and so forth. So I have always known that I was going to have to go there. I want to go there.

Interviewer : It is not going to do you any harm in an election year, so how important is that Irish-American constituency?

Mr. Reagan : Well I want the vote of all the Americans I can get and obviously the Irish-Americans constitute quite a size of the bronk^(t) in our country. There is a rich history of the millions of them that we have and I am one of them. So of course I would like to have their approval but I'm not making this trip for that purpose. I think that their votes will be based on their belief and whether I should be President for four more years or not.

Interviewer : You are coming to us after the New Ireland Forum has finally reported. The Congress has already given its backing to that Report. What's your view of the findings of the Report?.

Mr. Reagan : Of the

- Interviewer: The Forum, the New Ireland Ireland Forum?
- Mr. Reagan: Well, I think Prime Minister FitzGerald said it very eloquently, and that was that it was a practical agenda for a meeting of the minds and discussion and I think so too, but I believe to go beyond that be presumptuous of me. This is a problem to be settled there between not only the Governments of England and Ireland but also of the people of the North and the people of the South. They too must be considered and their wishes and I hope and pray we can find a solution that will bring peace.
- Interviewer: So you wouldn't be proposing to pick up Mr. Haughey's suggestion that in fact the United States might intervene at this stage?
- Mr. Reagan: I don't think it's our place to do that.
- Interviewer: Will you be raising it with Mrs. Thatcher for instance, seeking, using your good offices to encourage her at least to begin a process of further discussion.
- Mr. Reagan: Well I confess to a curiosity, knowing her well, about this proposal from the Forum that has been made and curiosity as to how she sees it and how she feels about it and I couldn't possibly ask a question about that.
- Interviewer: Mr. President, many Irish-Americans still see what goes on in Northern Ireland as a freedom fight and see the IRA not as terrorists but as people to be supported. Can they be persuaded that they are wrong on that.
- Mr. Reagan: Well I think there is a faction of the IRA that is revealed now mainly as the Provisional IRA that is not the IRA of the glorious days of

the fight for freedom and that it has all the attributes of a terrorist organisation. At the same time I think that there is an element on the other side and that I have a feeling myself that the majority of people on both sides of the border up there would want and do want a peaceful solution but that possibly on both sides of the border there is a problem about voicing that because of fear of the more radical elements and that, if its true, thats a tragedy and there must be a solution found.

Interviewer :

Mr. President, as you know there are people in Ireland who are objecting to your visit in particular they feel your stand on Central America has not supported justice sufficiently.

(cc)

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