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PROGRAM Irish-American Presidential Forum STATION C-SPAN

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SUBJECT Governor Bill Clinton Responds to Questions

JACK IRWIN (National Director, the Ancient Order of the Hibernians): Governor, I'd like to welcome you to our forum on issues of major importance to the Irish community. We are indebted to you for spending the time with us this evening, taking the time from your very, very busy schedule.

You've met our panel. With the exception of a special question from Mayor Raymond Flynn of Boston, the questions will be from the panelists only. Unfortunately, we won't have time to take questions from the floor.

Mayor Flynn, would you like to address the first question to the Governor?

MAYOR RAYMOND FLYNN: I guess the reason why I'm here, Governor, is on behalf of the mayors of this country who are deeply concerned about the situation in Northern Ireland. I just returned from Northern Ireland with the Executive Secretary of the United States Catholic Bishops Conference, along with Cardinal Law. And we'd seen a situation that is really one of great concern to all of us, particularly the 45 million Americans of Irish ethnic origin, perhaps one of the largest constituencies a President will have in the United States. And what we're looking at here is a situation in Northern Ireland that has been allowed to go on for such a long period of time, Governor Clinton, and we feel betrayed by the United States policy, that has really not dealt with the issue of bringing all parties together and dealing with the issue of justice, discrimination, unity, peace.

\*We believe that the best way to bring about the -- end the bloodshed, and the peace -- begin the peace process in

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Northern Ireland is for the President of the United States to appoint a peace envoy, such as we have in many cases, whether it's in Central America, South Africa, Middle East. And if it's important to have a peace envoy in those areas, why isn't it that the United States President and the United States Government would also have an envoy to bring all sides together in Northern Ireland?

So, that's the question. That's the central concern that we have. Also engaging the U.N., engaging the U.N. We want to see an end to the trouble and the turmoil and the heartache that is going on in Northern Ireland.

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Ans what our question is: Would you, as President of the United States, appoint a special peace envoy to bring all sides of the conflict to the table, as we can finally see the kind of end of the violence and the unity and end of the discrimination that the Catholic population suffer greatly in Northern Ireland? And that's the question, Governor Clinton.

We appreciate -- again, this is an Irish-American issues forum, presidential forum, that is being held in New York, but it is an American issue that you're dealing with here tonight.

Thank you.

GOVERNOR BILL CLINTON: The short answer to your question is yes. Let me just amplify a moment, if I might.

I think sometimes we've become a little too reluctant to engage ourselves in a positive way in pursuit of our clearly stated interest and values there because of our long-standing special relationship with Great Britain, and also because it poses such a thorny problem. But I have a very strong feeling that, as I announced in my foreign policy speech at the Foreign Policy Association on Wednesday, in the aftermath of the Cold War we need a governing rationale for our engagement in the world, not just in Northern Ireland or with our European allies, but around the world. And I think the United States is now in a position to be plierly about positive change, about the support of freedom and democracy and human rights, as well as economic opportunity, around the world.

And I was glad to hear you modify your remarks to also say that you thought we ought to try to get the United Nations more involved in the resolution of this. Because I think there is every reason to believe that with the dramatic changes in the former Soviet Union and the collapse of communism in all very large countries except for China, that the United Nations will be in a position to be more and more effective in pursuit of our

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So, I would do both of those things. And I applaud your leadership on this issue.

IRWIN: Governor, Mr. Patrick Farrelly from The Irish Voice.

PATRICK FARRELLY: Just to follow up on Mayor Flynn's question, but to get a little bit more specific about the human rights question. I mean both Amnesty International and the Helsinki Watch have criticized Britain's human rights record in Northern Ireland, on the grounds of civil liberties, discrimination, employment, and also illegal killings by the official security forces. And while the United States has criticized other countries for their human rights records, the criticism of Britain's record in Northern Ireland has been muted.

What kind of pressure, if any, would a Clinton Administration bring to bear on Britain to rectify that situation and respect human rights in the North of Ireland?

GOVERNOR CLINTON: Well, I would think that, first of all, if we had a special peace envoy and if we were initiating greater activity on the part of the United Nations, that we would wish to focus on the work of Amnesty International, as well as Helsinki Watch, on verifiable cases, not only by the security forces, but by other forces of violence and other violators of human rights and other purveyors of death in Northern Ireland. And I don't think you can exempt the security forces from the actions that we ought to take. And I think the fact that the Helsinki Watch and Amnesty International have been active in trying to document specific cases gives us the ground we need to go forward. And, yes, I would use their specific instances as the ground for greater initiatives by both the peace envoy and through the United Nations.

FARRELLY: And could you see yourself raising these issues with your counterpart, the British Prime Minister?

GOVERNOR CLINTON: Yes.

You know, I think that -- I don't see this as imperiling the special relationship between the United States and Great

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States. Of course we do, but we also have a common interest now in being a beacon for the world in the pursuit of our shared values, and we have to try to resolve some of those issues that have lingered on for so long. And we have a government now in Ireland, or a new President, committed to reaching across religious and geographic borders.

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I just think that this is a propitious opportunity to try to heal some of the divisions and solve some of the problems. And, yes, I would take it up with the Prime Minister of England -- of Great Britain.

IRWIN: Mr. Martin Galvin, I believe you have two questions for the Governor.

MARTIN GALVIN [Irish People]: Yes. Thank you, Jack.

Governor Clinton, my first question has to do with the area of visa denial and a policy that is called by the Irish community in the United States "censorship by visa denial," in which Sinn Fein, the oldest political party in Ireland and the political party which is opposed to British rule, which would be most vigorous in seeking Irish reunification, has their prominent members denied the opportunity to come to the United States to do what you are doing now, taking questions and stating your policies and defending your views. And this has even been extended, most specifically, to Jerry Adams, the President of Sinn Fein and an elected Member of the British Parliament.

My question is: If you were elected President, would you direct the State Department to allow a visa to Jerry Adams and other prominent members of Sinn Fein, to allow them to come to the United States to state their views and to just defend them before the American people?

GOVERNOR CLINTON: I want to give you a precise answer to your question.

I would support a visa for Jerry Adams, and I would support a visa for any other properly elected official who was part of a government recognized by the United States of America. I think that -- I understand the United States' historic position with regard to Sinn Fein and the advocacy of violence, as opposed to nonviolence. But I think that Adams is an elected Member of the British Parliament. It is a government we recognize. That government recognizes his legitimacy and right to serve. I think it would be totally harmless to our national security interest, and it might be enlightening to the political debate in this country about the issues in Ireland.

So, yes, I would support the visa for Adams and for any other properly elected official from a government we recognize.

GALVIN: Governor, my second question has to do with the issue of Joe Daugherty (?). Joe Daugherty was an Irish Republican who came to the United States seeking political sanctuary. He was arrested. First our government tried to extradite him. An American federal judge, after a full proceeding in federal court,

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said that he should not be extradited, because of our political-offense exemption to the extradition treaty. He remained imprisoned and ultimately was deported, without even being given the right to make a case or a hearing for political asylum, by a Cabinet member, a minister appointed by the present Administration.

My question is: Would you, first, raise the issue of Joseph Daugherty in the election campaign? And if any future issue like this would ever arise, would you give that person a right to a political-asylum hearing?

GOVERNOR CLINTON: If a future case like this were to arise -- first of all, I have discussed this case on several occasions, and I expect that the Irish community in America will give me other opportunities to do that.

I believe that what we should do is to respect our own laws and our own court system. And if the courts rule that they felt that a hearing was in order, then I would be strongly inclined to grant it.

I have to tell you, as a governor, in a very different and less-politically-charged context, normally less-politically-charged context, I deal with the issues of extradition frequently. I think it is very important that the nations have extradition laws and respect one another's laws. But I think it is also very important that nations preserve their own procedures for due process and constitutionality.

And so, that the thing that bothers me about this case, more than the facts of the case, although they are troubling in and of themselves, is the indication that our court system plainly laid out a process by which he could have been extradited, or not, as the case may be, and that that process was short-circuited, apparently for political reasons, by the Administration. That's what bothers me about this case.

I know those who support the extradition say, "Well, if he'd been Ireland, he would have been extradited." But that's not the point. The point is we have rules, regulations, a constitution, court procedures. And my strong instinct in all cases of this kind would be to let the court procedures run their course.

[Applause]

GOVERNOR CLINTON: And I say that...

[Applause]



GOVERNOR CLINTON: It doesn't mean that -- you know, again, if that means that the asylum hearing had resulted in a recommendation that he be returned, then I would have supported that. I don't want -- I'm not just trying to get applause lines here. I'm trying to explain.

And I have dealt with these very difficult issues of extradition in my context and I've studied them pretty closely in the global context, and I think that in the United States it's important that people believe we honor international extradition treaties, but we do it in accordance with our own constitutional principles and operations. And I'm troubled that that did not occur in this case.

IRWIN: Ray C'Hanlon.

RAY O'HANLON [Irish Echo]: Governor, would you, as President, use your office to encourage states that have not yet adopted the McBride Principles to do so? And on the assumption that you may well be elected President, would you encourage your successor as Governor of Arkansas to sign a McBride Principles bill, if and when it should ever reach his or her desk?

GOVERNOR CLINTON: Yes.

You know, it's interesting what you learn running for President. To the best of my knowledge, even though my state is full of Irish-Americans, priests and nuns who are educating our people and providing health care, a whole range of new Irish immigrants, most of them involved in the health care system of my state, people with whom I've had extensive and rich contact, I don't believe anyone ever asked me to try to pass a bill to embrace the McBride Principles. It's just one of those things that probably never happened because I live in a relatively small state, which probably would have a marginal economic impact.

"But I like the Principles. I believe in them. And, yea, I would encourage my successor to embrace them. And if, Lord forbid, I don't get elected President, I'm going to have a legislative session in 1993. I'd look at that."

I would also, as President, encourage all the governors to look at and embrace the Principles. I think it's a good idea. I like them very much.

D'HANLON: An argument, just as a follow-up, that is commonly presented against the Principles is that they discourage investment in Northern Ireland. Would you, as President, seek to allay, perhaps, the fears of American corporations and company executives who might feel that the McBride Principles are, in fact, a deterrent? Would you say to them that, in fact, Northern

Ireland is a good place to invest,"but on the assumption that you do not discriminate against anyone on the basis of their religion when you're giving jobs?

GOVERNOR CLINTON: Absolutely. I mean I think that -- I see it as a way of encouraging investment, because it's a way of stabilizing the political and economic climate in the work force by being free of discrimination. So I don't -- you know, that argument's made against any kind of principles that apply to countries where there are problems. I just don't buy that. I think that -- I don't see that as a serious problem.

IRWIN: Governor, I think that exhausts the questions....