

We seek to help peace, but only the people of Northern Ireland can deliver it.

So let me say to them:

These are our ideas, but the future is up to you;

You have an opportunity now which has not been there for many years;

An opportunity to work together to build a better future and a lasting peace.

Our proposals stem from the talks process launched four years ago, in March 1991.

It was agreed then by the two Governments and the four participating parties that the process would have three strands. It would seek a new beginning for:

Relationships within Northern Ireland;

Relations between the North and South of the island of Ireland;

And relations between the United Kingdom and the Republic.

We agreed that it was only by addressing all these relationships together than agreement would be found across the community in Northern Ireland.

At this press conference, the Taoiseach and I are publishing the document "A New Framework for Agreement" which deals with the second and third of these strands. A little later this morning I shall put forward a separate document proposing new arrangements within Northern Ireland—which is of course a matter for the British Government and the Northern Ireland parties alone.

Our proposals are based on several principles: self-determination, consent, democratic and peaceful methods, and respect for the identities of both traditions.

Consent is and will remain paramount in our policy.

It is the democratic right and the safeguard of the people of Northern Ireland.

No proposals for the future would be workable, let alone successful, without the consent and active support of all Northern Ireland's people. For they are the people who would carry them out and whose lives would be affected.

That is why any eventual settlement must be agreed by the parties; supported by the people of Northern Ireland in a referendum; and approved by Parliament—a triple consent procedure.

Our constitutional matters, each Government has offered crucial new commitments in this Framework Document:

As part of a balanced agreement the British Government would enshrine its willingness to accept the will of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland in British Constitutional legislation. We shall embody the commitments we made in the Downing Street Declaration;

The Irish Government would introduce and support proposals to change its Constitution, so that "no territorial claim of right to jurisdiction over Northern Ireland contrary to the will of a majority of its people is asserted". This is a very important proposal that I welcome unreservedly;

These changes would offer Northern Ireland a constitutional stability which it has not hitherto enjoyed. Its future status, by agreement between the two Governments, would be irrevocably vested in the wishes of a majority of its people

In line with the three-stranded approach, we propose new institutions for North/South cooperation.

The North/South body which we outline would comprise elected representatives chosen from a new Northern Ireland Assembly and from the Irish Parliament. It would draw its authority from these two bodies. It would operate by agreement, and only by agreement.

On the UK side, the North/South body would initially be set up by legislation at Westminster, as part of a balanced agree-

ment. It would come into operation following the establishment of the new Assembly. Thereafter, it would be for the Assembly and the Irish Parliament both to operate the body and to decide whether its functions should be extended.

Like all of our proposals, the new North/South institutions will be a matter for negotiation. But the way should now be open for beneficial cooperation between North and South without the constitutional tensions which have been such impediments in the past. We have made suggestions about areas which might be covered in this cooperation, to the advantage of both sides. Like all aspects of the document, they will be for discussion and agreement between all concerned.

The European Union already operates cross-border programmes between Northern Ireland and the Republic, as it does elsewhere. We propose that North and South could usefully work together in specific areas, to take advantage of what the EU has to offer. But the making of United Kingdom policy and the responsibility for representing Northern Ireland in the European Union will remain solely in the hands of the UK Government.

In the third of our Strands, we outline a new broader-based agreement to take the place of the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement.

The 1985 Agreement was criticised because the Northern Ireland parties had not contributed to it. Our new proposals are offered for discussion in the talks process. We want to hear the views of the parties; and we envisage that their representatives would be formally associated with the future work of the Intergovernmental Conference.

The Intergovernmental Conference would allow concerns to be expressed about any problems or breaches of the Agreement. But there would be no mechanism for the two Governments jointly to supervise or override either the Northern Ireland Assembly or the North/South body. It would be for each Government to deal on its own with any problems within its own jurisdiction. This would not be a question for joint decision, still less joint action. It is important to be clear about this, as there have been concerns on this score.

Our two Governments have worked with patient determination to agree on this Framework, and I am grateful to the Taoiseach, his predecessor, and the Tanaiste for their efforts and their spirit of accommodation.

Our proposals seek to stimulate constructive and open discussion and give a fresh impetus to the political negotiations. The outcome of those negotiations will depend, not on us, but on the consent of the parties, people, and Parliament.

It is not for us to impose. But what we propose is an end to the uncertainty, instability and internal divisions which have bedeviled Northern Ireland.

For over four years as Prime Minister, I have listened intently to the people of Northern Ireland. I have visited them, consulted them, travelled more widely than any predecessor throughout the Province, and held meetings with political leaders, church leaders, council leaders, community leaders, and people from all walks of life.

It is my duty as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to maintain the Union for as long as that is the will of the people. It is a duty in which I strongly believe, and one which these proposals protect. Just as people cannot be held within the Union against their will, so equally they will never be asked to leave it in defiance of the will of the majority.

Consent and free negotiation are fundamental to me, and they are the foundation stones of this Joint Document.

In the four years of the Talks process, we have travelled a long way, but not yet far enough.

I know that many people will be worried, perhaps even pessimistic, about the future.

But, as we look at the hurdles ahead, let us also consider where we have come from.

The dialogue of the deaf has ended.

For four years, we have been engaged in talks.

The three-stranded approach is becoming a reality.

The Joint Declaration has been accepted.

The British Government is engaged in talks with paramilitaries on both sides.

We have had nearly six months of peace.

Prosperity and a normal life are returning to Northern Ireland.

The principle of consent, once accepted only by Unionists and the British Government, is today accepted almost everywhere.

These are some of the gains for everyone in Northern Ireland.

More gains can lie ahead if we have the courage to conduct ourselves with patience, with foresight and with consideration.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I wonder whether I could ask unanimous consent to speak for 7 minutes as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. WELLSTONE pertaining to the introduction of S. 458 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30 p.m. having arrived, the Senate will stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, at 12:39 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:15 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. ABRAHAM).

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Senate continued with the consideration of the joint resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks recognition?

Mr. BYRD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. HATCH addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia has the floor.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I yield to the distinguished Senator without losing my right to the floor.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I appreciate my colleague from West Virginia, and I appreciate his courtesy at all times.

This has been a very interesting and energetic debate. We used up almost all the time. There have been very few