

economists estimate. And a laid-off worker who collected \$12,000 in unemployment pay might have received only \$7,000 or so.

Such estimates of the potential economic impact are not emphasized very much, however, in the debate over the balanced budget amendment. So far, the battle has focused on its value as a tool to shrink government or to discipline spending. But if the amendment is enacted, the side effect would be huge: a system that has softened recessions since the 1930's would be dismantled.

"There are risks associated with a balanced budget, and I don't think anyone should deny them," said William Hoagland, the Republican staff director for the Senate Budget Committee. "Nevertheless, the debate on the floor has been dominated by what we must do to get the budget in balance, not what the risks of a balanced budget amendment might be."

Mr. Hoagland expressed surprise that the biggest risk—deeper, more painful recessions—had not figured significantly in the debate, although Senator Daniel P. Moynihan, Democrat of New York, and Senator Paul S. Sarbanes, Democrat of Maryland, had called attention to this risk in several floor speeches. "The reason must be that the advocates of a balanced budget see the benefits to the economy as far outweighing the negatives associated with cyclical downturns," Mr. Hoagland said.

"That must be what is going on."

No benefit seems to hold more sway than the view that the amendment would shrink the Federal Government by restricting its power to tax and to spend. A dollar not collected and spent by the Government is a dollar left in the hands of the private sector. And the private sector invariably invests money more efficiently than the Government, this view holds.

"The people have spoken clearly that government is too big and we need to do something about it," said Robert Hall, a Stanford University economist who favors smaller government. "The problem is that the balanced budget amendment is a heavy-handed solution and risky."

The biggest risk is to the nation's "automatic stabilizers," which have made recessions less severe than they were in the century before World War II. The stabilizers, an outgrowth of Keynesian economics, work this way: When the economy weakens, outlays automatically rise for unemployment pay, food stamps, welfare and Medicaid. Simultaneously, as incomes fall, so do corporate and individual income tax payments. Both elements make more money available for spending, thus helping to pull the economy out of its slump.

The problem, of course, is that the stabilizers make the deficit shoot up—by roughly \$65 billion as a result of the 1990-1991 recession, according to the Treasury Department. Under the balanced budget amendment, Congress and the Administration would be required to get the budget quickly back into balance, through spending cuts, higher tax rates, or a combination of the two—perhaps even in the midst of a recession.

"The Government would become, almost inevitably, a destabilizer of the economy rather than a stabilizer," said Joseph Stiglitz, a member of the President's Council of Economic Advisers. Many economists share that view.

Absent the stabilizers, every 73-cent drop in national income in the last recession would have become a \$1 drop, said Bradford DeLong, deputy assistant Secretary of the Treasury, who as a Harvard economist studied this dynamic and recently updated his research. Of the 27 cents in cushioning, 20 cents came from falling tax revenue and 7 cents from the higher spending.

Economists outside the Government offer similar estimates. Ray Fair of Yale University, for example, said for every \$10 billion decline in national income during a recession, the deficit rises by \$2 billion, as the stabilizers kick in with their higher spending and lower tax revenue.

"We ought not to give up the stabilizers," Professor Fair said. "That would be very Draconian."

Nearly every economist agrees that the American economy requires, if not stabilizers, some substitute method for offsetting recessions in an era of balanced budgets. And those who favor the amendment are no exception.

"It would be a disaster to lose the stabilizers," said C. Fred Bergsten, director of the Institute for International Economics, who endorses the amendment as a necessary step if the nation is to afford the high cost of Social Security and Medicare for the baby boom generation, which reaches retirement age early in the next century.

Mr. Bergsten notes that the amendment, as now worded, would permit Congress to bring back the stabilizers by a three-fifths vote in both houses. The vote would permit the necessary deficit spending to finance the stabilizers.

While a three-fifths vote is a big hurdle, Mr. Bergsten and others argue that Congress would get used to authorizing the necessary deficits during recessions. Nevertheless, he would prefer a different solution. Once through the painful process of balancing the budget by 2002, as required by the amendment, then the Government should run budget surpluses in years of strong economic growth and full employment, Mr. Bergsten said.

The surpluses would cover the rising costs of the stabilizers during recessions. "You could go down to a balanced budget in the hard years, and still give the economy a little stimulus," he said.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the surplus needed to pay for the stabilizers during a recession as severe as that of 1981-1982, the worst since World War II, would be 1 percent of the national income during robust periods of full employment, and perhaps as much as 1.5 percent.

That would mean an annual surplus in today's dollars of \$70 billion to \$100 billion, rather than the nearly \$200 billion or so in annual deficits expected under current policy. Most of the \$200 billion is to help pay for programs like highway construction and new weaponry that have fixed costs and do not fluctuate with the ups and downs of the economy, as unemployment pay, food stamps, tax revenues and the other stabilizers do.

Some economists—including Milton Friedman, a Nobel laureate in economics who is with the Hoover Institute—hold that the stabilizers, despite the ballyhoo, are no longer so important. The Federal Reserve, through monetary policy, can more than offset their disappearance by lowering interest rates an extra notch or two to give the economy an additional stimulus in hard times.

"I have looked at many episodes in the world in which monetary policy went one way and fiscal policy the other, and I have never found a case in which monetary policy did not dominate," Mr. Friedman said. He favors a balanced budget amendment that would shrink the Federal Government by putting a ceiling on the tax increases that could be enacted to balance the budget.

But the Clinton Administration and even Federal Reserve officials question whether monetary policy could alone handle the task of reviving an economy in recession. The stabilizers, they note, kick in automatically—before the Federal Reserve and most econo-

mists often realize that the economy is falling toward recession.

A recession might be well along and getting deeper before the Fed recognized the problem and began to drop rates. The lower rates, in turn, would not be felt in the economy for a year to 18 months, the traditional lag. And even if the Fed acted quickly enough, the economy would behave in new and different ways without the stabilizers.

"My guess is that we would get it wrong the first time we went into recession, making that recession much deeper than it should be," said a Federal Reserve official, who spoke on condition that he not be identified. "But we would learn from that experience and do a better job thereafter."

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

Mr. LEAHY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am, as I have said, going to speak again on the question of the balanced budget. I think that the speeches made by the distinguished senior Senator from West Virginia and the distinguished senior Senator from New York are such that I hope a lot of people will listen to them.

Obviously, I myself am in great agreement. As I have stated, the Senate owes a thanks to both of them. But more than that, the United States owes thanks. This is a matter that should be debated.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Vermont and the distinguished Senator from New York for their comments.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak as in morning business on another subject.

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

A CHANCE FOR PEACE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this is an historic day in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. I want Senators and the American people to be aware of the significance of what the people of that island have done today.

For the past quarter of a century, Unionists who favor continued British control over Northern Ireland, and Catholics who favor unification of Northern Ireland with the Irish Republic, have been locked in a cruel war over the status of the North. Over 3,200 people have died, many of them innocent civilians caught in the crossfire between the IRA and Protestant paramilitary groups.

Mr. President, as an American of Irish descent, the violence in Northern Ireland has had a profound affect on me. I have always unequivocally opposed the use of violence by both sides in Northern Ireland. Irish-Americans who care about the land of our ancestors condemn violence without reservation and support a peaceful settlement.

My father felt he would never live to see real peace in Northern Ireland, and

he did not. But I believe that my father's son will see it, both as an American and as a U.S. Senator.

In December 1993, our hopes were raised for an end to the bloodshed, when former Irish Prime Minister Reynolds, and British Prime Minister Major, declared that the future status of Northern Ireland should be decided by agreement of the people there. That declaration began a peace process that led to the IRA cease-fire last August. Two months later Protestant paramilitary groups stopped shooting, and the cease-fire has held.

Since then, the British Government has taken several steps to reduce tensions in the North, including ending daytime military patrols in Belfast. In the Irish Republic, a Peace and Reconciliation Forum has brought Sinn Féin, the political wing of the IRA, into informal talks with representatives of the Government and other parties.

Today in Belfast, in what I believe offers the best hope for peace in the 25-year history of the conflict, Irish Prime Minister Bruton and Prime Minister Major announced the publication of a long-awaited Framework Document which provides a basis for future negotiations on a peace settlement.

Mr. President, late yesterday afternoon, I returned from Dublin, Belfast, and London, where I met with leaders and individuals representing all points of view on the future of Northern Ireland. I went there over the weekend because I knew the peace process was at a decisive point.

I wanted to give encouragement. I also wanted to pay tribute to the people of both Northern Ireland and the Republic, Catholic and Protestant, who are courageously trying to find a way to a better future.

The Framework Document, which sets out a joint vision for the future of both Irish and British Governments, is a tremendous step forward. It reaffirms the principles of self-determination, of the consent of the governed, of democratic and peaceful means, and of full respect and protection for the rights and identities of both traditions.

From the conversations I had, both in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, with people of all political and religious traditions, I realized the importance of the document and of bringing people together who so fervently want to be brought together. Members of my staff, Tim Rieser and Kevin McDonald, who accompanied me, heard the same thing.

Since the framework's aim is to encourage all parties to come to the negotiating table, nobody is going to be content with all of it. If it were written in such a way that any one group found it totally acceptable, it would guarantee that the rest would find it totally unacceptable. The Unionists with whom I met condemned the Framework Document long before its release. I suggested they recognize it for what it is—a basis for discussion, not a final

blueprint. I urged them to come to the negotiating table with their own ideas, not to condemn the process before even giving it a chance.

Mr. President, in Belfast I got a sense of the fear Unionists feel. For centuries they have thought of themselves as British, and today they fear that the British Government is abandoning them. Some longed for a past that never was, dreamed of a future that never would be, and they fear a present they do not understand.

It made a profound impression on me. Change in Northern Ireland is inevitable, but the Framework Document should threaten no one. It would give a majority of the people of Northern Ireland the right to decide their future. It is equally important to recognize that any lasting piece, any healthy society, must be rooted in equal justice. The fundamental civil rights of both Catholics and Protestants must be protected in Northern Ireland.

Everywhere I went, I heard praise for the role President Clinton has played in supporting the peace process in Northern Ireland. I was told that not since the days of President John F. Kennedy has an American President been so interested in what is happening. It is clear that without his personal involvement we would not have seen this day.

I want to praise our Ambassador, Jean Kennedy Smith, who has taken up the cause for peace and encouraged the parties to move forward. And I want to praise especially those parties, many of whom have been enemies for decades, perhaps for centuries, who are willing to come together.

In Dublin and Belfast I told Unionists and Nationalists the same thing, that the U.S. Government will support this effort fully, and with even-handedness.

But the real work of peace will be done by them. Both have legitimate aspirations, and both traditions must find a way to accommodate one another. We cannot, nor can any other country dictate what that outcome will be. The parties must find it for themselves.

Mr. President, I am under no illusion that a peaceful future in Northern Ireland is assured. Immense difficulties lie ahead. To put the past behind, to build peace out of bloodshed, to find common ground where there has been so much hatred and distrust. But from all that I heard during my brief visit there, there is a new spirit emerging; a wide recognition that violence has failed; a new determination to find another way.

When mothers in Belfast sat with me and told me they did not want their children to face the kind of horror and violence that they have, it is not a feeling of Protestants or Catholics, it is a feeling of mothers throughout Northern Ireland. It is a feeling that should be listened to by the leaders, because the people do not want to go back to the violent days of the past.

Those mothers spoke of their children, who are going to live most of

their lives in the next century. The leaders must decide what kind of a life they will have. The children cannot, but it is they who will be most affected. And if you have hatred and violence, prejudice and bias directed toward a child, does it make any difference whether that child is Protestant or Catholic? Those children have a right to expect their leaders to show courage and a sense of responsibility for the future and to give them a chance to live in peace.

Lasting peace means urgently dealing with the terrible problem of unemployment in the north. People need to have confidence in their government, but they also need jobs; they need economic security as well as physical security.

In Belfast, I saw some of the accomplishments of the International Fund for Ireland which the United States and European countries have supported since 1983. I can attest to the important work the Fund is doing to provide jobs in areas where unemployment among Catholics runs as high as 60 percent. The Fund's efforts have also brought together Catholics and Protestants in common endeavors where in the past there was virtually no contact between them.

And in speaking to members of the Orange Order in Comber near Belfast, I encouraged Unionists there to apply to the Fund and work together to bring jobs and a sense of security and a sense of hope in the future for their people.

President Clinton, in recognition of the Fund's accomplishments and the critical stage the peace process has reached, has proposed increases in our contributions in 1996 and 1997.

The Fund is a transitional program until real investment can take root in the north. A trade and investment conference is planned for May in Washington, and it is eagerly awaited by people in both Northern Ireland and the Republic. President Clinton's selection of Senator George Mitchell as his Special Adviser on Economic Initiatives in Ireland is not only indicative of the President's commitment to support peace there, it also ensures the success of the conference.

Again, in the Republic of Ireland, in Northern Ireland, and in the United Kingdom, I heard person after person praise the choice of George Mitchell, knowing the respect that is felt for him by both Republicans and Democrats in our country and by the President of the United States.

I am reminded of what Senator Mitchell, quoting Franklin Roosevelt, said to an audience in Dublin: In the dark days of our Great Depression, President Roosevelt said "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." He also said, "the best social program is a job." That will be Senator Mitchell's work as the President's Special Adviser, and the work of all the people there.

Mr. President, the island of my ancestors is at an historic turning point. Today's publication of the Framework Document offers a real chance for an end to a conflict that has horrified so many for decades.

I want to commend the Irish and British Governments and all the parties who are seeking a better future for the people of Northern Ireland.

Mr. President, for the first time I have a sense of hope that peace is at hand in Northern Ireland, which my late father so desperately wanted. I have a belief that his son and his grandchildren will see it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that statements of Prime Ministers Bruton and Major and a summary of the Framework Document be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the statements were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SUMMARY—A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR AGREEMENT

These proposals:

Reaffirm the guiding principles of self-determination, the consent of the governed, exclusively democratic and peaceful means, and full respect and protection for the rights and identities of both traditions;

Provide for an agreed new approach to traditional constitutional doctrines on both sides:

The British Government will propose changes to its constitutional legislation, so as to incorporate a commitment to continuing willingness to accept the will of a majority of the people living in Northern Ireland, and a commitment to exercise their jurisdiction with rigorous impartiality on behalf of all the people of Northern Ireland, in a way which does not prejudice their freedom to determine Northern Ireland's constitutional status, whether in remaining a part of the United Kingdom or in forming part of a united Ireland;

The Irish Government will introduce and support proposals for changes in the Irish 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, and so that the Irish Government recognise the legitimacy of whatever choice is freely exercised by a majority of the people of Northern Ireland with regard to its constitutional status;

Commend direct dialogue with the relevant political parties in Northern Ireland in developing new internal structures;

Propose a North/South body, comprising elected representatives from, and accountable to, a Northern Ireland Assembly and the Irish Parliament, to deal with matters designated by the two Governments in the first instance in agreement with the parties;

Describe ways in which such a body could work with executive harmonising or consultative functions, by way of authority delegated to its members by the Assembly;

Envisage that all decisions within the North/South body would be by agreement between the two sides;

Set out criteria for the designation of functions, and suggest a range of functions that might be designated from the outset, for agreement with the parties;

Envisage the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Irish Parliament being able, by agreement, to designate further functions or to move functions already designated between the three categories;

Envisage that the body will have an important role in consultation with the two Gov-

ernments in developing an agreed approach for the whole island in respect of the challenges and opportunities of the European Union;

Envisage a Parliamentary forum, with representatives from new Northern Ireland institutions and the Irish Parliament to consider matters of mutual interest;

Envisage a new and more broadly based Agreement between the British and Irish Governments to develop and extend co-operation;

Envisage a standing Intergovernmental Conference which would consider matters of mutual interest, but not those transferred to new political institutions in Northern Ireland;

Envisage that representatives of agreed political institutions in Northern Ireland may be formally associated with the work of the Conference;

Provide for a complementary undertaking by both Governments to ensure protection for specified civil, political, social and cultural rights.

These proposals do not provide for joint authority by the British and Irish Governments over Northern Ireland. They do not predetermine any outcome to the Talks process. Agreement by the parties, and then by the people, is the key.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY THE TAOISEACH (IRISH PRIME MINISTER), MR. JOHN BRUTON, TD, AT BELFAST LAUNCHING OF JOINT FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT, FEBRUARY 22, 1995

Today's new framework for agreement is a landmark event in the affairs on this island.

The two Governments are presenting to the political parties in Northern Ireland, and to the Irish and British peoples, a document which is the most detailed expression to date of our views on the subject of Northern Ireland.

The Prime Minister and I hope that the Framework Document will receive calm and measured consideration over the days and weeks ahead.

It is an important and serious text, offered as an aid to discussion and negotiation. It presents our best judgment of what might be an agreed outcome future talks involving the two Governments and the political parties.

We commend it to the parties for their careful consideration and we look forward to discussing it in detail with them at the earliest opportunity.

May I at this point pay a special tribute to my colleague the Tánaiste and his officials and to the Northern Ireland Secretary of State Patrick Mayhew and his team. Their determined efforts over many months have brought us to today's new framework for agreement.

The proposals which it contains are, we believe, balanced and fair and threaten nobody. No party need fear this document.

To the nationalist and republican people, the document:

Reaffirms that the British Government have no selfish, strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland and that they will uphold the democratic wish of a greater number of the people of Northern Ireland on the issue of whether they prefer to support the Union or a sovereign united Ireland;

Says that the British Government will enshrine in its constitutional legislation the principles embodied in this new framework for agreement by the amendment of the Government of Ireland Act 1920 or by its replacement by appropriate new legislation;

It will also be important to nationalists that both Governments consider that new institutions should be created to cater for present and future political, social and economic inter-connections within the island of

Ireland. These institutions will enable representatives of the main traditions, North and South, to enter agreed relationships. This is the purpose of the North/South body proposed in this document.

To the unionist and loyalist people, I would point out that the document commits the Irish Government to ask the electorate to change the Irish Constitution. The change proposed will address Articles 2 and 3 in the following ways:

It would remove any jurisdictional or territorial claim of legal right over the territory of Northern Ireland contrary to the will of its people;

It would provide that the creation of a sovereign united Ireland could therefore only occur in circumstances where a majority of the people of Northern Ireland formally chose to be part of a united Ireland.

It is also important to unionists that the document also contains a recognition by both Governments of the legitimacy of whatever choice is freely exercised by a majority of the people of Northern Ireland with regard to its constitutional status, whether they prefer to continue to support the Union or a sovereign united Ireland.

The proposals will challenge the two traditions on this island but it will do so in an even-handed way. Neither tradition need fear its contents. As I have emphasized at every appropriate opportunity, it is a framework for discussion and not a blueprint to be imposed over the heads of anyone. Its purpose is to facilitate, not pre-empt, dialogue. At the end of the day, the people of both North and South respectively will have the final say.

The document is our carefully considered response to many suggestions, from the parties and others, that it would be helpful to have the view of the two Governments as to what might be an agreed outcome from future talks.

We are asking the parties to come and talk to us, openly and candidly, about these proposals. We believe that, taken in the round, they offer a basis for structured discussions leading to a new agreement.

We believe that they do. It is our hope that the political parties, having given them the attention they deserve, will take a similar view.

There can be no doubt about the enormous desire on the part of the ordinary public—here, in the rest of Ireland and in Britain—for the earliest possible resumption of political dialogue.

The ending of all campaigns of paramilitary violence last autumn has created an unrivalled opportunity for such dialogue to take place with a reasonable prospect of a successful conclusion.

I join the Prime Minister in appealing to all the parties concerned to grasp this opportunity.

The Framework Document is our judgment of how things can best be taken forward. We have, in our view, the best opportunity in a generation for a lasting political settlement. We owe it to the peoples of both of these islands to put that opportunity to the test.

OPENING STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RT. HON. JOHN MAJOR, MP, AT A JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE WITH THE TAOISEACH, JOHN BRUTON, TD, TO LAUNCH THE JOINT FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT, BELFAST, WEDNESDAY 22 FEBRUARY 1995

There is one reason, above all, why the Taoiseach and I have come to Belfast today.

We wish to offer our proposals here in Northern Ireland—to Northern Ireland's people and their representatives.

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