

“Professor of Peace” Peter Robinson Ignores Economic Reality *by Garvin Crawford*

As one who heard his speech at QUB and went to hear how Peter Robinson could have evolved into a Professor of Peace Studies, I was struck by his failure to comment on the part played by economics in bringing peace about and securing a successful future for NI.

While his focus was purely on the political, and his recommendation that we explore all possibilities was welcome, he was billed as proposing how we get back to stable government and all he could say was that Stormont should be reformed so it becomes 'settled' and no longer vulnerable to collapse every time we have a crisis.

As to how this can be achieved he had nothing to offer - unless you can call a suggestion that we think more widely was a valuable contribution. I, for one, would have welcomed some recognition of the role played by economic success in underpinning any form of political stability.

The last time NI made a net contribution to the GDP of the UK was in 1950. Our economy is too small to regenerate by itself and, being on life support, it needs a massive boost to turn the corner. When the UK economy catches cold, we know NI gets economic pneumonia.

So how, when we can see the UK economy is headed for much worse than a cold - capable of reducing us to such austerity that a vote for a United Ireland will appear a godsend to many - how will that bring peace? and how does it justify the DUP continuing to support Brexit?

Brexit carries with it a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for us to transform our economy - by us joining the EU in our own right and offering a home to the crown jewels of GB industry to relocate here rather than across the English Channel. This is the sort of transformation we need - and is the surest way to long term peace we could ever imagine.

So? It isn't good enough for Peter Robinson to wear the laurels of a Professor of Peace while he cannot see beyond his nose the one thing that would actually secure it.