

Salmond speaks to Carnegie Council as part of Scotland Week

✖ The peaceful and orderly conduct of Scotland's century-long constitutional journey should stand as an exemplar of popular democracy for countries all over the world, First Minister Alex Salmond has told a prestigious institute in New York.

Speaking at the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, the First Minister said the current process of self-determination had been agreed, not with the force of arms, but with a handshake and would be determined in a democratic referendum, the result of which will be respected by both sides.

In his address, Mr Salmond said this approach to the affirmation of popular sovereignty was "rare and precious", even in the modern world, as he explained how the process contrasted with the way the Declaration of Arbroath and the US Declaration of Independence had been sealed through armed struggle.

The First Minister also used his speech – part of his Scotland Week programme – to highlight the key economic strengths that Scotland already possesses in areas such as innovation, renewables, life sciences, financial services and tourism.

And Mr Salmond told the audience, which included dozens of business leaders and investors, that an independent Scotland would be well placed to capitalise further on these strengths, participating as an active member of the international community and maintaining close ties with the United States and other major trading partners.

The First Minister said:-“An American President once famously said that the business of America is business. As a canny Scot I can relate to that. In this trip we have been demonstrating with inward investment and trade delegations and the marketing of Scotland week and next year’s Homecoming that the business of Scotland in America is business.

“However, I also know that the Coolidge quotation does not point to the fundamental principle of American society. The founding principle of this republic is popular sovereignty. The real business of America is not business but democracy. Therefore it is worth reflecting on something really important – how this process of Scottish self-determination is offering as an exemplar to the rest of the planet.”

The First Minister continued:-“For the best part of a century Scotland has been on a constitutional journey. Despite the passion of the argument not a single person has lost their lives arguing for or against Scottish independence – indeed nobody has suffered so much as a nosebleed.

“The process has been peaceful, orderly and constitutional. The Edinburgh Agreement which I signed with the Prime Minister in October is the culmination of that process. Both Scotland and London agreed on the terms of a popular referendum, agreed to accept the result and crucially in clause 30 agreed to work in the best interests of the peoples of Scotland and the rest of the UK following the result whatever it may be.

“Both the Declaration of Arbroath with its search for a Scottish legitimacy and the Declaration of Independence with its affirmation of popular sovereignty were sealed in the force of arms and struggle. Now the process of Scottish self-determination is signed in a handshake and determined in a democratic referendum of the people. Even in modern times this is a rare and precious process and one which stands as an

exemplar to the rest of the world.”