

Beat: Vips

Cameron says UK would be deeply diminished; without Scotland

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USPA News - British Prime Minister David Cameron will on Friday urge the people of Britain to speak out against Scottish proposals to break away from the United Kingdom and become an independent country, saying Scottish independence would "deeply diminish" the union. Cameron will make the call during a major speech at the Olympic Park in London on Friday, according to excerpts released by 10 Downing Street.

It comes just seven months ahead of a single-question referendum that will allow the Scottish people to decide whether they want to remain part of the United Kingdom. "This is a decision that is squarely and solely for those in Scotland to make. I passionately believe it is in their interests to stay in the UK," Cameron will say. "That way Scotland has the space to take decisions, while still having the security that comes with being part of something bigger. ... Scotland is part of a major global player." The prime minister will add that, while the final decision will be up to the people of Scotland, the rest of Britain should use their voice to speak out against Scottish independence. "My argument today is that though only 4 million people can vote in this referendum, all 63 million of us are profoundly affected," he says. Cameron adds: "There are 63 million of us who could wake up on September 19th in a different country, with a different future ahead of it. That's why this speech is addressed not to the people of Scotland, but to the people of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We would be deeply diminished without Scotland. This matters to all our futures. And everyone in the UK can have a voice in this debate." The British government has in recent months become increasingly vocal in its stance against Scottish independence, with the UK's Secretary of State for Scotland, Alistair Carmichael, on Thursday warning Scotland that it would not be able to keep the pound as its currency if it breaks away from the union. "We come as a brand - a powerful brand. If we lost Scotland, if the UK changed, we would rip the rug from under our own reputation. The plain fact is we matter more in the world together," Cameron will say on Friday, adding: "Those voting are our friends, neighbors and family. ... Let the message ring out from Manchester to Motherwell, from Pembrokeshire to Perth, from Belfast to Bute, from us to the people of Scotland - let the message be this: 'We want you to stay.'" The Scottish government released a white paper in late November that proposed the date of independence to be March 24, 2016, following the dissolution of the current Scottish Parliament, which is expected to take place at 11:59 p.m. the day before. March 24 is also the anniversary of both the Union of the Crowns in 1603 and the signing of the Acts of Union in 1707. In October 2012, British Prime Minister David Cameron and Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond signed the historic "Edinburgh Agreement" which grants the Scottish government the special powers necessary for an independence referendum. It followed months of negotiations on the specific details of the agreement. Cameron has repeatedly vowed to keep the United Kingdom united, and polls suggest that support for independence among Scots has continued to slip in the past year. A survey released by pollsters TNS-BMRB on December 18 indicated that only 27 percent of Scots are currently in favor of Scotland becoming an independent state, while 41 percent of those asked said they are not in favor of independence.

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

United Press Association, Inc.

3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168

Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA

(702) 943.0321 Local

(702) 943.0233 Facsimile

info@unitedpressassociation.org

info@gna24.com

www.gna24.com