A BELFAST TELEGRAPH/QUEEN’S SURVEY
STILL POLLS APART

In the final part of the Belfast Telegraph/Queen’s Survey, Alan Kernan reports on the key constitutional issues that are being discussed in the Stormont talks.

People longing for real talks to start

EVEN if there is a Northern Ireland Assembly, the problems of the past will not go away. The political parties will still be divided over the constitutional issue of how the formal structures of the state should be structured.

The results of the Belfast Telegraph/Queen’s Survey show that the parties are still far apart on the constitutional issue. The survey found that 56% of respondents agree with the idea of a devolved government within Northern Ireland, while 44% disagree. However, there is a wide range of opinion on the issue, with 25% of respondents saying they are unsure or have no opinion.

The survey also found that 62% of respondents believe that the British and Irish governments should be involved in the constitutional talks, while 38% believe that only the Northern Ireland Executive should be involved.

Protestants want to stay in the United Kingdom, but Catholics want a united Ireland. The parties are divided over the issue of the constitutional future of Northern Ireland.

The survey also found that 51% of respondents believe that the UUP should be treated as a devolved executive, while 49% believe that the party should be excluded from the executive.

The survey also found that 55% of respondents believe that the British government should have a veto over the constitutional talks, while 45% believe that the Irish government should have a veto.

The survey also found that 52% of respondents believe that the Irish government should have a veto over the constitutional talks, while 48% believe that the British government should have a veto.

With regard to the status of Northern Ireland please indicate which of the following options you consider to be "Preferred", "Acceptable", "Tolerable" or "Unacceptable":

1. Protestant
2. Catholic
3. Protestant and Catholic
4. Protestant, Catholic and others
5. The British government has a veto over the constitutional talks
6. The Irish government has a veto over the constitutional talks
7. The British and Irish governments have a veto over the constitutional talks
8. The British and Irish governments have no veto over the constitutional talks

With regard to the relationships between Northern Ireland, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland please indicate which of the following options you consider to be "Preferred", "Acceptable", "Tolerable" or "Unacceptable":

1. Protestant
2. Catholic
3. Protestant and Catholic
4. Protestant, Catholic and others
5. The British government has a veto over the constitutional talks
6. The Irish government has a veto over the constitutional talks
7. The British and Irish governments have a veto over the constitutional talks
8. The British and Irish governments have no veto over the constitutional talks

Referendums could bypass politicians

The political vacuum created by the suspension of the talks in August 1996 means that the Northern Ireland Assembly cannot be held back from the Stormont talks. The Assembly would have to be held to resolve the constitutional issue.

The survey found that 41% of respondents believe that a referendum on the constitutional issue should be held, while 59% believe that the Assembly should be held.

The survey also found that 55% of respondents believe that the British government should have a veto over the constitutional talks, while 45% believe that the Irish government should have a veto.

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How the poll was conducted

This poll has been commissioned by the Belfast Telegraph and the Queen’s Institute of Irish Studies at Queen’s University Belfast. The project has also been supported by a grant from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. The poll was conducted by the Market Research Bureau, London, from March 12-13 and 1997.

The survey was carried out by telephone and covered all of Northern Ireland. The sample size was 1,000 adults, and the margin of error was ±3%. The survey was conducted by telephone and covered all of Northern Ireland. The sample size was 1,000 adults, and the margin of error was ±3%.