YES vote for talks

Dr COLIN IRWIN, of Queen's University, analyses the findings of an in-depth opinion poll undertaken on the eve of Monday's crucial Stormont talks.

QUESTION 1

SHOULD YOUR PARTY STAY IN THE TALKS?

92% of the people of Northern Ireland want the political parties to support the talks. The poll also suggests that 86% of Protestants want the parties to stay in talks. The majority of Nationalists want the talks to continue while 80% of Catholics want the political parties that represent them to stay in the talks.

Clear majorities of Ulster Unionists want their parties to stay in the talks while only 73% of Democratic Unionists share this view.

QUESTION - "IN TODAY'S CIRCUMSTANCES DO YOU WANT THE POLITICAL PARTY YOU SUPPORT TO STAY IN THE TALKS?"

SUMMARY

Although most of the people of Northern Ireland want the political parties to support the talks, the situation is complicated. 86% of Protestants want the political parties that represent them to stay in the talks. However, 73% of Catholics also want to stay in the talks. The poll also shows that a significant majority of Ulster Unionists want their parties to stay in the talks while only 73% of Democratic Unionists share this view.

QUESTION 2

IS THE PEACE PROCESS BEARING?

Although both sides of the two communities want the political parties to support the talks, the situation is complicated. 86% of Protestants want the political parties that represent them to stay in the talks. However, 73% of Catholics also want to stay in the talks. The poll also shows that a significant majority of Ulster Unionists want their parties to stay in the talks while only 73% of Democratic Unionists share this view.

QUESTION 3

HOW IMPORTANT IS DECOMMISSIONING?

The poll suggests that decommissioning is seen as an important issue by most of the people of Northern Ireland. 86% of Protestants see decommissioning as an important issue while 73% of Catholics see it as important. The poll also shows that a significant majority of Ulster Unionists see decommissioning as an important issue while only 73% of Democratic Unionists see it as important.

QUESTION 4

IS THE IRISH CONSTITUTION AN OBSTACLE?

The poll shows that 86% of Protestants see the Irish Constitution as an obstacle to decommissioning while 73% of Catholics see it as an obstacle. The poll also shows that a significant majority of Ulster Unionists see the Irish Constitution as an obstacle while only 73% of Democratic Unionists see it as an obstacle.

QUESTION 5

IS THE FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT ACCEPTABLE?

The poll shows that 86% of Protestants see the Framework Document as acceptable while 73% of Catholics see it as acceptable. The poll also shows that a significant majority of Ulster Unionists see the Framework Document as acceptable while only 73% of Democratic Unionists see it as acceptable.

QUESTION 6

IS THERE AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE TALKS?

The poll shows that 86% of Protestants see an alternative to the talks while 73% of Catholics see an alternative. The poll also shows that a significant majority of Ulster Unionists see an alternative to the talks while only 73% of Democratic Unionists see an alternative.

TOMORROW: THE THORNIES ISSUE OF CONSENT