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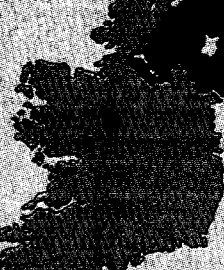
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## EXCLUSIVE: POLL REVEALS VIEWS ON CROSS-BORDER BODIES

# NORTH-SOUTH LINKS VERDICT

### Talks teams in new move at Stormont

**By Martina Purdy**

NORTHERN Ireland today took the first tentative steps towards a settlement with negotiators going into Stormont to hammer out a new talks blueprint.

Both unionists and nationalists have agreed to discuss proposals from the British and Irish governments which address all three relationships on the islands.

The proposals include an assembly elected by proportional representation, a North-South Council and an Intergovernmental Council taking in elected bodies in London, Dublin, Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff.

While differences of opinion have already emerged between the Ulster Unionists



The way ahead: Tony Blair in Tokyo this morning.

The DUP — which is outside the talks — and some elements of the Ulster Unionist Party, including MP William Thompson were also highly critical.

The Loyalist Volunteer Force also issued a statement that they wanted to see Articles Two and Three ended and demanding to know if the cross-border bodies would have executive power.

Prime Minister Tony Blair

By Martina Purdy

ONLY a slim majority of Protestants would accept co-operation between North-South bodies, a new survey reveals today.

While the vast majority of Catholics are in favour of such a move, just over half of Protestants find such bodies acceptable.

As parties prepare to hammer out cross-border arrangements at the Stormont negotiations, the survey provides a comprehensive view of the attitudes in both communities.

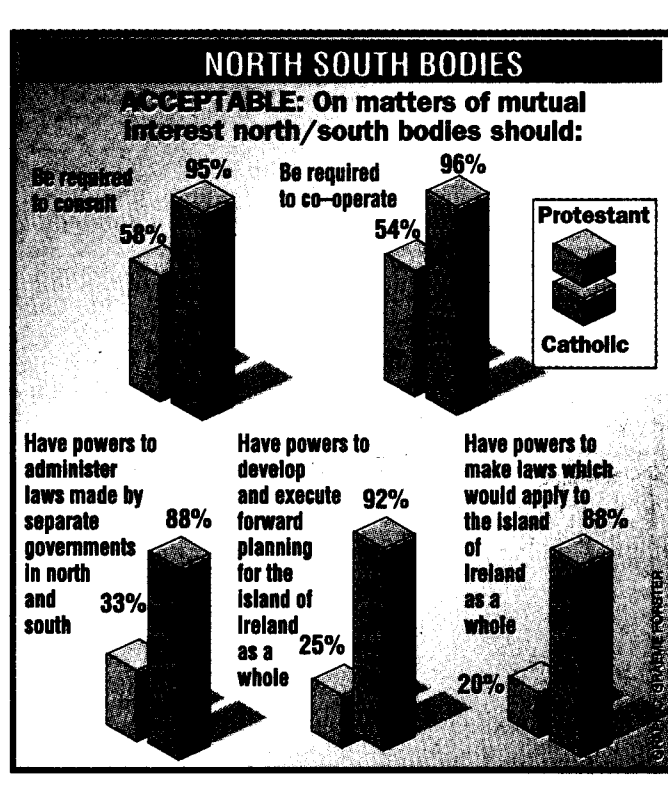
And there is a wide gap between the two communities when it comes to North-South bodies with Executive Power.

Just 33% of Protestants would find it acceptable for North-South bodies to administer laws made by governments in each jurisdiction.

Almost 90% of Catholics support this, however.

According to the poll, there is widespread support for north-south bodies to deal with the environment, agriculture, tourism, and fisheries.

Sharp divisions emerge however when it comes to co-operation on defence, polic-



ing, security, human rights and foreign policy.

Dr Colin Irwin of the Institute of Irish Studies, who conducted the research, said there was scope for the parties at Stormont to hammer out agreement on north-south bodies.

He stressed, however, that Catholics and Protestants want their elected representatives to call the shots and reach agreement with Dublin on the basis of unanimity.

● Viewpoint, page 10; poll results, page 11

### NEWS DIGEST

- Protest at murder pub**  
A CROSS-community protest against sectarian violence has been held at the pub where Eddie Treanor was murdered. And a vigil was planned today to commemorate LVF murder victim Terry Enright. **Page 3**
- £6m spent on old factory**  
THE Police Authority has spent almost £6m on a former Northern Ireland tobacco factory which it bought for £660,000. The Government has revealed. **Page 4**
- School dinners back on menu**  
HEALTH experts bid to put school dinners back on the menu. **Page 5**
- Beef ban hopes rise**  
HOPES were rising today that Northern Ireland beef exports could resume by Easter. **Page 6**
- Portavogie pub verdict**  
PORTAVOGIE gives its verdict on the village's first bar. **Page 7**
- It's Linfield for me: Glenn**  
GLENN Ferguson tells why he is choosing Linfield. **Back page**
- Ewart bidder revealed**  
ONE of the province's best-known businessmen is thought to be behind a bid for Belfast-based property firm Ewart. **Business Telegraph**

## More jail transfers on the cards

**By Michael Devine**

A FURTHER seven republican prisoners are due to be repatriated to the Republic from English jails later this week, official sources in Dublin indicated today.

A spokeswoman for the Department of Justice said that it was likely that seven prisoners would be transferred to Portlaoise Jail to continue serving lengthy sentences imposed by courts in Britain.

The transfers are "subject to the operational arrangements being finalised, between the two jurisdictions", she added.

The transfer of the seven men would represent the largest repatriation of republican prisoners since the British and Irish governments reached agreement on a transfer of prisoners pact in 1996.

The transfer involves one third of the remaining republican prisoners in Britain, leaving about twelve still there.

The Irish authorities went to the High Court last week to get the necessary clearance for the transfers. The men will be taken to Portlaoise to complete the tariffs imposed in Britain.

Five of those being transferred were each given 35-year sentences last July for conspiring to cause explosions in Britain.

They are Gerard Hanratty and Francis Rafferty, both from Belfast but who had been living in Dublin; former US marine John Crawley, who was arrested along with Martin Ferris aboard the gun-running ship Marita Ann in 1984; Donal Gannon from Dublin and Robert Morrow from Dundalk.

The other two prisoners are Peter Sherry, a native of Dunganannon, Co Tyrone, who is serving life sentence for bombing offences, and Dubliner Liam O'Dhuibhir, also serving a lengthy sentence for explosives offences.

Around 30 members of Saoirse protested at the talks and spokesman Robert McClenaghan said: "The prisoners should not even be part of the peace process. It is an issue of human rights, it should have been done years ago".

Ulster Unionist security spokesman Mr Maginnis said: "What we have got to ensure is that society is not disillusioned by the way prisoners are treated."

## Flanagan against RUC in Orange Order

**By Chris Thornton**

RUC Chief Constable Ronnie Flanagan would prefer if his officers were not in the Orange Order.

Speaking on a Channel 4 documentary to be broadcast on Thursday, Mr Flanagan said he "would rather they didn't belong to such organisations".

During the Dispatches programme — which looks at sectarianism in the RUC — Mr Flanagan says officers should be aware of how membership in Loyal Orders is perceived by the public.

The programme says that Mr Flanagan is "more outspoken than he's been before" on the issue and adds: "He knows banning membership would cause uproar."

An officer disciplined for taking part in an Apprentice Boys march disputes Mr Flanagan's comments.

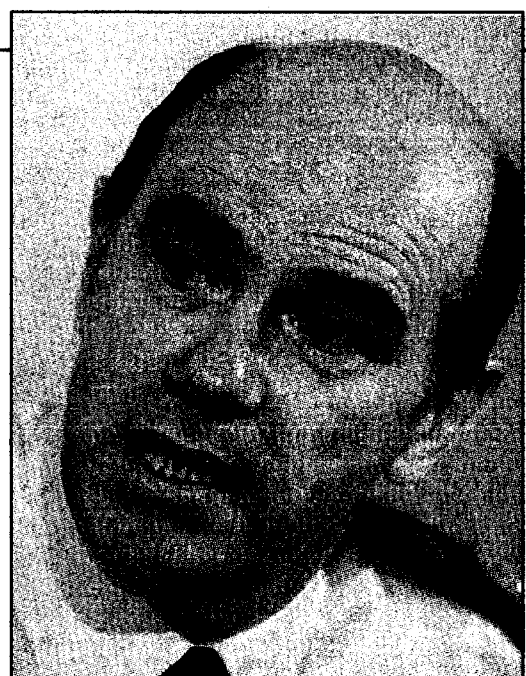
He says: "I've served within the community relations branch for a substantial number of years and I have never to my knowledge had any complaint against me during those times along those lines."

"Both the court and my authorities have stated that I've always acted in a totally impartial manner."

Mr Flanagan's comments come as police membership of outside organisations is under scrutiny by Parliament.

Concerned mainly with membership of the Freemasons, the Parliamentary inquiry could lead to police officers being required to register their membership in bodies like the Orange Order.

Mr Flanagan was a Freemason but said he left the organisation several years before he became Chief Constable so people would trust him to be impartial.



Ronnie Flanagan: Speaking out.

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TV AND RADIO P31; FINANCE P8; LETTERS P10; CROSSWORD P10; HOROSCOPES P12; SPORT P29, 30 & 32

**Weather Outlook**

GREATER BELFAST AREA: It will be a chilly night with the risk of ground frost in sheltered parts. There may be the odd light shower with long clear spells. A moderate north-west wind backing west to south-west. Min temp 2 - 4C. SEE BACK PAGE

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