The Belfast Telegraph

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VIEWPOINT

Staying in the United Kingdom

MANDELSON'S MESSAGE: *Unionists must face up to reality on Saturday*

In his article in last night's Belfast Telegraph, the Secretary of State set out clearly the parameters of the Government's policy in Northern Ireland. Two traditions have to be accommodated and respected but there is only one sovereignty, and that is British sovereignty.

Peter Mandelson has made a useful contribution at a critical point in the province's history. He has provided a "reality check" for the Ulster Unionist Council and reminded them of the gains which have been made for the union under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement.

It is time to go back to basics. For the foreseeable future, and for as long as a majority wishes it, this province will remain part of the United Kingdom. The principle of consent is now enshrined in law and the Good Friday deal requires it to be supported by nationalists and republicans.

But by the same token, stable government will only be achieved on the basis of partnership. The need for power-sharing is now accepted not just by pro-agreement unionists but by many who voted against the accord for other reasons.

Finally, a lasting settlement hinges on a neighbourly partnership being developed with the Republic. Cross-border institutions can work to the mutual benefit of north and south. As fellow members of the European Union, Northern Ireland must learn to co-exist with the Republic.

One fundamental difference between now and this day in 1974, when the power-sharing executive was on the brink of collapse, is that Articles Two and Three have been deleted from the Republic's constitution. Thanks to the Good Friday Agreement, the people of Northern Ireland now have control of their own destiny.

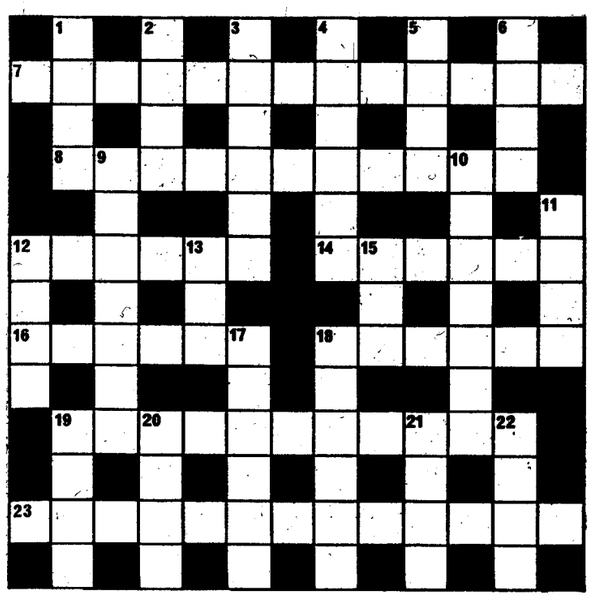
Life has moved on, and unionists have to come to terms with new realities. Those who imagine that unionists or nationalists can rule the roost are living in cloud cuckoo land. Instead, the future has to be built on consensus, and that involves everyone making painful choices.

With 48 hours to go to the Ulster Unionist Council meeting, the future of the Stormont executive still hangs in the balance. Unionists are entitled to doubt whether the IRA will honour its word, but there is no excuse for not putting the republican movement to the test.

Twenty-six years ago this week, unionists made the wrong choice and brought down the power-sharing executive. All that followed is now part of the tragic history of this province. No one needs reminding of that.

Now unionism and Northern Ireland stand at another crossroads. The mistakes of May 1974 must not be repeated in May 2000. Reality must be faced on Saturday and that means backing David Trimble, and the only deal which holds out the prospect of a brighter future for all our people.

TODAY'S CROSSWORD



No 1993

CRYPTIC CLUES

Across
7 Things that stand around and alter one's situation (13)
8 New work force in government (6,5)
12 One standing in for a crown (6)
14 Got one's money, and deserved it (6)
16 Is made to be taken by chauffeur (6)
18 Fruit of solemn potential (6)
19 Not caring about others' feelings, didn't do as much musing (11)
23 It's scrupulous, once its cousin has turned to it (13)

Down
1 First diner to be unwell: it's the pickle (4)
2 A blackleg may appear where one was hurt (4)
3 What will a steed add up to? (6)
4 The main commodity is a u-shaped fastener (6)
5 Knot on a tree shows degree of upset (4)
6 It's true, it's signally light (4)
9 It comes in a gush of pain —— awful pain (7)
10 A number of fellows at university attaching muscle to bone (7)
11 Elaborate lyrics used up in these doxologies (4)
12 As impolite as Gray's forefathers (4)
13 It shows how Mrs used to be called Miss (3)
15 One card that can't be returned from service (3)
17 A drink that's going around the North (6)
18 Hidden, not apparent as heat may be (6)
19 How to proceed like an old crone (4)
20 A drying kiln as used in occupational therapy (4)
21 It's very bad to be six when among the Spanish (4)
22 Ours may turn out like 18 Across (4)

QUICK CLUES

Across
7 State of one's affairs (13)
8 Socialist political faction (6,5)
12 Stand-in for monarch (6)
14 Got money by working (6)
16 Propelled (6)
18 Yellow citrus fruit (6)
19 Inconsiderate (11)
23 Driven by conscience, scrupulous (13)

Down
1 Plant seeds used as carminative, condiment (4)
2 Crust over sore (3)
3 Quantity (6)
4 A leading commodity (6)
5 A knot on a tree (4)
6 Quite, truly (4)
9 Excessive pain (7)
10 Bands of fibrous tissue (7)
11 Poems (4)
12 Discourteous (4)
13 Born (woman) (3)
15 Hole in one (3)
17 Drink of beer, etc; the head (6)
18 Dormant, undeveloped (6)
19 Horse's gait (4)
20 Hop-drying kiln (4)
21 Wicked (4)
22 Acidulous (4)

Answers to No 1992
Across: 1 Development, 7 Trouble, 9 Skin, 11 Chino, 12 Peddle, 14 On the fringe, 18 Sugary, 20 Oiled, 22 Neat, 23 Distant, 24 Pertinacity
Down: 2 Erosion, 3 Obey, 4 Naked, 5 Stick, 6 Inter, 8 Brothers, 10 Perilous, 13 Aft, 15 Gallant, 16 Using, 17 Edits, 19 Grave, 21 Eden

UNIONISM AT THE CROSSROADS:

What the people say

The Top Ten "Essential" Items for Ulster Unionist and Sinn Fein Supporters

ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY SUPPORTERS

1. The IRA leadership have agreed to initiate a process that will completely and verifiably put IRA arms beyond use. — 86%
2. Paramilitary organisations will state clearly that they will put their arms completely and verifiably beyond use. — 84%
3. The third parties will include the diplomats Cyril Ramaphosa from South Africa and Martti Ahtisaari from Finland. — 68%
4. The IRA leadership have stated there is no threat to the peace process from the IRA. — 48%
5. Measures will continue to be taken to re-integrate prisoners into the community. — 48%
6. In consultation with representatives from the paramilitary organisations, the Commission will develop more effective ways to carry out their mandate. — 47%
7. The IRA arms dumps will be inspected regularly. — 44%
8. Continued support for the victims of violence. — 41%
9. The third parties will report to the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning. — 41%
10. Both governments will take resolute action against any group that threatens or uses violence against the peace process. — 40%

SINN FEIN SUPPORTERS

1. Legislation will be enacted to implement the Patten report on policing. — 73%
2. Legislation and a detailed timetable for implementation of the review of the criminal justice system will be published. — 68%
3. The new policing board and independent recruitment agency for the Police Service of Northern Ireland will be established. — 65%
4. The establishment of equality schemes for public authorities in Northern Ireland. — 63%
5. In accordance with the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, all prisoners qualifying for early release will be released. — 62%
6. Continued support for the victims of violence. — 59%
7. Cooperation between the new Human Rights Commissions in both Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland. — 58%
8. The incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into British and Irish domestic law. — 54%
9. As early return as possible to normal security arrangements in Northern Ireland consistent with the level of threat. — 52%
10. Subject to a positive response to all of these commitments from the pro-Agreement parties, the restoration of the NI Assembly and Executive on May 22, 2000. — 45%

TABLE 1

EXCLUSIVE POLL

MAY 12/15 – 2000

	How did you vote in the referendum for the Belfast Agreement? YES	NO	And if the referendum was held today? YES	NO
All of NI	78	22%	74	26%
Protestant	66	34%	55	45%
Catholic	91	9%	94	6%
DUP	35	65%	32	68%
UUP	79	21%	64	36%
PUP	86	14%	70	30%
Alliance	90	10%	86	14%
SDLP	99	1%	100	0%
Sinn Fein	90	10%	94	6%

TAB LE 2

ULSTER UNIONIST SUPPORTERS

	Legislation will be enacted to implement the Patten report on policing	The new policing board and independent recruitment agency for the Police Service of Northern Ireland will be established
Essential	13%	10%
Desirable	16%	10%
Acceptable	25%	32%
Tolerable	20%	25%
Unacceptable	26%	23%

TABLE 3

Dr Colin Irwin, of the Institute of Irish Studies at Queen's University, reports

IN the referendum of two years ago 71% of the people of Northern Ireland voted Yes for the Belfast Agreement. In the Queen's University/Rowntree Trust poll run in October of last year, 74% said they voted Yes. Similarly in the BBC poll run between May 3 and 5 this year, 74.6% said they voted Yes.

However, in the latest Queen's University/Rowntree Trust poll, run between May 12 and 15 *after* the Hillsborough agreement was struck and new IRA statement made, this result rose to 78% claiming they had voted Yes. (Table 2)

Similarly those who said they would vote Yes if the referendum was held again, was 65% last October; 67.2% in the BBC poll run before the recent Hillsborough deal was struck and 74% in the new poll run after Hillsborough and the IRA statement.

Clearly the new arrangements for re-establishing devolved government in Northern Ireland and decommissioning paramilitary weapons have significantly strengthened support for the Belfast Agreement.

A majority of Protestants, 55%, now say they would vote Yes.

Rightly or wrongly the future of the Northern Ireland peace process is in the hands of the Ulster Unionist Council and the decision they will make this coming Saturday. But what do rank and file Ulster Unionists think?

What path would the peace process take if the decision was theirs?

In the second poll conducted for the BBC on May 9, 66% of Ulster Unionists responded positively to the question "In the light of the IRA statement about putting its arms 'completely and verifiably beyond use', should David Trimble and the UUP go back into the Executive on May 22?"

In the latest Queen's University/Rowntree Trust poll, with interviews conducted between May 12 and May 15, 72% of Ulster Unionist supporters believed their party should go back into the Executive.

The results ranged from a high of 100% for Sinn Féin supporters to 98% for the SDLP, 92% for Alliance, 78% for the PUP, 72% for the UUP and 38% for the DUP.

This was the question asked: "Given the new proposals from the two governments and IRA should the Ulster Unionists now go back into the Executive including Sinn Féin?"

Some commentators predicted a decline in Unionist support for the current Hillsborough deal after the initial impact of the latest IRA statement had worn off.

But this has not happened. Rank and file Ulster Unionist support for David Trimble to lead his party back into the Executive has held firm or even slightly increased.

Seventy four percent of the people of Northern Ireland would also like the DUP to take their seats in the Executive ranging from a high of 89% for SDLP and Alliance supporters, to 83% for Sinn Féin, 78% for the PUP, 71% for the UUP and 38% of the DUP electorate.

This was the question asked: "Should the DUP now take their seats in the Executive along with the UUP, SDLP and Sinn Féin?"

Critically, in the Queen's University/Rowntree Trust poll, everyone interviewed was asked 25 detailed questions about the new arrangements for implementing the Belfast Agreement before they were asked if they supported the deal as a whole.

As well as the IRA statement, which has been the focus of so much attention, there was also a joint statement from the two Governments and a letter from the two prime ministers to the parties.

Consequently everyone interviewed was asked to indicate which parts of these various proposals and statements they considered to be 'Essential', 'Desirable', 'Acceptable', 'Tolerable' or 'Unacceptable' as part of a successful peace process.

The large table (Table 1) on this page lists the top 10 'Essential' items in order of preference for both Ulster Unionist and Sinn Féin supporters.

It is now possible to see, in some detail, who wants what to make the Belfast Agreement work for them. As would be expected the most important elements of the new Hillsborough deal for Ulster Unionists are those concerned with decommissioning. Policing and equality issues remain at the top of the Republican agenda.

However, it is interesting to note that when the top policing priorities for Sinn Féin supporters are viewed from an Ulster Unionist point of view, (Table 3) only 26% of them consider the governments' commitment that 'Legislation will be enacted to implement the Patten report on policing' to be 'Unacceptable' and a majority of 55% consider this option to be 'Essential', 'Desirable' or 'Acceptable'— 20% consider it 'Tolerable'.

Similarly only 23% consider the government commitment that 'The new policing board and independent recruitment agency for the Police Service of Northern Ireland will be established' to be 'Unacceptable' and again a majority of 52% view this option as 'Essential', 'Desirable' or 'Acceptable' — 25% consider it 'Tolerable'.

The latest Hillsborough deal is a delicate balance between Unionist and Republican concerns.

Inevitably each party think they have given more than the other, but 72% of rank and file Ulster Unionists want David Trimble to take his party back into the Executive.

They clearly have misgivings about the Patten report, and no doubt many other things as well.

Sinn Féin supporters have their reservations too. But, on balance, the results of this poll suggest that rank and file Ulster Unionists would prefer to have these problems resolved with their party in government rather than out of government.

About the Poll

■This research was undertaken by Dr. Colin Irwin of the Institute of Irish Studies at The Queen's University of Belfast.

■The project was independently funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

■The public opinion survey work was conducted by Market Research Northern Ireland between May 12 and May 15 to produce 1002 'face to face' interviews that represented a cross section of the adult population of Northern Ireland in terms of age, gender, social class, religious affiliation and geographical area.

In all respects the poll was undertaken within the guidelines set out by the Market Research Society (UK) and in accordance with their code of conduct.

READERS' LETTERS ARE ON PAGE 14