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# DAY TWO

est stability for Northern Ireland.

The results are unambiguous. Forty-three per cent thought a UUP/SDLP ticket would be best with the DUP/SDLP coming in second at 11%, followed by a UUP/SF ticket at 9% and, lastly, the DUP and Sinn Fein sharing power at just 2%.

Sixty-eight per cent of UUP supporters and 76% of SDLP supporters thought the UUP/SDLP ticket was a good idea.

Party strategists may wish to give this result some thought.

## Steps Towards a Lasting Peace and Political Stability

PEOPLE from different communities often hold very different views about the steps that need to be taken in order to secure a lasting peace and political stability in Northern Ireland.

For every problem dealt with in this poll solutions were also tested. With regard to the Belfast Agreement and institutional stability a clear majority of the people of Northern Ireland still think it is a good idea to fully implement the Belfast Agreement, at 33% "essential", 22% "desirable", 17% "acceptable", 11% "tolerable" and 16% "unacceptable".

Of those strongly opposed to the Agreement, they were 60% "unacceptable" for the DUP, 29% for Protestants and 15% for the UUP.

New measures introduced to help improve stability were even more acceptable across both communities. Implementation reports were 81% "essential", "desirable" or "acceptable", commitments to stability 84%; exclusion for threatening stability 86% and exclusion for not adhering to exclusively peaceful means 84%.

Only 16% of Sinn Fein supporters found this option "unacceptable".

More people now think making changes to the Belfast Agreement to ensure its political stability (53% "essential" or "desirable") would be a better course of action than making no changes at all (37% "essential" or "desirable").

Policies for increased women in government comes in at 50% "essential" or "desirable" while opinions on changing the unionist and nationalist system of block votes and rotating Ministerial posts with smaller parties has less support at 39% and 42% respectively. Views are mixed on these issues.

But there is a strong consensus when it comes to putting in place new policies to deal with the problems of community relations.

Establishing an Assembly committee to monitor the management of community relations, equality and human rights is 28% "essential", 34% "desirable", 25% "acceptable", 8% "tolerable" and only 4% "unacceptable".

More effective policies to deal with the problems of community division and integration are likewise strongly supported and it is difficult to understand, given this consensus, why such a committee and policies haven't been actioned.

When it comes to questions of justice and reconciliation the consensus is even stronger. Seventy-two per cent of the people of Northern Ireland believe it is "essential" or "desirable" for the two Governments and all the parties to the conflict to make an honest and full accounting of any past misdeeds and abuses.

Similarly, 79% want them to stop blaming others and say what role they played in the Troubles and 80% want them to co-operate with all relevant public inquiries.

Not unexpectedly this consensus breaks down when it comes to the politically difficult issues of justice and policing.

Thirty-six per cent of Protestants consider it "unacceptable" to complete the process of police reform, rising to 62% for DUP supporters but falling to 29% for the UUP.

Similarly 38% of Protestants do not want Sinn Fein on the Policing Board, rising to 72% of DUP supporters but falling to 24% for the UUP.

However, in this case, 30% of Sinn Fein supporters also consider having their party take up their seats on the Policing Board to be "unacceptable".

This is a sensitive issue for everyone but having responsibility for justice and policing devolved to the Assembly is less problematic with only 14% of the people of Northern Ireland rejecting such a move as "unacceptable".

The people of Northern Ireland, particularly the

WHO SHOULD SHARE POWER IN FIRST MINISTERS' OFFICE?								
	%	ALL OF NORTHERN IRELAND	PROTESTANT	CATHOLIC	DUP	UUP	SDLP	SINN FEIN
<b>UUP - SDLP</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>20%</b>	
<b>UUP - SF</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>37%</b>	
<b>DUP - SDLP</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>5%</b>	
<b>DUP - SF</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>6%</b>	
<b>NONE OF THEM</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>31%</b>	

DEALING WITH FUGITIVES AND EXILES			
% UNACCEPTABLE	ALL OF NORTHERN IRELAND	PROTESTANT	CATHOLIC
Paramilitaries should allow all exiled persons to 'come home' before the question of the fugitives is dealt with	31%	42%	20%
Paramilitaries should complete all necessary steps to secure public confidence in a lasting peace before the question of the fugitives is dealt with	28%	39%	17%
Paramilitary fugitives should be given amnesty	44%	59%	29%
Paramilitary fugitives should only be given amnesty after they have given an account of their activities to the authorities	39%	49%	29%
Paramilitary fugitives should be processed through the courts and then 'released on licence'	37%	43%	32%
Security Service and other state offenders should be treated the same as paramilitary offenders	23%	29%	18%

Protestant community, do not like the idea of offenders being set free or given amnesty. They never did.

But if paramilitaries allow exiled persons to come home, then 42% of Protestants would consider making a deal on paramilitary fugitives, or 'On the Runs' (OTRs), to be "unacceptable". If paramilitaries could also secure public confidence in a lasting peace then so much the better, at 39% "unacceptable".

However, it is interesting to note that this Protestant resistance to dealing with offenders drops to just 29% "unacceptable" when members of the State security services are included.

This, of course, is largely a matter for the British Government and if any dealing is done on this issue it will probably be done behind closed doors.

But in the absence of an end to all paramilitary activity, no one can reasonably expect unionist politicians to accept any changes to the status of OTRs without the strongest of complaints.

Needless to say, almost everyone wants an end to all paramilitary activity. So the very practical question that must be answered here is where the points of least and greatest difficulty lie for those paramilitaries.

The Ulster Democratic Party is no more and the PUP is not as large a party as it once was, so this poll is not able to provide much reliable information on loyalist thinking beyond saying that most PUP supporters interviewed did not oppose an end to paramilitary activity as "unacceptable".

The statistics for Sinn Fein, however, are far more reliable. When it comes to ending any involvement in organised crime, targeting, paramilitary attacks, punishment beatings and intelligence gathering operations there does not seem to be a problem with only between 2% and 5% of Sinn Fein supporters opposing such policies as "unacceptable".

But 21% consider decommissioning all paramilitary weapons to be "unacceptable" and 27% are similarly opposed to disbanding their organisation while 28% are opposed to "standing down".

But when it comes to more general policies to help ensure peace and security the Northern Ireland consensus is restored.

Nearly everyone wants normalisation at 41% "essential", 32% "desirable", 21% "acceptable", 4% "tolerable" and only 3% "unacceptable".

Similarly, almost everyone supports an independent monitor to report on all aspects of violence and an independent commissioner to draw up plans and monitor progress towards normalisation and peace.

They also want the British and Irish Governments to direct their security services to end all paramilitary activity and would like programmes of regeneration and transformation to assist communities with paramilitary links to achieve "normalisation". Three million pounds has already been allocated to this end.

No one will be surprised at the resistance of some Protestants to continued police reform and the reticence of some Sinn Fein supporters to go beyond a simple end to

paramilitary activity.

And the question of OTRs, like early prisoner releases, was always going to be controversial. But what is perhaps surprising is the almost unanimous acceptance, across both communities, of all the other proposals put forward to make the Belfast Agreement work.

In this context it is difficult to understand why the two Governments and pro-Agreement parties have waited until now to tackle questions of stability, community relations

and normalisation in a more engaged way.

It would seem to be the case that the people have got ahead of the politicians. Hopefully, now, the two governments and pro-Agreement parties will do what has to be done to catch up.

### What Can be Done if the Negotiations Fail

If the negotiations on the future of the Belfast Agreement fail what should

the Governments and parties do?

A series of options were put to the people of Northern Ireland on this issue and here it may be helpful to put them in order of least resistance as percentages of "unacceptable".

As the table below shows scrapping the Agreement or negotiating a united Ireland are at the bottom of the list. No one seems to be willing to quite give up on the Belfast Agreement yet and the new institutions it has created.

IF TALKS FAIL...		
% UNACCEPTABLE	ALL OF NORTHERN IRELAND	SINN FEIN
The Civic Forum should be maintained as a public voice	7%	
A Shadow Executive should be established to advise the Government	9%	
The Assembly Committees should be re-established to advise each Government department	9%	
Bring in an electoral system that more evenly distributes seats and power between the small and large parties	11%	
The two Governments should move quickly and decisively to fill the political vacuum	12%	
End suspension and have fresh elections	12%	
The British and Irish Governments should implement as much of the Belfast Agreement as they possibly can	14%	
Joint authority in combination with a Northern Ireland Assembly	16%	
Continuation of Direct Rule from London with no Northern Ireland Assembly	25%	
Bring in an electoral system that distributes more seats and power to the largest parties	29%	
Joint Authority by Direct Rule from both London and Dublin	30%	
Scrap the Belfast Agreement and negotiate a new agreement	39%	
A new Anglo-Irish Agreement	43%	
Negotiate a united Ireland	47%	

THE IRA AND LOYALIST PARAMILITARIES SHOULD:		
% UNACCEPTABLE	ALL OF NORTHERN IRELAND	SINN FEIN
End any involvement in organised crime	2%	2%
End all targeting	2%	2%
End all paramilitary attacks and 'punishment beatings'	2%	3%
End all their intelligence gathering operations	2%	5%
Require their members to 'Stand Down'	6%	28%
Decommission all their weapons	5%	21%
Disband their paramilitary organisations	6%	27%

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## VIEWPOINT

# Massive cash plan is historic bonus

## PUBLIC SPENDING: London delivers but Stormont must decide priorities

**A**ll government investment in Northern Ireland is welcome, and when it amounts to £2,000m, spread over more than 100 projects, it must be classed as historic. The link with Britain, and the British taxpayer, is about to pay off handsomely.

The broad outline of the plans announced by direct rule minister Ian Pearson was negotiated by the devolved executive, as part of the massive investment across the UK which the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, has promised. Much will depend on the optimistic forecasts about the British economy, but no one can deny that Northern Ireland's basic infrastructure is greatly in need of upgrading.

Everyone is aware of the worn-out schools and hospitals, as well as the roads that are choked by traffic. New buildings and road improvements can now be anticipated, and housing schemes which have been held up for lack of sewage facilities will be able to go ahead.

There are five main headings for the spending programme, including 50 new or refurbished schools, a new acute hospital in the south-west, new or refurbished fire stations and waste water initiatives. One of the most interesting, and challenging, will be a pilot rapid transport system from east Belfast to the city centre.

Only the experts can say where the priorities lie and the government has wisely decided to form a Strategic Investment

Board to advise. The ideal would be to have local ministers, responsible to the Assembly, taking the decisions, but in their absence it will be important to keep the public fully informed and aware of the financial implications.

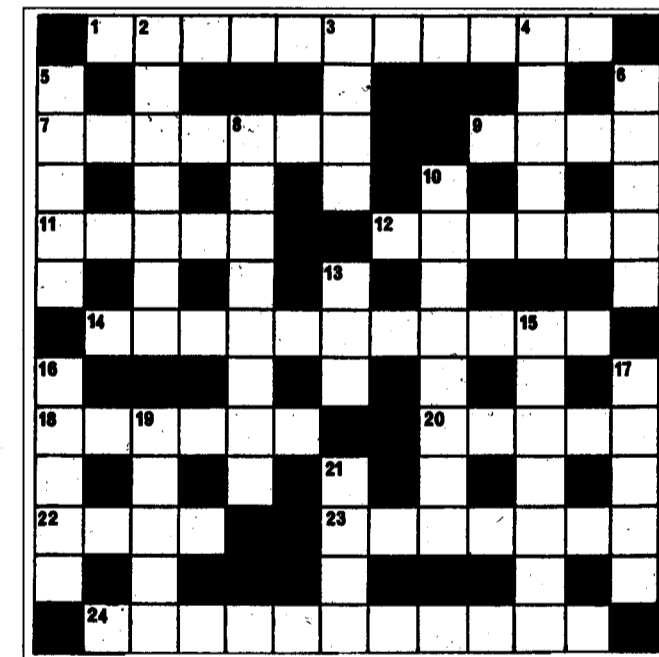
For no one should be in any doubt that there will be a price to be paid for public spending on this scale. Already there are warnings of rates increases, as well as a new water charge, and the bills are bound to mount up. As government loans, and debts incurred in private finance initiatives (PFIs), have to be paid back.

Finance Minister Ian Pearson has estimated that the programme will cost each household £1 per week for every £500m spent. With £2b worth of spending planned, over a long period, that will mean that family budgets will feel a considerable strain.

Clearly there must be detailed oversight of the plans and how they will be financed, if the public is to be assured that the money is being well spent, in the right places. Everywhere else in these islands, this would be the job of elected politicians, so when the parties resume their attempts to restore devolution, they have an obligation to make progress.

Today's poll shows that there are mixed opinions about the value of devolution, with Catholics heavily in favour but Protestants evenly divided. London has delivered, on public spending, but Stormont should decide what and where the priorities are.

## TODAY'S CROSSWORD



No 9876

### CRYPTIC CLUES

- Across**  
1 One working a less precious metal than Oliver's (11)  
7 It is money that makes interest in a principal city (7)  
9 It is too much for the French to return to harbour (4)  
11 Being walked on, it may stump one (5)  
12 Means of approach to a sporting location (6)  
14 The ability class can carry it: come round to it (11)  
18 An infant's toy may disconcert one (6)  
20 It gives one the flavour of fine perception (5)  
22 Stringed instrument one would blow if loudly begun (4)  
23 Extreme delight is rare, it just how you will (7)  
24 Retailer who is environmentally friendly to a food store (11)
- Down**  
2 Beg one to make lip more fluid (7)  
3 Part of a petrol engine is to show it (4)  
4 Old letter was intended to protect Rose (5)  
5 Make fun of one's food (5)  
6 Nerve oneself to sharpen a knife on it (5)  
8 How awful, Ivan! (8)  
10 Go beyond mark on top of short walk (8)  
13 It used to be a shilling for a haircut (3)  
15 Actor's period dress some cut into shape (7)  
16 Girl might use laptop to cook (5)  
17 Bar given over to merrymaking (5)  
19 Academic coach has rut to get out of (5)  
21 Most ruggedly constructed part of a fruit basket (4)

### QUICK CLUES

- Across**  
1 Worker in precious metal (11)  
7 Upper case letter (7)  
9 A fortified wine (4)  
11 Walking-surface (5)  
12 Tree-lined road (6)  
14 (Government by) those of proved ability (11)  
18 To shake; chatter briskly (6)  
20 Flavour (5)  
22 Old string instrument (4)  
23 Utter bliss (7)  
24 Purveyor of fruit and vegetables (11)
- Down**  
2 Earnestly ask, beg (7)  
3 Part played (4)  
4 Plant prickly (5)  
5 To deride (5)  
6 Hard metal (5)  
8 Dreadful (8)  
10 Walk beyond (8)  
13 A brief curtsy (3)  
15 Woman's outfit (7)  
16 Severely question (5)  
17 Feast, make merry (5)  
19 Private teacher (5)  
21 Shallow fruit-basket (4)

### Answers to No 9875

- Across:** 1 Jackdaw 5 Clasp 8 Lantern 9 Noted 10 Pertinent 12 Col 13 Ticca 17 Alb 19 Lamenting 21 False 22 Upgrade 24 React 25 Express
- Down:** 1 Jalopy 2 Control 3 Due 4 Wince 5 Constrain 6 Attic 7 Peddle 11 Intellect 14 Private 15 Gaffer 16 Egress 18 Balsa 20 Mouse 23 Gap

© THIS research was undertaken by Dr. Colin Irwin of the School of Politics at Queen's University 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 January 23 and February 6 to produce 1000 '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 conducted within the guidelines set out by the Market Research Society (UK) and in accordance with their code of conduct. This poll is the ninth in a series published by the Belfast Telegraph. They are reviewed in the author's book 'The People's Peace Process in Northern Ireland' (Palgrave) with full statistical reports available at <http://www.peacepolls.org>.