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The Mitchell Review

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Dear *Grate,*

This is just a short note to let you know that I now have the computer print out results of our poll in and will be writing up the stories over the next few days for delivery to the *Belfast Telegraph* at 9am on Monday morning. Publication will take place over two days. Tuesday the 26th and Wednesday the 27th.

The results are stronger than I expected and some parties, who have taken a keen interest in them, have also taken the view that sharing the main features of the results with you at this time could be helpful to the peace process. The principle conclusions that can be drawn are as follows:

1. Although Protestant support for the Agreement has slipped a bit from the Referendum result of May 22nd 1998 (as many polls have shown) support is still strong, particularly for 'Making the Agreement Work'. Support is holding up and any shift to 'No' is a protest vote.
2. Fears about what will happen if the Review fails are now much stronger than they were when these issues were addressed in the Sinn Féin/PUP poll of last March. People want the Review to succeed as much as they want the Agreement to work.
3. Support for the de Chastelain program, setting up the Executive, and our equivalents of the Hillsborough and Way Forward proposals have all strengthened. In particular both Sinn Féin and UUP resistance to these kinds of proposals has diminished since the March poll. The fear of failure seems to be having an effect across both communities.
4. All the other results are as might be expected with regards to a lack of trust between Sinn Féin and the UUP, for example, and general support for the 'Confidence Building Measures' with some degree of community and political variation. Predictably support for Joint Authority, Direct Rule and the like do not receive cross community support which leaves only the Belfast Agreement - one way or another.

I have not quite decided how I will end my stories for the 'Tele' but I am sure that given the strength of these results the people of Northern Ireland will be very pleased to support almost any solution you can come up with to make the Review a success.

Your reports should be ready early next week and I will get them to you as soon as I have completed my work with the *Belfast Telegraph*. See you next week and good luck.

Best wishes,

Dr. Colin Irwin.

Note: My direct line at Queen's is Belfast 273231,
and my home number is Belfast 381708.

