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US survey respondents oppose intervention if Chinese attack

NOT INTERESTED: Only 32 percent of US citizens said they think the US military should protect Taiwan if China starts an armed conflict, while 49 percent of congressional staffers said the same

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Most US respondents in a poll said they would oppose US intervention in the event of a military conflict in the Taiwan Strait triggered by a formal declaration of independence by Taiwan.

The survey, released on Monday, was coordinated by the non-partisan, non-profit Committee of 100 and found that 32 percent of US citizens, 31 percent of community leaders who help shape public opinion and 23 percent of business leaders said they supported US intervention.

CONGRESSIONAL STAFF

The poll also found that 49 percent of US congressional staffers agreed the US should intervene in such a conflict.

The survey, titled *Hope and Fear: American and Chinese Attitudes Toward Each Other*, was conducted between mid August and mid September in the US and China and covered a wide range of issues, including bilateral trade and economic relations, product safety, climate change, the rise of China and the Taiwan issue, to name a few.

Those polled included members of the public in both countries, as well as business and community leaders and US congressional staffers.

On the question of whether the US should play a more active role in cross-strait relations, 64 percent of congressional staffers said it should, while 57 percent of US community leaders, 54 percent of business leaders and 46 percent of ordinary citizens said that it should.

ON THE RISE

All the figures marked increases over those in a similar survey conducted in 2005, with the ratio of congressional staffers supporting a more active US role registering the steepest rise at over 5 percentage points.

As to whether the US should intervene in a cross-strait military conflict triggered by a declaration of independence by Taiwan, the percentages of business leaders and community leaders supporting the notion both marked sharp drops of over 20 percentage points from the level in the 2005 survey, while the ratio of congressional staffers and ordinary citizens supporting the concept remained

roughly the same in the two surveys.

Analyzing the poll results, Li Cheng, a senior researcher at the Brookings Institution who supervised the survey, said he believed the sharp drop in the percentage of business leaders and community leaders supporting US military intervention is related to US and Chinese economic interests as well as to recent provocative moves by Taiwan's government.

He also attributed the high level of support for Taiwan among Congressional staffers to the successful efforts of pro-Taiwan lobby groups in Washington.

CHINESE SURVEYED

Meanwhile, among Chinese citizens surveyed, 53 percent of business leaders and ordinary citizens said they believe the Taiwan issue is currently moving toward a peaceful resolution, while 32 percent of community leaders said they believed the Taiwan issue had come to an impasse.

Asked how China should work to resolve the Taiwan issue, a majority of Chinese, including 66 percent of community leaders, 57 percent of business leaders and 52 percent of ordinary citizens, said increasing exchanges with Taiwan was the most appropriate way to work for unification.

The survey in the US was conducted via telephone interviews with 1,200 adults nationwide, while the survey in China was carried out through face-to-face interviews with 4,104 adults around the country.

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