

Public Opinion in Taiwan and Taiwan's Bid to Join the United Nations

Mainland Affairs Council,

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The idea of “sovereignty residing in the people” is one of the core democratic values. The government's administrative measures and policies are formulated based on public opinion, which is also the normal situation existing in democratic countries. Taiwan’s bid to join the United Nations has long been a consensus among the majority within Taiwan's society. The application filed by the Taiwanese government this year to join the United Nations under the name of Taiwan is not only based on Taiwan’s mainstream public opinion, but is also aimed at responding to public opinion. This is also a concrete action that has won extensive support of Taiwan’s mainstream public opinion.

I. Objective data from the public opinion surveys

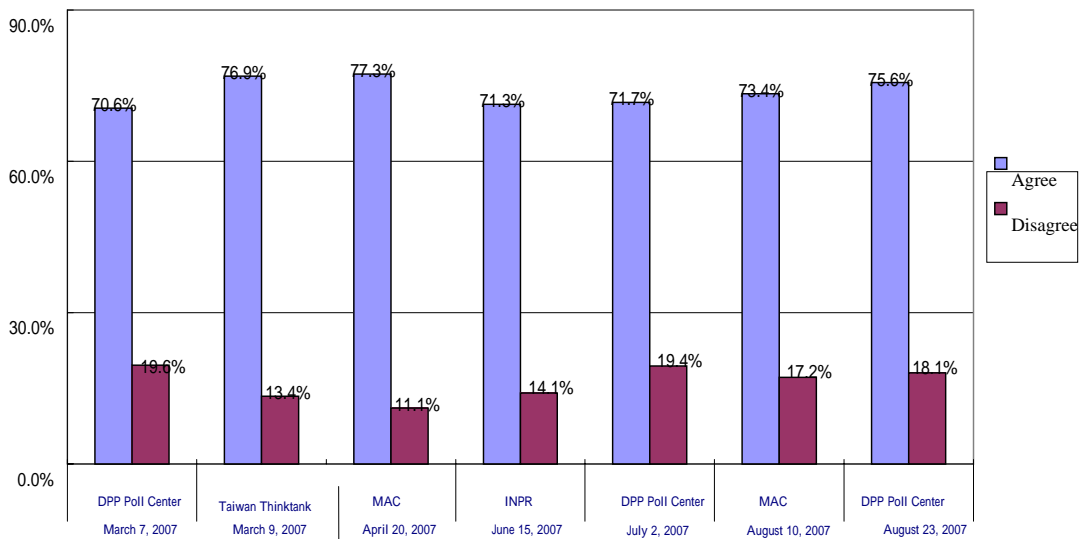
Government and civilian agencies as well as academic institutions in Taiwan have conducted various public surveys this year on Taiwan's bid to join the United Nations and on a referendum on such a bid. The results of these surveys show the following trends:

1. Taiwan’s bid to “join the United Nations under the name of Taiwan” has won extensive support of Taiwan’s mainstream public opinion.

The results of various public surveys show that, on the average, more than 70 percent of the public support “Taiwan’s bid to join the United Nations under the name of Taiwan,” with one of these surveys showing a significantly high proportion (77.3 percent). Basically, the various public opinion surveys conducted by different agencies show approximately the same results. These

survey results highlight the fact that there is a considerable degree of consensus among the Taiwanese people regarding “Taiwan’s bid to join the United Nations under the name of Taiwan.” Participation in the international community under the name of Taiwan has become the mainstream public opinion.

Recent surveys on “Taiwan’s bid to join the United Nations under the name of Taiwan”



Note:

DPP Poll Center: Democratic Progressive Party’s Poll Center

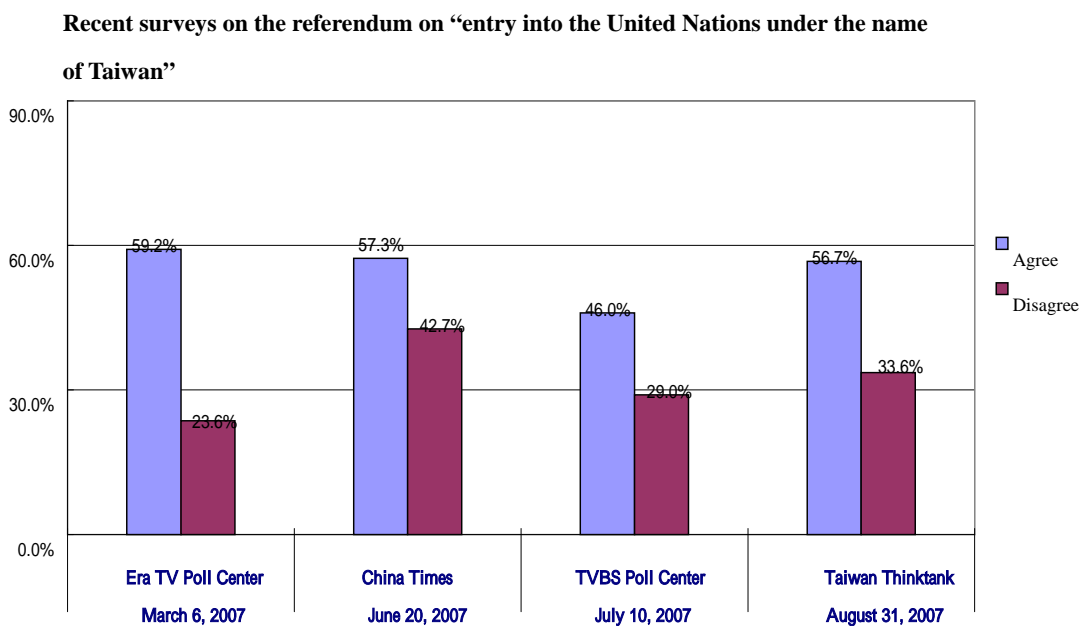
MAC: Mainland Affairs Council

INPR: Institute for National Policy Research

2. The proportion of the respondents in favor of holding a “referendum on Taiwan’s UN bid” is much higher than the proportion of those who disagree.

More than 70 percent of the Taiwanese people support Taiwan's bid to join the United Nations. With regard to holding a referendum on Taiwan's UN bid, approximately 50 percent of the people show approval. Although there is a slight difference in the questionnaire designs in different surveys (*Era TV: Certain legislators are launching a signature*

campaign for the promotion of Taiwan's entry into the United Nations under the name of Taiwan; are you in favor of such a campaign? China Times: Are you in favor of holding a referendum on Taiwan's UN bid together with the 2008 presidential election? TVBS: In next year's presidential election, do you agree that a referendum on Taiwan's UN bid should be settled as a referendum topic in the referendum? Taiwan Thinktank: The DPP and the KMT are advocating a public referendum on Taiwan's UN bid; are you in favor of holding such a referendum?), the results of these surveys are similar. The proportion of the respondents supporting the holding of the referendum ranges from 46 percent to 59.2 percent, while the proportion showing disapproval ranges from 23.6 percent to 42.7 percent. Overall, the proportion of people supporting the holding of the planned referendum is greater than the proportion showing disapproval, and the average gap between both groups is 23 percentage points.



II. The significance of the public survey data

1. The results of various public surveys show that more than 70 percent of the Taiwanese people support Taiwan's entry into the United Nations under the name of Taiwan. This is the hope and expectation of the majority of the Taiwanese people. The proportion of people in favor of holding a planned referendum on Taiwan's bid to join the UN also constitutes the majority at approximately 50 percent. Urged by such a strong majority of Taiwanese public opinion, the Taiwanese government cannot run counter to mainstream public opinion and must have the courage to assume responsibility and work hard to accomplish the task entrusted by the people, even under China's forceful suppression and obstruction of Taiwan's bid to join the United Nations as well as Taiwan's plan to hold a referendum on its UN bid.

2. Due to the fact that the international community has been under the influence of the political framework of "one China," Taiwan has always been unreasonably treated and excluded from participating in international organizations including the United Nations for a long time. The results of various surveys show that the confidence and determination of the Taiwanese people toward Taiwan's participation in international organizations including the United Nations has never wavered a bit. The majority of the Taiwanese people believe that as an independent sovereign country, Taiwan is surely entitled to become a member of the United Nations. The Taiwanese people should be treated in the same way as the people in other countries who enjoy and are not deprived of equal and basic human rights. The Taiwanese people must work together with all the other nations of the world in achieving humankind's ideals of peace and security.

3. The public referendum is an exercise of direct democracy. Every country in the world must make efforts to defend and preserve the universal value of democracy and respect the normal operations of democratic processes. Taiwan's plan to hold a referendum on its UN bid is a reflection of active public opinion. The Taiwanese people hope to draw the attention of the international community to Taiwan's public opinion by completely expressing their collective public opinion.

4. The road leading to Taiwan's membership in the United Nations is long and boundless and filled with hardships, but the Taiwanese people will unswervingly move toward their goal by holding an attitude of taking things one step at a time. We believe that with the support of Taiwan's mainstream public opinion, a democratic and free Taiwan will be able to accomplish its policy objective of "joining the United Nations under the name of Taiwan" through the use of people power.