

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
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Opposition to Taiwan Intervention
A Year Later, More Doubts About Kosovo Mission

A year after the United States launched military operations in the Balkans, the public has more doubts about the efforts of the U.S. and its NATO allies to bring peace to Kosovo. Americans are also wary of possible military action against China, with a solid majority opposed to using force to defend Taiwan against a possible Chinese attack. Overall, Beijing's public image has shown a surprising, if modest, improvement since last year, despite recent tensions between China and Taiwan.

While Americans back U.S. participation in the NATO peacekeeping mission in Kosovo, by a 51%-41% margin, support was somewhat stronger last June, when 57% endorsed the deployment and 37% were opposed. Equally important, nearly half (47%) of the public does not believe that the U.S. and its NATO allies have made progress toward their goals in Kosovo, against 37% who say progress has been achieved. Last June, 46% saw progress being made while 40% did not.

The latest survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted March 15-19 among 1,184 adults, shows a partisan split in attitudes over the Clinton administration's policies in the Balkans and China. Republicans fault the president for being insufficiently tough on China, while also opposing, by 50%-44%, the continued deployment of U.S. peacekeepers in Kosovo. Democrats generally approve of Clinton's handling of China policy and strongly favor the presence of U.S. peacekeepers in Kosovo.

But on these politically-charged foreign policy issues, there are also important areas of agreement. Pluralities in *both* parties — along with a majority of independents — believe the NATO peacekeeping mission has not made progress toward the goal of bringing peace and stability to Kosovo. There also is widespread opposition to using force in Taiwan's defense, even among Republicans who otherwise favor a harder line against China.

Sagging Support for Kosovo Operation

	<i>June 1999</i>			<i>March 2000</i>		
	<i>Rep</i>	<i>Dem</i>	<i>Ind</i>	<i>Rep</i>	<i>Dem</i>	<i>Ind</i>
<i>U.S. troops in Kosovo...</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%
Favor	49	66	55	44	61	47
Oppose	43	29	40	50	31	46
Don't Know	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>U.S. & NATO made progress in Kosovo...</i>						
Yes	41	54	43	36	41	34
No	44	33	44	50	44	52
Don't Know	<u>15</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>14</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100

Overall, the public opposes, by a 53%-31% margin, using force against China if it resorts to military means to bring Taiwan under its control. While Democrats oppose such an action, 56%-26%, Republicans are also opposed, by a narrower 53%-35% margin.

Less Confidence on Kosovo

Support for U.S. participation in the peacekeeping operation has shown a marked decline not just among Republicans, but among independents as well. Independents favored the deployment in June, 55%-41%; now they are evenly split (47% in favor, 46% opposed). The decline in support among Democrats (66% last June, 61% today) has been less pronounced.

An even bigger change in the public's attitudes has come on the question of whether the peacekeeping mission is fulfilling its original aims. In June, Democrats by a wide margin (54%-33%) said progress was being made; now, only 41% believe progress is being achieved, while 44% do not. Skepticism among independents has also risen substantially.

Beyond these political divisions, there are also differences over the Kosovo mission based on age, income levels, education, and even geography. For instance, a plurality of people living in the South are opposed to the continued deployment of U.S. forces in Kosovo (48%-44%), but majorities of Americans in other regions back the mission. Support is strongest in the West, where people favor participation in the peacekeeping operation 61%-32%.

Americans with less than a high school education and those with family incomes of less than \$30,000 oppose the U.S. presence in the peacekeeping mission, as do those age 65 and over. Majorities of college graduates (57%), those with family incomes above \$75,000 (61%), and women age 30-49 (59%) support the U.S. presence in Kosovo.

No China Backlash

Despite China's recent threats against Taiwan, most Americans believe that U.S.-China relations are remaining stable. Support for the Clinton administration's China policy has actually increased since last summer, when it dipped following allegations that China stole U.S. nuclear technology.

Overall, more than half of Americans (55%) say U.S.-China relations are staying about the same, while 19% believe things are getting worse and 13% say relations are improving. Last June, 50% said relations were stable, while more than one-third (35%) said

Criticism of China Softens			
	<u>Sept '97</u>	<u>June '99</u>	<u>Mar '00</u>
	%	%	%
<i>China today is...</i>			
An adversary	14	18	17
A serious problem	46	53	44
Not much of a problem	32	22	26
Don't know	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>13</u>
	100	100	100
	<u>Aug '95</u>	<u>June '99</u>	<u>Mar '00</u>
	%	%	%
<i>Relations with China...</i>			
Improving	16	7	13
Getting worse	22	35	19
About the same	53	50	55
Don't know	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>13</u>
	100	100	100
	<u>Mar '99</u>	<u>June '99</u>	<u>Mar '00</u>
	%	%	%
<i>Clinton's dealing with China...</i>			
Too tough	2	1	2
Not tough enough	44	51	42
About right	43	35	42
Don't know	<u>11</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>
	100	100	100

things were getting worse. Currently, a plurality (44%) regards China as a serious problem, 26% view it as not much of a problem, while 17% view it as an adversary. In June, 53% judged China a serious problem, 22% said it was not much of a problem and 18% called it an adversary.

The public is split on the administration's China policy, with 42% endorsing Clinton's approach and the same percentage saying it is not tough enough. But last summer, Americans were less supportive of the administration — 51% said it was not being tough enough on China, against just 35% who backed the policy.

Republicans are more critical of Clinton's China policy than Democrats. A majority of Republicans (52%) say the administration has not been tough enough on China, while 34% endorse the administration's policy. Democrats are far more supportive of the administration, with 49% favoring the policy against 34% who say it has not been tough enough.

Still, there is a general reluctance toward intervening militarily if China uses force against Taiwan. The exception is the relatively small group of Americans who report following events in China and Taiwan very closely (only 9% of the public, according to the Pew Center's monthly news index). This group would support military action against China by a margin of 55%-39%.

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

Results for the survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among a nationwide sample of 1,184 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period March 15-19, 2000. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. For results based on either Form 1 (N=585) or Form 2 (N=599), the sampling error is plus or minus 5 percentage points. For results based on registered voters (N=912), the sampling error is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
MARCH 2000 NEWS INTEREST INDEX
— FINAL TOPLINE —
March 15-19, 2000
N =1,184

ASK ALL:

Q.7 Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?
[INSERT ITEM; ROTATE]

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	(VOL) <u>DK</u>
ASK ALL:					
b. Increasing tensions between China and Taiwan	9	21	28	41	1=100
Late July, 1999	8	20	25	47	*=100

ASK ALL:

And now a few questions on China...

Q.42 All things considered, which of these descriptions comes closest to your view of China today... do you think China is **(READ)**:

	<u>June 1999</u>	<u>March 1999</u>	<u>Sept 1997</u>
17 An adversary	18	20	14
44 A serious problem, but not an adversary	53	48	46
26 OR, Not much of a problem	22	25	32
<u>13</u> Don't know/Refused (DO NOT READ)	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
100	100	100	100

Q.43 What is your impression... These days are relations between the U.S. and China improving, getting worse, or staying about the same?

	<u>June 1999</u>	<u>March 1999</u>	<u>Aug 1995</u>
13 Improving	7	13	16
19 Getting worse	35	19	22
55 Staying about the same	50	60	53
<u>13</u> Don't know/Refused	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
100	100	100	100

[NO Q.44]

Q.45 In your opinion, has the Clinton administration been too tough, not tough enough, or about right in its dealings with China?

		<u>June</u> <u>1999</u>	<u>March</u> <u>1999</u>
2	Too tough	1	2
42	Not tough enough	51	44
42	About right	35	43
<u>14</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>13</u>	<u>11</u>
100		100	100

Q.46 As you may know, there have been renewed tensions about when and how to bring Taiwan back under Chinese control. If China were to use military force against Taiwan over this, should the United States use military force to defend Taiwan, or not?

31	Should use force
53	Should not use force
<u>16</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Two last questions about international affairs...

K.1 There are now U.S. troops in Kosovo as part of a NATO peacekeeping force to help maintain peace. Do you favor or oppose having U.S. troops in Kosovo for this reason?

		<u>June 1999¹</u>
51	Favor	56
41	Oppose	37
<u>8</u>	Don't Know/Refused	<u>7</u>
100		100

K.2 Do you think the U.S. and NATO have made progress in achieving the goals they started out with when they became involved militarily in Kosovo or not?

		<u>June 1999²</u>
37	Yes	46
47	No	40
<u>16</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>14</u>
100		100

¹ In June 1999 the question was worded "The peace agreement calls for sending 7,000 U.S. troops, as part of a NATO peacekeeping force of about 50,000 troops, to help maintain peace in Kosovo now that the military conflict has ended. Do you favor or oppose sending U.S. troops to Kosovo as part of a NATO peacekeeping force?"

² In June 1999 the question was worded "Do you think that the U.S. and NATO have achieved the goals they started out with when they began the bombing campaign?"