

President's 'honeymoon' nearing end: foundation

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President Tsai Ing-wen's (蔡英文) "honeymoon" period is ending, the Taiwan Public Opinion Foundation said yesterday, citing its latest poll, which found a drop of nearly 20 percentage points in Tsai's approval rating since her inauguration on May 20.

The telephone-based survey showed that 52.3 percent of respondents expressed satisfaction with Tsai's handling of national matters, a 17.6 percentage point decline from three months ago.

The percentage of respondents dissatisfied with her performance climbed 24.4 percentage points from 8.8 percent in May to 33.2 percent.

"It appears that a downward trend in Tsai's approval rating shows no sign of stopping. As such, we can say the president's honeymoon period is about to end," foundation chairman You Ying-lung (游盈隆) told a news conference in Taipei.

Respondents gave Tsai a score of 61.28 out of 100 for her performance as president over the past three months, which the foundation said indicates that the public believes there is much room for improvement and could "flunk" Tsai if she does not try harder.

Regarding cross-strait issues, 51.4 percent said they were content with Tsai's handling of the nation's relations with Beijing, despite the indefinite stagnation of cross-strait ties, compared with 39.6 percent who felt otherwise.

Comparing the survey with the May poll, which found that nearly 70 percent of respondents approved of Tsai's refusal to recognize the so-called "1992 consensus," the foundation said the public's views on cross-strait ties have apparently changed, adding that Tsai's administration should not take the matter lightly.

The so-called "1992 consensus," a term former Mainland Affairs Council chairman Su Chi (蘇起) admitted making up in 2000, refers to a tacit understanding between the Chinese Nationalist

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Party (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party that both sides of the Taiwan Strait acknowledge there is "one China," with both sides having their own interpretation of what "China" means.

Topping the list of areas in which respondents expressed satisfaction with Tsai's performance were international affairs with a 56.5 percent approval rate, followed by pension reform (55.9 percent), national defense (48.8 percent), judicial reform (48.2 percent), the economy (45.9 percent) and labor policy (40.7 percent).

However, respondents were divided on whether the president has lived up to her pledge to have "the most communication-friendly government," with 47 percent support against 47.2 percent opposition.

The survey also showed a lack of public consensus on the abolition of the controversial Special Investigation Division (SID), with 43 percent of those polled in favor of keeping the agency, while 37.4 percent called for it to be immediately disbanded.

While Tsai's honeymoon period is coming to an end, the results indicated that respondents were willing to give the president "the benefit of the doubt," National Sun Yat-sen University political science professor Liao Da-chi (廖達奇) said.

Chinese Culture University politics professor Yang Tai-shun (楊泰順) attributed Tsai's declining support rating to swing voters' generally negative perception of issues to which she has attached great importance, such as abolishing the SID and improving labor conditions.

The poll collected 1,076 valid samples from people aged 20 and older from Monday to Wednesday last week, and has a margin of error of 2.99 percentage points.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2016/08/30](#)