

Daya Bay
Surveys

72% say 'no' to Daya Bay

18-3

SUNDAY SURVEY

HONGKONG residents have come out overwhelmingly against the Daya Bay nuclear power plant in the first public opinion survey on the issue.

The poll, commissioned by the *Sunday Morning Post* and conducted on Thursday and Friday nights, shows that 72 per cent of the public believe the project should not go ahead as planned.

Even more people, 81 per cent of those polled, believe the Government and the plant's contractors have failed to provide the public with sufficient information about the safety aspects of Daya Bay.

Women are more opposed to the plant than men. The poll revealed that 80 per cent are against the project, compared with 65 per cent of men.

An independent research company, Survey Research Hongkong Ltd, conducted the poll among a representative sampling of 622 residents selected at random.

Conviction

This was the first detailed study of attitudes on Daya Bay since the project was approved six years ago.

It showed that public concern over the safety of the plant has mounted following the recent Chernobyl accident in the Soviet Union in April.

Of those who responded to the poll, 93 per cent said they were aware of the controversy surrounding Daya Bay.

Men (97 per cent) appeared more aware of the controversy than women (89 per cent).

While both men and women are convinced of the need to know more about Daya Bay, the level of concern is higher among those who are younger, better educated and earning more money.

This includes those in the 15-34 age range with either post-secondary or university educations and with a household income of at least \$6,000 a month.

The conviction that not enough information has been made available appears to be firmly held, in spite of a concerted public education campaign undertaken recently by both the Government and the Hongkong Nuclear Investment Company,

Q: Do you agree that work should proceed on the construction of the power plant at Daya Bay?

RESPONDENTS	TOT %	SEX		AGE GROUP			HOUSEHOLD INCOME			
		M %	F %	15-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Under \$4,000 \$4,000 -5,999	\$6,000 -9,999	Over 10,000	
Strongly disagree	33	28	39	29	39	37	38	31	28	43
Slightly disagree	39	37	41	42	39	34	35	39	43	32
Neither	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	-
Slightly agree	19	22	15	23	14	15	16	21	20	19
Strongly agree	6	11	1	5	5	11	7	6	8	6
Don't know	2	1	3	1	2	2	2	2	1	-

which has a 25 per cent stake in the project.

In stark contrast, only 30 per cent of the poll respondents are confident that those who will manage the operation of the plant will have enough expertise to ensure that the highest standards of safety are met.

A significant 68 per cent of the public do not have much confidence or none at all in the expertise of the operators.

Women and those aged between 15 and 49 with at least a secondary school education and earning over \$10,000 a month were less confident than the average.

It is not clear from the answers whether the lack of local confidence in the plant's management stems from fears about China's ability to operate it safely, or from uncertainty over the foreign expertise that China will employ once Daya Bay becomes operational in 1992.

The most overwhelming response in the survey involved the current high level of concern over the building of Daya Bay.

This concern is justified, said 89 per cent of those polled. Just nine per cent believe concern is not justified.

Again, women and those between 35 and 49 with a secondary education and earning from \$4,000 to \$5,999 a month, were above the average in their concern.

Of the minority which did not feel the current level of concern is justified, views were divided on who they thought was responsible for the highly-charged atmosphere which now surrounds the \$27 billion project.

Despite the Government's conviction that pressure groups are behind the anti-nuclear campaign, only nine per cent of the public support this view.

Only four per cent blamed the level of concern on continued discussion of the issue in newspapers. More people, however, are inclined to believe that the

authorities simply aren't providing enough information.

Of those polled, 32 per cent blame a lack of information for the present concern over Daya Bay while 29 per cent blame it on Chernobyl.

Only 21 per cent believe the current concern is due to those generally against nuclear power plants.

Differences

Surprisingly, 21 per cent of those polled are convinced that lack of confidence in China is responsible for the high level of concern over Daya Bay.

Throughout the poll, women and those between the ages of 15 and 49 who have at least a secondary education and a household income of between \$4,000 and \$5,999 consistently held the strongest views about Daya Bay.

In another development yesterday, Miss Maria Tam, a member of the Executive and Legisla-

tive Councils, the territory's highest legislative bodies, appealed to her colleagues to bury their differences over Daya Bay.

In a bid to heal the split that has developed in recent weeks, Miss Tam reminded fellow councillors that Hongkong had only one government and their job was to unite rather than divide the public into opposing camps.

She called on councillors opposed to the building of Daya Bay to join the Europe and US-bound delegations in seeking more information on nuclear power before closing their minds on the issue.

"Our job is not to divide Hongkong into two camps, like the Conservative Party and the Labour Party (in Britain) where one side stages an opposition aimed at pulling down the other," she said at the opening of the Southern District Motor Service Centre.

● Continued Page 2

Poll 'no' to Daya Bay

● From Page 1

"Officials and Unofficials must work together as if they are in the same boat."

Miss Tam said while differences in opinion were healthy, councillors didn't have to divide into factions.

"We welcome anti-nuclear councillors to join the delegations so that, when we return, those who have not joined cannot brush aside our report and say we are not objective without reading it, because this is unhealthy."

Her comments come as time runs out on the deadline for any last-minute additions to the two delegations.

Councillors have been told they have until 5.30 pm on Tuesday to sign up.

So far, there is no indication that the most outspoken critics of the nuclear plant, Mr Martin Lee and Mr Szeto Wah, are planning to take part.

The forthcoming trips have come under severe attack as being nothing more than junkets at public expense.

This hasn't stopped Mrs Pauline Ng and Mr Hilton Cheong-Leen, the latest councillors to sign up.

Miss Tam has insisted that councillors will make an objective evaluation of the safety and economic aspects of Daya Bay, based on the evidence they expect to bring back from their overseas trips.

She also appealed to the Chinese Government to be patient and take time to explain its position, in the event that it goes ahead with the plant despite local opposition.

"Suppose the plant is safe and we're over-reacting. It will then take time to explain to people why the plant is safe.

"Suppose our present reaction is correct . . . China will

have a very difficult decision to make.

"If China knows it's right to build the plant and Hongkong people feel it's wrong, the hardest decision will be whether China should wait or not. I hope China will wait."

Miss Tam said she did not know why the Government failed to consult the public before it approved the China Light and Power Company's participation in the nuclear project.

In her own defence, she said the decision was made in 1979, before she became a member of the Executive Council, the body that approved the move.

But she said she believed there must have been consultants' reports as well as political and economic analyses.

She said she was confident the decision was made with the interests of the Hongkong public in mind.