Gallup: Few Finns are willing to send Hornets to Libya

Most poll respondents reject the idea of deploying Finnish fighters in the Libyan crisis

Only six per cent of Finns are in favour of Finland's military contribution to the Libya operation "for example by committing Finnish Hornet fighters for the Libya operation", indicates a survey commissioned by *Helsingin Sanomat*. The supporters of the National Coalition Party backed the sending of Hornet fighters to Libya most enthusiastically, but here, too, just 13 per cent of the party's respondents were fully in favour.

The most popular response alternative represented the same moderate policy line as Finland's foreign policy leaders have taken.

Around half of Finns felt that Finland should participate in the Libya operation only later, for example by protecting the evacuation of civilians and providing humanitarian aid.

One-fourth of Finns regarded even the provision of humanitarian aid as too much. In their opinion, Finland must not be involved in the Libya operation in any shape or form.

The voters of the True Finns took a particularly negative attitude toward Finland's participation in the operation. Half of them chose the "absolute no" line.

In the camps of the Centre Party, the Social Democrats, and the Left Alliance, one-fourth of respondents supported complete withdrawal from participation.

Among the voters of the National Coalition Party and the Green League, around 13 per cent of respondents adhered to the strict "No" line.

Participation at a later stage, including protection of humanitarian aid shipments and potential evacuations, was supported most by voters of the Green League and the Left Alliance.

A party affiliation was the most significant underlying factor behind the opinions.

There was no great difference between men and women, except that the protection of humanitarian aid operations was slightly more supported by women.

Further factors explaining the Libya attitudes were education and the employment status. The number of respondents who opposed all participation was highest among those with a vocational school education and among the unemployed.

Half of respondents with university education were in favour of protecting humanitarian aid measures, while less than one-fourth supported participation in the operation without a separate military contribution.

A NATO-led alliance is monitoring the no-fly zone imposed on Libya by the United Nations Security Council. The Council has also granted the alliance permission to protect civilians, under which the alliance's jet fighters have attacked the ground forces of Colonel **Muammar Gaddafi**.

Sweden has sent eight jet fighters to Libya.

Finland is not taking part in the enforcement of the no-fly zone. From the outset, both President **Tarja Halonen** and Minister for Foreign Affairs **Alexander Stubb** (Nat. Coalition Party) have opposed the sending of F-18C Hornet fighters to Libya.

In their view, Finland will later send humanitarian aid and help to protect aid

operations.

Finland has been asked to participate in planning a potential EU battle group operation that would protect humanitarian aid transports and other actions in Libya.

FACTFILE: How was the survey conducted?

The poll was conducted in early March, involving interviews with 1,307 Finns aged 15 to 74, with the exception of the autonomous Åland Islands.

The respondents were asked:"The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is leading the alliance of Western countries that is monitoring the no-fly zone imposed on Libya by the United Nations Security Council. For example Sweden has made a decision to send eight jet fighters to Libya. Finland is not involved in the Libya operation. Do you think that Finland should participate in the operation?"

A total of five response alternatives were available: 1. Yes, for example by sending Finnish fighers to support the operation. 2. Yes, by participating in the alliance, but without a military contribution. 3. Cannot tell. 4. No, Finland should participate in the settling of the crisis later on, for example in the protection of potential evacuations and humanitarian aid. 5. No, Finland must not participate in the Libya operation in any way.

The margin of error in the survey is around 2.5 percentage points in either direction.

The poll was commissioned by *Helsingin Sanomat* and conducted by TNS Gallup.

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