



Canadians believe our military is playing a critical role in Afghanistan

Majority of Canadians support Canada sending troops to Afghanistan

Support for Afghan mission rooted in underlying belief that Canadian troops should help where need whether there is a direct threat to Canada or not

Toronto – June 23, 2006 – With Canadian troops coming under increasingly more dangerous in Afghanistan, is the risk of our troops worth it? A recent survey commissioned by the Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute and conducted by Innovative Research Group on its Canada 20/20 online panel found that just over three in five Canadians (61%) believe that the Canadian military involvement in Afghanistan is providing critical assistance to local Afghans who are trying to create a peaceful and democratic society. Only a quarter of Canadians (26%) felt that the Canadian military involvement in Afghanistan is putting Canadian lives at risk for no apparent benefit.

Canadians over 55 (67%), those in the Atlantic region of Canada (73%), men (72%), or English-speaking Canadians (63%) were more likely to say that the Canadian military is providing critical assistance. On the other hand, Canadians aged 45-54, residents of Quebec (31%), women (32%) or French-speaking Canadians (33%) were more likely than other Canadians to feel that the Canadian military's involvement in Afghanistan is putting Canadian lives at risk.

Just over one in ten (13%) responded that they did not know enough to judge.

Despite the recent headlines about the difficulties our troops are facing in Afghanistan a majority of Canadians (59%) support sending troops to Afghanistan, compared to only 36% who do not support this measure.

Those who are in the youngest surveyed age cohort (18-24-year-olds) are least likely to support sending troops overseas; support for this international mission increases with age (those 55+: 68% support; 35-44: 60%, 25-34: 55%). Men (70%) are more likely than women (49%) to support sending troops to Afghanistan, while English speaking Canadians

(63%) are more likely than French speaking Canadians (46%) to support sending troops to Afghanistan.

Canadians support humanitarian efforts despite lack of threat to Canadians or Canadian interests. At a time when sending troops into any situation puts them at risk regardless of the mission's objective, two-thirds of Canadians feel that our troops should be sent to developing nations such as Asia and Africa to help with humanitarian efforts, even if no Canadians or Canadian interests are at risk (67%). On the other hand, 33% agreed that while Canada should do what it can to help...we should not put the lives of members of the Canadian military at risk unless there is a real threat to Canadian civilians," (33%).

Agreement with using Canadian troops to help with people in developing nations that are threatened regardless whether Canadians and Canadian interests are being threatened was highest in the westernmost and easternmost regions of the country. Seventy-two percent agreed in BC and Alberta, 70% agreed in the Atlantic regions, with the lowest level of agreement in the interior: Ontario (65% should send troops), Quebec (66%) and the prairies (65%) less often selected international military involvement without national interest.

Men (71%) were more likely than women (63%) support of international military engagement without national interest.

About This Survey

Innovative Research Group, Inc. (www.innovativeresearch.ca), a national research firm with offices in Toronto and Vancouver, surveyed 2,333 Canadians from its online Canada 20/20 panel. The survey was conducted between Monday, June 19th, and Wednesday, June 21st, 2006 and has a margin of error of $\pm 2.03\%$, 19 times out of 20. The data was weighted in accordance to the 2001 census. The portions of the survey mentioned above were commissioned by the Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute.

Attribution

In the first instance of mentioning the poll results the survey should be identified as a "Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute survey conducted by Innovative Research Group using their Canada 20/20 online panel".

All subsequent mentions can use the convention "CDFAI/INNOVATIVE poll" or "the CDFAI poll."

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Questions asked

AFG1. Whenever Canada sends our military into dangerous circumstances around the world, there is always a chance some members of our military may be injured or killed. Which of the following statements about the military is closest to your view?

Some people say ...[ROTATE]

...that Canada should send troops to help when people in Asia and Africa are threatened by systematic human rights violations or countries collapse, even if no Canadian civilians are at risk and Canada has no direct interest at stake.
[1]

...while Canada should do what we can to help people in Asia and Africa when countries collapse or there are serious human rights violations, we should not put the lives of members of the Canadian military at risk unless there is a real threat to Canadian civilians or our national interest.
[2]

AFG2. Do you support or oppose Canada sending troops to Afghanistan?

Strongly support	1
Somewhat support	2
Somewhat oppose	3
Strongly oppose	4
Don't know	8

AFG3. Currently about 2,300 Canadian soldiers are serving in Afghanistan. Which of the following statements is closest to your view on the impact of those Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan?

- 1 The Canadian military involvement in Afghanistan is providing critical assistance to local Afghans and is trying to create a peaceful and democratic society.
- 2 The Canadian military involvement in Afghanistan is putting Canadian lives at risk for no apparent benefit
- 3 I don't know enough to say