

News

## Bush disliked by 73% in Canada: But 68% like Americans

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Canadians tend to dislike and fear George W. Bush, a new poll suggests. Seventy-three per cent expressed an unfavourable opinion of the U.S. President and 38% said they felt he was more dangerous to world security than Osama bin Laden.

Those results, however, should not be seen as sweeping anti-Americanism. While Mr. Bush is singularly disliked in Canada, the nation does not allow that feeling to taint its image of Americans as a whole. In fact, 68% of Canadians said they had a favourable opinion of Americans.

The poll of 1,016 randomly selected Canadians was conducted by **Innovative Research Group** for the Dominion Institute and the Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute. A corresponding survey of 1,000 Americans was also conducted on some questions for a comparison of national views. The results were provided to the National Post.

When Canadians and Americans were each asked their views on Mr. Bush, there was decidedly less love for the President north of the border. Forty-six per cent of respondents in Canada said they had a "very unfavourable" impression of Mr. Bush, while only 27% of U.S. respondents expressed that.

Another 27% of Canadians had a "somewhat unfavourable" impression of Mr. Bush compared with 16% of Americans.

While 25% of Americans said they were "very favourable" of Mr. Bush, only 5% of Canadians were similarly impressed, and while 23% of American said they were "somewhat favourably" impressed by Mr. Bush, only 16% of Canadians shared that view.

When residents of Canada and the United States were each asked who was more dangerous to world security, Mr. Bush or bin Laden, 73% of Americans said bin Laden, the al-Qaeda terrorist leader. Far less -- 21% -- said their own president was.

Opinion on that issue was far more divided in Canada.

Less than half (49%) of Canadians said bin Laden was more dangerous, with another 38% naming Mr. Bush.

"The results show that the rising tide of anti-Americanism in this country is driven not out of a dislike for the American people but as a visceral dislike of Mr. Bush and the war in Iraq," said Rudyard Griffiths, executive director of the Dominion Institute, a group promoting knowledge of Canadian history.

The poll may reflect a feeling that politicians already know.

Paul Martin, the Prime Minister, has been raising objections to U.S. policies as he draws closer to an election call. In his first radio address last month, he sternly lashed out at the U.S. stand on the softwood lumber dispute.

And when Jean Chretien, the former prime minister, was defending the legacy of his tenure in power in the face of the damning Gomery report, he highlighted as one of his key decisions his keeping Canada out of the U.S.-led war in Iraq.

The public-opinion survey also suggests Canadians are deeply divided on the appropriate balance of resources dedicated to our military. Half of those questioned said Canada was pulling its weight on national defence, compared with 40% who said we were getting a free ride from the United States.

While Canadian opinion was split over the state of the country's military efforts since the end of the Second World War, the intensity of feelings over it are far from ambivalent.

Of the 50% of Canadians who felt that Canada was pulling its own weight on national defence, half of them described that view as one they "strongly" held.

Similarly, of the 40% who felt that Canada was getting a free ride from the United States on defence, 16% "strongly" held that view.

The survey was conducted in late October and is considered to have a margin of error of 3.1%, 19 times out of 20.

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