

MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN

Canadians Reject Extending Combat Mission in Afghanistan Beyond 2011

Respondents would welcome other arrangements to support Afghanistan, such as work related to training and development.

[VANCOUVER – Apr. 1, 2010] – An Angus Reid Public Opinion poll—the first conducted since U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton urged Canada to reconsider its decision to end its military commitment in Afghanistan in 2011—finds that a large majority of Canadians reject the possibility of changes to the announced departure date for combat troops.

In the online survey of a representative sample of 1,006 Canadians, 79 per cent of respondents oppose Canadian troops taking part in a combat mission after the current mandate ends in 2011. Only 16 per cent of Canadians would consent to such an arrangement.

Most Canadians, however, would like the country to remain engaged in Afghanistan. More than half of respondents (54%) would support Canadian troops training the Afghan military after 2011.

In addition, almost two thirds of respondents (64%) would agree with Canadian soldiers participating in activities related to development and governance work.

Quebecers are clearly opposed to any extension of the combat mission (85%), and are also less keen than Canadians in other regions about training the Afghan military (47%) and assisting in development and governance work (49%).

KEY FINDINGS

- **79% oppose Canadian troops taking part in a combat mission in Afghanistan after 2011**
- **54% support Canadian troops training the Afghan military after 2011**
- **64% support Canadian troops dealing with development and governance work in Afghanistan after 2011**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From March 30 to March 31, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,006 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.5%, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

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Future of Afghanistan

Canadians do not believe that the situation in Afghanistan will improve markedly once Canadian troops are no longer involved in combat duties. Half of respondents (50%) believe the security situation will be the same at the end of 2011 as it is now, three-in-ten (30%) expect violence to increase and just six per cent foresee a decline in violence.

Also, two thirds of Canadians (68%) believe that the Government of Afghanistan will not be able to run its affairs without the assistance of international troops after 2011.

The Government of Afghanistan

When asked to select six words to describe the Government of Afghanistan, respondents choose mostly negative traits. A majority of Canadians (54%) believe the Afghan government is *inefficient*. Other characteristics that were picked by respondents are *weak* (47%), *violates human rights* (47%), *dishonest* (44%), *oblivious to the country's needs* (37%), *secretive* (32%), and *backward-looking* (30%).

Analysis

Several NATO allies have gone through particularly divisive debates over their future role in Afghanistan. A discussion about this matter brought down the Dutch government only a few weeks ago. The plea from the U.S. Secretary of State did not change the prevailing point of view in Ottawa, and Canadians overwhelmingly reject any changes to the current timetable that calls for the end of the combat mission in 2011.

Still, the public would endorse an arrangement that would allow Canadian soldiers to play a different role and be away from the battlefield. While Canadians do not have a high opinion of the Afghan government at this time, they are also aware that the problems the country faces will not be over in the next 20 months.

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Mission in Afghanistan

Now, we'd like to ask you some questions about Afghanistan. Please select up to six words you think describe the Government of Afghanistan.

Inefficient	54%
Weak	47%
Violates human rights	47%
Dishonest	44%
Oblivious to the country's needs	37%
Secretive	32%
Backward-looking	30%
In decline	24%
Arrogant	20%
Uncaring	19%
Makes me ashamed	14%
Growing	11%
Forward-looking	5%
Mindful of the country's needs	4%
Open	3%
Down to earth	3%
Honest	2%
Efficient	1%
Makes me proud	1%
Compassionate	1%
Strong	1%
Respects human rights	1%
None of the above	9%

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Mission in Afghanistan

As you may know, Canada's commitment to the military mission in Afghanistan is set to expire in 2011. The U.S. government would like to see Canadian troops involved in Afghanistan after 2011. Do you support or oppose Canadian troops taking part in each one of these activities after 2011? –

"A combat mission"

Region							
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Support	16%	14%	23%	20%	18%	10%	10%
Oppose	79%	79%	76%	80%	74%	85%	84%
Not sure	5%	6%	1%	0%	7%	5%	6%

Mission in Afghanistan

As you may know, Canada's commitment to the military mission in Afghanistan is set to expire in 2011. The U.S. government would like to see Canadian troops involved in Afghanistan after 2011. Do you support or oppose Canadian troops taking part in each one of these activities after 2011? –

"A training role for the Afghan military"

Region							
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Support	54%	47%	55%	57%	58%	47%	66%
Oppose	39%	46%	43%	32%	33%	47%	29%
Not sure	7%	7%	1%	11%	8%	7%	6%

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Mission in Afghanistan

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“Activities related to development and governance work”

Region							
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Support	64%	61%	73%	68%	69%	49%	78%
Oppose	29%	33%	24%	27%	25%	42%	15%
Not sure	7%	6%	3%	5%	6%	9%	8%

Mission in Afghanistan

After 2011, do you think the level of violence in Afghanistan will have increased, remained the same as it is now, or decreased?

Region							
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Increased	30%	25%	28%	17%	31%	34%	31%
Remained the same	50%	49%	53%	51%	50%	53%	44%
Decreased	6%	8%	8%	8%	8%	3%	2%
Not sure	13%	18%	12%	24%	11%	9%	23%

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Mission in Afghanistan

After 2011, do you think the Government of Afghanistan will be able to run its affairs without the assistance of international troops?

Region							
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Yes	7%	8%	11%	1%	6%	9%	5%
No	68%	64%	69%	75%	69%	64%	72%
Not sure	25%	28%	21%	25%	25%	27%	23%

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Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specializing in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Public Opinion team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995

Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum (www.angusreidforum.com), Springboard America (www.springboardamerica.com) and Springboard UK (www.springboarduk.com) online panels, which are carefully recruited to ensure representation across all demographic and psychographic segments of these populations. Panel members pass through rigorous screening and a double opt-in process ensuring highly motivated and responsive members. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.

Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight provincial elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes.

Angus Reid, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election. More information on our electoral record can be found at:
<http://www.visioncritical.com/record-of-accuracy>

More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at
<http://www.visioncritical.com/what-we-do/practices/angus-reid-public-opinion/>

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**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

Copies of this poll are available on our website:
<http://www.visioncritical.com/category/global-opinions-and-trends>

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