

AFGHANISTAN MISSION – DECEMBER 2007

More Canadians see benefits for Afghan people, but a majority still calls for an early end to mission

Three-in-five respondents oppose an extension to the military deployment

[VANCOUVER – Dec. 31, 2007] – Fourteen months prior to the purported end of Canada's military deployment in Afghanistan, Canadians remain concerned about the mission's present and future, an Angus Reid Strategies poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 47 per cent of respondents regard the assignment of Canadian troops in Afghanistan as a war mission, while 28 per cent deem it a peace mission. Men (57%) and Quebecers (62%) clearly see Canada's participation as a conflict operation.

More than half of respondents (53%) believe Canada should withdraw its troops from Afghanistan before their mandate ends in February 2009, including 60 per cent of women and 65 per cent of Quebecers. In addition, three-in-five respondents (61%) in the whole country remain opposed to an extension of the Canadian mission in Afghanistan beyond February 2009. Once again, women (67%) and residents of Quebec (71%) sided in their censure.

The federal government continues to face a challenge in courting Canadians. While 31 per cent of respondents agree that the administration headed by Stephen Harper has effectively explained the mission in Afghanistan—up 12 points since July—three-in-five (60%) disagree. Men (41%) and Atlantic Canadians (38%) are more likely to endorse the government's pronouncements on Afghanistan.

KEY FINDINGS

- » **47% regard Canadian participation as war mission**
- » **57% say Afghan people are benefiting from Canadian efforts**
- » **53% call for an early withdrawal of Canadian troops from Afghanistan**
- » **61% reject extending the mission beyond February 2009**
- » **60% say the Harper government has not effectively explained the mission**
- » **71% say Canada is shouldering too much of the burden of NATO's mission**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

*From December 19 to December 20, 2007, Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of **1,052 adult Canadians**. The margin of error for the total sample is **+/- 3.1 %, 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.*

The silver lining for Harper comes in the form of a significant shift in the way Canadians perceive the success of the mission. This month, 57 per cent of respondents think the Afghan people are clearly benefiting from Canadian efforts in their country, a marked increase from 39 per cent in July. Men (68%), Atlantic Canadians (70%) and Albertans (66%) are particularly optimistic.

The biggest change registered comes on the question of whether Canada is shouldering too much of the burden of NATO's mission in Afghanistan. While in July 58 per cent of respondents agreed with this statement, the number jumped to 71 per cent in December.

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Mission in Afghanistan
In your view, is the Canadian mission in Afghanistan...

		Region						Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
A peace mission	28%	44%	40%	22%	27%	22%	17%	27%	29%
A war mission	47%	29%	36%	47%	46%	62%	53%	57%	39%
Not sure	24%	27%	25%	31%	27%	16%	30%	16%	32%

Trend – In your view, is the Canadian mission in Afghanistan...

	December 2007	July 2007
A peace mission	28%	28%
A war mission	47%	52%
Not sure	24%	20%

The Government's Role Do you agree or disagree with this statement? – The Harper government has effectively explained the mission in Afghanistan									
	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Agree	31%	30%	37%	29%	31%	27%	38%	41%	22%
Disagree	60%	52%	56%	65%	62%	62%	58%	53%	66%
Not sure	9%	18%	7%	5%	8%	11%	4%	6%	12%

Trend – The Harper government has effectively explained the mission in Afghanistan		
	December 2007	July 2007
Agree	31%	19%
Disagree	60%	60%
Not sure	9%	21%

Canada and NATO Do you agree or disagree with this statement? – Canada is shouldering too much of the burden of NATO's mission in Afghanistan									
		Region						Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Agree	71%	70%	63%	73%	70%	74%	76%	73%	69%
Disagree	19%	11%	22%	19%	21%	21%	10%	21%	17%
Not sure	11%	19%	15%	8%	10%	6%	14%	6%	15%

Trend – Canada is shouldering too much of the burden of NATO's mission in Afghanistan		
	December 2007	July 2007
Agree	71%	58%
Disagree	19%	18%
Not sure	11%	24%

An early withdrawal? Do you agree or disagree with this statement? – Canada should withdraw its troops from Afghanistan before their mandate ends in February 2009									
		Region						Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Agree	53%	51%	38%	52%	51%	65%	44%	44%	60%
Disagree	39%	36%	51%	40%	42%	30%	46%	52%	28%
Not sure	8%	13%	11%	7%	7%	5%	11%	4%	11%

Trend – Canada should withdraw its troops from Afghanistan before their mandate ends in February 2009		
	December 2007	July 2007
Agree	53%	49%
Disagree	39%	33%
Not sure	8%	18%

Are Afghans benefiting? Do you agree or disagree with this statement? – The Afghan people are clearly benefiting from Canadian efforts in their country									
		Region						Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Agree	57%	55%	66%	48%	61%	48%	70%	68%	47%
Disagree	26%	21%	22%	35%	23%	36%	13%	25%	27%
Not sure	17%	24%	12%	17%	16%	16%	18%	7%	26%

Trend – The Afghan people are clearly benefiting from Canadian efforts in their country		
	December 2007	July 2007
Agree	57%	39%
Disagree	26%	22%
Not sure	17%	39%

Extending the mission

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? – Canada should extend the mission in Afghanistan beyond February 2009

		Region						Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Agree	28%	22%	34%	31%	28%	21%	45%	37%	19%
Disagree	61%	59%	53%	58%	62%	71%	42%	55%	67%
Not sure	11%	19%	14%	12%	10%	8%	13%	8%	14%

Trend – Canada should extend the mission in Afghanistan beyond February 2009

	December 2007	July 2007
Agree	28%	16%
Disagree	61%	63%
Not sure	11%	22%

Angus Reid Strategies is a North American full-service polling and market research firm which 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 Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995. Located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal, our team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research.

Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel (www.angusreidforum.com), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. This premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.

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More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF.WP.pdf>

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

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
www.angusreidstrategies.com**