

MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN

Almost Half of Canadians Would End Afghanistan Mission Before 2011

Atlantic Canadians, Quebecers and Ontarians more likely to both disagree with the extension of the mission, and advocate for an early withdrawal.

[VANCOUVER – Mar. 7, 2009] – Canadian adults remain concerned about the mission in Afghanistan, with very few respondents advocating for an extension of Canada's military commitment and almost half calling for a withdrawal of troops before the scheduled 2011 deadline, a new *Toronto Star* / Angus Reid poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 48 per cent of respondents want the bulk of the troops currently deployed in Afghanistan to be withdrawn before 2011, 35 per cent would continue under the scheduled plan that calls for the end of the mission in 2011, and only seven per cent believe Canadian soldiers should remain in Afghanistan after 2011.

Since September 2008, more than half of Canadians (52% in the February 2009 survey) have disagreed with the extension of Canada's mission in Afghanistan until 2011. In the latest poll, the highest level of rejection is reported in Atlantic Canada (66%), Quebec (59%), and Ontario (50%).

Almost half of Canadians (48%) believe the Afghan government will be unable to take care of its own security needs without assistance from international troops in 2011—a proportion that remains unchanged since December.

KEY FINDINGS

- **49% reject Canada negotiating with the Taliban**
- **48% want to withdraw Canadian troops from Afghanistan before 2011**
- **48% believe the Afghan government will be unable to deal with security after international forces leave**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From February 27 to February 28, 2009, Angus Reid Strategies 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 +/- 3.1%, 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.