



## *NEWS RELEASE*

# **If Canada is Up, Why Are Canadians so Down? *Canadians Feel Good But Fear the Future***

Canadians feel good about the direction of the country at the moment, but in a departure from usual patterns, this has not put them in a sunny frame of mind when they look ahead. In fact, they fear for the future their children will face, saying they anticipate a more corrupt system of government and a scarier world. The results are contained in a new EKOS/Toronto Star/La Presse poll conducted this week in part to mark EKOS' 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

"You really have to wonder what is driving Canadians to these drastic conclusions," said Frank Graves, President of EKOS Research Associates. "It is certainly not their financial circumstances. It seems people are looking beyond their own personal situation for cues about what the future will bring."

In fact, in Alberta, the region of the country where the public is most positive about the economy and even the general direction of the country, the public is if anything more sour about the future than elsewhere.

## **Gloom Ahead**

Fifty-four per cent of Canadians say that Canada is moving in the right direction. Moreover, when they reflect back over the last quarter century, 44 per cent say that their overall quality of life is better and another 26 per cent say it is about the same. However, when we asked respondents to speculate about the next generation, about half said they thought that the overall quality of life will be worse in twenty-five years from now.

In part, the explanation for the current mood of pessimism in Canada may lie not in the conditions of daily life, but in what Canadians see going on in the news. In particular, there is a sourness about federal politics at the moment, wrapped up with the sponsorship scandal, and there is trepidation about what is seen as an increasingly dangerous world.

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Not surprisingly, in the wake of the publicity surrounding the sponsorship scandal and the Gomery report, 42 per cent of Canadians say that they believe politics in Canada is more corrupt today than it was a quarter-century ago. And they don't expect much improvement looking ahead. Slightly more Canadians believe that politics will get more corrupt over the next twenty-five years than think they will get more honest; but a clear majority think politics will remain pretty much the same.

Looking to the world, 69 per cent of Canadians say they think it is more dangerous today than it was 25 years ago – a remarkable conclusion when you consider that in 1980, the Iron Curtain was still in place and the US government was set to launch a renewed arms race with the Soviet Union. Almost as large a percentage of Canadians say they think that the world will get yet more dangerous in the quarter-century to come.

“This dark view of the direction of the world clearly reflects the post-September 11 consciousness that the conflicts in far-flung places can be brought to our door,” said Graves.

### *METHODOLOGY:*

These data are based on telephone interviews conducted Nov 7 to Nov 9, 2005 with a random sample of 1275 Canadians aged 18 and over. A sample of this size provides a margin of error of +/- 2.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as regions).

All the data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional, gender and age composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.