



NEWS RELEASE

Support for Afghanistan Mission Solidifies in Wake of Toronto Arrests Knowledge of Canadian Mission Continues to Rise

A new EKOS poll shows that support for Canada's military role in Afghanistan has not fallen, as some had suggested it might in the wake of the recent arrests of 17 men in the Toronto area on terrorism-related charges. If anything, support for the mission has solidified somewhat. Sixty-five per cent of Canadians now support the mission, up three percentage points from April, which is just inside the poll's margin of error.

"In some countries, the fear of terrorism has led to a desire to get out of international military involvement and in others it has had a 'rally-round effect', strengthening support," said Frank Graves, President of EKOS Research. "The recent arrests in Canada have not had any dramatic effect on support for the Afghanistan mission either way, though they may have halted the gentle ebbing in support we have been seeing since last fall."

The poll suggests that Canadians continue to take an increasing interest in the Canadian mission, which has moved into a tougher phase in recent months, with a sharp rise in Canadian casualties. The number of Canadians saying they know a fair amount or a great deal about the mission has risen from just 30% last September to 62% today.

"What is interesting here is that as the stakes on the ground in Afghanistan have grown, and as Canadians have grown in their understanding of the mission, support seems to have stabilized in a ratio of roughly two-to-one over opposition," said Graves. "This runs contrary to some of the conventional wisdom that Canadians have no stomach for anything other than traditional peacekeeping roles for their military abroad."

"What we are seeing here is an evolution in Canadian attitudes to military involvement abroad rather than a seismic shift," said Graves.

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METHODOLOGY

The EKOS survey sampled 1,004 Canadians between June 12 and June 20, 2006. A sample of this size produces a statistical margin of error of +/- 3.1 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.