



EMBARGO DATE: November 6, 2006

NEWS RELEASE

Afghanistan Support Stabilizes

After more than a year of decline, support for Canada's military role in the Afghanistan mission has stabilized. Using a tracking question, EKOS found that 58% of Canadians now support the mission, compared with 57% in August. These two polls showing almost identical levels of support represent a change from a trend of gradually diminishing support from a high of 76% over the last 14 months.

"What we are seeing is that Canadians are getting better and better informed about the Afghanistan mission," said EKOS President Frank Graves. "As people came to realize how exposed our soldiers were over the last year, many soft supporters of the mission gravitated to soft opposition. However, the population is now pretty literate about what is going on over there, and we may be entering a new period of relative stability in public opinion, barring a major change in the military situation."

Recent polls have drawn conflicting pictures of Canadian public opinion. Depending on the timing of the polls, and their exact wording, some have shown pluralities for and some against the mission. The virtue of a poll that asks precisely the same question over time is that it can clearly demonstrate the trend.

Strong support for the mission is fairly entrenched at just over a quarter of the population. Movement in response to the EKOS tracking question over the last year has been from those who "somewhat support" the mission into the "somewhat oppose" category, but now seems to be stabilizing. Strong opposition is at just under a fifth of the population.

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METHODOLOGY

The EKOS survey sampled 1,008 Canadians between October 20 and October 30, 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.