



NEWS RELEASE

62% Support Canada's Role in Afghanistan Understanding of Mission Rising; Support Ebbing

A clear majority of Canadians (62%) continues to support Canada's role in Afghanistan, down eight percentage points since February, according to EKOS Research Associates' latest sounding on the issue. While strong support for the mission remained about the same (27%) as it was in February, there was an erosion among those who "somewhat support" the mission (from 42% to 35%). Quebeckers are notably more divided than other Canadians over the deployment.

"In some ways, what is most remarkable here is how robust support for the mission has proven to be," said EKOS President, Frank Graves. "After all, for the first time in many years, Canadians are seeing significant casualties among their armed forces. What we are seeing is that some of those who were less firmly supportive of the mission a few months ago are falling away as their understanding of its seriousness rises."

Clearly the media coverage of Canada's deployment in Afghanistan and the Canadian casualties is having an impact on public understanding of the mission. More than four-fifths of Canadians (82%) say they have recently read, seen or heard information about the Canadian Forces – a significant jump since February. The number saying they know at least a "fair amount" about Canada's mission in Afghanistan has risen from 43% to 54%, and the number describing the mission as "peace support" as opposed to traditional "peacekeeping" has risen from 60% to 69%.

Canadians continue to be divided over their *preferred* role for Canadian forces. In this most recent survey 51% said that they thought Canada should participate in peace-support operations involving both peacekeeping and fighting alongside allies in disputed areas, while 46% said they preferred Canadian troops to stick to traditional peacekeeping roles such as observation and monitoring a truce.

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METHODOLOGY

The EKOS survey sampled 1,013 Canadians between April 20 and 27, 2006. A sample of this size produces a statistical margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The statistical error margin of for questions posed on half of the sample is +/- 4.4 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.