

BACKGROUND

Canada in the World A National Survey of Canadians

*Commissioned by The Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation,
in collaboration with the Université de Montréal*

Purpose:

Prior to the 10th annual Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation Conference (November 21-23, 2013), the Environics Institute for Survey Research conducted a national survey of Canadians around the Foundation's four defining themes, one of which is "Canada in the World." What do Canadians see as the country's foreign policy priorities, what countries are seen as friends and enemies, and what public support is there for participation in military missions abroad?

Highlights:

- Among four foreign policy areas, Canadians place the strongest priority on their country doing more to work with other countries to address climate change; close to half say the country should do more in this area and are willing to help pay for it through an additional \$100 per year in federal taxes. About one in four express a comparable level of support and commitment for Canada to do more to promote international trade abroad, and for Canada to do more to provide development aid to poor countries. The public places the lowest priority on their country doing more to combat international terrorism, with the commitment of one in six.
- The public tends to see other major countries as friends of Canada, with very few labelling them as enemies (with one notable exception). Almost everyone puts in the friend category the country's traditional allies of Great Britain, the USA and France, and a majority also consider as friends such countries as Mexico, India and Israel. Opinions are more divided when it comes to China, Russia and Saudi Arabia, but no more than one in ten considers any of these countries to be an enemy of Canada. The one outlier in the list of 10 countries presented is Iran: Fewer than one in ten label Iran as a friend of Canada, with others evenly divided between those who say Iran is an enemy and those who believe Iran is neither a friend nor an enemy of their country.
- Seven in ten Canadians would support a hypothetical international military mission to restore peace in a small African country, with this a majority view across the country. Moreover, this support does not vary noticeably whether such a mission were led by Great Britain and France, by the USA or by the United Nations.

Research Findings in Detail

CANADA'S FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES

- 1. Do you think that Canada should do more, should do less, or should do about the same as now, in terms of each of the following: Providing development aid to poor countries; Working with other countries to address climate change; Combating international terrorism; Promoting Canadian trade with other countries?**

How does the public prioritize its country's foreign policy priorities? Of the four options presented, Canadians place the greatest emphasis on working with other countries to address climate change: More than six in ten (63%) say their country should do more, compared with seven percent who say it should do less, and 28 percent who are satisfied with the status quo. Next in priority is promoting Canadian trade with other countries (55% say Canada should do more). The other two policy areas are lower priority for the public: 33 percent say the country should do more to provide development aid to poor countries, while 29 percent would like to see more done to combat international terrorism. In both cases, more than half believe Canada should maintain its current level of effort.

<i>In terms of each of the following, do you think that Canada . . .</i>	Should do more %	Should do less %	Should do about the same %
Working with other countries to address climate change	63	7	28
Promoting Canadian trade with other countries	55	6	38
Providing development aid to poor countries	33	13	51
Combating international terrorism	29	14	53

Public support for expanding international efforts around climate change is most widespread in Quebec (73% say do more) and BC (70%), as well as among university-educated Canadians (72%). This view is less apt to be shared in Manitoba (49% versus 35% who say the country should maintain its current level of effort) and Alberta (43%, versus 42%). In no group do more than 12 percent say Canada should be doing less than it is doing now to work with other countries to address climate change.

Support for doing more to promote international trade is most evident in Atlantic Canada (62%) and among Canadians in the top income bracket (62%), as well as among immigrants from outside Europe/USA (63%). This is the majority opinion across all groups except those with the lowest incomes (47%).

By comparison, expanding the country's role in providing development aid to poor countries is most widely endorsed in Quebec (39%), B.C. (38%) and the major urban areas (39%), and especially among Canadians aged 18 to 29 (48%) and those with a university degree (41%). Finally, public support for expanding the country's efforts to combat international terrorism is most evident in Manitoba (41%), as well as among Canadians without a high school diploma (51%) and those 45 years and older (37%).

2. *Would you be willing to pay additional \$100 per year in federal income tax to help pay for Canada to do more in each of these areas?*

A further way to test Canadians' support for expanded foreign policy is to test their willingness to help pay for it through higher taxes. Survey respondents who say Canada should do more in each policy area were asked if they would be willing to help support this goal by paying an additional \$100 per year in federal taxes.

The most widespread willingness to help pay for new foreign policy initiatives was expressed by those who would like Canada to do more to provide development aid to foreign countries (79% of this group say they would pay an additional \$100 per year), followed by those who support greater efforts to work with other countries to address climate change (71%). This proportion is somewhat lower among those advocating expanded efforts to combat international terrorism (59%) and promote international trade (49%).

Combining the level of support for expanded policy efforts with expressed willingness to help pay for it reveals the proportion of Canadians who express a strong commitment to each area. Based on this metric, doing more to work with other countries on climate change emerges as the clear frontrunner of public support (45% of Canadians support this objective and are willing to help pay for it). In distant second place is promoting Canadian trade abroad (27%), followed by providing development aid to poor countries (26%) and combating international terrorism.

<i>Percentage that both support expanded foreign policy <u>and</u> are willing to help pay for it through an additional \$100/year in federal taxes:</i>	<i>%</i>
Working with countries to address climate change	45
Promoting Canadian trade with other countries	27
Providing development aid to more countries	26
Combating international terrorism	17

CANADA'S FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

3. *Please tell me if you consider each of the following countries to be a friend of Canada, an enemy of Canada, or neither a friend nor enemy?*

How do Canadians view other countries in terms of being friendly or hostile toward their own nation? Public opinion about the 10 countries presented generally conforms to Canada's current foreign policy with respect to the country's allies, and countries with which it has more tenuous diplomatic relations.

Nine in ten Canadians consider Great Britain (91%) and the USA (89%) to be friends of Canada, followed closely by France (84%); virtually no one considers any of these countries to be an enemy. Clear majorities also say Mexico (72%), India (61%) and Israel (56%) are friends of Canada, with very small proportions labelling them as enemies.

Less clear-cut are the opinions of such countries as China (49% consider China to be a friend, versus 42% who say it is neither a friend nor an enemy), Russia (33% versus 55%) and Saudi Arabia (24%, versus 58%). In each case no more than one in ten see this country as an enemy.

<i>Do you consider this country to be a friend of Canada, an enemy of Canada, or neither?</i>	Friend %	Enemy %	Neither friend nor enemy %
Great Britain	91	-	7
The United States	89	1	9
France	84	-	14
Mexico	72	3	22
India	61	2	34
Israel	56	7	34
China	49	7	42
Russia	33	10	55
Saudi Arabia	24	12	58
Iran	8	42	46

At the bottom of the list is Iran: Fewer than one in ten (8%) say this country is a friend of Canada, but the remainder are divided between those who believe Iran is an enemy (42%) and those maintain it is neither a friend nor an enemy (46%).

The overall ordering of countries is largely the same across the country, with a few notable distinctions. Among the strongest allies, Quebecers are (understandably) most positive about France, while residents of Ontario and the west (as well as Canadians 30 and older) are most likely to see Great Britain as a friend. British Columbians tend to be more positive toward the lower tier countries, including India, Mexico, China and Iran, while Ontarians are among the most likely to count Israel as a friend.

SUPPORT FOR MILITARY MISSIONS ABROAD

4. *I would now like you to imagine the following scenario: A small African country has descended into civil war, with several thousand civilians at risk of death. An international military mission has been proposed to restore peace in this country[SPLIT SAMPLE: to be led by the United States/ to be led by Britain and France/ to be led by the United Nations/ no text], and Canada has been asked to contribute 300 troops.*

Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose Canada participating in this type of mission?

To what extent are Canadians prepared to support their country's participation in a military mission overseas, and does it matter what other country or international body is leading this mission? The survey presented a hypothetical scenario involving a military mission to restore peace in a small African country, in which each respondent was presented with one of four options of leadership (randomly assigned).

Overall, seven in ten Canadians say they would strongly (23%) or somewhat (47%) support Canada’s participation in this mission, compared with one in four who would somewhat (15%) or strongly (11%) oppose it. The leadership of this mission made very little difference in how the public viewed this scenario, with support for Canada’s involvement ranging from 66 percent (for a US-led mission) to 72 percent support for a mission led by Britain and France.

<i>Do you support Canada participating in an international military mission to restore peace in a small African country that has descended into civil war, led by [four options]?</i>	COMBINED %	USA %	Britain-France %	United Nations %	[not indicated] %
Strongly support	23	20	23	26	22
Somewhat support	47	46	49	44	47
Somewhat oppose	15	15	15	15	16
Strongly oppose	11	15	8	10	10

There is majority support for Canadian involvement in such a peacekeeping mission across the population, but the breadth of this sentiment is widest Atlantic Canada (75%), Quebec (74%), and among Canadians with at least some post-secondary education (72%). Support is less evident in Alberta (61%), among Canadians aged 60 and over (62%), allophones (63%) and immigrants from outside of Europe/the USA (63%).

Survey Methodology

The results are based on a telephone survey conducted for the Environics Institute by Research House with a representative sample of 1,501 Canadians (18 years and older) between September 17 and October 13, 2013. The sample was stratified by province and community size to ensure adequate coverage of jurisdictions for analysis purposes. A sample of this size will produce a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error is greater for results for regional and socio-demographic subgroups of the total sample.

The survey questions were designed by the Environics Institute, in conjunction with representatives from the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation and the Université de Montréal.