

Probe Research Inc. News Release

MANITOBANS AND THE FUTURE OF CANADA'S AFGHANISTAN MISSION

Release Date: December 19th, 2006

This province-wide Omnibus survey was designed and conducted by Probe Research Inc. via telephone interviews conducted between November 27th and December 5th, 2006 among a random and representative sampling of 1,000 Manitoba adults.

With a sample of 1,000 one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within +/- 3.1 percentage points of what they would have been if the entire adult population of Manitoba had been interviewed. The margin-of-error is higher within each of the survey's population sub-groups.

Modified random digit dialling was used to ensure that all Manitoba adults would have an equal opportunity to participate in this Probe Research survey. Minor statistical weighting has been applied to this sample to ensure that the age and gender balance correspond with the province as a whole.

MANITOBANS AND THE FUTURE OF CANADA'S AFGHANISTAN MISSION

Winnipeg, Manitoba – Manitobans are divided on the question of whether or not to withdraw Canadian soldiers from Afghanistan, with public support for bringing the mission to an early end being almost as strong as support for keeping soldiers there until the current mission ends in 2009. Probe Research conducted this random and representative sampling of 1,000 Manitoba adults between November 27th and December 5th, 2006.

Other research findings show that Manitobans are divided along several demographic lines on the question of Canada's commitment to Afghanistan. Those Manitobans most likely to favour staying the course in Afghanistan include men, middle-aged and older adults, those with post-secondary education and higher income earners. Conversely, women, young adults and those with lower levels of education and household incomes are more likely to favour withdrawing soldiers from Afghanistan before 2009.

Manitobans Divided on Keeping Soldiers in Afghanistan

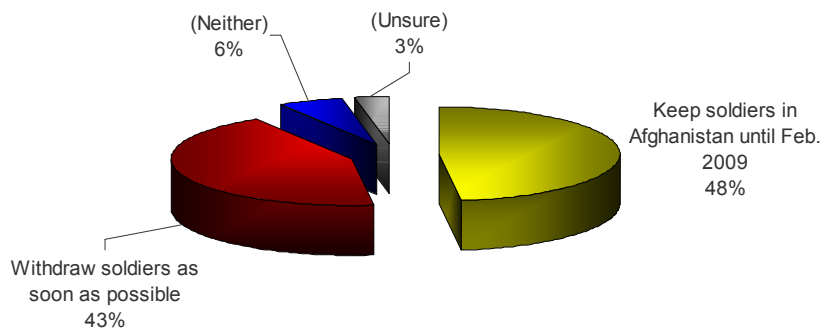
Respondents were asked which of two views came closest to reflecting their own personal opinion on Canadian soldiers' involvement in Afghanistan: that Canada should keep its soldiers in Afghanistan at least until Canada's military commitment expires in February 2009, or that Canada should seek to withdraw its soldiers from Afghanistan as soon as possible.

As Figure 1 on the following page illustrates, almost one-half of Manitobans (48%) favour keeping Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan until our military commitment there ends in February 2009, while almost as many (43%) favour withdrawing Canadian soldiers from Afghanistan as soon as possible. A small number of Manitoba adults find both options unsatisfactory (6%), and only a mere three percent declare themselves undecided on this matter.

Figure 1

Manitobans' Views on Keeping Canadian Soldiers in Afghanistan until February 2009

Q1. "As you may know, Canadian soldiers – including about 130 based here in Manitoba – have been involved in an armed conflict in Afghanistan since 2001. The Canadian government has committed to keeping our soldiers there until February of 2009, while some people have begun to call for a more immediate withdrawal of our troops there. Which of the following two options best reflects your own views about Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan? (ROTATE:) Canada should keep its soldiers in Afghanistan at least until our military commitment expires in February of 2009 or Canada should seek to withdraw all Canadian soldiers from Afghanistan as soon as possible" (n=1,000)



An examination of these polling results by demographic subgroup reveals that Manitobans from different walks of life tend to have divergent opinions on whether or not Canadian soldiers should remain in Afghanistan until the current military commitment there ends in 2009.

- Male respondents were solidly in favour of keeping Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan until at least February 2009, with nearly six in ten favouring staying the course (57%, versus the 35% of men who favoured withdrawing troops). Conversely, one-half of female respondents favoured withdrawing Canadian troops prior to 2009 (51%, versus the 40% of female respondents who favoured keeping Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan until 2009.)
- Young adults aged 18-34 tended to favour an early exit from Afghanistan (48%, versus the 41% who favoured keeping Canadian soldiers in place until 2009). The majority of Manitobans aged 35-54 years (52% “stay” versus 40% “withdraw”) and 55 years or over (51% “stay” versus 41% “withdraw”), however, tended to oppose withdrawing Canadian soldiers until the February 2009 commitment has been fulfilled.

- The combination of age and gender tends to exacerbate the differences noted above. Nearly two-thirds of men aged 55 years or over favour keeping Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan until at least February 2009 (64% “stay” versus 29% “withdraw”), while nearly three in five women aged 18-34 favour an early troop withdrawal (58% “withdraw” versus 32% “stay”).
- Opinions were divided along education lines as well. Indeed, university and college graduates (52% “stay” versus 40% “withdraw”) and those with some post-secondary education (51% “stay” versus 37% “withdraw”) tend to be in favour of keeping soldiers in Afghanistan until February 2009. However, one-half of Manitobans with Grade 12 or less (50% “withdraw” versus 42% “stay”) favour an early troop withdrawal.
- Support for keeping Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan until 2009 tends to rise with household income, with nearly six-in-ten respondents in the \$80,000-plus bracket (59% “stay” versus 33% “withdraw”) favouring adhering to the 2009 commitment. At the other end of the income scale, more than one-half of those in households earning less than \$30,000 per year favour withdrawing Canadian soldiers as soon as possible (54% “withdraw” versus 36% “stay”).

Manitobans' Opinions on Canada's Involvement in Afghanistan

"As you may know, Canadian soldiers – including about 130 based here in Manitoba – have been involved in an armed conflict in Afghanistan since 2001. The Canadian government has committed to keeping our soldiers there until February of 2009, while some people have begun to call for a more immediate withdrawal of our troops there. Which of the following two options best reflects your own views about Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan?" (First two options read in random order)

	TOTAL	REGION			GENDER		AGE		
		Winnipeg (%)	Rest of MB (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)	18-34 (%)	35-54 (%)	55+ (%)	
Should stay until 2009	48 (1,000) (%)	48 (600) (%)	49 (400) (%)	57 (484) (%)	40 (516) (%)	41 (317) (%)	52 (358) (%)	51 (283) (%)	
Should withdraw as soon as possible	43	46	39	35	51	48	40	41	
(Neither)	6	4	8	5	6	5	5	6	
(Unsure)	3	2	4	3	3	6	3	2	

Manitobans' Opinions on Canada's Involvement in Afghanistan (cont'd)

"As you may know, Canadian soldiers – including about 130 based here in Manitoba – have been involved in an armed conflict in Afghanistan since 2001. The Canadian government has committed to keeping our soldiers there until February of 2009, while some people have begun to call for a more immediate withdrawal of our troops there. Which of the following two options best reflects your own views about Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan?" (First two options read in random order)

	TOTAL	EDUCATION			HOUSEHOLD INCOME			
		HS or Less (%)	Some Post-Sec. (%)	Univ./Coll. Graduate (%)	< \$30K (%)	\$30K-\$59K (%)	\$60K-\$79K (%)	\$80K+ (%)
Should stay until 2009	48 (1,000) (%)	42 (348) (%)	51 (197) (%)	52 (440) (%)	36 (178) (%)	47 (289) (%)	52 (146) (%)	59 (211) (%)
Should withdraw as soon as possible	43	50	37	40	54	45	42	33
(Other/Neither)	6	5	8	5	7	6	3	4
(Unsure)	3	3	4	3	3	2	3	4

For more information on this survey, please contact:

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