



Latest News: Detainee issue overshadowing-

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**Casualties**

**55%**  
Pull out if casualties climb

**39%**  
Casualties unfortunate but necessary

**This graphic shows that a growing number of Canadians favour leaving Afghanistan if casualties continue to rise.**

Poll suggests most concerned about Afghanistan

Updated Sun. May. 6 2007 6:54 PM ET

CTV.ca News Staff

A new poll suggests that two-thirds of Canadians think this country's presence in Afghanistan makes Canada more vulnerable to a terror attack.

Pollster Nik Nanos of SES Research told CTV News, "If there's one word to describe Canadians' view of the war in Afghanistan, it's concern.

"Canadians are concerned we're not putting in the resources to succeed, they are concerned the mission makes us more of a target and they are concerned about casualties," he said Sunday.

The poll asked the 1,000 respondents how the Conservative government is managing the war:

- 48 per cent disagreed with the government's management
- 44 per cent supported the government

The findings also suggest that the number of casualties causes concern:

- 55 per cent said Canada should pull out of Afghanistan if casualties continue.
- 39 per cent said casualties are an unfortunate but necessary part of the mission.

About 55 per cent of respondents -- who were interviewed between April 26 and May 1 -- didn't think Canada and other NATO countries have deployed the resources necessary to succeed in Afghanistan.

Since early 2002, Canada has lost 54 soldiers and one diplomat to violence



**Military personnel walk under a projected images of fallen soldiers as they arrive for a memorial service for the eight Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan at CFB Gagetown, near Oromocto, N.B. on April 25, 2007. (CP / Andrew Vaughan)**

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Canadian Casualties



Profiles of the Canadian casualties in Afghanistan since April 2002.

in Afghanistan.

A top Canadian general defends the conduct of the mission in Afghanistan's Kandahar province, considered Taliban heartland.

"It is better today than when we went there a year ago," said Lt. Gen. Walter Natynczyk.

The Conservative government has been under fire for the past two weeks over the issue of detainees turned over to Afghan authorities being subjected to torture and abuse.

A reworked agreement with Afghanistan's government on the transfer of detainees will allow Canadian personnel more access to those suspected insurgents in Afghan government hands.

"When you are operating in these kinds of circumstances, nothing is perfect," Natynczyk said. "You learn, and one can't think of what they knew in 2004 when over the months they put the first agreement together with the Afghan authorities."

However, other NATO countries at that time signed an agreement that did give them access to the detainees they transferred.

"Basically, I think the detainee story is kind of shorthand for Afghanistan writ large and the concerns Canadians have about it," CTV's Craig Oliver said Sunday on *Question Period*.

"One of the reasons why the Conservatives cannot break out beyond their base, I think, is because of doubts about Afghanistan. Also, doubts about their stand on the environment. This is a serious problem for them."

Pollsters have found that when Canadians are focused on domestic issues such as the economy, support for the Conservatives goes up.

When their attention shifts to foreign policy issues, it goes down.

While the Conservative party has been in the high 30s and barely over 40 per cent in some opinion polls this winter, a recent Strategic Counsel poll had the two leading parties stuck where they were at the time of the Jan. 23, 2006 election.

The poll, conducted between April 21-24 for CTV and *The Globe and Mail*, gives the Conservatives a six-point lead (percentage-point change from a March 20-21 poll in brackets):

- Conservatives: 36 per cent (-3)
- Liberals: 30 per cent (-1)
- NDP: 13 per cent (unchanged)
- Bloc Quebecois: 9 per cent (+1)
- Green Party: 12 per cent (+3)

Two recent Decima Research polls have the Conservatives and Liberals tied at 30 per cent.

SES, who conducted the poll for Sun Media, didn't question voters in this current poll about which political party they supported.

In the Strategic Counsel poll, 36 per cent of respondents supported the sending of troops to Afghanistan, while 57 per cent were opposed.

The last time a majority of respondents supported the sending of troops was in a March 2006 poll, which is just after the Kandahar phase of Canada's Afghanistan involvement began. Back then, 55 per cent supported the sending of troops, while 41 per cent were opposed.

*With a report from CTV's Rosemary Thompson and files from The Canadian Press*

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Andy Johnson looks at what the Taliban might have in store for spring offensive. ↗

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## VIDEO

- ▶ CTV News: Rosemary Thompson on the mission 1:54
- ▶ CTV Newsnet: Canadians' opinion on Afghanistan changing 0:33
- ▶ CTV's Question Period: Media panel 8:11
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