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Thursday, February 20, 2003

**Canucks still resist war: Poll****Stance doesn't bother U.S., says  
Manley****By BILL RODGERS, OTTAWA BUREAU  
CHIEF**

OTTAWA -- Two-thirds of Canadians remain firmly opposed to Canadian support for a unilateral U.S.-led attack on Iraq, an SES/Sun Media poll reveals.

The survey of 1,000 people conducted by SES Canada Research shows 66% said they believed Canada should not support an American invasion without United Nations approval.

Only 26% of Canadians would support unilateral U.S. action in Iraq.

The results "point to the fact that the U.S. efforts in the media and at the United Nations have had no impact," said SES president Nik Nanos.

**ATTITUDE CONSISTENT**

The poll asked: "Some people think that Canada should support the United States if it decides to unilaterally invade Iraq to topple Saddam Hussein because the U.S. is our ally. Others think that we should not support our U.S. ally without the approval of the United Nations. Which of these two options best reflects your view?"

The survey of 1,000 Canadians, conducted between Feb. 2 and

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Sun Media Newspapers

Feb. 11, shows virtually no change in attitude from a poll that posed the same question last November.

It also clearly illustrates why the Chretien government has been so hesitant to get too cozy with the Bush administration and its hard-line position to oust Saddam Hussein with or without UN approval.

Deputy Prime Minister John Manley told Sun Media the poll is "pretty consistent with what we've heard," adding he hasn't observed a strain in Canada-U.S. relations as a result of the Chretien government's position.

"We have tried to be very careful in how we have framed our views on this," Manley said. "In no way have we given comfort to the enemies of the United States and I don't think that they necessarily believe that is true of all other countries."

He added, "I don't think at this point that our position is causing them any unhappiness."

In Washington, U.S. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld yesterday expressed appreciation for Canada's commitment.

"Canada has been a solid ally in the global war against terrorism and we thank the Canadian people for their support in defending freedom around the globe," he said.

Canadian Alliance defence critic Leon Benoit said he too would like to see a UN-sanctioned operation in Iraq, if necessary, but added, "if the United Nations won't enforce their own resolutions, then someone has to and Canada should be a part of that."

Benoit said the Chretien government is being led by public opinion.

## **NO LEADERSHIP**

"Look at people like (British PM) Tony Blair -- completely against public opinion. He knows it's the right thing to do."

NDP leader Jack Layton, whose party opposes war in Iraq, accused the Grit government of still having a fuzzy position on the issue.

The SES poll is accurate plus or minus 3.1%, 19 times out of 20.

"That why it's important for Canadians to keep speaking out because we haven't got a prime minister with backbone so the Canadian population has to provide it.