

April 17, 2008

Canadians pessimistic about ability to win in Afghanistan

A new survey by Phoenix SPI finds that very few Canadians believe the NATO mission in Afghanistan will succeed in establishing a lasting democratic government in that country. Moreover, an overwhelming majority believes that once the NATO forces leave, Afghanistan will once again become a haven for terrorists.

Key Findings

- Only one in twenty Canadians (5%) feels certain that the NATO forces will win the war in Afghanistan and succeed in helping to establish a lasting democratic government in that country. An additional 25% see this as a probable scenario. Conversely, almost two-thirds (64%) think that NATO forces will probably or definitely fail in terms of facilitating democratic transition in Afghanistan.
- Compared to the rest of Canada, residents of Quebec are the most likely to doubt the eventual success of the NATO mission in Afghanistan (75% vs. 61%).
- Optimism about the outcome of the mission also varies with age: Canadians aged 25 to 34 are most likely to think the NATO mission has a chance at success (43%), while those aged 35 and older are more pessimistic (26%).
- What is perhaps more disconcerting is that over three-quarters of Canadians (78%) believe it is likely that once the NATO forces have left, Islamic radicals will move back into the country and use it as a base for terrorist activities. Moreover, almost half (44%) think this is *very* likely. Only 15% of Canadians discount this possibility.
- Curiously, residents of Quebec were less likely than those living elsewhere in Canada to think that Islamic radicals would return to Afghanistan once the NATO forces depart (70% vs. 81%).
- The perceived likelihood that Afghanistan will once again become a base of terrorist operations also increased with age: 33% of Canadians between 18 and 24 did not think this to be a likely scenario, compared to 17% of those aged 25 to 24, and only 11% of those 35 years of age and older.

Phoenix SPI is an Ottawa-based, non-partisan public opinion research firm. Established in 2003, Phoenix has become one of the top suppliers of public opinion research to the Government of Canada.

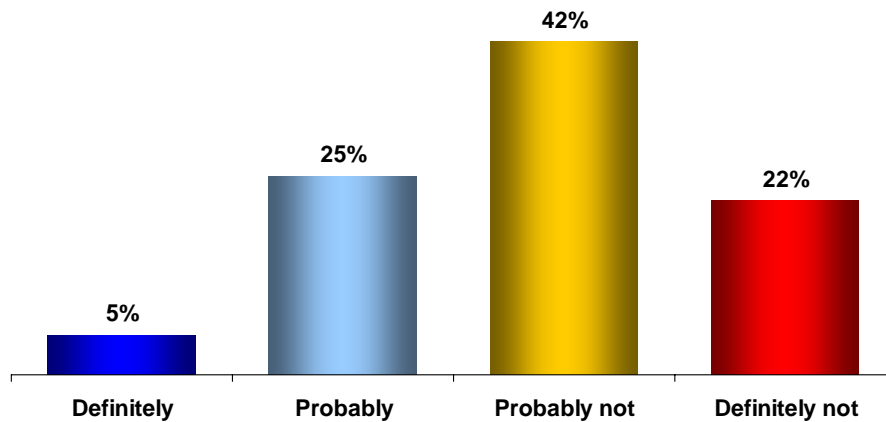
Methodology

- The findings presented above are based on a telephone survey conducted April 8-12, 2008, with a random sample of 1039 Canadians, 18 years of age and older. Fieldwork was undertaken by Elemental Data Collection.
- Given the size of the sample, the findings can be considered representative of the general population of Canada within $\pm 3.0\%$, 19 times out of 20.
- The margin of error increases as the results are sub-divided.
- The final data were weighted by region, age, and gender using Statistics Canada Census data to reflect the actual demographic and regional distribution of the Canadian population.

If you would like more information on the findings of this survey, please contact Sergey Vershinin by phone at (613) 260-1700 x225 or via email at svershinin@phoenixspi.ca.

NATO Mission Deemed Unlikely to Succeed

Q: Do you think that NATO forces will win the war in Afghanistan and succeed in helping to establish a lasting democratic government in that country?

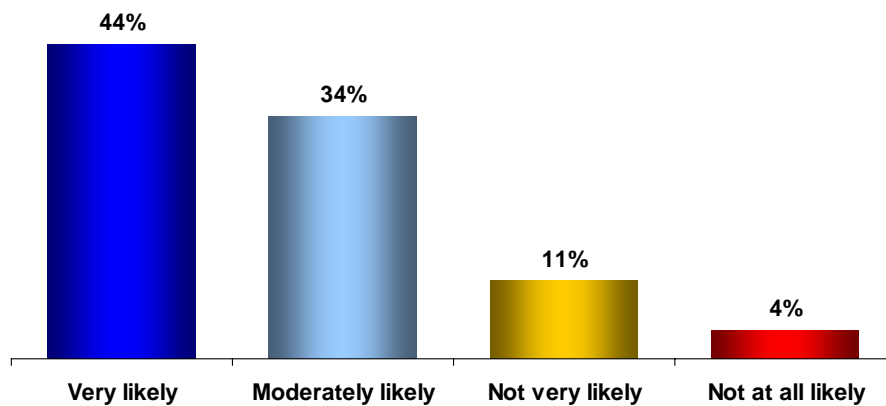


Base: All Canadians (n=1039; DK/NA=6%)

Phoenix SPI, Canadians' views on mission in Afghanistan (April 17, 2008)

Once NATO Leaves, the Terrorists Will Come Back

Q: If NATO forces were to leave Afghanistan within the next 3-5 years, how likely do you think it is that Islamic radicals would move back into the country and use it as a base to train and launch terrorist operations?



Base: All Canadians (n=1039; DK/NA=7%)

Phoenix SPI, Canadians' views on mission in Afghanistan (April 17, 2008)