



FACTUM

More Than Half (56%) of Canadians Consider Canada's Armed Forces to be Old and Antiquated

Three-quarters (75%) think Canada should increase its military spending, but six in ten (59%) still consider them among the best in the world.

Toronto, ON, August 4, 2023 – With the recent NATO summit in Vilnius all wrapped up, Canada's Armed Forces and the current geopolitical tensions are on the front burner for the moment. However, over half of Canadians (56%) consider their armed forces old and antiquated, according to a recent Ipsos poll conducted for Global News.

Prime Minister Trudeau and his government cut military spending in the 2023 budget. However, Canadians disagree with him about the direction of military spending. Three-quarters (75%) of Canadian's believe that Canada should increase its defense spending to ensure it can protect Canadian territory and sovereignty, while seven in ten (71%) want that increased spending to allow the Canadian Forces to contribute to global peace and stability. Overall, half of Canadians think the military is adequately funded to defend Canada's interests at home (51%) and abroad (50%). Though half believe it is adequately funded, seven in ten (69%) feel that the modernization of Canada's military is held back by mismanagement and political interference.

There are a number of reasons why Canadians are concerned about their military's current state of readiness. Seven in ten Canadians feel that their concerns about defending Canada are directly related to Russia's invasion of Ukraine (71%) and China's recent actions in the Taiwan Strait (69%). While the former dominated the Vilnius summit with NATO pledging more support to Ukraine and acknowledging Russia as the [most significant and direct threat to NATO](#), China's growing presence as a strategic threat also made the summit's communique. Combined with [Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy](#) and the [American Department of Defense's 2022 Strategic Review](#) both highlighting the threat of China, it is clear that Canada and it's allies are moving to solidify their defenses. Canadians don't just want to rely on their allies though as they aren't supportive of leaving the nation's defense up to the United States with 78% disagreeing with the sentiment. Instead, Canadians appear to want their country to take on a bigger role in the current escalating geopolitical tensions and to shore up its own defenses.

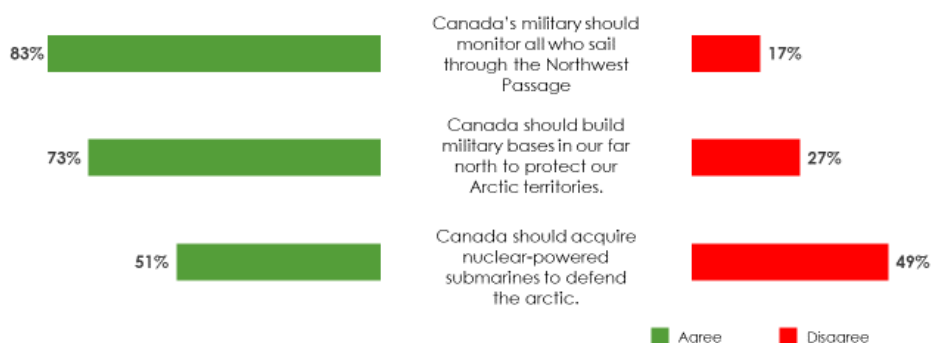
Canadians Feel Strongly About Monitoring and Defending the Arctic

One area where Canadians believe the military should play a larger role is in the Arctic. The far north is rapidly becoming a new frontier of the current East-West tensions as newly opened shipping routes from melting ice packs and increased demand for the region's natural resources draw more traffic. The threat from Russia in the Arctic has loomed large since the Cold War, but China's declaration of itself as a near Arctic state adds new fuel to the fire.

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Increasingly, Canadians are viewing the Arctic as a key area of interest for monitoring and defending. Over eight in ten (83%) Canadians want Canada's military to monitor all who sail through the Northwest Passage, which passes through Canadian territorial waters. Canadians are also in favour of an increased presence in the North with 73% agreeing that more military bases should be built in the far North to protect Canada's Arctic territories and half (51%) in favour of Canada acquiring nuclear submarines to defend the region.

To what extent to agree or disagree that...



Generational Divisions in Support For Increased Military Spending as Younger Canadians Believe Other Priorities Take Precedence

Support for increased military spending and an increased role for the Canadian military is not homogenous among all Canadians. Older Canadians with their memory of the Second World War and Cold War are significantly more supportive of increased military funding to ensure the Canadian Armed Forces can defend the nation's sovereignty (83% vs. 71% of 35-54 years old and 68% of 18-34 years old). Current geopolitical tensions are also a greater concern to older Canadians likely due to their memories of past conflicts. Significantly more feel concerned about Canada's defense due to the war in Ukraine (79% vs. 68% of 35-54 years old and 64% of 18-34 years old) and China's actions in the Taiwan Strait (79% vs. 68% of 35-54 years old and 58% of 18-34 years old).



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Older Canadians are also supportive of an expanded military presence at home and abroad. Those aged 55 years and older are more likely to believe that Canada should increase its military spending so it can contribute to global peace and stability (79% vs. 70% of 35-54 years old and 63% of 18-34 years old). Canadians 55 and over also favour an expanded presence in the country's far North with significantly more agreeing that the Canadian military should monitor all who sail the Northwest passage (90% vs. 83% of 35-54 years old and 74% of 18-34 years old) and that Canada should build more military bases to protect the nation's Arctic territories (82% vs. 68% of 35-54 years old and 67% of 18-24 years old).

Younger Canadians are taking a different view of the current state of the nation's defense. Those aged 18-34 are significantly more likely to believe that Canada should leave its defense up to the United States (36% vs. 21% of 35-54 years old and 12% of 55+ years old). This is likely because younger Canadians think that there are more urgent issues that require larger amounts of government spending than defense (66% vs. 54% of 35-54 years old and 41% of 55+ years old). In addition to this, younger Canadians are also more likely to believe that Canada's military is adequately funded to defend the nation's interests at home (67% vs. 56% of 35-54 years old and 35% of 55+ years old) and abroad (67% vs. 53% of 35-54 years old and 34% of 55+ years old).

About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between June 19th and 20th, 2023, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of 1,000 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed. Quotas and weighting were employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the Canadian population according to census parameters. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians aged 18+ been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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