

ARCTIC SOVEREIGNTY AND RUSSIA

Canadians Concerned About Russia; Want Action on Arctic Sovereignty

Tories picked over Grits to assert Canada's claim; half of respondents fear Russia will become a military threat to Western nations.

[VANCOUVER – Aug. 21, 2008] – The vast majority of Canadians want Ottawa to assert the country's sovereignty over the Arctic, and a large proportion of respondents express fears over Russia becoming a military threat to the West, a new Angus Reid Strategies poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 74 per cent of respondents think Canada should invest heavily on securing sovereignty over its Arctic territory. Additionally, 56 per cent of respondents want Canada to plant a flag on the Arctic seabed—just as Russia did last year.

According to international regulations, the Arctic region surrounding the North Pole is not regarded as part of any single country's territory and is therefore administered by the International Seabed Authority. However, Canada, Russia, the United States, Norway and Denmark have economic rights over parts of the Arctic around their coasts. All of these countries claim that parts of the Arctic—an oil rich region—belong to their territories.

More than half of Canadians (54%) see Russia—and not the United States—as the main challenger to Canada's claims over the Arctic territory.

Angus Reid Strategies first asked Canadians about this particular topic in August 2007. A year ago, 44 per cent of respondents said they trusted Prime

KEY FINDINGS

- **Fewer Canadians (41%, -3) have confidence in Harper's ability to secure Arctic sovereignty**
- **74% want Canada to invest heavily on securing sovereignty over its Arctic land**
- **54% say Russia is main threat to Canada's claims over Arctic territory**
- **49% say Russia will be a military threat for Western nations in near future; 37% see it as a possible threat to Canada**
- **40% of Canadians want to participate in U.S. missile defence shield system criticized by Russia; 43% disagree**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From August 15 to August 17, 2008 Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of 1,014 adult Canadians. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.1 %, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding

Minister Stephen Harper to secure Canada's territorial claims over the Arctic. The proportion has dropped slightly to 41 per cent in this new survey. Remarkably, more Canadians now think that Ottawa should plant a flag on the Arctic seabed (56%, compared to 51% in 2007).

In the new poll, 29 per cent of Canadians say they trust the Conservative Party to assert Canada's Arctic sovereignty, while only 15 per cent pick the Liberal Party. Just under a quarter of respondents (23%) believe neither of the two major federal parties.

Arctic sovereignty concerns aside, respondents were asked to express their views on Russia's growing power in the global stage. Half of Canadians (49%) foresee Russia becoming a military threat for Western nations within the next five years. More than a third of respondents (37%) think Russia will threaten Canada specifically.

Canadians hold differing views on the country's participation in the United States-backed ballistic missile defence shield that has been severely criticized by Russia. Washington claims that the system—built with the help of countries such as Australia, Britain, Israel, Japan and South Korea—would defend the U.S. and its allies from a potential attack by Iran or North Korea. Critics believe the project could lead to a new arms race. Russia has said that the plan undermines its national security and has questioned the motives behind the project.

Asked whether Canada should participate in this endeavour, 40 per cent of respondents say the federal government should definitely or probably consider it, while 43 per cent disagree. Rejection to the idea was highest in British Columbia (51%) and Ontario (46%).

Arctic Sovereignty and Russia

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(Strongly Agree / Moderately Agree responses only)

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL
Canada should invest heavily on securing sovereignty over its Arctic territory	74%	76%	86%	67%	74%	67%	83%
Russia represents a bigger threat than the United States to Canada in matters related to Arctic sovereignty	54%	61%	63%	58%	50%	52%	57%
I have confidence in the government of Stephen Harper to secure Canada's Arctic sovereignty	41%	35%	60%	48%	38%	39%	41%
Canada should plant a flag on the Arctic's seabed	56%	47%	55%	51%	56%	57%	71%

Arctic Sovereignty and Russia

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(Strongly Agree / Moderately Agree responses only)

	Gender		Age			Income			Education		
	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$50K	\$50-99K	\$100K+	HS or less	College/ Tech schl	Univ+
Canada should invest heavily on securing sovereignty over its Arctic territory	83%	65%	59%	75%	84%	72%	76%	82%	72%	73%	79%
Russia represents a bigger threat than the United States to Canada in matters related to Arctic sovereignty	61%	48%	46%	55%	61%	55%	59%	56%	59%	53%	50%
I have confidence in the government of Stephen Harper to secure Canada's Arctic sovereignty	50%	32%	32%	40%	50%	39%	46%	47%	44%	41%	36%
Canada should plant a flag on the Arctic's seabed	61%	51%	43%	59%	64%	55%	56%	61%	57%	58%	50%

Arctic Sovereignty and Russia

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(Strongly Agree / Moderately Agree responses only)

	August 2008	August 2007
Canada should invest heavily on securing sovereignty over its Arctic territory	74%	75%
Russia represents a bigger threat than the United States to Canada in matters related to Arctic sovereignty	54%	53%
I have confidence in the government of Stephen Harper to secure Canada's Arctic sovereignty	41%	44%
Canada should plant a flag on the Arctic's seabed	56%	51%

Arctic Sovereignty and Russia

Which of the two main federal political parties do you trust more to assert Canada's Arctic sovereignty?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL
The Conservative Party	29%	34%	49%	35%	29%	22%	24%
The Liberal Party	15%	11%	5%	11%	20%	15%	16%
Both equally	9%	10%	8%	3%	8%	12%	10%
Neither	23%	28%	19%	24%	17%	30%	28%
Not sure	23%	17%	19%	27%	26%	22%	21%

Arctic Sovereignty and Russia

Which of the two main federal political parties do you trust more to assert Canada's Arctic sovereignty?

	Gender		Age			Income			Education		
	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$50K	\$50-99K	\$100K+	HS or less	College/ Tech schl	Univ+
The Conservative Party	40%	19%	26%	28%	35%	27%	34%	39%	33%	28%	27%
The Liberal Party	15%	15%	15%	11%	20%	15%	15%	17%	11%	13%	25%
Both equally	10%	8%	7%	11%	9%	9%	8%	11%	6%	10%	14%
Neither	21%	26%	18%	28%	22%	27%	20%	20%	25%	23%	21%
Not sure	14%	32%	34%	22%	13%	23%	23%	14%	25%	25%	14%

Arctic Sovereignty and Russia

How concerned are you about Russia becoming a military threat to Western Countries over the next five years?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL
Very concerned / Moderately concerned	49%	49%	55%	51%	47%	48%	54%
Not too concerned / Not concerned at all	43%	46%	43%	41%	45%	41%	43%
Not sure	7%	4%	2%	8%	8%	11%	3%

Arctic Sovereignty and Russia

How concerned are you about Russia becoming a military threat to Western Countries over the next five years?

	Gender		Age			Income			Education		
	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$50K	\$50-99K	\$100K+	HS or less	College/ Tech schl	Univ+
Very concerned / Moderately concerned	51%	47%	41%	48%	58%	51%	46%	56%	54%	44%	54%
Not too concerned / Not concerned at all	44%	42%	46%	45%	38%	41%	48%	42%	37%	47%	45%
Not sure	4%	10%	13%	7%	4%	7%	6%	3%	10%	9%	1%

Arctic Sovereignty and Russia

How concerned are you about Russia becoming a military threat to Canada over the next five years?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL
Very concerned / Moderately concerned	37%	42%	43%	47%	30%	40%	36%
Not too concerned / Not concerned at all	56%	54%	55%	46%	62%	49%	61%
Not sure	7%	4%	2%	7%	7%	11%	4%

Arctic Sovereignty and Russia

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Very concerned / Moderately concerned	35%	40%	32%	35%	46%	39%	37%	38%	42%	36%	33%
Not too concerned / Not concerned at all	61%	50%	57%	58%	51%	54%	57%	58%	49%	56%	65%
Not sure	4%	10%	11%	8%	3%	7%	6%	3%	9%	8%	2%

Arctic Sovereignty and Russia

As you may know, the United States wants to implement a ballistic missile defence shield in the world, and has approached the governments of Poland and the Czech Republic for assistance. Several countries—including Australia, Britain, Israel, Japan and South Korea—are already working with the U.S. on this project. The U.S. government claims that the ballistic missile defence shield would defend the U.S. and its allies from a potential attack by Iran or North Korea. Critics believe the project could lead to a new arms race and are worried about the possibility of placing weapons in space. Do you think Canada should participate in the ballistic missile defence shield?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL
Definitely should / Probably should	40%	36%	46%	42%	36%	39%	53%
Probably should not / Definitely should not	43%	51%	37%	39%	46%	41%	36%
Not sure	17%	13%	17%	19%	18%	19%	11%

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	Gender		Age			Income			Education		
	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$50K	\$50-99K	\$100K+	HS or less	College/ Tech schl	Univ+
Definitely should / Probably should	49%	30%	34%	38%	46%	40%	38%	50%	41%	41%	36%
Probably should not / Definitely should not	42%	45%	44%	43%	43%	41%	49%	39%	34%	45%	53%
Not sure	9%	25%	22%	19%	11%	19%	13%	11%	25%	15%	11%

Angus Reid Strategies is a full-service polling and market research firm which is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995.

Angus Reid Strategies, along with its sister company, Vision Critical, is now the largest Canadian-owned market research enterprise. In addition to its four offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices San Francisco, New York and London, England. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel (www.angusreidforum.com), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. This premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.

Over the last year, Angus Reid has covered five elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes. <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=194>

More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF.WP.pdf>

- 30 -

**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
www.angusreidstrategies.com**