



Greater Support Among Canadians for Activism in World Affairs And More Evidence Found of Growing Affinity with Americans

As 2002 opens with a focus on international efforts to combat terrorism and the conditions that breed it, an increased number of Canadians think the country should become more active in military alliances such as NATO, and in delivery of foreign aid.

There has been a corresponding drop in the proportion saying that Canada should maintain its current level of involvement in these activities, and little change in the proportion saying the country should be less involved.

While about half (51%) say that Canada should maintain its current level of involvement in military alliances like NATO, 37% want the country to be more involved, a 13-point increase over March, 2001 and a significant shift in public thinking. Only 10% want less involvement.

These are findings of a survey conducted for the Centre for Research and Information on Canada (CRIC) by Environics Research Group, which was completed in early January.

The survey shows that there has also been a 10 point increase in the proportion saying Canada should become more involved in providing economic aid to poor countries (39% in January 2002, up from 29% in March 2001), and a five-point increase in the proportion saying Canada should become more involved in peacekeeping missions abroad (35% in January 2002, up from 30% in March 2001). At the same time, the proportion saying Canada should maintain its current level of involvement has fallen.

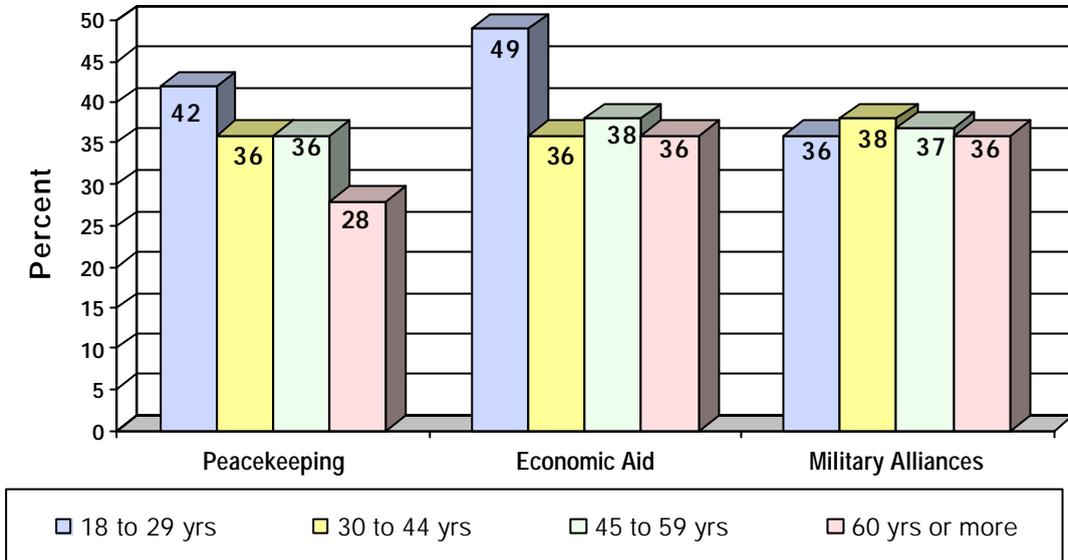
Question: For each of the following activities, please tell me whether you think Canada should be more involved, less involved, or maintain its current level of involvement...								
	Peacekeeping missions abroad		Economic aid to poor countries		Military alliances like NATO		The negotiation of new trade agreements	
	%		%		%		%	
	March 2001	Jan. 2002	March 2001	Jan. 2002	March 2001	Jan. 2002	March 2001	Jan. 2002
More involved	30	35	29	39	24	37	44	49
Less involved	13	12	13	17	12	10	8	12
Maintain current level of involvement	56	52	55	43	58	51	41	36
DK / NA	2	1	2	1	6	2	6	3

A particularly striking finding is that relatively few Canadians think the country should be *less involved* in world affairs at the present time. Only 17% want to pull back from giving economic aid to poor countries, only 12% what to be less involved in peacekeeping, and only one in ten want to be less involved in military alliances. And despite the fact that the country's actual level of involvement in anti-terrorism and peacekeeping activities has increased in recent months, there has been no significant change in these figures over time. Given international events since September, the message is clear: Canadians take their responsibilities to the international community quite seriously.

It is also notable that the proportion saying that Canada should become more active militarily is about the same as those who seek greater humanitarianism through such activities as economic aid and peacekeeping.

Younger Canadians are more likely to support greater involvement in peacekeeping and in economic aid to poor countries. In fact, almost one-half of 18 to 29 year olds want the country to be more involved in economic aid. Views concerning military alliances are roughly same across all age groups.

**Percent Saying Canada Should Be More Involved in World Affairs
Responses by Age Group**



Question: For each of the following activities, please tell me whether you think Canada should be more involved, less involved, or maintain its current level of involvement?

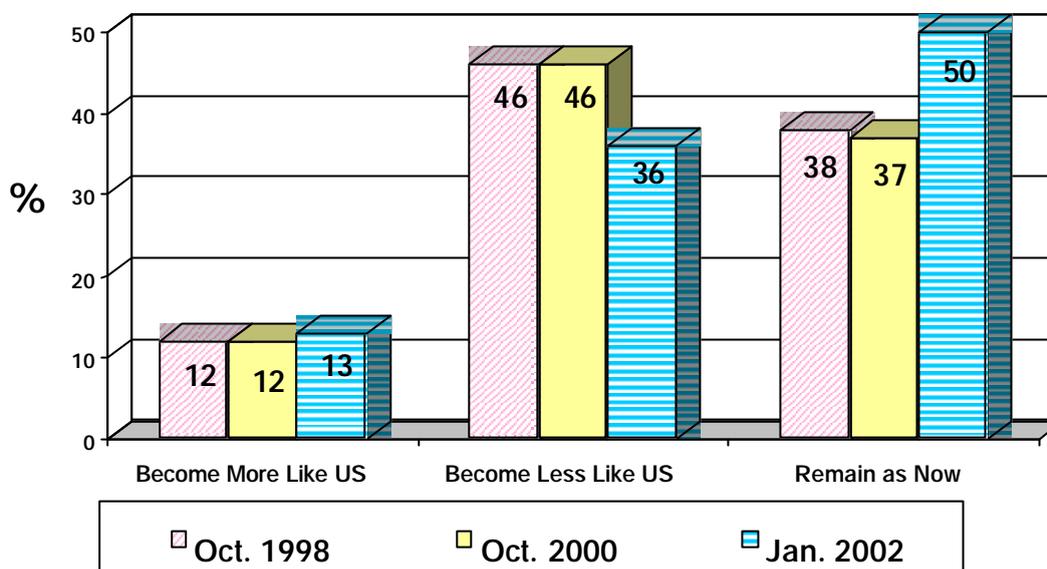
Methodology

This survey was conducted on behalf of the Centre for Research and Information on Canada (CRIC) by Environics Research Group. Environics contacted 2,000 Canadians 18 years of age and over by telephone between December 13, 2001 and January 5, 2002. Results for a survey of this size can be considered accurate to within plus or minus 2.2 percent, nineteen times out of twenty.

Quebecers (at 39%) are as supportive as other Canadians of increased involvement in economic aid, but much less favorable to increased commitment to military alliances. Twenty four percent of Quebecers say Canada should be more involved in these alliances, compared to 42% in the other provinces. This represents a five-point increase in Quebec, since March 2001, compared to a 16 point increase elsewhere.

The survey also identified a shift in attitudes towards the United States. The proportion of Canadians who say that, in the future, Canada should become *less like* the US has fallen to 36% -- down from the 46% reported in CRIC surveys conducted in 1998 and 2000. Fifty percent say that things should remain as they are now, compared to 38% in 1998 and 37% in 2000.

Should Canada Become More or Less Like the United States?



Question: And in the future, would you like Canada to become more like the United States, less like the United States, or would you like things to remain as they are?

The decline in the number of Canadians who feel Canada should become less like the US is confined to the provinces outside Quebec. In those provinces, it has fallen 15 points -- from 49% in 1998 and 2000 to just 34% in January 2002. In Quebec, the movement has been in the opposite direction. In 1998, 36% thought that Canada should become less like the US. In 2002, it is 40%.

The pan-Canadian decrease among those who want the country to become less like the US echoes the findings of CRIC's *Portraits of Canada 2001* study which found a 10-point jump between March and October 2001 in the number seeking closer Canada-US ties. Outside Quebec, the increase was 14 points, whereas in Quebec there was no change.

These figures suggest that in the context of the terrorist attacks on the United States, anxieties about the US influence on Canada have waned – at least among those living in the provinces outside Quebec. The shift in opinion outside Quebec is understandable. It is in the provinces outside Quebec where the issue of American influence traditionally has raised concerns about the preservation of the Canadian identity. For this reason, Canadians outside Quebec historically have been more anxious than have Quebecers about the country's ties with the US.

Canadians outside Quebec are feeling no less protective of their identity or even their sovereignty than they were prior to September 11th (note, for instance, that very few Canadians outside Quebec – only 13% -- want Canada to become more like the US). But many are feeling more affinity towards Americans. One effect of this sentiment is that these Canadians are currently not as preoccupied with the issue of the "Americanization" of the country. The setting aside, for the moment, of this traditional preoccupation likely has led to the shifts in opinion noted above.

It is harder to explain why Quebecers, in contrast to other Canadians, have become slightly more insistent that Canada should become less like the US. It likely does not signal that Quebecers are any less supportive of their neighbours to the south in the context of the current crisis. It suggests, rather, that their views on the nature of the political or economic relationship between the two countries are not as tied to their feelings of solidarity with the American people – and therefore are not as volatile.

Speculating further, it could be that the public debate about globalization that has been underway for the last several years has made Quebecers more wary than they once were about the effects of international economic integration. CRIC's March 2001 survey on the subject showed that Quebecers remain among the most enthusiastic Canadians when it comes to free trade agreements, but are among the least enthusiastic when it comes to globalization. And it is notable that the 2000 edition of Portraits of Canada showed that 59% of Quebecers said American culture was a threat to the French language in Quebec – essentially the same as the 60% who said that the language was threatened by the English majority in Canada. It could be that, just as Canadians outside Quebec are becoming more comfortable with international economic integration, Quebecers are becoming less comfortable. But further research is needed to confirm whether or not this is the case.

In view of this, it is worth noting one of the survey's other findings. A majority of Canadians (53%) agree with the statement that "Canadians and Americans basically have the same values regardless of which country they live in." But almost as many, 46%, disagree. Because this question was asked in the context of a series of other questions about terrorism and border security, the answers probably are shaped by the solidarity that many Canadians feel with Americans in the wake of September 11th. Men (59%) are more likely to agree than women (48%), and older people (65% of those aged 60 years or more) are more likely to agree than younger people (43% of those aged 18 to 29 years). And not surprisingly, given the uniqueness of the Quebec language and culture, Quebecers (46%) are less likely to agree than are other Canadians (55%).

As to whether they are more worried about peace and security in Canada due to the terrorist attacks, the survey finds that Canadians are divided. Fifty three percent say they are more worried than usual about peace and security in Canada, but 45% say they are no more worried than usual.

Women (59%) are more likely than men (45%) to say they are feeling more worried than usual about peace and security in Canada.

Finally, Canadians remain supportive of the country's participation in international trade agreements, with only 12% saying that Canada should be less involved in new trade negotiations. Forty nine percent say Canada should be more involved in the negotiation of new trade agreements, and 36% want to maintain the country's current level of involvement.

Results of the earlier surveys cited in this report be obtained on CRIC's website, www.cric.ca. See especially:

CRIC Paper # 1: Trade, Globalization and Canadian Values (April 2001)

Canada and World Affairs: CRIC Survey Results (July 2001)

CRIC Paper # 4: Portraits of Canada 2001 (January 2002)