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**THE NATIONAL ANGUS REID/SOUTHAM NEWS POLL**

**- CANADA'S ARMED FORCES AND THE SOMALIA INQUIRY -**

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This National Angus Reid/Southam News Poll was conducted by telephone between January 21st and 27th, 1997 among a representative cross-section of 1,519 Canadian adults.

The actual number of completed interviews in each region was as follows: B.C. - 202; Alberta - 151; Manitoba/Saskatchewan - 121; Ontario - 523; Quebec - 401; Atlantic - 121. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 1991 Census data.

With a national sample of 1,519, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population.

## **CANADA'S ARMED FORCES AND THE SOMALIA INQUIRY**

Public confidence in the overall health of Canada's armed forces has waned further since last summer amidst the ongoing Somalia Inquiry and other revelations: a majority of Canadians now believe the armed forces has "widespread, fundamental problems", and most of these people expect these problems will remain for a long time.

Defense Minister Doug Young, meanwhile, receives a majority public endorsement for his overall efforts to address these problems: most Canadians believe he is "on the right track", and most support his view that the Somalia Inquiry should move to finish earlier.

These findings emerged from a National Angus Reid/Southam News Poll conducted among a representative cross-section of 1,519 Canadians between January 21st and 27th, 1997.

### ***Broad Perspectives on Canada's Armed Forces***

- A majority (54%) of surveyed Canadians said they view recent charges of misconduct and other problems as "evidence of widespread, fundamental problems in the whole structure of Canada's armed forces", compared to four in ten (42%) who view these as "isolated incidents". This majority perspective was evident in all major regions of the country except Atlantic Canada (43%, while 53% opted for "isolated incidents"). (Table 1)
- The public's broad assessment of the armed forces has deteriorated since last summer: in a July 1996 Angus Reid Poll, a slim majority of 51 percent viewed these issues as isolated incidents versus 45 percent who worried they signalled widespread, fundamental problems in the Canadian armed forces.
- Further, most of those who believe the Canadian armed forces are experiencing widespread fundamental problems expect these problems will be around for a long time (63%) rather than resolved in the not too distant future (33%). (Table 1)

***The Defense Minister and the Somalia Inquiry***

- In terms of the Defense Minister specifically, more than one-half (54%) of Canadians surveyed in January said they think that Doug Young is "on the right track" in his efforts to address the problems in Canada's armed forces, almost three times as many as said he is "on the wrong track" (19%). (Fully 27% of respondents were unable to assess Mr. Young's performance to date.) The Defense Minister's efforts on this front received a majority endorsement from residents of nearly all major regions of the country, especially the Atlantic region (68% right track). British Columbia was the sole exception (46%, though still much larger than the 16% who were critical of Mr. Young). (Table 2)
- The Defense Minister's decision to tell the Somalia Inquiry to wrap up earlier than intended also meets with public approval: a majority of 57 percent of surveyed Canadians agreed with the argument that the Inquiry should finish earlier because "it has already gone on long enough and cost a lot of money, and the army needs the Inquiry's report as soon as possible". This view was held by at least a slim majority of respondents from all major regions. Four in ten (40%), on the other hand, expressed their disapproval with this move, believing that the Inquiry "should take as much time as needed to make a full investigation and to interview all witnesses with relevant information". (Table 2)

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