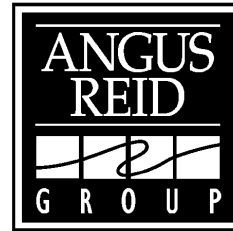

NATIONAL ANGUS REID POLL

- CANADIAN TRADE AND INVESTMENT IN ASIA -

CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER
THE GLOBE AND MAIL



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Public Release Date: November 19, 1997 5:00PM EST

This National Angus Reid Poll was conducted by telephone between October 23rd and 28th, 1997 among a representative cross-section of 1,515 Canadian adults.

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 and 1996 Census data.

With a national sample of 1,515, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within ± 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.

CANADIAN TRADE AND INVESTMENT IN ASIA

Most Canadians – six in ten – perceive that Canada and Asian countries benefit equally from their trading relationship: the remainder, however, are more than twice as likely to believe that Asian countries are the prime beneficiary rather than Canada. Furthermore, a majority think “it is a good thing for Canadian companies to do business in these Asian countries because the Canadian presence will have a positive influence on human rights and labour conditions there”.

However, the public is much less supportive of Canadian trade and investment in these countries as long as there is an economic benefit to Canada: one in three Canadians say it is okay for Canada to trade and invest in countries with poor human rights records, and slightly more than four in ten say Canada should encourage trade and investment with countries that have less strict labour laws. In essence, then, the public supports Canadian economic involvement in Asian countries if the motivation is the promotion of democracy, but it is much more hesitant to endorse Canadian trade and investment in these countries if the focus is on economic dividends for Canada.

These findings emerged from a National Angus Reid Poll conducted among a representative cross-section of 1,515 Canadian adults between October 23rd and 28th, 1997.

WHO BENEFITS THE MOST FROM CANADA-ASIA TRADE?

- ◆ A solid majority (60%) of surveyed Canadians said they perceive the trading relationship between Canada and Asian countries to be equally beneficial to both parties. The remainder, however, were more likely to believe that the trade relationship primarily benefits Asian countries rather than Canada (21% versus 9%). (Table 1)

- ◆ The perception that both Canada and Asian countries benefit equally from their trading relationship was held by at least one-half of respondents from all major population segments, especially Quebecers (68%, dropping to 50% among Atlantic Canadians).

VIEWS ON CANADIAN BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT IN ASIAN COUNTRIES

- ◆ Asked for their broad perspective on Canadian companies doing business in Asian countries which have a poor record on human rights and labour conditions, more than one-half (56%) of those surveyed subscribed to the view that “it is a good thing for Canadian companies to do business in these Asian countries because the Canadian presence will have a positive influence on human rights and labour conditions there”. Four in ten (39%), on the other hand, said they believe “it is a bad thing for Canadian companies to do business in these Asian countries because the Canadian trade and investment looks like an endorsement of the people in power and their policies”. (Table 2)
- ◆ The proportion of surveyed Canadians who felt that Canadian businesses operating in these Asian countries is “a good thing” was generally consistent across all regions and other major sub-groupings of the population.

CANADIAN TRADE AND INVESTMENT IN COUNTRIES WITH POOR HUMAN RIGHTS/LABOUR LAWS

- ◆ Asked whether “Canadians should trade with and invest in countries with poor human rights records as long as there is an economic benefit to Canada”, surveyed Canadians offered a negative response by nearly a two-to-one margin (63% said “no”, 34% said “yes”). Men were more likely than women to say “yes” (40% versus 28%). (Table 3)

- ◆ As to whether “the Canadian government should encourage trade and investment with countries that have much less strict labour laws than we do”, again a majority answered “no” (albeit slimmer at 51%), while 44 percent thought this would be okay. Once again, men were more receptive than their female counterparts (50% “yes” versus 38% of women).

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