

# CANADIANS AGREE, WE'RE AMERICA'S BEST FRIEND; THEY'RE LESS SURE A THREAT TO THE US ALSO THREATENS CANADA



Nik Nanos

In our latest Nanos Research poll for *Policy Options*, we decided to test public response to the central statements made by President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Stephen Harper at their joint news conference on February 19, without attributing the declarations to their authors.

Not surprisingly, nearly 90 percent of Canadians agreed or somewhat agreed with Barack Obama's statement that "the United States could not have a better friend and ally than Canada" (question 1). These numbers held among all regions of the country, and voting intentions for both major national political parties. Nine out of 10 Canadians believe we are a good ally and a great friend to the United States.

But only a simple majority of 54 percent agreed or somewhat agreed with Stephen Harper's statement that "there is no such thing as a threat to the national security of the United States that does not represent a direct threat to Canada" (question 2). One out of three Canadians, 32 percent, outright disagree with Harper's statement, and another 8.8 percent somewhat disagree. Four Canadians in 10 don't agree. Canadians are much divided on this question, and particularly along an ideological divide on the left. For example, 49 percent of NDP voters outright disagree.

Nanos Research was in the field from March 13-18, with a telephone poll of 1,002 Canadians. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

There is a minority thread of disaffection in Canada with the US, even with such a compelling figure as Barack Obama, himself a liberal Democrat, in the White House.

On the substantial questions of Canada-US relations, we found that Canadians generally support efforts to fight protectionism in trade (question 3), support the free move-

ment of people and goods across the border (question 4) and support a continental energy policy (question 5). But support was strongest of all, more than 90 percent, for cooperating on environmental issues (question 6).

Fully 86.6 percent of Canadians support cooperating on environmental issues, while 6.9 percent somewhat support it, for a total of 93.5 percent who are generally supportive. Only 3.6 percent are opposed.

Support for a continental energy policy stands at 76 percent overall — three Canadians in four agree with the concept. But here, regional scores vary in terms of intensity. Surprisingly, only 58.7 percent of western Canadians support the idea, while 67.6 of Ontarians do so. In other words, support for a continental energy policy is stronger in a consuming province than it is in the primary energy producing provinces of Canada.

Meanwhile, 72.9 percent of Canadians support "enhancing the flow of people and goods across the border," and another 12.8 percent somewhat support the idea. In other words, 85.7 percent of Canadians now support free trade with the United States, something that only 44 percent of Canadians voted for in the 1988 free trade election.

And finally, on our lead-off policy question on fighting protectionism, 49.9 percent support "reducing trade protectionism," while another 14.6 percent are somewhat supportive, but that adds up to only 64.5. In other words, one Canadian in three supports trade protectionism and, once again, this reflects the ideological divide on the left.

*Contributing Writer Nik Nanos is president and CEO of Nanos Research Ltd., an Ottawa-based national public opinion research firm. [nnanos@nanosresearch.com](mailto:nnanos@nanosresearch.com)*

Canadians agree, we're America's best friend; they're less sure a threat to the US also threatens Canada

QUESTION 1. DO YOU AGREE, SOMEWHAT AGREE, SOMEWHAT DISAGREE, OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?

		The United States could not have a better friend and ally than Canada					
		Total N	Agree %	Somewhat agree %	Somewhat disagree %	Disagree %	Unsure %
Region	Canada	1,002	78.5	10.4	3.7	4.9	2.5
	Atlantic	99	79.0	9.6	0.0	7.2	4.3
	Quebec	253	70.1	12.6	9.8	3.6	3.9
	Ontario	301	81.4	10.7	0.9	6.0	1.0
	West	350	81.9	8.8	2.6	4.3	2.3
Gender	Male	506	76.6	12.0	3.1	5.2	3.1
	Female	497	80.4	8.8	4.3	4.7	1.9
Age	18 to 29	197	72.2	12.8	3.8	6.0	5.3
	30 to 39	192	79.2	12.1	4.0	4.0	0.7
	40 to 49	217	81.6	7.9	3.7	5.8	1.1
	50 to 59	172	79.7	10.3	3.0	4.3	2.6
	60 plus	225	79.4	9.5	3.7	4.4	3.0
Vote profile	Liberal	323	79.1	12.6	2.6	4.4	1.3
	Conservative	293	85.5	6.0	1.5	4.0	3.0
	NDP	114	76.2	10.8	4.3	5.8	3.0
	Bloc	90	69.1	13.3	11.0	5.8	0.8
	Green	73	62.4	10.9	9.9	14.8	2.0
	Unsure	110	78.7	13.0	1.7	0.7	5.9

QUESTION 2. DO YOU AGREE, SOMEWHAT AGREE, SOMEWHAT DISAGREE, OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?

		There is no such thing as a threat to the national security of the United States that does not represent a direct threat to Canada					
		Total N	Agree %	Somewhat agree %	Somewhat disagree %	Disagree %	Unsure %
Region	Canada	1,002	38.7	15.3	8.8	32.0	5.3
	Atlantic	99	36.3	14.7	1.9	40.5	6.6
	Quebec	253	37.5	17.8	19.8	22.9	2.0
	Ontario	301	37.2	14.5	5.0	36.1	7.1
	West	350	41.3	14.3	6.1	32.5	5.7
Gender	Male	506	39.2	16.0	9.2	30.9	4.8
	Female	497	38.1	14.6	8.5	33.1	5.8
Age	18 to 29	197	32.3	21.1	9.8	30.1	6.8
	30 to 39	192	34.2	16.8	6.7	36.9	5.4
	40 to 49	217	38.9	15.3	10.0	31.1	4.7
	50 to 59	172	41.4	12.9	8.2	34.9	2.6
	60 plus	225	45.6	10.8	9.1	28.0	6.4
Vote profile	Liberal	323	40.1	16.1	8.2	29.9	5.6
	Conservative	293	44.5	12.9	6.1	29.7	6.8
	NDP	114	27.4	10.6	8.4	49.1	4.5
	Bloc	90	36.6	14.3	24.7	23.6	0.8
	Green	73	35.0	15.0	10.7	33.9	5.3
	Unsure	110	34.5	25.1	3.9	32.0	4.6

QUESTION 3. DO YOU SUPPORT, SOMEWHAT SUPPORT, SOMEWHAT OPPOSE OR OPPOSE CANADA PURSUING THE FOLLOWING POLICIES IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES?

		Reducing trade protectionism					
		Total N	Support %	Somewhat support %	Somewhat oppose %	Oppose %	Unsure %
Region	Canada	1,002	49.9	14.6	5.2	19.3	11.0
	Atlantic	99	44.2	20.7	2.5	15.9	16.8
	Quebec	253	47.9	20.8	6.4	15.5	9.4
	Ontario	301	49.3	10.6	6.0	21.6	12.5
	West	350	53.6	11.9	4.3	21.1	9.2
Gender	Male	506	56.3	13.1	3.1	19.8	7.7
	Female	497	43.5	16.1	7.3	18.9	14.3
Age	18 to 29	197	42.9	17.3	3.8	21.1	15.0
	30 to 39	192	49.7	15.4	6.0	19.5	9.4
	40 to 49	217	49.5	13.7	6.8	18.9	11.1
	50 to 59	172	52.6	15.9	6.0	16.4	9.1
	60 plus	225	54.7	11.5	3.4	20.3	10.1
Vote profile	Liberal	323	52.2	15.2	6.0	16.9	9.7
	Conservative	293	54.2	11.8	5.6	18.7	9.7
	NDP	114	42.9	17.1	0.7	27.3	12.0
	Bloc	90	47.8	19.8	7.9	16.8	7.7
	Green	73	45.3	14.5	3.6	22.9	13.8
	Unsure	110	43.9	13.8	4.9	19.4	18.0

QUESTION 4. DO YOU SUPPORT, SOMEWHAT SUPPORT, SOMEWHAT OPPOSE OR OPPOSE CANADA PURSUING THE FOLLOWING POLICIES IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES?

		Enhancing the flow of people and goods across the border					
		Total N	Support %	Somewhat support %	Somewhat oppose %	Oppose %	Unsure %
Region	Canada	1,002	72.9	12.8	2.9	6.8	4.6
	Atlantic	99	72.4	12.6	0.7	6.0	8.2
	Quebec	253	60.2	17.7	7.2	10.0	5.0
	Ontario	301	76.1	11.1	0.9	6.1	5.7
	West	350	79.6	10.7	2.2	5.2	2.3
Gender	Male	506	76.8	10.5	2.4	6.8	3.6
	Female	497	69.0	15.2	3.4	6.7	5.7
Age	18 to 29	197	69.9	11.3	1.5	12.0	5.3
	30 to 39	192	70.5	14.1	4.0	7.4	4.0
	40 to 49	217	72.1	15.3	2.6	4.7	5.3
	50 to 59	172	78.9	10.8	3.4	3.0	3.9
	60 plus	225	74.0	12.2	3.0	6.4	4.4
Vote profile	Liberal	323	73.6	10.2	2.4	9.0	4.8
	Conservative	293	78.7	13.0	2.1	3.6	2.7
	NDP	114	73.7	12.6	2.0	10.0	1.7
	Bloc	90	55.3	19.9	9.5	9.3	6.0
	Green	73	70.4	14.3	5.1	3.6	6.7
	Unsure	110	71.3	13.2	0.7	5.3	9.5

QUESTION 5. DO YOU SUPPORT, SOMEWHAT SUPPORT, SOMEWHAT OPPOSE OR OPPOSE CANADA PURSUING THE FOLLOWING POLICIES IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES?

		Creating a continental energy policy					
		Total N	Support %	Somewhat support %	Somewhat oppose %	Oppose %	Unsure %
Region	Canada	1,002	62.0	14.0	5.0	11.0	8.0
	Atlantic	99	71.0	6.7	2.2	6.0	14.1
	Quebec	253	56.5	15.1	12.2	12.4	3.8
	Ontario	301	67.6	13.1	1.6	9.3	8.4
	West	350	58.7	16.1	3.5	12.8	8.9
Gender	Male	506	62.2	13.2	4.9	12.3	7.5
	Female	497	61.8	15.0	5.1	9.6	8.5
Age	18 to 29	197	58.6	12.0	6.8	13.5	9.0
	30 to 39	192	65.1	12.1	4.7	8.7	9.4
	40 to 49	217	62.1	17.4	4.2	10.5	5.8
	50 to 59	172	62.5	15.9	6.0	9.5	6.0
	60 plus	225	61.8	12.8	3.7	12.2	9.5
Vote profile	Liberal	323	69.8	13.6	3.2	6.8	6.6
	Conservative	293	60.0	15.3	5.1	10.8	8.8
	NDP	114	62.4	11.1	4.3	15.8	6.4
	Bloc	90	47.5	18.0	11.4	18.9	4.1
	Green	73	57.1	9.9	9.1	12.7	11.2
	Unsure	110	59.1	14.6	2.7	10.8	12.7

QUESTION 6. DO YOU SUPPORT, SOMEWHAT SUPPORT, SOMEWHAT OPPOSE OR OPPOSE CANADA PURSUING THE FOLLOWING POLICIES IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES?

		Cooperating on environmental issues					
		Total N	Support %	Somewhat support %	Somewhat oppose %	Oppose %	Unsure %
Region	Canada	1,002	86.6	6.9	0.9	2.7	2.9
	Atlantic	99	87.2	3.2	0.0	2.3	7.3
	Quebec	253	77.0	11.1	2.1	6.0	3.8
	Ontario	301	92.5	4.1	0.2	0.9	2.3
	West	350	88.3	7.4	0.7	1.9	1.6
Gender	Male	506	87.2	5.8	1.4	2.7	3.0
	Female	497	86.0	8.1	0.4	2.6	2.9
Age	18 to 29	197	86.5	5.3	0.8	4.5	3.0
	30 to 39	192	83.9	9.4	0.7	2.0	4.0
	40 to 49	217	84.2	8.9	1.1	2.6	3.2
	50 to 59	172	87.5	7.3	1.3	1.3	2.6
	60 plus	225	90.5	4.1	0.7	2.7	2.0
Vote profile	Liberal	323	91.5	3.5	0.8	1.6	2.6
	Conservative	293	84.1	8.6	1.7	2.3	3.4
	NDP	114	91.8	4.1	0.0	3.0	1.1
	Bloc	90	72.3	16.6	0.8	7.2	3.1
	Green	73	89.5	4.3	0.0	4.6	1.6
	Unsure	110	83.1	9.3	0.7	1.4	5.6

Source: Telephone poll by Nanos Research ([www.nanosresearch.com](http://www.nanosresearch.com)) of 1,002 Canadians conducted from March 13 to March 18, 2009. The margin of accuracy for a sample of 1,002 is  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20.