

Most Canadians want to keep bombing ISIS; half think pulling CF-18s will hurt Canada's global reputation

But majority have confidence in Trudeau government's ability to handle mission

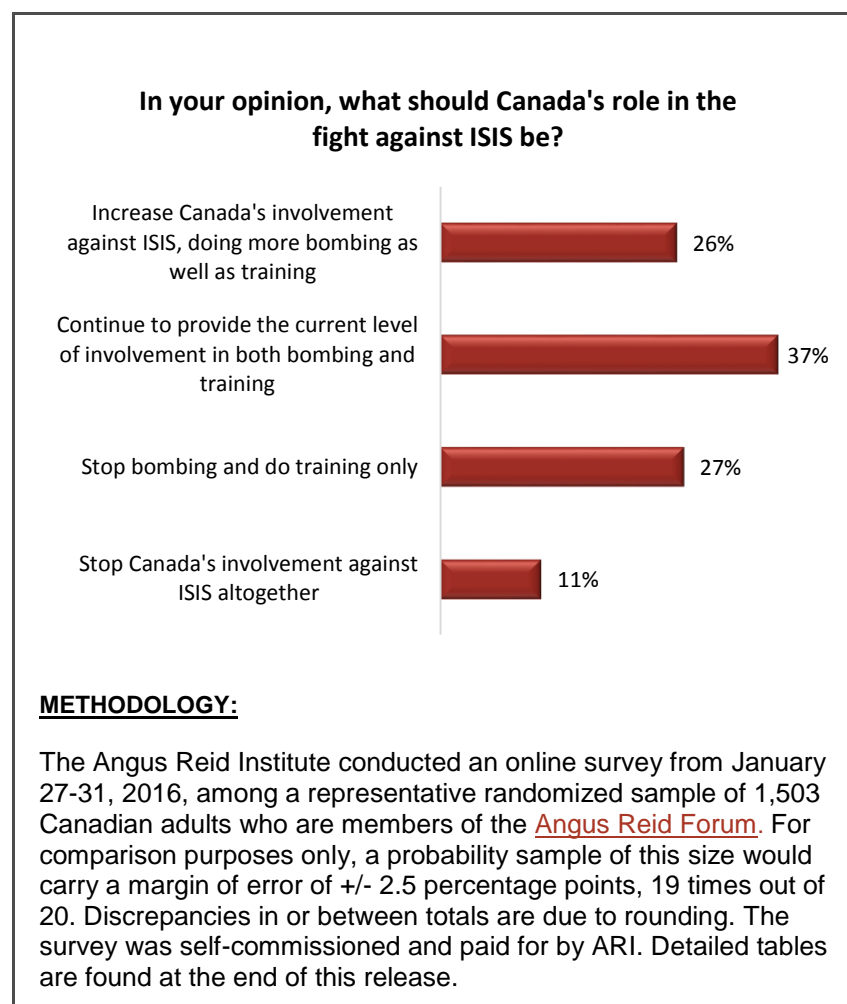
February 6, 2016 – With Canada's participation in the military mission against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) [scheduled to end next month](#), a new poll from the Angus Reid Institute finds Canadians are concerned about the effect withdrawing CF-18 jets from the fight would have on Canada's international reputation and on the mission itself.

This concern may be rooted in a growing fear of ISIS itself – two-in-three Canadians say the threat posed by the terrorist group has been growing in recent months.

Further, nearly two-thirds of Canadians (63%) say they would either like to see Canada continue bombing ISIS at its current rate or go further and increase the number of bombing missions it conducts. This support for bombing is consistent with [a November ARI poll](#) on the subject.

Key Findings:

- 47 per cent say withdrawing CF-18s from the mission will have a negative effect Canada's international reputation, while fewer than one-in-five (18%) say it will have a positive one
- Nearly two-in-five Canadians (37%) say Canada should keep conducting its current number of bombing missions against ISIS, and another one-quarter (26%) say the country should increase them



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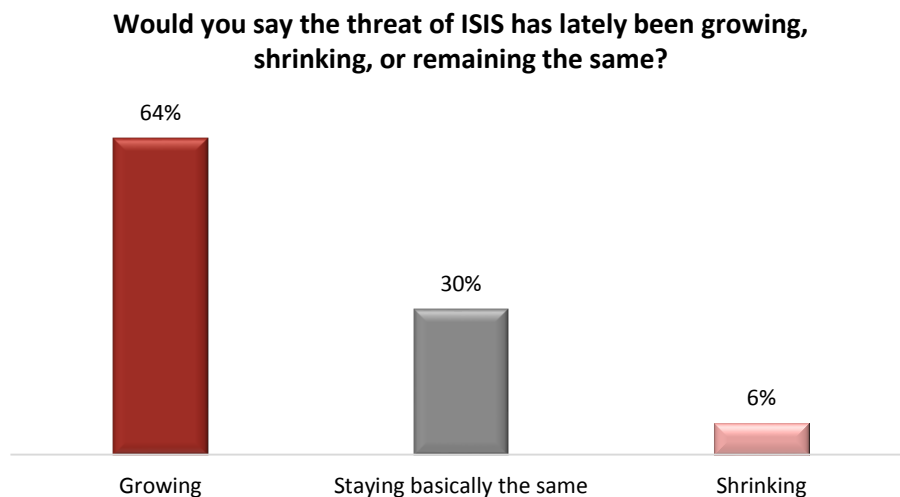
- At the same time – though they don't support withdrawing the planes – most Canadians (54%) say they're confident in the Trudeau government's ability to manage Canada's involvement in the ISIS mission

Is the ISIS threat growing or shrinking?

The widespread desire to see Canada continue bombing ISIS – or even step up its attacks – could be rooted in the perception that the danger the terrorist group poses has been growing.

Almost two-thirds of Canadians (64%) say the threat posed by the Islamic State is increasing. Roughly half of that total (30% overall) say it has been “growing significantly.”

Fewer than one-in-three (30%) say the ISIS threat has remained the same, and the number who say it's growing outpaces the number who say it's been shrinking by a staggering 10:1 margin:



Canadians aged 55 and older, as well as Quebec residents, are more likely to say the danger of ISIS has been growing “significantly” ([see comprehensive tables for more detail](#)).

What should Canada do to fight it?

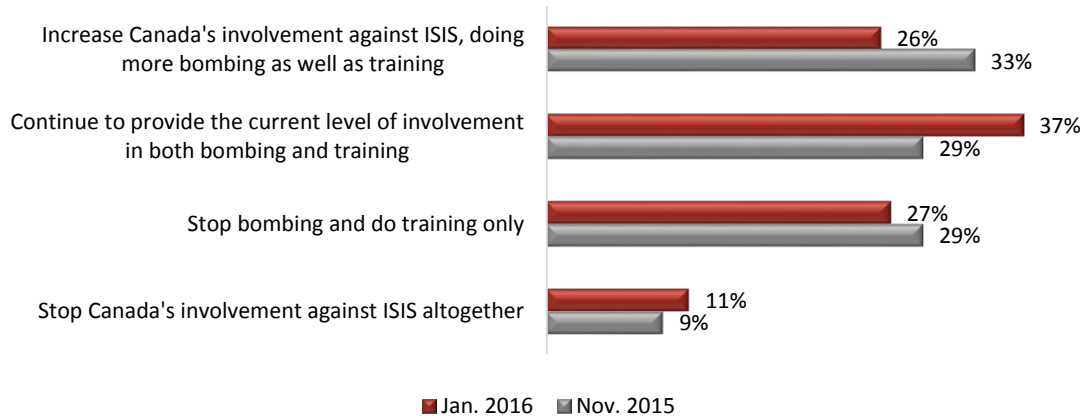
When the Angus Reid Institute asked Canadians in November what effect, if any, the then-recent ISIS attacks in Paris should have on Canada's bombing missions, the largest group of respondents (33%) said the country should step-up its involvement in the fighting.

In this survey, several months removed from the brutal bombings and shootings in the French capital, opinion has softened somewhat, with the largest group of respondents (37%) coalescing around maintaining Canada's current level of involvement in the mission:

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In your opinion, what should Canada's role in the fight against ISIS be?



Support for withdrawing CF-18s and engaging only in the training of local troops in Iraq and Syria – a position Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his Liberal Party campaigned on – has remained relatively flat since November, with the support of fewer than three-in-ten Canadians (27%).

Younger Canadians (those aged 18 – 34), women, and university graduates are the demographics most supportive of the Trudeau plan ([see comprehensive tables](#)).

Even those who voted for the Liberals in the 2015 election are lukewarm on the government's plan to stop bombing ISIS. Past Liberal voters are slightly more likely to support maintaining the current level of involvement (37%) than to support withdrawing Canada's planes (34%).

What effect would following the Trudeau plan have?

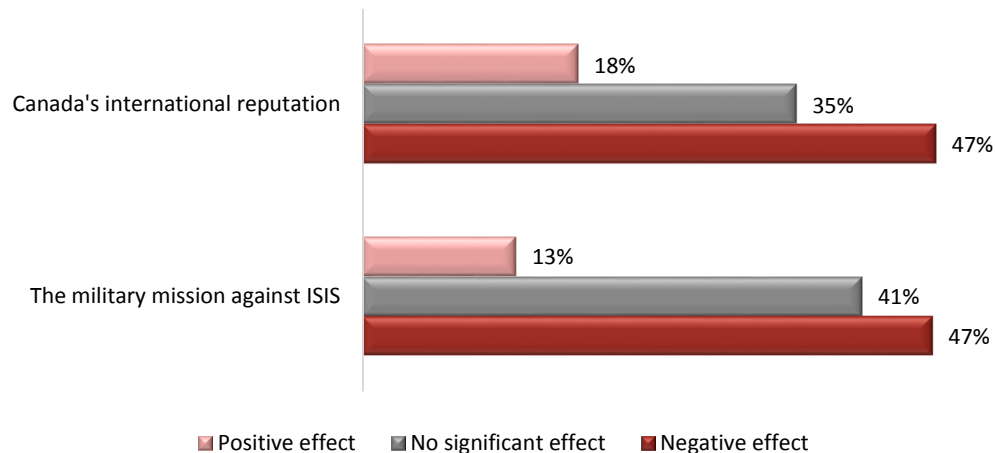
Assuming the federal government sticks to its campaign promise to withdraw Canada's fighter jets from the ISIS mission, what consequences do Canadians foresee?

Most anticipate no significant effects on the Syrian refugee crisis or Canada's national security ([see comprehensive tables](#)), but almost half say withdrawing the planes would have a negative effect on the mission and Canada's international reputation, as seen in the following graph:

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What effect, if any, do you think withdrawing CF-18 fighter jets from the ISIS mission would have on each of the following?



As might be expected, those who voted for Stephen Harper and the Conservatives in the 2015 election are more likely to foresee negative consequences to the Trudeau government's plan on all fronts (see detailed tables at the end of this release).

Less obvious, and perhaps more concerning for the government, is that those who voted for the Liberals are more likely to anticipate negative consequences than positive ones for both the ISIS mission and Canada's reputation.

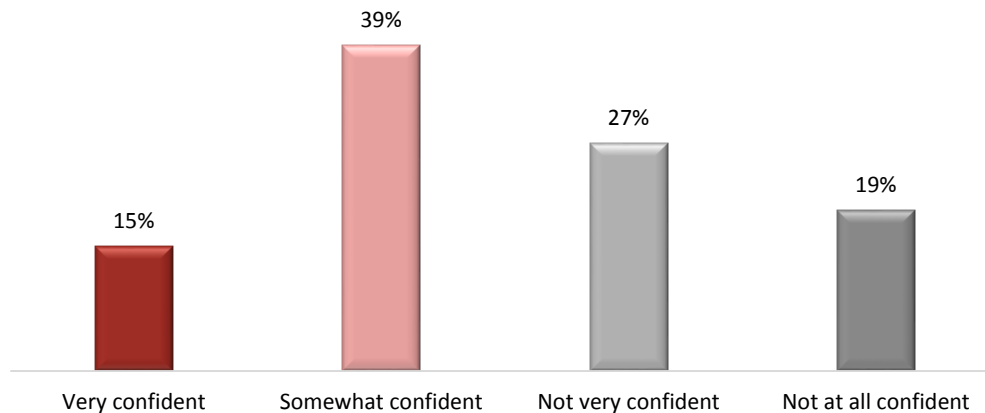
This fear of negative consequences may explain why most of these past Liberal voters don't support the plan put forward by the government they helped elect.

Most have confidence in Trudeau government, despite not agreeing with its plan

Although the vast majority of Canadians – and even the government's own partisans – would prefer to see some course of action other than what the government has proposed, most still express confidence in its ability to manage Canada's involvement in the ISIS mission.

Some 54 per cent of respondents say they are either "very" or "somewhat" confident in the Trudeau government's ability to manage the fight against ISIS, with most of these choosing the "somewhat" option:

How confident would you say you are in the Trudeau government's ability to manage Canada's involvement in the mission against ISIS?



As with support for withdrawing CF-18s, confidence in the government is strongest among women, those under age 35, and university graduates. It's worth noting, however, that at least half of each age group expresses confidence in the Trudeau government's future handling of ISIS ([see comprehensive tables](#)).

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research organization established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

Summary tables follow. For comprehensive results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

What effect, if any, do you think withdrawing CF-18 fighter jets from the ISIS mission would have on each of the following?				
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (1503)	Federal Vote Last		
		CPC (372)	Liberal Party (464)	NDP (285)
Canada's national security				
Positive effect	20%	8%	22%	27%
No significant effect	51%	36%	59%	55%
Negative effect	29%	55%	19%	18%
The Syrian refugee crisis				
Positive effect	15%	5%	17%	20%
No significant effect	62%	54%	67%	63%
Negative effect	23%	40%	16%	17%
The military mission against ISIS				
Positive effect	13%	6%	15%	16%
No significant effect	41%	22%	50%	48%
Negative effect	47%	72%	35%	37%
Canada's international reputation				
Positive effect	18%	8%	19%	25%
No significant effect	35%	17%	46%	34%
Negative effect	47%	75%	35%	41%

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In your opinion, what should Canada's role in the fight against ISIS be?				
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (1503)	Federal Vote Last		
		CPC (372)	Liberal Party (464)	NDP (285)
Increase Canada's involvement against ISIS, doing more bombing as well as training	26%	48%	19%	16%
Continue to provide the current level of involvement in both bombing and training	37%	41%	37%	32%
Stop bombing and do training only	27%	8%	34%	36%
Stop Canada's involvement against ISIS altogether	11%	3%	11%	16%

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