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NEWS RELEASE

Canadians Seek Balance in Promotion of Democracy and Human Rights Abroad Says Nationwide Opinion Poll

VANCOUVER, BC – September 14, 2006 - Canadians firmly believe that the promotion of democracy and human rights in Asia should be a major priority for the Government of Canada. There is less support, however, for the use of trade restrictions to promote these objectives.

The poll was conducted between August 2-9, 2006 by The Strategic Counsel on behalf of the Asia Pacific Foundation and *The Globe and Mail*. Results for the national sample are accurate to within 3.1 points 19 times out of 20.

According to a national poll by the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada and *The Globe and Mail*, 33 per cent of respondents strongly agree that the promotion of democracy and human rights in Asia should be a major priority, while 72 per cent strongly/somewhat agree. This number rises in Quebec to 83 per cent. Only 21 per cent, however, strongly agree with the use of trade restrictions to try and influence the policies of Asian countries that are not fully democratic, while 58 per cent of respondents strongly/somewhat agree. And only 16 per cent of Canadian strongly agreed and 42 per cent strongly/somewhat agreed with the idea that Canada should not trade with countries that do not have fully democratic regimes.

Said Foundation Co-CEO Dr. Paul Evans, “Canadians have consistently upheld the importance of democracy and human rights in our foreign policy, but they are divided on the utility of using trade restrictions as a way of promoting these ideals.”

The poll suggests that almost two-thirds (63%) of Canadians believe the human rights situation in China today is better than it was 10 years ago. Forty-four per cent agreed with the statement, “China behaves more responsibly than the United States in the international community.” A regional difference emerged

as 20 per cent of Quebec respondents showed strong support for this statement while 53 per cent strongly/somewhat agreed.

Forty-six per cent of Canadians believe that Canada's foreign relations with China are better than they were two years ago and only six per cent believe they are worse. In contrast, while 36 per cent of the respondents think that relations with the US are better, 28 per cent believe that they have worsened.

“More education to help prepare for stronger cultural, political and economic ties with Asia is strongly supported by Canadians,” said Dr. Evans. “This can clearly be seen by the majority of respondents (54%) who want Canadian schools to place more emphasis on teaching about Asia and Asian languages.”

Other news releases based on the national opinion poll include:

China More Promising Market for Canadian Exports Than the United States Says Nationwide Opinion Poll at: [\(link\)](#)

Canadians Bullish on Stronger Economic Relations with Asia Says National Opinion Poll at: [\(link\)](#)

A summary of the survey results is available at: [\(link\)](#)

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About APF Canada

The Asia Pacific Foundation is Canada's leading independent resource on Asia and Canada-Asia relations. As a national non-profit organization established by an Act of the Federal Parliament in 1984, the Foundation brings together people and knowledge to provide the most current and comprehensive research, analysis and information on Asia and on Canada's transpacific relations. It promotes dialogue on economic, security, political and social issues, helping to influence public policy and foster informed decision-making in the Canadian public, private and non-governmental sectors. The Foundation is funded through an endowment from the Government of Canada and a grant from the Province of British Columbia.

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