

Executive Summary

In addition, some distance or independence between Canada and the United States needs to be established on this issue. As noted, there is a strong perception that Canadians are fighting an American instigated and an American-led war effort. This is also reinforced by a general perception that this government is already too closely aligned with the U.S. on other fronts.

The government should consider other opportunities to underscore Canadian sovereignty and a defence of Canadian interests as a means of downplaying this perception of an overly-close, dominant-subservient relationship between the U.S. and Canada. Speaking out on Arctic sovereignty, for example, while not directly related to the Afghanistan mission, would serve to soften or dispel this perception.

6. Identifying Effective Spokespeople

Given levels of mistrust in government and in politicians, spokespeople should be identified from other spheres that are viewed as credible and balanced in their perspective. This could include:

On-the-ground aid and development workers;

The Afghan people themselves;

Representatives of the Afghan government, including the Ambassador for Afghanistan in Canada; and

Canadian Forces officers stationed in Afghanistan as well as those who have returned from their deployment in Afghanistan (e.g. Corporal Paul Franklin).