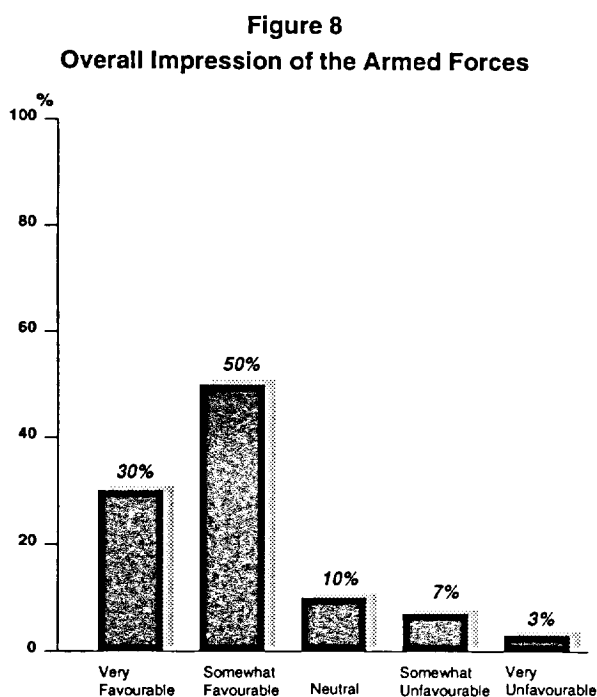


IV. The Canadian Forces

As noted earlier, peacekeeping is seen by a plurality of Canadians (39%) to be Canada's main international contribution in the last five years as well as a significant contributor to Canada's positive reputation abroad. What is more, 83% of Canadians consider it important to maintain the ability to defend Canada, although this policy goal did not stand out among the nine foreign policy goals tested in this study.

Figure 8 depicts the generally high level of approval enjoyed by the Canadian Forces. Eighty percent of Canadians hold a *somewhat favourable* (50%) or *very favourable* (30%) view of the Armed Forces.



The overall level of satisfaction depicted in Figure 8 is considerably better than approval levels recorded in the late 1980s, which hovered near the 55% mark.

This increased approval rating may have several sources. First, Canadian involvement in peacekeeping operations has become more frequent in recent years and has been accorded a higher national profile. To the extent that the Armed Forces are associated with these operations, they will benefit from the high levels of public support for peacekeeping in Canada. What is more, several Canadian peacekeeping operations in the 1990s (Bosnia, Croatia, Somalia) have had a significant humanitarian component which was not present in many previous operations, such as Cyprus and UNIFIL. Finally, the decline of the Cold War and the concomitant decline in Canadians' concern about global conflict has likely reduced the extent to which some Canadians may perceive the existence of armed forces to be *inherently* dangerous.