

Although support for defence spending is relatively high, there can be no doubt that support has dropped markedly compared to a decade ago, when over half of Canadians supported increased defence spending¹⁷.

The purpose of measuring spending priorities such as those in Figure 28 is not to measure exact levels of preferred spending - most Canadians only have a very limited understanding of how much is currently spent in each of these areas. Instead, spending priority questions serve three main purposes. First, they provide a ranking of importance among the various spending areas tested. Second, they provide an indication of when otherwise worthy spending areas are seen to be consuming an undue share of public resources. Finally, *overall* trends in preferred spending options may be tracked and taken to signal a change in the fiscal orientation of Canadians if they call for more or less spending in all areas over time.

Support for all types of international spending is highest among Atlantic Canadians and Quebecers, as depicted in Table 9.

Table 9
Support for International Spending: Regional Variations
% Saying Spend the Same or Spend More

<u>Spending Area</u>	<u>Atlantic</u> %	<u>Québec</u> %	<u>Ontario</u> %	<u>Prairies</u> %	<u>British Columbia</u> %
Promoting Trade	90	95	87	91	83
Promoting Canadian Culture	77	92	73	63	63
Peacekeeping	87	97	80	78	79
Helping Poorer Countries	84	93	71	75	73
Defence	78	84	70	70	68
Relations With Other Countries	76	94	74	72	69
Foreign Aid	76	90	66	69	66

There can be little doubt from Table 9 that there is no appetite whatsoever in Québec for spending reductions - fewer than 10% of Quebecers endorse cuts in any area of international spending. It is equally clear that Western Canadians and especially British Columbians are far more likely to want cuts in international spending.

¹⁷ The difference in public support for defence spending since 1989 can be seen especially in the differing public receptions accorded to the nuclear submarine and EH-101 procurement decisions in comparison with the equally costly TRUMP and Canadian Patrol Frigate Programs of the early 1980s.