

INTRODUCTION

The Advisory Board for Defence Information, ABDI, (*Maanpuolustustiedotuksen suunnittelukunta, MTS*) polled the opinions of Finns on Finnish foreign and security policy and on defence policy. In addition, citizens were asked to provide their views on how they think security will develop over the next five years, and to assess factors which affect the security of Finland and their personal sense of security. The survey also included questions regarding threat scenarios, preparedness for different threats and the situation in Afghanistan.

In all there were 20 questions, three of which were new. The new questions concerned Afghanistan.

Taloustutkimus Oy, commissioned by ABDI, conducted the survey through personal interviews as part of an omnibus survey. Altogether 981 persons were interviewed. The target group was the 15 to 79 year olds of the country's population, with the exception of the Åland Islands. The sample was formed by quota sampling in which the target group's quotas were the distribution of age, gender, province and municipality. Interviews were conducted at 81 locations, 46 of which were cities and 35 were other types of municipalities. The sample was weighted according to the target group with the weighted numbers corresponding to Finland's population of 15 to 79 year olds in thousands.

The error of margin is $\pm$ three point two (3.2) percentage points.

When interpreting background variables related to party affiliation, it must be taken into account that the data representing the supporters of larger political parties are more reliable than those of smaller parties, whose supporters are numerically fewer in the sample. The following question was asked: *Which party would you vote for, if parliamentary elections were held now?* Of all of the respondents, 72 percent (710 persons) revealed their party affiliation and 28 percent (271 persons) declined to answer.

The survey was carried out from 25 September to 20 October 2009. On the basis of written instructions drafted for this survey, fifty pollsters trained by Taloustutkimus Oy conducted the interviews.

The work of the pollsters was monitored through their personal data sheets as well as random spot checks done on respondents.

The report comprises a text section and illustrating figures that also present the time sequence of the previously asked questions. The illustrations were produced at Taloustutkimus Oy. Some of the questions represent a continuous sequence since 1964. The ABDI research branch and work branch were responsible for drawing up the questions. The research branch compiled the report.

Throughout the history of the surveys ABDI has cooperated with its Swedish counterpart, the National Board of Psychological Defence (*Styrelsen för Psykologiskt Försvar, SPF*), who began to conduct similar surveys in Sweden as early as the 1950s. In the beginning of 2009 the SPF's activities were consolidated into the new Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (*Myndigheten för Samhällsskydd och beredskap, MSB*). The reports can be found at www.msbmyndigheten.se.

The data from this survey, like the previous surveys, are stored in the Finnish Social Science Data Archive (www.fsd.uta.fi), University of Tampere. The ABDI's survey reports are available in Finnish, Swedish and English on the ABDI's home page (www.defmin.fi/mts).

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Preface

The biggest changes compared to the 2008 survey relate to confidence in there being a more secure future. The UN and the EU are still regarded as positive factors in Finland's security (77% and 69%). Whereas positive views on the United States and Russia have grown (25% and 16% vs. 7% and 4% in 2008), negative views decreased (22% and 27% vs. 22% and 40% in 2008). Negative views also decreased when it comes to NATO, (22% vs. 32% in 2008) while positive views increased (28% vs. 23% in 2008).

Factors related to the European Union as well as Finland's participation in its activities are considered to be the most positive influence on Finland's security. These include Finnish participation in the EU's common defence (61%), Membership in the EU (68) and Finland's participation in the EU's Rapid Reaction Force (41).

Finland's military non-alignment is believed to increase security (38%) rather than decrease it (21). On the one hand, Finland's possible membership in NATO is believed to both increase security (34) and, on the other hand, decrease security (32).

Citizens' concern over the employment situation in Finland has risen from the previous year (81% vs. 65% in 2008).

This year there were three new questions, all of which concerned Afghanistan. With regard to the question on what the situation in Afghanistan was about, half of the respondents answered multiple-choice questions and the other half provided open answers. By and large, the respondents agreed on all of the choices that were provided: a crisis management operation to stabilise the situation in Afghanistan (68%); preventing Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for international terrorism (67); a civil war (65); peacemaking between parties to an armed conflict (63); action to secure democracy and human rights, reconstruction and improving the living conditions of the citizens (63); and, elimination of activities directed against the government of Afghanistan (61).

In open answers the most often quoted factors were religious issues (N=113), terrorism (53), oil and natural resources (49) and the Taliban (41).

The international community has failed to achieve its goals in Afghanistan. This opinion was unanimous from the list of all of the goals polled: improving the status of women (78%); creating democratic governance (77); improving living conditions (76); combating terrorism (73); stabilisation of the situation in the country (72); and, reducing narcotics production (72).

This being the case, should Finland completely distance itself from Afghanistan? No, it should not, think 67 percent of citizens, 27 percent think differently.

Finns mostly want to assist in the establishment of a democratic government (82%); support economic and social development as well as education through development cooperation (81); participate in police training (66); and, participate in the stabilisation of Afghanistan by means of military crisis management (55).

The respondents did not want to participate in eliminating extremist groups by means of military force (72%), nor in training the Afghan National Army (50).

Increased confidence in a more secure future

Roughly one fifth, 28 percent (18% in 2008), of citizens thinks, considering the present situation in the world, that Finland and Finns will live in a more secure world during the next five years. Twenty-three (14) percent of women and 33 (22) percent of men think so. When compared to the previous year's result, the sense of security has increased by 6-11 percentage points among all age groups.

Forty percent (49% in 2008) of citizens believe that Finland and Finns will live in a less secure world during the next five years. Forty-nine (58) percent of women and 32 (40) percent of men feel this way.

A little less than one third, 30 percent (31% in 2008), sees no change from the present situation. This opinion was held by 35 (36) percent of men and 26 (26) percent of women. *Figures 1 and 2*

The United States and Russia exert more positive influence than before

This was the third time the following question was polled: Do the UN, EU, OSCE, the United States, Russia and China exert positive, negative or no influence on Finland's security?

Seventy-seven percent (70% in 2008) of the respondents estimate that the UN has a positive influence on Finland's security. Fifteen (18) percent believe that the UN has no effect on Finland's security, five (9) percent deem its effect is both positive and negative and one (1) percent of the respondents think that its effect is detrimental to the security of Finland and Finns.

Sixty-nine percent (60% in 2008) believe that the EU has a positive influence, thirteen (13) percent do not see any influence, twelve (20) percent view the EU as having a positive and negative influence and four (6) percent perceive the EU as having a negative influence.

Whereas 55 percent (50% in 2008) consider the OSCE to have a positive influence, two (3) percent see it as a negative influence. Ten (13) percent consider the OSCE to have a positive and negative influence. Twenty-four (24) percent believe that the OSCE has no effect on Finland's security.

Twenty-eight percent (23% in 2008) view NATO as a positive influence and 22 (32) percent as a negative one. Twenty-two (22) percent regard it as a positive and negative influence and 21 (16) think that it does not have any effect at all.

One fourth, 25 percent (7% in 2008), of citizens feels that the United States has a positive influence, eleven (22) percent a negative influence and twenty-eight (33) percent a positive and negative influence. Thirty-two (35) percent think that it has no effect whatsoever on Finland's security.

Sixteen percent (4% in 2008) regard Russia as a positive influence, 27% (40) as a negative influence and 33% (35) consider it both positive and negative. Nineteen (18) percent think that Russia has no effect on Finland's security.

As regards China, 10 percent (6% in 2008) consider it a positive influence and 11% (14) as negative. Eighteen (22) percent regard China's influence as positive and negative and 54% (51) believe that it has no effect on Finland's security. *Figures 3 and 4*

Participation in activities of European Union thought to increase security

Factors related to the activities of the European Union are perceived as the ones that increase the security of Finland and Finns the most. As in the previous four surveys, Finland's participation in establishing a European common defence is considered to be the most important security-increasing factor, 61 percent (64% in 2008). This was followed by Finland's membership in the European Union, 58% (63); participation of a Finnish unit in the EU's Rapid Reaction Force, 41% (44); as well as, Finland's increasing international economic activity, 40 (49) percent.

The increase in foreign ownership in Finland's economy was regarded as the factor that decreases Finland's security the most, according to 56 percent (53% in 2008).

Factors that are felt to be irrelevant to the security of Finland and Finns include Sweden's military non-alignment, 71 percent (64% in 2008); NATO membership of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, 66% (60); the possible NATO membership of Ukraine, 66% (61); the possible NATO membership of Georgia, 62% (56); and, the possible NATO membership of Sweden, 58 (51) percent. *Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8*

Employment situation and state of the environment cause concern

Of the 22 choices provided, factors that cause much or some concern include the state of the global environment, 87 percent (87% in 2008); the use of the Earth's natural resources, 85% (86); the employment situation in Finland, 81% (65); global warming, 76% (75); international terrorism, 76% (80); nuclear weapons, 75% (77); the future of welfare services in Finland, 71% (66); the use of nuclear power in energy production in Russia, 69% (69); Finland's economic outlook, 68% (59); proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, 67% (67); international organised crime, 66% (66); and, cyber crime, 65 (69) percent.

Compared to the previous year's results, which had identical choices, factors that cause increasing concern are the employment situation in Finland as well as Finland's economic outlook. *Figures 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13*

Foreign policy is believed to be handled well

Eighty-one percent (79% in 2008) of citizens consider Finnish foreign policy well run. Eighty-three percent (78) of women and 79 percent (79) of men are of this opinion. Seventy-five (77) percent of the 15-24 age group, 79% (79) of the 25-34, 83% (81) of the 35-49 as well as 82 (78) percent of the over-50 age group agree.

Ninety-two percent (86% in 2008) of National Coalition supporters hold this view and 91 (81) percent of Centre Party, 81 percent of SDP and Greens (78 and 75) as well as 63 (73) percent of Left Alliance supporters think likewise.

Sixteen percent (16% in 2008) of citizens think foreign policy is poorly run. Whereas 37 (22) percent of Left Alliance supporters think so, 18 (19) percent of SDP, 14 (20) percent of Greens,

7 (15 and 12) percent of Centre Party and National Coalition supporters also agree. *Figures 14 and 15*

Finland's external relations are properly conducted

Ninety-six percent (94% in 2008) of citizens deem that Finland had properly conducted its relations with Sweden. Eighty-five (88) percent also believe that this is true with Estonia, 84% (86) with Germany, 83% (79) with Russia, 80% (75) with the United States, 67% (70) with China and 52 (54) percent with developing countries. *Figures 16, 17 and 18*

Support for military non-alignment unchanged

Sixty-one percent (58% in 2008) of citizens think that Finland should remain militarily non-aligned. Sixty-four (59) percent of men and fifty-nine (57) percent of women think so. Eighty-three (87) percent of Left Alliance supporters and 74 (60) percent of SDP, 70(68) percent of Centre Party, 68 (61) percent of Greens and 44 (31) percent of National Coalition supporters hold this view. From a regional perspective, military non-alignment garners the most support in Western and Eastern Finland: 67 and 65 (63 and 65) percent, respectively. It is least supported in Southern Finland, 54 (50) percent.

A little less than one third, 31 percent (31% in 2008), of citizens favours military alignment. There is no difference between the genders in this segment. Fifty (64) percent of National Coalition supporters and 25 percent of Centre Party and Greens (27 and 22), 20 (31) percent of SDP as well as 15 (2) percent of Left Alliance supporters hold this view. Whereas 36 (38) percent of citizens in Southern Finland support military alignment, 29% (22) in Eastern and Northern Finland as well as 27 (27) percent in Western Finland think this way.

Eight percent (11% in 2008) of citizens had no opinion. This was the case with 10 (16) percent of the women and five (7) percent of the men. *Figures 19 and 20*

Join NATO or not?

Sixty-two percent (60% in 2008) feel that Finland should not seek NATO membership. Sixty-five percent (60) of men and 60 (61) percent of women feel this way. The most negative age group towards NATO membership is the 15-24 segment, 68 percent (62), followed by 64 (58) percent of the 25-34, 61 (61) percent of the 35-49 and 60 (60) percent of the over-50 age group. Ninety-two (88) percent of Left Alliance supporters and 74 (60) percent of SDP, 69 (67) percent of Greens, 68 (70) percent of Centre Party and 40 (29) percent of National Coalition supporters hold the same view.

A little less than one third, 28 percent (28% in 2008), believes that Finland should seek membership in NATO. Twenty-nine (31) percent of men and 26 (25) percent of women think this. Fifty-two (62) percent of National Coalition supporters and 23 (22) percent of Greens, 21 (22) percent of Centre Party, 15 (23) percent of SDP and 8 (3) percent of Left Alliance supporters favour NATO membership. *Figures 21 and 22*

What would be the best option for Finland?

In the two previous years' surveys the respondents were asked to answer the question: What would be the best option for Finland? The choices were: military non-alignment; NATO

membership with no other NATO countries' troops or NATO bases in Finland during peacetime; NATO membership with other NATO countries' troops and bases in Finland during peacetime; striving towards developing the European Union into a military alliance; and, attempting to establish a defence alliance with Sweden. This time the choices were altered by amending the last choice as follows: Attempting to establish a defence alliance with Sweden *and the other Nordic countries*. Therefore, the results are not fully comparable with the two previous years' surveys.

Of those responding to these choices a little more than one third, 38 percent (48% in 2008), thinks that Finland should remain militarily non-aligned. A little less than one fifth, 16 (23) percent, favours NATO membership with no other NATO countries' troops or NATO bases in Finland during peacetime, and 4 (3) percent *with* other NATO countries' troops or NATO bases in Finland during peacetime. Seventeen (17) percent support developing the EU into a defence alliance. One fifth, 20 (3) percent, favours a defence alliance with Sweden and the other Nordic countries. *Figures 23 and 24*

Defence policy believed to be well run

Roughly four fifths, 85 percent (80% in 2008), consider Finland's defence policy well run. Eighty-six (82) percent of women and 84 (80) percent of men think thusly. Eleven (14) percent consider defence policy poorly run. Among the different age groups the biggest variance can be found in the 25-34 population segment, 75 (77) percent of whom consider defence policy well run, and one fifth, 20 (21) percent, poorly run. As regards the other age groups, 88 percent of everyone over 35 years old as well as 81 percent of the 15-25 segment consider defence policy to be well run.

Ninety-two (81) percent of National Coalition supporters and 90% (88) of Centre Party, 89 (86) percent of SDP, 84 (83) percent of Greens and 67 (67) percent of Left Alliance supporters consider defence policy well run. *Figures 25 and 26*

Will to defend the nation remains high

Seventy-four percent (72% in 2008) of citizens believe that, if attacked, Finland should defend itself militarily in all situations, even if the outcome were uncertain. Eighty-one (71) percent of men and 68 (65) percent of women feel this way. Seventy-nine (75) percent of the over-50 segment hold this opinion and 76 (71) percent of those 35-49, 71 (71) percent of those 25-34 as well as 65 (67) percent of the 15-24 age group agree.

One fifth, 22 percent (22% in 2008), of citizens thinks that Finland should not defend itself: 27 (27) percent of the women and 16 (18) percent of the men. Twenty-seven (27) percent of the under-25 years-of-age group hold this opinion, followed by 26 (24) percent of those 25-34, 22 (24) percent of those 35-49 and 18 (20) percent of the over-50 segment. *Figures 27 and 28*

The question on the will to defend the nation originally came to Finland from Sweden, where the National Board of Psychological Defence (*Styrelsen för Psykologiskt Försvar*) has polled it since 1952. In 2008 the Swedish results (yes 74%, no 27%, no opinion 10%) corresponded well with the Finnish numbers.

Increased satisfaction with present level of defence appropriations

The majority of citizens, 59 percent (49% in 2008), support preserving the present level of defence appropriations. Whereas twenty-seven (33) percent would increase the defence appropriations, 12 (14) percent would cut them. Sixty-three (55) percent of women and 55 (44) percent of men favour the present level.

Sixty-seven percent (50% in 2008) of Greens supporters back the present level as do 55 percent of SDP and Centre Party (56 and 59), 56 (43) percent of National Coalition and 55 (50) percent of Left Alliance supporters.

Thirty-five percent of Centre Party and National Coalition supporters (38% and 52% in 2008) favour increasing the defence appropriations as do 31 (28) percent of SDP, 17 (10) percent of Left Alliance and 12 (13) percent of Greens supporters.

Twenty-eight percent (33% in 2008) of Left Alliance supporters would cut the defence appropriations as would 22 (35) percent of Greens, 9 (4) percent of National Coalition, 8 (12) percent of SDP and 4 (3) percent of Centre Party supporters. *Figures 29 and 30*

General conscription for men supported

Ten years ago the following question was polled for the first time: Should Finland maintain a defence system based on general conscription for men and a large reserve or should the size of the reserve be diminished and the national service be selective, or should Finland establish a fully professional military? During the past decade support for the present system has varied between 80-71 percent, support for a selective system between 9-19 percent and support for a fully professional military between 7-11 percent.

Seventy-two percent (74% in 2008) deem that a conscription system resembling the present one should be preserved; 73 (75) percent of women and 71 (73) percent of men are of this opinion. Older age groups are the strongest proponents of this. Seventy-eight (78) percent of the over-50 segment as well as 72 (73) percent of those 35-49, 68 (73) percent of those 15-24 and 60 (67) percent of the 25-34 age group favour the present system.

Sixteen percent (15% in 2008) would rather institute a selective national service system: 17 (16) percent of the men and 15 (14) percent of the women. The strongest support, 22 (21) percent, for such an arrangement is found in the 25-34 segment, followed by 14-15 (13-16) percent of the other age groups. Twenty-five (30) percent of Greens supporters favour a selective system, followed by 18 percent of Left Alliance and National Coalition (29 and 12), 13 (12) percent of SDP and 12 (7) percent of Centre Party supporters.

Eleven percent (10% in 2008) of citizens support the establishment of a fully professional military: 12 (10) percent of the men and 10 (10) percent of the women. *Figures 31 and 32*

More wariness about Finnish participation in global crisis resolution and prevention of security threats

Ninety-five percent (96% in 2008) of citizens believe that the Defence Forces' task is to defend the territorial integrity of Finland.

Sixty-one percent (62% in 2008) of citizens are of the opinion that defending the European Union is one of the military tasks of the Finnish Defence Forces. Sixty-five (65) percent of women and 57 (60) percent of men think so. One third, 33 (30) percent, regards that it should not be a task for the Defence Forces. Fifty-six (46) percent of Left Alliance supporters think along these lines, followed by 31 (30) percent of Centre Party, 27 (24) percent of National Coalition, 25 (29) percent of SDP and 22 (26) percent of Greens supporters.

Forty-nine percent (56% in 2008) of citizens consider participation in crisis and threat prevention in various parts of the world a military task for the Defence Forces. Fifty-three (60) percent of women and 44 (51) percent of men as well as 56 (68) percent of Greens supporters, 55 (49) percent of SDP, 52 (62 and 62) percent of Centre Party and National Coalition and 36 (55) percent of Left Alliance supporters agree. Almost as many, 45 (39) percent, do not believe that this should be a task for the Defence Forces. Sixty-one (42) percent of Left Alliance supporters, followed by 42 percent of Centre Party and National Coalition (34 and 33), 40 (30) percent of Greens and 39 (45) percent of SDP supporters think so. *Figure 33*

Credible defence consists of several factors

This question included 13 different factors to be assessed as regards a credible defence. This was the third time the question was polled.

The most important factors affecting a credible defence include: good relations with neighbouring countries, 96 percent (94% in 2008); followed by the defence of the entire territory of the nation, 89 (97) percent; the quantity, quality and maintainability of defence materiel, 87 (89) percent; the citizens' will to defend the nation, 86 (88) percent; general conscription for men, 84 (84) percent; modern weapon systems, 83 (87) percent; the level of defence appropriations, 82 (83) percent; the size of the reserve, 74 (76) percent; regular refresher exercises, 68 (64) percent; NATO interoperability in command systems and weaponry, 57 (55) percent; Finland's participation in international peace support and crisis management operations, 55 (56) percent; Finnish participation in the EU's Rapid Reaction Force, 54 (53) percent; and, women's voluntary service, 42 (41) percent. *Figures 34, 35 and 36*

Global economic crisis most likely threat

A question listing 11 different threat scenarios was polled for the first time in the 2005 survey. Respondents were requested to select the three most likely scenarios for which Finland should prepare during the next ten years.

When the percentages given to the three most likely threats are counted, a deep, global crisis of the international economy, 48 percent (41% in 2008), is seen as the most likely threat. This is followed by a rise in international crime, 47 (52) percent; an environmental disaster caused by global warming, 46 (37) percent; a large-scale influx of refugees to Finland, 31 (28) percent; and, a regional crisis caused by social problems or an environmental disaster in our vicinity, 31 (36) percent.

The next most likely scenarios include an accident at a nuclear plant in or around Finland, 27 percent (27% in 2008), and an attack against communications systems in order to paralyse society, 22 (25) percent.

Less likely threats, though still requiring preparedness, include an armed skirmish in Finland's near environs, 12 (14) percent; a terrorist attack against Finland, 11 (15) percent; Russian military action against Finland, 8 (9) percent; and, an armed attack against Finland, 6 (8) percent. *Figures 37 and 38*

Well prepared for epidemics, not as well for political pressure

In 2007 citizens were polled for the first time on how well Finland has prepared for different security threats. The list includes 11 different threats and the respondents were requested to estimate how well, or how poorly, Finland was prepared for these potential threats.

Eighty-nine percent (86% in 2008) of citizens believe that Finland is extremely well or fairly well prepared for different communicable diseases and epidemics. This is followed by preparedness for major accidents, 82 (79) percent; availability of energy, 78 (78) percent; various environmental threats (floods, accidents related to transportation of oil or dangerous substances), 75 (67) percent; armed attacks, 73 (74) percent; international crime, 58 (62) percent; cyber attacks, 58 (56) percent; climate change, 49 (49) percent; unmanageable migration, 49 (68) percent; and, political pressure, 47 (59) percent. *Figures 39 and 40*

The complex conflict in Afghanistan

A new question involved the reason for the conflict in Afghanistan. Half of the respondents answered multiple-choice questions and the other half provided open answers.

The multiple-choice questions included eight assertions, with which the respondents could either, fully or somewhat, agree or disagree.

The conflict in Afghanistan concerns a crisis management operation to stabilise the situation in Afghanistan. Whereas 68 percent agree with the argument, 24 four percent disagree. Sixty-five percent of women and 70 percent of men think this. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents younger than 25 years of age agree, as do 67 percent of the 25-34 years age group, 65 percent of the 35-49 age group and 64 percent of the respondents older than 50 years of age. Seventy-six percent of Social Democratic Party (SDP) supporters think so and 73 percent of National Coalition, 72 percent of Greens, 62 percent of Centre Party and 59 percent of Left Alliance supporters have the same opinion.

It is all about preventing Afghanistan from becoming a base for international terrorism. Whereas 67 percent agree, 22 percent disagree with this premise. Sixty-nine percent of men are of this opinion and 64 percent of women. Eighty-two percent of National Coalition supporters hold this position and 79 percent of SDP, 64 percent of Centre Party, 63 percent of Left Alliance and 61 percent of Greens supporters concur.

Afghanistan is fighting a civil war. Sixty-five percent of the respondents agreed with this argument, 66 percent of the women and 65 percent of the men. Twenty-four percent of the respondents did not think so. Seventy-six percent of National Coalition supporters agreed with the argument as well as 68 percent of SDP and Greens, 67 percent of Left Alliance and 63 percent of Centre Party supporters.

The issue involves peacemaking between parties to an armed conflict. Whereas 63 percent of the respondents agreed with the argument, 26 percent disagreed with it. Sixty-six percent of men and 60 percent of women held this position. Seventy-six percent of National Coalition supporters thought so as well as 69 percent of Left Alliance, 65 percent of SDP and 59 percent of Centre Party and Greens supporters.

It is about advancing democracy and human rights, reconstruction and improving the living conditions of the citizens. Sixty-two percent of the respondents agreed with this premise and 29 percent disagreed with it. Sixty-nine percent of men and 56 percent of women are of the same opinion.

The situation involves the elimination of activities directed against the Government of Afghanistan. Fifty-eight percent of women and 56 percent of men agreed with this statement. Seventy percent of SDP supporters as well as 69 percent of Centre Party, 63 percent of Greens, 55 percent of National Coalition as well as 35 percent of Left Alliance supporters concur.

It is about securing the economic and strategic interests of certain foreign powers. Whereas 51 percent agree with the premise, 29 percent disagree. Sixty-eight percent of men and 54 percent of women hold this position. Ninety-one percent of Left Alliance supporters as well as 69 percent of SDP, 62 percent of Centre Party, 59 percent of National Coalition and 55 percent of Greens supporters have the same opinion.

It is about preventing the supply of narcotics. Fifty-one percent of the respondents agreed with this argument and 39 percent disagreed with it. Whereas 62 percent of the respondents in the over-50 years of age group held this view, 49 percent in the 35-49 age group, 40 percent in the 15-24 age group and 32 percent in the 25-34 age group had the same opinion. Sixty-five percent of Left Alliance supporters as well as 62 percent of Centre Party supporters, 61 percent of National Coalition and SDP as well as 38 percent of Greens supporters also held the same opinion. *Figure 41*

Altogether 455 open answers were provided. The most often mentioned topics were religion and religious issues (N=113) followed by terrorism (53), power struggle and internal strife (51), oil and natural resources (49), the Taleban (41), the United States (33), narcotics (30), great power politics (27), Russia (16), tribal tensions (16), money and the economy (13), history (10), status of women (10), poor living conditions (10), civil war (9), cultural clashes (7) outside interference in a country's internal affairs (7) as well as peace support (7).

“The international community has failed in Afghanistan”

Another new question dealt with how well the international community has achieved its objectives in Afghanistan. The question included six goals, each of which was separately assessed.

As regards all of the polled objectives, the citizens thought that they have been poorly achieved as follows: improving the status of women (78%), building a democratic government (77), improving the living conditions (76), combating terrorism (73), stabilising the situation in the country (72) and curtailing narcotics production (72). *Figure 42*

Finns want Finland to stay in Afghanistan

Should Finland totally disengage itself from Afghanistan? It should not, say 67 percent. Seventy-six percent of National Coalition supporters have this opinion as well as 74 percent of Greens, 72 percent of SDP, 68 percent of Centre Party and 64 percent of Left Alliance supporters.

Roughly one fourth, 27 percent, of the respondents disagrees. Twenty-nine percent of Centre Party and Left Alliance supporters hold this view as well as 23 percent of SDP, 21 percent of National Coalition and 20 percent of Greens supporters.

How should Finland act in Afghanistan?

The question included six distinct types of mission, each of which was separately assessed.

Finland must assist in the establishment of a democratic administration in Afghanistan. More than four fifths, 82 percent, of the respondents agree; three percent disagree.

Finland should support economic and social development as well as education through development cooperation. Eighty-one percent concur and 13 percent disagree.

Finland must participate in police training in Afghanistan. Sixty-six percent agree and 29 percent disagree.

Finland must participate in the stabilisation of Afghanistan by means of military crisis management. Whereas 55 percent agree, roughly one third, 38 percent, of the respondents disagrees. Seventy percent of Greens supporters agree with the argument as well as 66 percent of SDP, 59 percent of Centre Party, 58 percent of National Coalition and 40 percent of Left Alliance supporters.

Finland must not participate in training the Afghan National Army. Whereas 50 percent of the respondents agreed with the premise, 43 percent of them had a favourable opinion of such training activities. Fifty-eight percent of SDP supporters as well as 55 percent of Greens, 53 percent of Left Alliance, 46 percent of National Coalition and 40 percent of Centre Party supporters were unreceptive to the idea of training the ANA.

Fifty-three percent of National Coalition supporters as well as 51 percent of Centre Party supporters, 46 percent of Left Alliance, 38 percent of Greens and 37 percent of SDP supporters had a favourable opinion of participating in the training of the Afghan National Army.

Finland must not participate in eliminating extremist groups by means of military force. Whereas seventy-two percent of the respondents agreed with this premise, one fifth, 20 percent, of the respondents have a favourable view of such action. Eighty-three percent of National Coalition supporters as well as 80 percent of Left Alliance, 69 percent of Centre Party, 67 percent of Greens and 66 percent of SDP supporters agree with the argument. *Figure 43*

ABDI Research Branch and Chairs 2007-2011

ABDI Research Branch 2007- 2011

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Vice-chairs	Aila Paloniemi, Member of Parliament Reijo Laitinen, Member of Parliament