

The Second World War and the Fear of Another Global Conflict?

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1. Introduction

Tomorrow will mark the 70th anniversary of the start of the Second World War which is widely considered to have commenced on September 1, 1939, with the German invasion of Poland and subsequent declarations of war on Germany by most of the countries in the British Empire and Commonwealth, and by France. To mark the Anniversary, the Association for Canadian Studies commissioned the firm Leger Marketing to ask Canadians whether they fear there will be another global conflict in the next 20 years. The web-based survey of 1366 Canadians was conducted during the week of August 17th and a comparable sample for a national phone survey would have a margin of error of 3.1 percentage points 19 times out of 20.

As observed below some one in three Canadians believe there will be another global conflict in the next two decades.

Table 1

Another World War will occur within the twenty years	Total
Total Agree	34
Strongly agree	7%
Somewhat agree	27%
Total Disagree	66%
Somewhat disagree	43%
Strongly disagree	23%

Those with the most self-evaluated knowledge of the conflict are most likely to fear that there will be another global conflict in the next two decades.

Table 2

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following

	Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following: / Another World War will occur within the twenty years.						
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 and over
Total Agree	46.0	38.0	33.5	32.8	31.0	24.2	45.2
Strongly agree	11,8%	8,6%	7,9%	7,3%	6,9%	2,5%	
Somewhat agree	34,2%	29,4%	25,6%	25,5%	24,1%	21,7%	45,2%
Total Disagree	54.0	62.0	66.6	67.3	69.0	75.7	54.8
Somewhat disagree	35,4%	40,3%	38,0%	44,4%	47,8%	52,0%	38,1%
Strongly disagree	18,6%	21,7%	28,6%	22,9%	21,2%	23,7%	16,7%

Table 3

Francophones are least likely to feel that way.

	French	English	Other
Total Agree	27.5	35.2	37.5
Strongly agree	7,0%	6,9%	7,6%
Somewhat agree	20,5%	28,4%	29,9%
Total Disagree	72.5	64.8	62.5
Somewhat disagree	47,3%	41,6%	43,6%
Strongly disagree	25,2%	23,2%	18,9%

As many men as women fear there will be another global conflict

Table 4

	...A man	...A woman
Total Agree	33.6	34.6
Strongly agree	6,8%	7,4%
Somewhat agree	26,8%	27,2%
Total Disagree	66.4	65.5
Somewhat disagree	38,2%	47,2%

disagree		
Strongly disagree	28,2%	18,3%

There is a moderate correlation between those who self-estimate a strong knowledge of the second world war and the extent to which they believe there will be another such conflict in the next two decades. The more you know the more likely you believe there will be a reoccurrence.

Table 5

	I have a good knowledge of World War 2.			
Another World War will occur within the twenty years	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Strongly agree	12,7%	6,7%	4,8%	5,5%
Somewhat agree	26,2%	28,7%	25,1%	27,1%
Somewhat disagree	35,4%	41,9%	50,5%	40,3%
Strongly disagree	25,8%	22,7%	19,5%	27,1%