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Conservative Party, a Decline from 46% in Early October***

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Alliance in Breaking Through in Ontario and Quebec***

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(32%) Nationally Say They Would Seriously Consider Voting for
New Party – 29% in Ontario***

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Toronto, ONTARIO (Friday, October 23rd, 2003) – After years of flirting and months of negotiations, federal Progressive Conservative leader Peter McKay and Canadian Alliance leader Stephen Harper formally announced their deal to merge the two right of center parties in an attempt to defeat the governing Liberals in the next election. According to a new Ipsos-Reid/CTV/Globe and Mail poll released today, four in ten (39%) Canadians say they are likely to vote for the combined forces in the new Conservative Party of Canada, a decline of seven points since the last sounding on this issue in early October when only rumours of a merger were in the air. It should be noted, however, that at this level of support, they could present a formidable challenge to the governing Liberal party.

The Canadian Alliance, and its precursor, the Reform Party, spent numerous elections trying unsuccessfully to build a strong foothold in Central Canada. This inability to breakthrough in seat-rich Ontario and Quebec also appears to be an issue that will face the new untied right of centre party according to Canadians. In fact, seven in ten (68%) Canadians feel that the new Conservative Party is just the Alliance taking over the Progressive Conservatives, and



that they'll still face the same problems attracting voters in Ontario and Quebec that they had before.

Since the announcement of the merger there has been considerable discussion that former Ontario Premier Mike Harris may run for the leadership of the new Conservative Party of Canada. In fact, he has said that he would provide a decision sometime in November. When asked, one in three (32%) Canadians say that if Mike Harris becomes the leader of the new Conservative Party they would seriously consider voting for this party in the next election. Just under half (46%), however, strongly disagree that they would seriously consider voting for the new Conservatives led by Mike Harris.

In the other expected change on the federal front over the next few months, half (49%) of Canadians expect that when Paul Martin becomes Prime Minister he will run the country pretty much like Jean Chretien has. When asked further, if this was a good thing or a bad thing for the country, those who agree that this will be the case are split with 52% who say it is a good thing for the country, 41% who say it is a bad thing, and 7% who 'don't know'.

As for the current federal political standings, if an election were to be held tomorrow, the Liberals (46%, -1 point from early October) would end up with the most support, followed by the current Progressive Conservatives (15%, +1 point), the current Canadian Alliance (11%, -2 points), the NDP (11%, -1 point), and the Green Party (4%, unchanged). The Bloc Quebecois (8% national, -1 point) would receive support from 31% of Quebecers, down from 38% in early October.

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/CTV/Globe and Mail poll conducted between October 21st and October 24th, 2003. The telephone survey is based on a randomly selected sample of 1,056 adult Canadians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population

been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 2001 Census data.

Four in ten (39%) Canadians say they are likely to vote for the combined forces of the new Conservative Party of Canada. Fifty-six percent say they are unlikely to vote for this new party.

- Residents of Alberta (63%) are most likely to say they would likely vote for the new Conservative Party in the next federal election, followed by those in Atlantic Canada (47%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (44%), British Columbia (44%) and Ontario (37%). Residents of Quebec (26%) are least likely to say they will vote this way.
- Men (42%) are more likely than women (36%) to say they would likely vote for the new Conservative Party.
- Canadians from upper (60%) and middle (58%) household income groups are significantly more likely than are those in lower income households (48%) to say they are unlikely to vote for the new Conservative Party.
- Nine in ten (88% - 62% strongly) of current Canadian Alliance supporters say they are likely to vote for the new Conservative Party of Canada, while almost as many current Progressive Conservative supporters (84% - 50% strongly) say that they are likely to vote for the new party. One-quarter (23% - 3% strongly) of current Liberal supporters say they are likely to vote for the new Conservative Party of Canada.

Seven in ten (68%) of Canadians feel that the new Conservative Party is just the Alliance taking over the Progressive Conservatives, and that they'll still face the same problems

attracting voters in Ontario and Quebec that they had before. One in four (26%) disagree that this will be the case.

- Regionally, Quebecers (73%) are significantly more likely to hold this opinion than are those in Atlantic Canada (61%) and Alberta (58%). Results in Ontario reflect the national average.
- Young adult (74%) Canadians are significantly more likely than are their middle-aged (66%) and older (66%) counterparts to express agreement.
- A majority of supporters for each of the main parties agrees with this view, with Liberal (75%), Bloc (74%) and NDP (72%) voters significantly more likely than Progressive Conservative (61%) or Canadian Alliance (59%) voters to hold this view. Not surprising, current supporters of the Canadian Alliance (38%) and Progressive Conservatives (35%) are significantly more likely to disagree with this view.

Regarding the possibility of Mike Harris as leader of the new federal Conservative Party of Canada, when asked, one in three (32%) Canadians say that if former Ontario Premier Mike Harris becomes the leader of the new Conservative Party they would seriously consider voting for this party in the next election. On the opposite side, six in ten (63%) disagree with this view, including a plurality of 46% who strongly disagree that they would seriously consider voting for the new Conservatives led by Mike Harris.

- Half (50%) of Alberta residents say they agree that they would seriously consider voting for a Mike Harris led Conservative Party. This compares to the views of residents of Atlantic Canada (41%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (39%), British Columbia (30%), Ontario (29%), and Quebec (26%). Interestingly, seven in ten (69%) Ontarians say they would not

seriously consider voting for a Mike Harris led Conservative party, while just as many hold this position in Quebec (69%).

- Canadians in rural (40%) parts of the country are significantly more likely to say they agree they would seriously consider a Mike Harris led party, than are urban Canadians (30%).
- Men (37%) are significantly more likely than women (28%) to agree that they would seriously consider voting for this new party led by Mike Harris.
- Canadians without a high school diploma (45%) are significantly more likely to say they would seriously consider voting for this party with Mike Harris as leader than are those with a post-secondary education/some university (33%) and university graduates (26%).
- Among supporters of the two potential partners, two-thirds of each party's supporters (PC 64%; CA 63%) agree they would seriously consider a Mike Harris led Conservative Party of Canada.

Half (49%) of Canadians expect that when Paul Martin becomes Prime Minister he will run the country in pretty much like Jean Chrétien has, while 46% disagree with this view.

- There are no significant differences between regions, genders, or age groups on this subject.
- Those in the lowest income households (55%) are significantly more likely than those in the highest income households (46%) to believe this to be the case.



- Six in ten (61%) of current Alliance supporters agree with that this will be the case, followed by 57% of NDP supporter, 50% of Progressive Conservative voters, and 45% of Liberal voters.

When asked further if this was a good thing or a bad thing for the country, those who agree that Paul Martin will govern pretty much in the same way as Prime Minister Chrétien, are somewhat split with 52% who say it is a good thing, 41% who say it is a bad thing, and 7% who 'don't know'.

- Regionally the country is also split on this issue, with majorities in Eastern Canada (Quebec 61%; Ontario 58%; Atlantic Canada 56%) feeling it is a good thing, while majorities in Western Canada (Alberta 66%; Saskatchewan/Manitoba 58%; British Columbia 55%) saying it is a bad thing for the country.
- Young adult Canadians (69%) in this group are significantly more likely to feel it is a good thing for the country than their middle-aged (45%) and older (43%) counterparts.
- Eight in ten (80%) Liberal supporters, who feel agree that Paul Martin will run the country in the same manner as Jean Chrétien, feel that this is a good thing for Canada, while 87% of this group who are Alliance supporters feel that it is, in fact, a bad thing for the country. Among Progressive Conservatives supporters in this group, 61% feel that it is a bad thing, while just as many NDP supports (56%) also say it is a bad thing.

As for the current federal political standings, if an election were to be held tomorrow, the Liberals (46%, -1 point from early October) would end up with the most support, followed by the current Progressive Conservatives (15%, +1 point), the current Canadian Alliance (11%, -2 points), the NDP (11%, -1 point), and the Green Party (4%, unchanged). The Bloc Quebecois (8% national, -1 point) would receive support from 31% of Quebecers, down from 38% in

early October. Four percent would support another party. One in twenty (5%) are undecided while 3% say they would not vote.

- Regionally, Liberal support among decided voters is highest in Ontario (54%), Quebec (50%) and Atlantic Canada (49%), while it is weaker in British Columbia (40%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (28%) and Alberta (27%). There are no significant differences across age, gender or household income groups regarding support for the federal Liberals.
- Regionally, the Progressive Conservatives are strongest in Atlantic Canada (35%) and Alberta (23%), while they are weakest in Quebec (5%). There are no significant differences across age, gender or household income groups regarding support for the federal Progressive Conservatives.
- Support for the Canadian Alliance is highest in Alberta (34%), British Columbia (23%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (15%), while it is lowest in Ontario (8%), Atlantic Canada (4%) and Quebec (3%). In addition, support for the Alliance is higher among men (14% versus 9% of women), Canadian in middle-income households (14% versus 7% in lower income households) and those with a post-secondary education/some university (14%) and with a high school diploma (14% versus 8% of university graduates).
- NDP support is highest in Saskatchewan/Manitoba (24%) and lowest in Alberta (8%) and Quebec (6%). Canadians in lower income households (16%) are significantly more likely than those in middle (10%) or upper (10%) income households to support the NDP. There are no significant differences in support for the NDP between gender and age groups.
- Support for the Green Party is significantly higher in British Columbia (8%) than in Alberta (1%) or Atlantic Canada (0%). Young adults (8%) are more likely to support the Green Party than are their middle aged (3%) or older (2%) counterparts. Support the Green Party sits at 5% among Canadians in urban regions compared to 1% in rural areas.



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