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Ottawa, ON – With the political battlefield of Parliament returning and with weapons drawn it would appear the largest number of Canadians (63%) believe that Prime Minister Stephen Harper has the 'right stuff' of leadership qualities and skills compared to all other federal party leaders. This compares with NDP Leader Jack Layton at 57% and BQ Leader Gilles Duceppe at 63% in his province of Québec (15% nationally), and Opposition and Liberal leader Stephan Dion with the lowest ratings of all of the Federal leaders at 36%.

Canadians were asked to rate the leadership qualities and skills of each of the federal party leaders.

- Prime Minister Stephen Harper was given a rating of 63% (11% great/52% good) compared with 34% (21% good/13% bad) and just 3% who said that they 'don't know'. Mr. Harper received his highest ratings of leadership from the residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (77% great/good versus 23% poor/bad) followed by Alberta (68% great/good versus 27% poor/bad), British Columbia (67% great/good versus 32% poor/bad), Québec (61% great/good versus 34% poor/bad), Ontario (60% great/good versus 36% poor/bad) and Atlantic Canada (55% great/good versus 44% poor/bad). In terms of age groupings, those over the age of 55 were more likely (73%) to give the prime minister top marks compared with middle-aged (61%) and younger

aged Canadians (55%). Men (66%) were just slightly more likely than women (60%) to acknowledge Mr. Harper as the leader with the top skill set.

- NDP Leader Jack Layton was given a rating of 57% (5% great/52% good) compared with 35% (25% cooler/10% bad) and 8% who said that they 'don't know'. Mr. Layton received his highest ratings in Eastern Canada -- Atlantic Canada (65% great/good versus 24% poor/bad), Québec (64% great/good versus 28% poor/bad) and Ontario (60% great/good versus 33% poor/bad). This compared with lower ratings in the West with residents in Alberta giving their judgment (48% great/good versus 41% poor/bad) almost exactly the same as their counterparts in British Columbia (47% great/good versus 46% poor/bad) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (40% great/good versus 51% poor/bad). There were no significant differences in terms of age of respondents and women (59%) were just slightly more likely than men (55%) to rate Mr. Layton's leadership attributes higher.

- Bloc Québecois Leader Gilles Duceppe given a rating of 63% (13% great/51% good) compared with 33% (24% poor/10% bad). Just 3% indicated that they 'don't know'. This rating compared with the other leaders in Québec where Mr. Layton (64%) is in a virtual tie, followed by Prime Minister Harper and 61%. Liberal leader Stephan Dion receives top leadership ratings from only 33% of respondents in the province of Québec.

- Liberal Leader Stephan Dion fares considerably worse than other federal party leaders when assessed for top leadership qualities and skills: only 36% of Canadians (2% great/33% good -- total is rounded) give him top marks compared with 55% (39% poor/16%) who don't. A total of 9% indicated that they "don't know". Mr. Dion's leadership qualities and skills is given the highest rating by Atlantic Canadians (51%), followed by British Columbia (39%) and Ontario (38%), Québec (33%),

Saskatchewan/Manitoba (27%) and Alberta (25%). Mr. Dion fares worse in his assessment from those living in Alberta (64%), followed then by those in Québec (61%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (60%), Ontario (55%), British Columbia (49%) and Atlantic Canada (33%).

Given that the Liberals and Conservatives have the highest levels of support among voters across Canada, respondents were asked who they would choose between if they could only vote for either Stephen Harper or Stephan Dion in an election. The results were similar to the leadership attribute ratings noted above: Mr. Harper fared the best with 56% support versus Mr. Dion at 35%.

- Those most likely to support Mr. Harper were in the provinces of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (70%) and Alberta (69%), followed by British Columbia (58%), Ontario (54%), Québec (52%) and Atlantic Canada (50%).

- Those most likely to support Mr. Dion were from Atlantic Canada (43%), followed by Québec and British Columbia (37%), Ontario (36%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (27%) and Alberta (22%).

But where the rubber meets the road is at the ballot box where all of the leaders are assessed in terms of the public's propensity to vote or not to vote for them. And in this regard, Prime Minister Harper emerges as the leader with the most popularity -- 60% of Canadians indicate that they will or could vote for Mr. Harper, compared with 47% for NDP leader Jack Layton, 46% for Liberal leader Stephan Dion and 54% Bloc Québécois Leader Gilles Duceppe (only in the province of Québec).

- Mr. Harper's greatest propensity for votes (60%) comes from Alberta (73%) followed by Saskatchewan/Manitoba (71%), British Columbia (62%), Ontario (58%), Atlantic Canada (57%) and Québec (54%).

- Mr. Layton's greatest propensity for votes (47%) comes from residents of Atlantic Canada (64%), followed by Québec (48%), Alberta (46%), Ontario and British Columbia (44%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (43%).

- Mr. Dion's greatest propensity for votes (46%) comes from residents of Atlantic Canada (60%), followed by a British Columbia (56%), Ontario (49%), Québec (40%) and Alberta and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (31%).

These findings contrast with only 37% of Canadians who indicate that they would never vote for conservative leader Stephen Harper, compared with 50% for NDP leader Jack Layton and 51% for Liberal leader Stephan Dion. In Québec, 43% indicated they would never vote for Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe.

- Of those who indicate that they would 'never vote for' Mr. Harper (37%) they are most likely to come from Québec (42%) followed by Atlantic Canada (40%), Ontario (38%) British Columbia (36%) Saskatchewan/Manitoba (29%) and Alberta (25%).

- Of those who indicate that they would 'never vote for' Mr. Layton (50%), they're most likely to come from Saskatchewan/Manitoba (57%), followed by British Columbia (53%), Alberta (52%), Ontario (51%), Québec (40%) and Atlantic Canada (33%).

- Of those who indicate that they would 'never vote for' Mr. Dion (51%), they're most likely to come from Saskatchewan/Manitoba (67%), followed by Alberta (65%), Québec (57%), Ontario (47%), British Columbia (43%) and Atlantic Canada (34%).

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted for CanWest News Service/Global News and fielded from Oct 9 -14, 2007. For this survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1,001 adult Canadians was interviewed by telephone. With a sample of this size, the aggregate results are

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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 each sub-grouping of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data.

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