

POLLS ■ PM-elect Harper says his govt needs to build consensus

# 93 6 2571 Canadians elects minority Conservative Party

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**C**ANADIAN Prime Minister-elect Stephen Harper reached out on Monday to the Opposition parties he just defeated, saying he recognised that his minority government would need to build consensus.

Harper reveled in returning Conservatives to power for the first time since 1993 but recognised he fell well short of half the 308 seats in parliament.

"Tonight, although Canadians have voted for change, they have not given any one party in the House of Commons a majority," Harper said.

"They have asked us to cooperate, to work together and to get on with tackling the real concerns of ordinary working people and their families," he added.

Harper will need to rely on support of one or more of the other three—outgoing Prime Minister Paul Martin's Liberals, the Separatist Bloc Quebecois and the Leftist New Democrats.

"I look forward to working with all of the parties and all of the members of Parliament to build consensus the move this country forward," Harper said. "We will govern as we campaigned—in a spirit of hope, not fear."



PM Harper and his wife Laureen celebrate his win in Calgary on Monday. Reuters

The 46-year-old economist has more than once been written off but came back from losing to Martin in the 2004 election to edge out the Liberals on Monday night by clearly laying out a policy platform that helped allay the fears of some who had opposed him.

"To those who did not vote for us, I pledge to lead a government that will work for all of us. We will move forward together," Harper told the crowd of 2,000 in his hometown of Calgary in the western province of Alberta. The longest

cheer came when he spoke to the West, which has long felt Canada has been too dominated by Ontario and Quebec.

"The West has wanted in. The West is now in. Canada will work for all of us," he said adding, "Enjoy this moment. The time has come." He promised to return to Ottawa on Tuesday to begin the transition from Liberal rule. He pledged to defend democratic ideals around the globe "as so courageously demonstrated by our young soldiers who are serving, and who have sacrificed, in Afghanistan." —Reuters

# Canada for ban on weapons in space

**Ottawa:** Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin will seek an international pact to ban weapons in space if his Liberals are returned to power in a January 23 election, according to the party platform.

The document, leaked to the conservative magazine *Western Standard* ahead of its intended release on Wednesday, states: "Liberals are firmly opposed to the weaponisation of space and recognise that the best time to prevent an arms race in outer space is before it begins."

"A Liberal government ... will lead an international campaign at the United Nations to establish a treaty banning all weapons in space."

The 85-page document

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notes that a treaty already forbids the stationing of weapons of mass destruction in space, but "there is currently no multilateral agreement banning the deployment of a broader range of weapons". It goes on to say: "A Liberal government will build on the international reputation earned through Canada's prominent initiatives on such issues as disarmament and the landmines convention."

The proposal risks antagonising Washington, already unhappy by Martin's refusal to join the United States North American missile defence shield, but is expected to boost the Liberals' sagging popularity at home, according to pundits. AFP