

PRESS RELEASE

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Enough is Enough - Stephen Harper is an embarrassment to Canada on the World Stage

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has used his closing remarks at the G8 Summit to launch a vicious and admittedly false attack on Liberal Party leader Michael Ignatieff, for comments that Mr. Ignatieff never made. Harper's press secretary later apologized to reporters, admitting that the statements and views the Prime Minister attributed to Michael Ignatieff to the international media were in fact made by an academic who criticized the Conservative Government's approach to the summit- and not Mr. Ignatieff.

In a 45 minute closing news conference, and in both official languages, Harper called Ignatieff "irresponsible" and snidely remarked that the Liberal Leader "is supposed to be a Canadian."

"Stephen Harper's utterly false attacks against Michael Ignatieff in his closing statement at the G8 Summit was an abuse of the Prime Minister's position on the international stage." said Frank Valeriote, Member of Parliament for Guelph. "The Prime Minister of Canada -at a gathering of the G8 Summit dealing with a crisis in the world economy- spent his closing statement making partisan attacks, which his staff fully admits have no basis in reality."

Valeriote said that the stunt fits a well established pattern of behavior of personal attacks by the Conservatives.

"Stephen Harper's patriotism is a discriminating brand of patriotism. What authority does he have to measure the "Canadianess" of his political opponents? It demonstrates the same small-mindedness and viciousness that permeates Harper's conduct both inside and outside of parliament. Other world leaders of any stature do not use moments of such seriousness to make crude partisan attacks on their political opponents in their home countries. Such behavior reflects poorly on all Canadians. His parochial view of the world and lack of global vision revealed in his comments cannot be masked by apologies. How can anyone take an apology seriously after a multimillion dollar negative advertising campaign, part of which is at the expense of Canadian taxpayers?"

"I think that this latest stunt clearly illustrates three points: The first and most obvious is that Harper has no class. The second is that he has no plan to deal with the economy, our isotope shortage, and all other issues important to Canadians- preferring to simply attack others. The third is that we continue to witness to the same divide-and-conquer style of politics we saw from the Bush Republicans" said Valeriote. "Stephen Harper is a man of the past."

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