



Double-Talk

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JOURNALIST: So why did you write that letter to the Governor General with Gilles Duceppe and Jack Layton saying in the event of a confidence vote situation do not call a snap election - are we to assume that therefore you're working to form a coalition?

HARPER: There seems to be an attitude in the Liberal government - that they can go in, be deliberately defeated and call an election - that's not how our constitutional system works. The government has a minority - it has an obligation to demonstrate to Canadians that it can govern. That it can form a majority in the House of Commons. If it can't form a majority, we look at other options, we don't just concede to the government's request to make it dysfunctional. I know for a fact that Mr. Duceppe and Mr. Layton and the people who work for them want this Parliament to work and I know it is in all of our interests to work. The government has got to face the fact it has a minority, it has to work with other people.

SOURCE: Interview with Stephen Harper, September 2004.
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HARPER'S LETTER to the Governor General, September 9, 2004 said:

As leaders of the opposition parties, we are well aware that, given the Liberal minority government, you could be asked by the Prime Minister to dissolve the 38th Parliament at any time should the House of Commons fail to support some part of the government's program.

We respectfully point out that the opposition parties, who together constitute a majority in the House, have been in close consultation. We believe that, should a request for dissolution arise this should give you cause, as constitutional practice has determined, to consult the opposition leaders and consider all of your options before exercising your constitutional authority.

Your attention to this matter is appreciated.



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