



Canada's Conservatives Release First Ads Attacking Ignatieff

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By Theophilos Argitis

May 13 (Bloomberg) -- Canadian Prime Minister **Stephen Harper**'s Conservative Party today released its first television ads that attack Liberal opposition leader **Michael Ignatieff**, in a bid to stem his growing popularity.

Television ads shown to reporters in Ottawa paint Ignatieff, a novelist and former Harvard University professor, as an "arrogant" elitist who has few links to Canada. The ads claim Ignatieff, who lived outside of Canada for 34 years before returning in 2005 to enter politics, is "just visiting" the country.

"Mr. Ignatieff has had an extended honeymoon. That honeymoon is over," a Conservative Party official told reporters today in Ottawa on condition he not be identified.

The Liberals have surpassed Harper's Conservatives in opinion polls since Ignatieff took over leadership of the party in December.

The Liberals had the support of 36 percent of voters, compared with 33 percent for the Conservatives, according to a poll by **Ipsos Reid** taken between April 29 and April 30. The poll of 1,001 Canadians has a margin of error of 3.1 percentage points. The Conservatives led the Liberals by 23 percentage points in a December poll by Ipsos Reid.

The television spots are the first ads to target Ignatieff, reflecting the Conservative Party's wariness to aggressively attack the Liberal leader as the country entered into a recession, said **Nikita Nanos**, an Ottawa-based pollster.

"Everyone has been waiting six months for this to happen," said Nanos, president of Nanos Research. "It was just realistically a matter of time before the Conservatives started to at least attempt to define Michael Ignatieff."

Ignatieff's predecessor, **Stephane Dion**, blamed Conservative Party attack ads for his loss in elections last October.

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