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Canada's Liberals Say Harper Plagiarized Howard Speech on Iraq

By Theophilus Argitis

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Sept. 30 (Bloomberg) -- Canada's opposition Liberal Party, lagging in polls ahead of elections, alleged Prime Minister [Stephen Harper](#) plagiarized a 2003 speech by former Australian Prime Minister [John Howard](#) on the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

In a speech to Parliament while he was leader of the opposition Canadian Alliance, Harper made the case for Canada to support the U.S. in Iraq. Liberals say almost half of the speech was a "word-for-word" recitation of a speech by Howard two days earlier, and the party has produced a [video](#) juxtaposing the two speeches.

"Liberals have been arguing for over two years that Canada is losing its independent voice in foreign affairs under Mr. Harper," [Bob Rae](#), the Liberals' foreign affairs critic before elections were called last month, said in a statement. "We just had no idea that Mr. Harper was prepared to borrow the drafting of the actual words he would use from another country."

Opinion polls show Harper's Conservatives are poised for their first back-to-back victories in two decades, largely because of the party's perceived superiority on economic issues. A Nanos Research poll for CPAC yesterday showed the Conservatives have support of 36 percent of voters, compared with 26 percent for the Liberals. Elections are Oct. 14.

The Liberals are seeking to deflect attention away from the main issues of the campaign, a Conservative Party official told reporters today on condition of anonymity, calling the allegation an act of "desperation."

The official declined to comment on whether the speech had been plagiarized.

To contact the reporter on this story: [Theophilus Argitis](#) in Ottawa at targitis@bloomberg.net.

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