

H & K Communications

72 Elvaston Avenue
Nepean, Ontario
K2G 3X9

Phone: (613) 829-1800
Fax: (613) 829-2449
E-mail: hturkow@rogers.com

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PRIME MINISTER'S SCRUM AT VICTORIA B.C AIRPORT

H & K Communications

Phone (613) 829-1800 Fax (613) 829-6181 E-mail hturkow@home.com

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MODERATOR: Questions. When I call your name, if you could please make your way to the end of the cameras here. André has his hand up. We'll start with Justine Hunter from the Globe and Mail.

REPORTER: Just wondering in terms of the last speech from Gadhafi, saying he's going to fight to the end, what are you doing for...what are we doing for Canadians that are in Libya right now, and does Canada have some kind of broader role to play here?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER (Prime Minister of Canada): Canada, we're in close contact with Canadian citizens who are present there, as well as Canadian companies who are employers. That's the reason most Canadians who are in Libya are in Libya. They are there because they're working for one of our oil companies. So we're in close contact, and obviously evaluating the situation carefully, and putting in place evacuation plans should or as those appear to be necessary. I don't know that I can say much more than I said yesterday. I think the government of Canada's position is not just consistent with our allies, but with the world community that has expressed, I think, understandable outrage at the behaviour of the Libyan government in dealing with these protests. We obviously expect any government to take the concerns of its citizens seriously, but not to engage in violence against them, to fire on them. It is outrageous and unacceptable, and the government of Canada and the world community will continue to express that view strongly to the authorities in Libya.

MODERATOR: Continue with Cindy Harnett from Victoria Times columnist.

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REPORTER: Ok. Hi. I'm just curious about the \$155 million for the facilities today. Is that part of the \$1.3 billion in the intended costs that were noted in Gilles Fraser's report? And I have a follow-up question as well.

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Short answer...Peter? No, no. So the answer's no.

MODERATOR: Stephen Smart from CBC.

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Sorry, she had a follow-up question.

REPORTER: Just a quick follow-up, sorry. How quickly must BC repay the \$1.6 billion in the HST money if on September 24th in our referendum people vote against it?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Well, I say, that's entirely hypothetical based on, obviously, that referendum and then what next steps the government of British Columbia may or may not take. Our position is clear. I've been very clear. We're not inserting ourselves into this debate. Our position has been that it is up to the provincial government to decide what form of sales tax they want, whether they want to harmonize their sales tax with the federal sales tax or not. Our position, as a federal party which has distinguished us, I should say, clearly from our opposition is that we have lowered the federal sales tax and we believe that it should stay low, and we are opposed to all proposals that have been made by all three of these parties who all oppose lowering the sales tax, who are opposed to any effort to raise the federal sales tax back up again.

MODERATOR: Continue with Stephen Smart from CBC.

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REPORTER: Prime Minister, as you're aware, the BC Liberal Party will select a new leader on the weekend and a new Premier. Do you have any parting words for Premier Campbell, given what appears to be a lot of work rebuilding the relationship between Victoria and Ottawa? And I supposed also if you could comment, sir, whether you think that that relationship would be good to continue with whoever replaces Gordon Campbell.

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Ok, well, first of all I'll repeat what I said when Premier Campbell announced his intention to step down. First of all, we've had an excellent relationship. We haven't always agreed on everything, but I don't think there's been a time in history where the relationship between the government of British Columbia and the government of Canada has been better or more fruitful for the citizens of British Columbia, and to the advantage of the country. I think Premier Campbell should be remembered, first of all and most importantly, for the guy who turned the economy of this province around. This was a have-not province when Premier Campbell came to office. He made all the difference. He and his leadership made all the difference in that regard. He has been, well, obviously, a vocal defender of the interests of this province. He has also been a strong and unabashed, patriotic Canadian and supporter of the federation, and I think he deserves a lot of credit for the success of British Columbia's Games, and in particular for making the entire country share in that triumphal moment for all of us. So I wish him well in the future, and I hope that whoever his successor may be, that we will continue to have a good and productive relationship for the future, for the people of British Columbia, and also because British Columbia's so important, as the world tilts west, tilts towards the Pacific, I

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hope it will continue to be a great relationship for the sake of the entire country.

MODERATOR: Thank you very much, everyone. Merci beaucoup, tout le monde. (APPLAUSE)

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