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## Ex-PM predicts election upset

Mulroney 'very positive': Harper  
Sees similarities to '84 Tory victory

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QUEEN'S PARK BUREAU

LINDSAY - Buoyed by poll numbers that show the governing Liberals faltering, Stephen Harper said yesterday that former Progressive Conservative prime minister Brian Mulroney sees history repeating itself.

"He's very excited," the Conservative Party of Canada leader told reporters before main-streeting here. "He thinks the Liberals are extremely vulnerable and he told me he sees all kinds of similarities between this election and the one he had in 1984.

"I haven't spoken to Mr. Mulroney for a couple of days, but we did speak early on. He's very positive. Of course, Mr. Mulroney is noted for being a very positive guy."

In 1984, Mulroney defeated then-prime minister John Turner's Liberals, ending 20 years of almost uninterrupted Liberal governance.

With the prospect of forming a government and toppling the Liberals, who have been in power since 1993, Harper said he has been thinking about transition. He's assembling a transition team for the possible move to power and is musing about the challenges of running a minority government.

"I've consulted people around the country on what would need to be done on a new government, but we haven't done anything official yet," he said as he began a week-long swing through vote-rich Ontario.

"I'm getting some advice. I will make a formal announcement when I think that is necessary and when I think we're ready to go in that direction, but at this point we are focused almost entirely ... on winning this election."

Harper has reportedly also discussed transition with long-time Tory insider Hugh Segal, national campaign co-chair Michael Fortier, Senator Pierre Claude Nolin, former B.C. MP John Reynolds and his top adviser Tom Flanagan, a University of Calgary political science professor.

And sources say he spoke recently with former Ontario premier Mike Harris, but the two haven't talked about transition matters.

"To be pretty blunt, they have made a pretty deliberate attempt to avoid any Harris people," said one former aide to Harris, noting Harper wants to steer clear of any controversies linked to the previous Ontario Tory government.

In Oshawa last night, Harper told a raucous crowd that Ontarians have "a national choice and a national responsibility ... to break the cycle of disappointments and deception" and defeat the Liberals.

"This guy has the gall to accuse us of having a hidden agenda," Harper said, pointing to the \$100 million sponsorship scandal. "Mr. Martin, where's our money hidden? Why don't you tell us that."

In response, the crowd of more than 250 chanted: "Give it back, give it back, give it back."

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