



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Retirement of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien

Toronto - Wednesday 21 August 2002

Akaash Maharaj

has released the following statement about Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's retirement announcement:

"Nothing in his political life became him like the leaving it.

"Both Canada and the Liberal Party owe Jean Chrétien an enormous debt of gratitude, not only for his forty years of public service, but also for his willingness at the critical moment to place the national interest ahead of any personal ambitions.

"Prime Minister Chrétien could have waged a forceful campaign over the leadership review vote. However, irrespective its outcome, it would have unleashed a bloodletting without parallel in the Liberal Party's long and storied history, plunging the governing Party and therefore the government itself into chaos.

"Instead, Prime Minister Chrétien has chosen his moment to bow out in a manner that will allow the government of Canada to focus on his bold and Liberal public policy agenda of national renewal.

"As the Liberal Party's National Policy Chair, I welcome the Prime Minister's selfless decision.

"As a member of the Liberal Party's National Executive, I will press for the timely adoption of leadership succession rules that will respect the integrity of the democratic process."

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