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Statement on Don Cherry

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Now that Remembrance Day is well passed, and we have honoured the real veterans and people who died for their country, a comment on the former hockey broadcaster. I come from an army family, a family of veterans. That gives me no special rights. But my father was a veteran who landed on D-Day and fought in three countries. My mother was a veteran and was bombed in London. One of my uncles was shot down and killed.

Another was shot down and managed to escape. My Godfather was recognized as a hero and a courageous leader. I was brought up surrounded by soldiers who had no time for those who hid behind bluster and patriotism, often using it to their own advantage.

As for words like "you people", they have been used in the past by Christians against Jews, by European Canadians against Indigenous people. And now this person attempts to use them against new Canadians.

These words cannot be justified as an old-fashioned romantic view of Canadian nationalism. These are the attitudes which brought Canada to the edge of breakup several times in the past. Why? Because they divided us and provoked hatred.

This is the way some groups have always tried to demonize minorities. As if they own patriotism. As if they own the country. They don't. And they do not speak for some mysterious silent majority. Comedy and bluster is one thing. Shouting down people is quite different, particularly those who cannot reply. This is not freedom of expression. Nor is attacking minorities. It is bullying. Canadians should not be demeaned in this way.

Anyone who attempts to do this should be ashamed.

Oh, and an incapacity to apologize is a sign of weakness, not strength. Real leaders, like good coaches, know you have to be clear about your failures in order to move forward.