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Nicola Sturgeon risks becoming a “laughing stock” after she claimed her election campaign has nothing to do with independence, the Scottish Conservatives said today.

The First Minister's claim was made yesterday as polls today show a further slump in support both for independence and a second referendum.

Today, the Scottish Conservatives are publishing quotes from the SNP in recent elections where – as the First Minister did yesterday – the party has tried to argue that its campaign was not about its unpopular plan for independence.

Yet, after each result, the SNP has then gone on to use any gains made to push the case for separation – culminating in Nicola Sturgeon's demand for a second divisive referendum in March.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“The First Minister risks turning herself into a laughing stock here.

“For the last few months, everyone in Scotland has seen her do nothing else but campaign for an unwanted second independence referendum.

“Yet now there's an election on, she suddenly tells people independence isn't the issue for her and orders her troops – don't mention the 'i' word.

“After the last few months of talking about nothing else, who does she think she's kidding?□

“We've heard it all before. At every election, the SNP says the vote has nothing to do with independence. Afterwards, it claims that separation is ever closer.

“More and more people in Scotland have wised up to these nationalist games.

“And more and more of them know that only the Scottish Conservatives have

what it takes to stop the SNP in its tracks and say no to its plans to split our country in two.

“This time round, she won’t get away with it.”

The SNP *always* says elections aren’t about independence...

- 2016 EU referendum, Nicola Sturgeon: ‘I support an independent Scotland...However, this vote is not about independence’ (Herald Scotland, 12 June 2016, [link](#)).
- 2016 Holyrood election, Nicola Sturgeon: ‘To propose another referendum in the next parliament without strong evidence that a significant number of those who voted No have changed their minds would be wrong and we won’t do it. It would not be respecting the decision that people made’ (Nicola Sturgeon Speech to SNP Conference 2015, 15 October 2015, [link](#)).
- 2016 Holyrood Election, Nicola Sturgeon: ‘If I, the SNP, those who believe in independence, can’t shift opinion from September 2014, we won’t earn the right to ask the question again’ (STV *Face to Face*, 29 April 2016, [link](#)).
- 2015 General election, Nicola Sturgeon: ‘As I have made very clear, this election is not about independence or about another referendum’ (*The Scotsman*, 29 April 2015, [link](#)).
- 2015 General election, Nicola Sturgeon writing for The National: ‘As I have made very clear, this election is not about independence or another referendum, no matter how many SNP MPs may be elected today’ (*The National*, 7 May 2015).
- 2015 General Election, Nicola Sturgeon writing for The Scotsman: This election is not about independence or another referendum (*The Scotsman*, 2 May 2015, [link](#)).
- 2015 General Election, Alex Salmond: “This election is not about independence or a referendum on independence” (Daily Telegraph, 7 May 2015)
- 2012 council elections, Nicola Sturgeon: “The SNP believe in independence... but the election here is not about independence (*Daily Record*, 13 April 2012).
- 2011 Holyrood elections, Alex Salmond “I think the people who vote SNP may or may not be supporters of independence...In an election people will have all sorts of reasons for voting for you or against you but we wouldn’t decide a constitutional issue on the basis of an election victory” (*Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 2011, [link](#)).□