



wheels.cahealthzone.cayourhome.caparentcentral.catoronto.com

Search bar with dropdown menu containing: thestar.com, Web, find a business

Home Blogs Politics

## December 23, 2009

### The big shrug

A new poll by Nik Nanos helps explain why the federal Conservatives have chosen the response they have on the Afghan-detainee issue -- everything from boycotting Commons committee hearings, defying an order to produce documents and now, the real possibility of shutting down Parliament altogether.

One line in Nik's analysis stands out:

The overall confusion on this issue has meant that it has not been a significant vulnerability for the governing Conservatives.

So there we have it. There is apparently no price to be paid, in public-opinion terms, for giving the back of the hand to Parliament. It makes one wonder why we bother to have one at all.

December 23, 2009 at 06:26 AM | [Permalink](#)

#### TrackBack

TrackBack URL for this entry:

http://www.typepad.com/services/trackback/6a00d8341bf8f353ef0120a7753cb4970b

Listed below are links to weblogs that reference [The big shrug](#):

#### Comments



Not yet - it's Xmas. Wait until life gets back to so-called normal and people start paying attention.

Posted by: MyThought | [December 23, 2009 at 07:30 AM](#)



My thoughts exactly...sad really

Posted by: RT B | [December 23, 2009 at 09:48 AM](#)



Recall that Nik had also very recently widely claimed (e.g. on CPAC with Peter van Dusen) that the Cons polling 40% was a new "normal" and that Harper was finally on his way to a majority -- just look it up.

Nik may be losing his touch, ha! ha!

Posted by: Anon | [December 23, 2009 at 10:16 AM](#)



Anyone else think the way the question was posed strange - almost like leading to a certain answer?

Posted by: MyThought | [December 23, 2009 at 12:30 PM](#)



It's painful to admit - but a lot of Canadians (and I'm thinking of the not so new ones) seem to think in their hearts

## Susan Delacourt on Politics



**Susan Delacourt**, the Star's Senior Writer in Ottawa, has covered federal politics for more than two decades as a reporter and bureau chief.

[Subscribe to this blog's feed](#)

[Follow her on Twitter](#)

[Donate to the Santa Claus Fund](#)

### Recent Comments

MCBellecourt on [The big shrug](#)

MJH on [The big shrug](#)

MJH on [The big shrug](#)

Tim from Alberta on [The big shrug](#)

I'll turn this country around... on [The big shrug](#)

Michael on [The big shrug](#)

wascally wabbit on [The big shrug](#)

MyThought on [The big shrug](#)

Anon on [The big shrug](#)

RT B on [The big shrug](#)

### Categories

[Canada-U.S. relations](#)

[Conservatives](#)

[Current Affairs](#)

[Electioneering](#)

[Greens](#)

[Leadership](#)

[Liberals](#)

[Low blows](#)

[NDP](#)

[Ottawa & the provinces](#)

[Parliament Hill](#)

[People on the Hill](#)

[Politics & the Media](#)

[Television](#)

[The Budget](#)

[Worth reading/seeing](#)

### Archives

[January 2010](#)

[December 2009](#)

that these detainees deserve what they get - to adopt Gen Hillier's so generously sweeping phrase - they are all "scumbags".

The Opposition has yet to make the point that

- a) Many of these folks picked up are drive bys (i.e. not combatants) when detained
- b) That the Geneva Convention - which Canada signed - is a two-way street - if we don't protect our "prisoners-of-war" (even if this technically isn't a war because we haven't declared it such) - it tends to give the other side carte blanche to do to our armed force members whatever.
- c) Much of the current mess was due to the fact that none of the other NATO partners were (and maybe are) comfortable - in the Bush / Cheney / Rumsfeld "Stuff happens" days - of handing over detainees to the US.
- d) This lot in Government at this moment do not seem to be in the "winning hearts and minds" frame of mind right now - confrontation and do as I say not as I do seems to be their modus operandi.
- e) Engagement and anger will be made cumulatively - when Canadians wake up to the fact that - collectively - all these dumb or petty minded decisions / mistakes in judgement or strategy have significantly diminished Canada's standing in the world these last four years. If there is one thing that will engage Canadians from coast to coast to coast - it is that the principles and what we stand for as Canadians are getting whittled away to the point that we are becoming less and less distinct when compared to Americans!

Posted by: wascally wabbit | [December 23, 2009 at 01:48 PM](#)



Why don't these Ottawa-centric media pollsters ever get it?

The question we want answered on Afghan detainees isn't "who has the credibility on the issue?" or "do you think the Conservatives would ever do such a thing?"

The question we want an answer to is "How much do you CARE about the Afghan detainee issue?" A lot? A little? Not at all?

The only nugget of useful information here is that a majority of Canadians (51.1%) have not even heard of the Afghan detainee issue.

Lets get these pollsters asking the important issues - what do Canadians care about? - and leave the rather meaningless comparisons of politicians' credibility on the issue (which few of us are able to judge) to the Ottawa circle-jerk crowd.

Posted by: Michael | [December 23, 2009 at 03:27 PM](#)



I remember when studies linking tanning beds to higher rates of cancer came out recently. I saw a woman being interviewed on TV. She said, "I heard about the study, but I honestly don't care." They should do a poll to find out if people who don't care about the risks of tanning beds are less likely to get cancer. I have a guess.

And maybe Canadians don't "care" about the Geneva Convention or the Military Police Complaints Commission cause they've, like, never even heard of them, but Canadian military generals should care! The majority of politicians in the country cared enough to vote on seeing the memos on detainee abuse, and their motion passed. Now the government won't hand over the memos. Maybe we should ask Canadians if they care that Parliament is being ignored before we decide what to do next...somebody call Nanos.

Posted by: I'll turn this country around... | [December 24, 2009 at 02:54 PM](#)



Way to go Michael!!!!Finally someone sayint it like it is.The politicians and MSM all huddle under the bubbles that are Ottawa and Toronto.They all think they know what is important to the citizens of this country,when in fact all they are exposed to is what is important to the inhabitants of these two cities.

I suspect that is why Harper pays little attention to their bleats and continues to govern this country for it's people and not the so called intellectual elites (in their own minds).

Posted by: Tim from Alberta | [December 25, 2009 at 03:55 PM](#)



51% of Canadians never heard of the Afghan Detainee Issue. Not at all surprising, most do not watch CBC or read the Star.

Posted by: MJH | [December 25, 2009 at 10:15 PM](#)



We need to know what happened with terrorist transfers PRIOR to 2006 as well as after. Lets have an Inquiry from 2002 to 2009. Then we will learn something!!

Posted by: MJH | [December 25, 2009 at 10:18 PM](#)



@MJH: And, Michael Ignatieff would agree with you. He is on record as saying he is in favour of an inquiry into the mission from its beginning. Unlike Harper, he is not afraid to clear the slate.

[November 2009](#)

[October 2009](#)

[September 2009](#)

[August 2009](#)

[July 2009](#)

[June 2009](#)

[May 2009](#)

[April 2009](#)

## Political blogs

[Paul Wells' Inkless Wells](#)

[Kady O'Malley's Inside the Queensway](#)

[David Aikin's On the Hill](#)

[CBC.ca's Political Bytes](#)

## Related Links

[Today's Toronto Star](#)

[TheStar.com](#)

[More Star Blogs](#)

[TheStar.com Photos](#)

[TheStar.com Videos](#)

[Commenting Guidelines](#)

## del.icio.us

Tag and save this blog to your Del.icio.us favourites.

[What is Del.icio.us?](#)

POWERED BY del.icio.us

## Advertisement

## Legal Notice

[TheStar.com](#)

Copyright Toronto Star Newspapers Limited. All rights reserved. The views expressed are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views