Another Harper broken promise

Written by Scott Parsons Editorial
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In an article re cutbacks to diplomatic hospitality budgets the Ottawa Citizen (Sept 13th) referred to Harper's mistrust, while in opposition, of Canadian diplomats. It mentioned a 2005 campaign speech in which Harper said "he would extend Canada's fisheries jurisdiction off the East Coast even if it resulted in a diplomatic row." The reality of course is that once in office Harper failed to deliver on that promise precisely because he wanted to avoid a diplomatic row. Instead, his government agreed to amendments to the Convention establishing the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, amendments that undermine Canadian sovereignty and weaken the effectiveness of mechanisms to manage the straddling fish stocks off the East Coast.
Four retired DFO executives (including myself) waged a two-year crusade to block this gutting of Canada's management authority. In December 2009 this resulted in the House of Commons adopting a resolution (with all three opposition parties concurring) calling on the government to reject the proposed NAFO amendments and to notify other countries that Canada would not ratify the amendment package, thereby scuttling the initiative. With undue haste and in a display of utter contempt for Parliament, the very next day Fisheries Minister Shea announced that the government had notified NAFO member countries that it was ratifying the amended Convention. Mr. Harper's cowardly capitulation on this matter was then overshadowed by a furor over another resolution which was adopted that same evening, the one calling on the government to produce detailed records on the Afghan detainee issue.

TAGS: Harper, extended fisheries jurisdiction, broken promise, straddling stocks, NAFO amendments, Canadian sovereignty, House of Commons, contempt for Parliament

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