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Thank you, sir, may I have another?

Dec 3, 2009 by Andrew Coyne



UN-BE-LIEVABLE. The Chinese publicly humiliate the Prime Minister of Canada, and the opposition rushes to ... [blame the Prime Minister](#).

“Mr. Harper’s provocative refusal to engage with China for four years comes with a price, which Canada is paying for, and which this incident reflects,” Mr. Rae told *The Globe and Mail* in an email this morning. He said the Chinese Premier’s comment “is indeed unprecedented and deliberate, but then so was Harper’s truly ignorant behaviour...”

Mr. Layton, meanwhile, told *The Globe* this morning that the “public rebuke shows that there’s work to do on Canada’s part.”

And much more in the same vein. It is just sick-making. Is there no indignity this country will not swallow? Is there no bottom to our cravenness, our endless capacity to rationalize, explain away and blame ourselves? If the Chinese had done this to any other world leader — to the President of France, say — do you think their opposition parties would be taking the side of the regime? Do you think their president would stay in China another day?

MOREOVER: The emperors of ancient Rome used to parade the kings of defeated tribes through the streets as a ritual humiliation. That’s more or less what’s going on here. The purpose of Harper’s visit was expressly one of capitulation to Chinese power and money, and the Chinese leadership were simply forcing us to acknowledge it. They treated the Prime Minister of Canada, in public, as if he were a schoolboy late for class. And, by extension, they were treating Canada the same. Because they know we’ll just sit there and take it.

So his humiliation is ours — and apparently we’re just fine with that. Harper’s belated willingness to put aside human rights concerns and suck up to the regime was not just applauded, but *demand*ed, by virtually the entire Canadian political, business and journalistic establishment — a remarkable confluence of the left’s

traditional blindness to the abuses of Communist dictatorships and the business community's traditional desire for profit. Perhaps that's inevitable. But let us have no more preening about our moral standing in the world. And, after this, let us not pretend to much in the way of national pride either.

Harper will be told by his advisers to just suck it up. And, after kicking a couple of chairs, he will. What is national pride besides the dictates of "the almighty dollar"?

MOREOVEST: But perhaps I've misjudged Jack Layton. Here he is, after all, [talking about human rights in China](#):

The NDP Leader added, too, that we need to "show we're serious about our human rights concerns in China —

Yes? Yes? By...?

— by addressing *our* human rights problems with Afghan detainees."

Not just moral equivalence — moral grovelling.

Tags: [China](#), [human rights](#), [spinelessness](#), [Stephen Harper](#)

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