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Editorial Firing & Foot Shooting

Shooting from the hip, Prime Minister Harper may himself become collateral damage in his intensifying practice of firing anyone who has something to say that he does not want to hear.

So far, Harper has fired:

- Paul Kennedy, former chair of the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP, who was not being kind to the RCMP;
- Linda Keen, former chair of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, who said that the nuclear reactor in Chalk River was not safe;
- Peter Tinsley, former chair of the Military Police Complaints Commission, who sought to continue investigating the treatment of Afghan detainees;
- Helena Guergis, former Minister of State for the status of women, who was accused of something involving her husband, Rahim Jaffer;

- Munir Sheikh, former Chief Statistician, who denied that he supported the decision to terminate the long form census survey;

- Pat Stogran, former ombudsman for veterans, who advocated for veterans; and

- Marty Cheliak, formerly the RCMP head of the Canadian Firearms Program, who advocated for the continuance of the gun registry.

What all of these people had in common is that they were doing the jobs they had been appointed to, and doing them well. In the end, they resigned, were fired, or did not have their appointments renewed.

More importantly, they had also developed the support of others—and support in the media. Mr Harper's technique for avoiding advice—good or bad—is backfiring. His trigger-happy leadership style is becoming apparent as a combination of uncertainty and paranoia. ☞

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