

Khadr settlement made sense

Much has been written about the alleged payout of \$10.5 million to Omar Khadr by the Trudeau Liberal government. Though I understand the emotions on both sides of the issue, what the current federal government had to deal with was Khadr's civil action for \$20 million in damages arising from the inaction of successive Liberal and Conservative federal governments while he, a Canadian citizen and child soldier, was tortured and imprisoned for years at Guantanamo Bay Prison.

Three times the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that our federal government failed in its duty to protect Khadr as a Canadian citizen. As an insurance broker, I see civil actions frequently brought against our clients and insurers settle these claims for significantly less than the injured third parties are seeking, but for substantially more than our clients think should be paid. These settlements are reached through negotiations and based upon each side assessing the chances of losing and the legal costs of proceeding to trial.

In these three cases brought to the Supreme Court of Canada by Omar Khadr, the federal government is alleged to have spent \$5 million on its legal defense and still lost. Faced with little chance of mounting a successful defense, the Trudeau Liberal government made the business decision of negotiating a settlement rather than risk losing \$20 million and incurring the additional legal costs of pleading their case at the Supreme Court, just like insurance companies negotiate settlements with claimants for damages every business day. It may seem outrageous to some, but this was a business decision made in the best interests of citizens and taxpayers, and business people should understand it.

What we all should be outraged by are the actions of Conservative Party Leader Andrew Scheer and Conservative MPs Peter Kent and Michelle Rempel, who are using such American media outlets as the Wall Street Journal and the Tucker Carlson Show on Fox to poison Canada-US relations over the Omar Khadr settlement, on the eve of the re-negotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement. It shocks me that the Conservative Party of Canada would be so irresponsible with the economic well-being of Canadians.

How many people in this community would lose their jobs at Honda Canada or KTH Manufacturing in Shelburne or Husky Injection Molding Systems in Bolton if U.S. President Donald Trump heeds the message of outrage promoted by the Conservative Party in his Wall Street Journal or on Fox News and punishes Canada by tearing up NAFTA? What harsher measures will Trump negotiate against farmers and other businesses or will this Conservative poison discourage American tourists from coming to Canada? The reckless Conservative partisan poison over Omar Khadr jeopardizes the economic foundation of Canada and it needs to stop now.

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